

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

1 CORINTHIANS

BOB WINTON



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Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs and Henry Simmons. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, Ray Hawk and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people. "Outlined" does not imply skimpy—these are full-length books.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad!

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.

Bob Winton

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bwint38@hotmail.com

(931) 728-7610 * (931) 639-0317

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Corinthians

Introduction	Page 5
Chapter 1	Page 15
Chapter 2	Page 41
Chapter 3	Page 61
Chapter 4	Page 75
Chapter 5	Page 88
Chapter 6	Page 97
Chapter 7	Page 109
Chapter 8	Page 130
Chapter 9	Page 139
Chapter 10	Page 152
Chapter 11	Page 177
Chapter 12	Page 196
Chapter 13	Page 212
Chapter 14	Page 228
Chapter 15	Page 254
Chapter 16	Page 288
Bibliography	Page 302
Special Items:	
Temptations	Page 166
Tongue-Speaking	Page 243
Role of Women	Page 250
New Testament Baptism	Page 329

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS

A. The City of Corinth.

1. Corinth's history goes back to ancient times when it was called Ephyra.
 - a. It is situated on an isthmus which joins Greece with the Peloponnesus (which was once called *Morea*). The isthmus is a narrow band of land which separates the Ionian and Aegean Seas. This *isthmus* gave the name for all other similar strips of land. Corinth is also known for another geographic feature, a citadel of rock which rises almost 2,000 feet above the sea, called *Acro-Corinthus*. At the top of this mountain was a flat area large enough for a town. A temple dedicated to Aphrodite (the goddess the Romans called *Venus*) was built atop this citadel, in which a thousand religious prostitutes served. The city proper was a little ways inland from this citadel. The Acropolis in Athens, about fifty miles away, was visible from the Acro-Corinthus.
 - b. Corinth acquired vast riches on account of its good location for trade by land over the isthmus and by sea from many quarters. Corinth was known for many centuries for its shipbuilding and for its famous Isthmusian Games. Its importance was also attributable to its military significance. The citadel could be guarded by a few soldiers since the ascent to it was made difficult by the steep slope of the mountain. "It had good harbors at Cenchreae and Lechaem, on either side of the isthmus. By 750 B.C., Corinth had become the wealthiest city of ancient Greece. Except for two periods (454-404 B.C. and 146-144 B.C.) it maintained economic supremacy for about 1,300 years" (*World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p.832). But with the increase of wealth, great corruption of morality came.
 - c. The city was destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. when some of their ambassadors were mistreated. A hundred years later, it was rebuilt by the Romans, under Julius Caesar. It regained its former glory and wealth, along with its moral corruption.
2. So corrupt did Corinth become that the Greek language used the word "Corinthianize" to describe moral degradation. "Even as late as the seventeenth century, the 'Corinthian' in Shakespearean dramas was always a debauchee, making his entry on stage in a state of drunkenness" (Coffman, p.350). So base had Corinthian society become that Paul was virtually overawed when he arrived there.
 - a. Acts 18:9-10: "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 2:3: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."
3. Since those ancient days, the city has decreased in size to about twenty-seven thousand. The modern city is near the site of the ancient city of Corinth. "The town is a minor commercial center linked by rail and road with Návplion, Pátrai, and Athens. Corinth has a small harbor, active since completion of the ship canal across the Isthmus of Corinth in 1893. Among the chief products of trade are currants, corn, honey, silk, and olive oil. The modern town, founded in 1858 after the destruction of the old city by an earthquake, was itself severely damaged by an earthquake in 1928. Population (1991) 27,412" [Microsoft ® Encarta ® Reference Library 2004. © 1993-2003 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved].
4. While Nero was emperor in Rome, an unsuccessful attempt was made to dig a canal across the isthmus in order to aid the flow of shipping. Sailing around the Peloponnesus was time-consuming and dangerous. The idea had been pursued by an ancient king of Macedonia and by Julius Caesar. A French company began cutting the canal in 1882, and Greece completed it in 1893. It is 4 miles long, 70 feet in width, and 26 feet deep.

B. The Background of the Corinthian church of Christ: Acts 18:1-11.

1. Acts 18:1: "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth."
 - a. We are not told why the apostle remained only for a short time in Athens. In terms of importance, and perhaps also population, Corinth outstripped its neighbor. The gospel would have a better chance of being spread if it could be firmly planted in Corinth. With ships and merchants coming from many parts of the Empire, the gospel would be given a very wide influence. Athens and Corinth separated by only about 50 miles.
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- b. Some think that Paul made another visit to Corinth not reported in the Bible:
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 1:15: "And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:1: "But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 12:14: "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 12:21: "*And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 13:1-2: "This *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare."
 2. Acts 18:2: "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them."
 - a. Paul met Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth. They had been among the Jews who had been expelled from Rome at the decree of Claudius Caesar. The Jews were unpopular in Rome, and were thought to be the source of tumult in the imperial city. Claudius issued an edict about 49 A.D. which forced the Jews to leave Rome. This husband-wife team had only lately come from Italy.
 - b. Aquila was a Jew by birth, thus had to leave. He had been born in the province of Pontus, located in the northeastern part of Asia Minor, on the southern shore of the Black Sea. The Bible does not indicate whether Aquila and Priscilla were Christians when they left Rome or whether they were converted by Paul in Corinth. Jews from Rome and Pontus were among the great crowds in Jerusalem on Pentecost Day (Acts 2:9-10). It is certainly possible that they could have been in the audience to hear the first gospel sermon almost 20 years earlier. Paul's current visit to Corinth began about 51 A.D.
 3. Acts 18:3-4: "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."
 - a. Aquila and Priscilla and the apostle Paul were tent-makers by trade, thus the apostle abode with them and plied his trade. The Jews had a proverb that a father who failed to teach his son a trade, had by default taught him to steal. There was much in common between the three partners: they were Jews, tentmakers, and Christians.
 - b. Paul praised these two devout saints in Romans 16:3-4: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." By the time Paul penned the Roman Epistle (56-58 A.D.), Aquila and Priscilla had returned to Rome. This godly couple had been instrumental in setting Apollos aright in scriptural matters (Acts 18:24-26).
 - c. When Paul came to Corinth, he was likely short of funds. The apostle made several allusions to his working with his hands for his own support.
 - 1) Acts 20:34: "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:12: "And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 2:9: "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 3:8: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you."
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- d. Paul again resorted to his long-established practice of entering Jewish synagogues to reason with those gathered there. This he did in Corinth for a number of sabbath days, reasoning with them to persuade them that Jesus is the Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-11).
 4. Acts 18:5: "And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* Christ."
 - a. Silas and Timothy finally caught up with Paul in Corinth. They had remained in Berea following his sudden departure, being given instruction to follow him on to Athens with all speed (17:14-15). It appears that Paul left Athens before they arrived, (if so, he left word in Athens which would guide them to him in Corinth), but from a statement in 1 Thessalonians 3, another possibility is indicated, which is discussed below.
 - b. Their arrival greatly encouraged the apostle on account of the good report they brought him about the brethren in Macedonia and the financial support sent to him by the saints there (2 Cor. 11:8-9; Ph. 4:15; 2 Cor. 8:1-5). The good news they brought gave Paul fresh motivation to press the great work of preaching the gospel in Corinth. His heart would have been relieved of any doubts or anxieties about the welfare of his co-laborers and the new saints in Macedonia.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-8 speaks of Timothy coming from Thessalonica to Paul at Corinth. The first verse says that Paul had sent Timothy to Thessalonica and that he had abode alone in Athens. It seems that Timothy had actually rejoined Paul at Athens, and had been sent back to Thessalonica. "His present arrival in Corinth [Acts 18:5], therefore, was not from his original stay in Berea; but from a recent visit to Thessalonica. Probably Silas had remained till now in Berea" (McGarvey, p.225).
 - d. The arrival of Silas and Timothy in Corinth was the occasion of the writing of the book of 1 Thessalonians, which appears to be the first of his many epistles. He was re-invigorated at the news they brought (1 Th. 3:6-8; Acts 18:5; cf. 18:28). He pressed forward with the work, testifying (John 15:26-27; Acts 10:39; 1:8; 4:33) that Jesus is the Christ.
 5. Acts 18:6-7: "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue."
 - a. As was the usual result of gospel preaching then, some of the Jews rejected the truth. Luke reports that they "opposed themselves" by so doing. The Jews in Antioch of Pisidia had "judged" themselves "unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13:44-46) by their rejection of the gospel; these Jews had done the same thing. In both cases, they became guilty of blasphemy (cf. Matt. 12:32; Rom. 1:16; John 12:48). One would be wasting his time to continue to try to teach people who have rejected the gospel. Compare: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. 7:6).
 - b. When the Jews in a local situation rejected the gospel, Paul turned to the Gentiles, but when he went to another location, he first sought out the Jews there to begin his ministry in that new place. Paul shook his raiment, symbolizing his freedom from their lost condition. "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean..." (Cf. Ezek. 3:17-19; 33:4,7-9; Acts 20:26). Paul had done all that anyone could do to bring them to salvation. We should not be discouraged when we face similar cases today.
 - c. Seeing that the majority of the Jews were unwilling to receive the gospel, Paul moved his base of operation to the house of Justus. He would no longer be given opportunity of speaking openly and freely in the synagogue; to have persisted would have been to bring premature, unnecessary difficulties upon the cause. Gracefully, he took up his work elsewhere. He probably continued to stay with Aquila.
 - d. We know very little about this Justus, identified in the ASV as Titus Justus. He was a worshipper of God; his name indicates he was a Gentile; thus, he obviously was a proselyte to the Jewish religion. But now he was favorably inclined toward Paul, although the text does not state that he was a Christian at this point. He readily opened his home as a meeting place where Paul could continue his preaching, and as a place of worship.
 - e. His house was next door to the synagogue. When Satan closes one door, God is able to open another. How easily we become despondent when little problems develop! How little trust we often have! If
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- we are faithful in the basic tenets of Christianity and sincerely practice them regularly (prayer, Bible study, mutual encouragement, worship, etc.), these discouraging difficulties would not appear nearly as serious.
- f. Titus Justus was not the Titus who was a fellow-traveler with Paul; that Titus was already active in Antioch and Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1; Acts 15:2).
6. Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
- a. Paul's work was bearing good fruit. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, obeyed the gospel, along with the other members of his family. Luke reports further that many of the Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized. Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:14 that he had personally baptized Crispus and Gaius.
 - b. "It was very seldom that men of high position in the Jewish synagogues were induced to obey the gospel. It is greatly to the credit of Crispus, therefore, that he was among the first in Corinth to take this position, and this, too, at the moment when the opposition and blasphemy of the other Jews were most intense. He must have been a man of great independence of spirit and goodness of heart—the right kind of a man to form the nucleus for a congregation of disciples" (McGarvey, p.226).
 - c. The details of the conversion of these Corinthians are summed up in three actions: they heard, believed, and were baptized. This is a beautiful, concise and accurate rendering of the plan of salvation. Repentance and confession are not specifically named, but obviously they are implied since they are elsewhere required (Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:10).
 - d. Crispus would give up his position as chief ruler in the synagogue; he could not continue in that work now that he had become a Christian, and indeed the Jews would not permit it. Verse 17 speaks of Sosthenes as the chief ruler; but in 1 Corinthians 1:1, a Sosthenes is included with Paul in the greetings sent to the church at Corinth. It is possible that different synagogues are meant, but not likely; it is possible that different men are indicated by the name Sosthenes, but it is also possible that the replacement to Crispus (Sosthenes) was also converted to Christ.
7. Acts 18: 9-10: "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city."
- a. The Lord saw the need to speak to Paul in a vision to give encouragement to him. Even the apostles were not immune to discouragement. Christ told Paul to cease being fearful, but speak the gospel plainly. He assured his beloved apostle that he would see to it that no one would hurt him. How would you like to have such a direct promise from Christ? He does not address us orally or directly today, but his written word is just as reliable!
 - 1) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
 - b. Paul was facing a large pagan population which had little regard for human life, no regard for God's word, no respect for Christ and his followers, and a people who were given over to licentiousness. These people did not fear God, and would have no concern over a lowly Jew who presented a message about another Jew who claimed to be the Son of God!
 - c. How would you have approached the work in Corinth? Would there have been any fear in your heart? We would have done just as Paul did: go to the Jews first, and then work with those Jews and proselytes who showed interest; and we would have had a measure of fear just as he did!
 - d. Given the assurance of heavenly protection, Paul was urged to speak forth the word of salvation. The Lord stated that there were many in the city who were teachable. Things are not always as bleak and dangerous as they appear! Who would think that there would be many in this wicked city who would obey? Look at our own country. Although there seems to be little hope of finding people who will obey the gospel, yet from experience we know there are many.
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- e. Some have perverted the Lord's statement to agree with Calvinistic doctrine that God has already picked out individuals who are to be saved. This would violate Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Knowing the hearts of men, Christ could also know that there were some who would hear, believe and obey. He spoke by anticipation.
8. Acts 18:11: "And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."
 - a. Being encouraged by the Lord's promise to protect him and by the assurance that there were many in the city who would be receptive to the gospel, Paul vigorously pursued the great work of preaching the gospel.
 - b. He continued there for eighteen months, teaching the word of God among the Corinthians. Christ fulfilled his pledge to safeguard the apostle; the chief ruler of the synagogue was beaten instead of Paul, when the Jews raised a tumult against Paul (18:12-17).

C. The Author of the Epistle.

1. The text identifies Paul as the inspired author (1 Cor. 1:1; 16:21; 1:12-17; 3:4, 6, 22).
2. External evidence attesting Paul's authorship of 1 Corinthians is abundant from the first century onward, including Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, the Didache, and Justin Martyr.
3. As an apostle, Paul was:
 - a. An eyewitness of the resurrected Christ:
 - 1) Acts 1:21-22: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:1: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?"
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:8: "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."
 - b. Called by the Lord:
 - 1) Acts 26:16-18: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 2) Galatians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)."
 - c. Inspired:
 - 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 3) Galatians 1:11-12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - d. Able to confirm his messages:
 - 1) Mark 16:17-20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

- 2) Hebrews 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
- e. Given a universal commission:
 - 1) Acts 26:16-18: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 2) Romans 1:14-17: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 3) Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
 - 5) Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 11:28: "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

D. The Epistle is Addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth."

1. The denominations which call themselves "Church of God" did not come into existence until the late 19th century in America. It is one thing for a group to call themselves the *Church of God*, but it is an entirely different proposition to prove they constitute God's church!
 - a. The New Testament church was not a denomination; it was not a confederation of many denominations. The fact is, no denomination existed in New Testament times! It has often been observed, that a denomination is too big to be a local congregation, and too small to be the church universal.
 - b. Men founded and developed each of the denominations extant today. If the New Testament is followed, all denominations would fade away into nothingness. There is no Bible authority for the existence of any of them; they reject parts of the Bible; they are uniformly wrong in their plan of salvation, worship, the organization, work, name, and authority by which they operate.
 - c. Paul addresses this congregation of God's people as "church of God" because it was God who planned it and brought it into existence. It is the church of Christ because Christ died for it (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25), it is his body (Eph. 1:20-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18,24), and he serves as its head (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:20-23).
 - d. There are several designations by which the Lord's church is known in the Bible. Scripturally, we could refer to ourselves as the church of God, the Lord's church, the church of Christ, the body of Christ, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, the church of the first born; but it would not be wise to use these designations arbitrarily on our signs, due to the confusion this would foster.
2. The apostle describes the recipients as "sanctified in Christ Jesus," who call upon the name of Christ. They began to call on the name of the Lord when they obeyed the gospel; they were sanctified when they became Christians by obeying the gospel.
 - a. Acts 2:36-47: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and

to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles....And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

- b. Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."

E. Paul the Apostle.

1. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years (Acts 24:27) before being sent to Rome (Acts 27). The Book of Acts closes with the apostle having been in prison at Rome for two more years (Acts 28:30-31). What happened at the end of these two years?
2. The following quotation from Thiessen, pp.260-262, gives one view:
 - a. "Paul was tried and acquitted. The flimsy charges against him (Acts 25:14-27; 26:30-32) did not convince even a Nero of the Apostle's guilt. Certain expressed purposes of Paul in the Prison Epistles (Phil. 23,24; Philemon 22) and certain references to men and places in the Pastorals [?—bw] (to be noted) enable us to determine his movements and activities after his release with some feeling of certainty.
 - b. "From Rome he probably went to Brundisium, crossed the Adriatic, either to Apollonia or to Dyrrachium, and then took the Egnatian Road to Macedonia and Philippi. He probably did not stay long at Philippi at this time, but hastened on to Ephesus and from this as a center he visited Laodicea, Colossae, and other cities in this neighborhood. After spending the biggest part of a year in the East, he probably set out for Spain. There was constant intercourse between the East and Massilia (the modern Marseilles), and so he would have no difficulty in reaching the 'limit of the west.' It is thought that he remained about two years in Spain. During this time, probably, Timothy took up the work at Ephesus. It appears, however, as if somewhere on Paul's way back from Spain to Macedonia Timothy asked Paul to allow him to leave Ephesus and to travel with him once more. But this Paul did not allow (1 Tim. 1:3). Some time after this the Apostle wrote 1 Timothy to his faithful co-worker.
 - c. "Timothy, converted under Paul's ministry (1 Tim. 1:2,18) on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23), became the Apostle's assistant on the second journey (Acts 16:1-3) after his ordination [the sectarian "ordination" is not authorized by the Scriptures—bw] to the ministry (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). He was with Paul at Troas, Philippi, Berea, and Athens. From the last place he made a trip to Thessalonica and returned to Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:5). Then we lose sight of him for about five years (Plummer). He reappears at Ephesus, on Paul's third journey, and is sent by the Apostle with Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Paul hoped he would get to Corinth also, but it is not certain whether Timothy ever reached that city (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10). He is with Paul again in Macedonia when Paul writes 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1,19), and must have accompanied him to Corinth, for he sends greetings when Paul writes Romans (Rom. 16:21). He returned with Paul to Macedonia and to Asia, at least as far as Troas (Acts 20:3-6). Then we again lose sight of him for the two years of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment. We next find him at Rome, joining Paul in sending greetings to Colossae, Philemon, and Philippi. From Rome he, undoubtedly, made the trip to Philippi of which Paul speaks (Phil. 2:19-23), after which he again disappears from the record. We may, however, assume that he was with Paul in some of his further ministries in various eastern cities; but it is not likely that he accompanied the Apostle to Spain. Some time during Paul's visit to Spain he probably took up the work at Ephesus. While still at this place he received what we call The First Epistle to Timothy."
3. Quotation from Rex Turner, Sr., MSOP, pp.14-18:
 - a. "Luke closed his Acts of the Apostle in the following words: 'And he (Paul) abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, and none forbidding him' (Acts

28:30,31). In this conclusion to his Acts of the Apostles, Luke did not say that at the end of the two year imprisonment Paul was put to death, nor did he imply it. In fact the necessary implication is that Paul had been set free....

- b. "Someone is bound to ask: 'Is there external evidence that bears on the question of Paul's release, or non-release from prison, and if so, what does the evidence show, and how relevant is it?' There is external evidence!
 - c. "To illustrate, one source of external evidence is from the writing of Clement of Rome. Clement (A.D. 30-100) wrote the Corinthians, and the salutation reads as follows: 'The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied.' In this epistle, written about A.D. 97, Clement admonished: 'Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.' Stress should be placed upon the fact that Clement said that Paul came unto 'the extreme limit of the west,' and after his having done so, he suffered martyrdom. Under no circumstances could Rome be counted the extreme west. The clear and unmistakable implication is that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and in turn, that he completed his long avowed purpose to preach the gospel in Spain.
 - d. "A second source of external evidence is the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment or canon was discovered by L.A. Muratori (A.D. 1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library and published by him in A.D. 1740. It was written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. Scholars agree that the original form, of which the Muratorian fragment is a copy, was written about A.D. 180-190. That fragment reads: 'Luke compiled for most excellent Theophilus' what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and also the departure of Paul from the city, when he departed [for] Spain.' Note should be taken of the fact that his Muratorian fragment explicitly states that Paul left for Spain.
 - e. "A third source of external evidence is from the historian Eusebius. His life dates about A.D. 260-340. He wrote as follows: 'Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix's successor. Under him, Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner. And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint. Then after he made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.' As should be observed, this external evidence is independent. There is no attempt by the author to have it agree with another external evidence, but on the other hand it is in complete agreement with the prior external evidence already submitted.
 - f. "A fourth source of external evidence is from the historian Jerome. He wrote from Bethlehem in A.D. 492. In his preface he states that he had no predecessor in his work, but he very properly acknowledged his indebtedness to the church history written by Eusebius. Concerning the apostle Paul, he wrote: 'And because a full account of his (Paul's) life is given in the Acts of the Apostles, I only say this, that the twenty-fifth year after our Lord's passion, that is the second of Nero, at the time when Festus Procurator of Judea succeeded Felix, he was sent bound to Rome, and remaining for two years in free custody, disputed daily with the Jews concerning the advent of Christ. It ought to be said that at the first defense, the power of Nero having not been confirmed, nor his wickedness broken forth to such a degree as the historians relate concerning him, Paul was dismissed by Nero, that the gospel of Christ might be preached also in the west. As he himself writes in the second epistle to Timothy at the time
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he was about to be put to death dictating his epistle as he did while in chains; 'at my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.' This external evidence is in harmony with the other three sources as quoted. The case is that Paul's writings together with external history make certain the fact that he was released from his imprisonment at Rome, and that 'he preached also in the west,' or Spain. Thus by both internal and external evidence—Paul's release, his visit to Philippi and Ephesus, his visit to the Island of Crete, and his visit to Spain—all of these are confirmed. Paul's second imprisonment and his ultimate death at the hands of Nero are also confirmed.

- g. "The external evidence as set forth, especially by Eusebius and Jerome, indicates that Paul was put to death just prior to Nero's death. Nero's death occurred on June 8, A.D. 68. Luke closed his Acts of Apostles at the end of Paul's two whole years of Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 62, and certainly not later than A.D. 63. Now, from A.D. 62 to A.D. 67 or 68 would leave a minimum of five to six years for Paul to make his promised visits and to preach the gospel in Crete and in Spain as well."
4. "It is difficult to say how long it was after his release that Paul wrote this Epistle. But since the three Pastorals have an affinity of language, similarity of thought, and likeness of error to combat they must have all been written at about the same time. If Paul was released in 61, and if we allow one year for his travels and work in the East and two years for his work in Spain, we get 64 or 65. This, then, is the date we would suggest for 1 Timothy" (Thiessen, p.263).

F. The Date and Place of writing.

1. Paul had already been in Corinth when he wrote the first epistle to the church. He had established the church in the city during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1ff; 1 Cor. 2:1-3). When he penned the letter, he was on the verge of returning to them (4:19; 16:5). Luke reports (Acts 19:21) that Paul did pass through Macedonia en route to Achaia (where Corinth was located). He also relates that Paul made that journey after leaving Ephesus, where he had spent about two years in evangelizing and edifying (Acts 19-20).
2. It seems certain that Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote this letter.
 - a. He sent greetings to them from the churches of Asia (1 Cor. 16:19); Ephesus was situated in Asia.
 - b. Aquila and Priscilla sent their greetings to the brethren in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:19); they were in Ephesus at the time (Acts 18:26).
 - c. He stated his intention to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:8), before returning to Corinth.
 - d. A great and effectual door had been opened to him in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8-9), but the enemies were ferocious (1 Cor. 15:32); Acts 19 furnishes some of the details of his struggles there.
3. The date of the letter can be placed between 54-57 A.D. He arrived in Ephesus sometime during the year 54 A.D., and was there two years and three months. He spent three months disputing in the Jewish synagogue (Acts 19:8); afterwards, he taught in the school of Tyrannus for two years (Acts 19:9-10).

G. The Purpose of the epistle.

1. Paul had learned of certain problems which had developed in the Corinthian church since his departure (1:11). It was necessary that he write a message to expose and correct their errors. He could not leave the profitable work he was doing in Ephesus, hence the letter was sent.
2. The problems they were having are indicated by the contents of the letter.
 - a. They were divided: 1:10-17.
 - b. They had a problem of *modernism*: 1:18-21.
 - c. There was a problem of immorality which they were allowing: chapter 5.
 - d. They were involved in bringing lawsuits against each other: 6:1-11.
 - e. They had some questions about marriage: chapter 7.
 - f. There were difficulties regarding the questions of meats: chapter 8; 10:1-13.
 - g. Some were abusing the Lord's Supper: chapter 11.
 - h. There were problems regarding spiritual gifts: chapters 12-14.
 - i. Some were denying the resurrection from the dead: chapter 15.

H. Outline of 1 Corinthians.

1. Introduction: 1:1-9.
 2. Their problem of division: 1:10—4:21.
 - a. Paul rebukes their division: 1:10-17.
 - b. The gospel of Christ is superior to human wisdom: 1:18-31.
 - c. Paul illustrates by his own conduct the humility that is needed to promote unity: 2:1-5.
 - d. The apostle shows that Christianity came from God: 2:6-16.
 - e. Their divisions evinced their continued carnality: 3:1-4.
 - f. Even ministers of the gospel have nothing of which to boast, since it is God who gives their increase: 3:5-15.
 - g. The church is the temple of the Spirit, and therefore must not be contaminated by sin: 3:16-23.
 - h. The principle of stewardship refutes the sin of division: chapter 4.
 3. Moral problems addressed: 5:1—10:33.
 - a. Immorality: chapter 5.
 - b. Lawsuits between Christians: 6:1-11.
 - c. Abuses of Christian liberty: 6:12-20.
 - d. Marriage problems: chapter 7.
 - e. Eating meats: chapter 8.
 - f. Liberty and self-denial: chapter 9.
 - g. Exhortations based on Israelite history: 10:1-13.
 - h. Eating meats: 10:14-33.
 4. Church problems: 11:1—14:40.
 - a. Work of women: 11:1-16.
 - b. Abuses of the Lord's Supper: 11:17-34.
 - c. Spiritual gifts: 13:1—14:40.
 5. Resurrection of the dead: chapter 15.
 6. Closing admonitions: chapter 16.
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1 CORINTHIANS 1

A. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9: Salutation and Introduction.

1. Verse 1: "Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother."
 - a. We are initially introduced to Paul in Acts 7:58 where, as a young man, he watched the coats of those who stoned Stephen. He consented to the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1). His name was changed to *Paul* in Acts 13. *Saul* is Jewish; *Paul* is Roman. Hodge says that it was common for a Jew to be called by one name among his own people, and by another name among the Gentiles.
 - b. Paul's apostleship was questioned by those who rejected the truth he preached, thus he found it necessary on several occasions to defend his authority as having been given to him by Christ.
 - 1) Galatians 1:1-2: "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia."
 - 2) Galatians 1:11-12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 9:1-5: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:8-10: "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 12:11-13: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."
 - c. Although he was not of the original twelve, he clearly had the full authority of apostleship, which he proved by the many miracles he wrought: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong" (2 Cor. 12:11-13).
 - d. He was an apostle of Christ for the Lord had personally selected and appointed him to that great work (Acts 26:12-20). In view of the evil work the Judaizers were doing to undermine his influence and to take over his converts to their own selfish ends, it was fitting that he begin the letter by affirming his apostleship.
 - e. He states further that his apostleship came upon him through the will of God. The Father and the Son are perfectly united in all that they say or do. Since Christ selected Paul to be an apostle, God had already put his approval upon the choice.
 - f. Greetings are sent from Paul and Sosthenes to the brethren in Corinth. Sosthenes was possibly the same person as the one named in Acts 18:17. If so, then two leaders of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth were converted, the other being Crispus (Acts 18:8). Sosthenes was with Paul when the epistle was written, and joined with the apostle in sending greetings to the Corinthian congregation. Notice the distinction that Paul makes in the statement, between his authority and Sosthenes; he lists himself as an apostle, but does not connect this brother to that office. Thus we have: "Paul, an apostle of Christ, and Sosthenes, our brother."

2. Verse 2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."
 - a. Those addressed are included in the phrase, "the church of God which is at Corinth." Every saved person in Corinth was a member of the church. There is no such proposition in the New Testament that allows one to be saved without belonging to the church. The Lord adds the saved (all the saved) to the church. The saved constitute the body of Christ, which is the church.
 - 1) Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - b. There is only one church which has God's approval: "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism*" (Eph. 4:4-5). Every other church is man-made, exists without God's approval, and operates in opposition to the will of God (Matt. 12:30; 13:9-15).
 - 1) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - 2) Matthew 13:9-15: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - c. But some may argue that these sectarian churches do a lot of good by promoting morality and helping the needy. However, think of all the precious souls that are misled into thinking they are following Christ when in truth they are merely adhering to a man-made system! Also, a counterfeit \$100 bill might do a lot of good to the person who has it; he might be able to buy food and medicine for his family with it, but the fact remains that he is acting in violation of the law by passing the bill, even though he may sincerely think it to be genuine. Sooner or later, someone will have to absorb the \$100 cost of the false bill.
 - d. The church may properly be called Christ's church because he died in order to bring it into existence (Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25); it may properly be called God's church because he planned it from eternity, and set in motion the preparations which led to its establishment (Eph. 3:1-11; Isa. 2:2-4; 1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 1) Modern denominations which have appropriated this as their sectarian name do so without

authority. Just because a group refers to themselves as the "Church of God" does not mean that God has anything whatsoever to do with them! Those denominations which use that name, do so without scriptural authority! "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

- 2) The oldest of these only goes back to about 1880, far too young to be God's church. They began by the authority of man; they preach and follow human doctrines; they offer a perverted plan of salvation to the world; they engage in worship activities which are without divine approval; their organization is not after the New Testament order (Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:18,24); and their operations bring glory to themselves, not to Almighty God! And instead of blessing the name of Christ, they bring shame.
 - a) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
 - b) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - c) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - d) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - e) 2 Corinthians 11:4: "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."
- e. The members of the church were *sanctified in Christ Jesus*. Those who are sanctified are set apart, separated to a sacred service or purpose.
 - 1) Passages:
 - a) Exodus 13:2, 12-13: "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it *is* mine....That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males *shall be* the LORD'S. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem."
 - b) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - c) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - d) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."
 - e) 1 Peter 2:5,9: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

- 2) That holy state does not mean that they were beyond the possibility of being tempted, but that they were consecrated to the service of God.
 - a) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - b) James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 - c) 1 Peter 2:9-10: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."
 - 3) Sanctification is obtained *in Christ*, which designates a spiritual location or state.
 - a) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - b) Romans 8:1-4: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
 - d) Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - e) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - f. They were *called to be saints*. Paul was called to be an apostle, which necessitated a special, direct, supernatural call from Christ:
 - 1) Acts 9:1-6: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."
 - 2) Acts 22:6-16: "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen
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- thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
- g. An alien sinner must receive a *call* before he can be delivered from the guilt of his past sins; that call is issued through the gospel.
- 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 3) John 6:44-45: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”
 - 4) Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:9: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
- h. The penitent, believing alien is called-on to obey the gospel. There is nothing miraculous about this call.
- 1) Saints are those who have been sanctified (set apart for holy purposes, separated from the sinful world). Some have a faulty understanding of saints, perceiving that one becomes a saint only after having lived an exceptional life, has died, and at some later time is *beatified* by their earthly judges. But every genuine Christian is a saint!
 - 2) These Christians in Corinth are called *saints*, as are those who comprised the church at Philippi: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: (Phil. 1:1). The terms saints, disciples, Christians, and brethren are used interchangeably in the Scriptures.
- i. Included in the salutation are *all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ their Lord and ours*. This includes all other Christians in every place and time. To call on the Lord's name is to invoke his help. The phrase, "call on the name of the Lord," is used in the Scriptures as an equivalent to "obey the gospel." This statement is misunderstood by the average religionist. The usual interpretation forced on the verse has Paul saying that if an alien wants to be saved, all he must do is call out to Christ, and ask him for salvation. But to call upon the name of the Lord and to pray are two different things. The Bible does not say "call" but to "call upon." That he does not mean aliens may pray for salvation is seen in other passages.
- 1) God will not hear the prayer of a sinner.
 - a) John 9:31: “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.”
 - b) Psalms 66:18: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”
 - c) Proverbs 28:9: “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”
 - 2) In the case of Cornelius, the Lord did not save that man by prayer; rather he was instructed to send for Peter who would tell him "words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14). The words Peter delivered to Cornelius were the words of the gospel, which led those Gentiles to be baptized (Acts 10:47-48).
 - 3) By merely calling out to the Lord, nothing is gained. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). When one cries out to the Lord for salvation, by means of prayer, he has no reason
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to expect to be saved thereby. As Christ said, those who are acceptable to him are those who obey the will of God (i.e., who obey the gospel).

- 4) The expression as given in Romans 10:13 has a universal application: "Whosoever shall call..." This included Gentiles and Jews, all races and nationalities. The gospel is for all (Rom. 1:16). In every nation, those who fear God and work righteousness are acceptable to him (Acts 10:34-35). There is no separate plan of salvation for the different nations or races (Mark 16:15-16; John 14:6; 6:44-45; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47). The offer of salvation is extended to everyone (Heb. 2:9) because all accountable persons need it (Rom. 3:23; 5:12; Isa. 56:6).
- 5) The statement gives a condition to salvation: One must call on the Lord's name to be saved. The human response to this requirement is an act of obedience. If one denies the essentiality of baptism for salvation on the basis of it being an act the individual enters into, the same argument could be directed against this calling on the Lord's name. One who denies the purpose of baptism (because it is an act of obedience), but who believes in this calling, contradicts himself.
- 6) Before one will call on the Lord's name, he must have a desire for the blessing proffered. Whosoever **will**, let him take of the water of life freely (see Rev. 22:17). To *call* and to *take the water of life* are equal, and each requires an action. What is the action? The act grows out of faith in Christ, for one cannot call on his name successfully if he does not believe in the Lord's ability to help:
 - a) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - b) John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."
 - c) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - d) John 6:68: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."
- 7) How does one call on the name of the Lord? It is not done by prayer or by merely uttering words with the lips (Prov. 28:9; Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; 1 John 3:22). God hears and answers the prayers of the obedient, not the sinful. Calling on his name is explained in Acts 2. In verse 21, Peter cites the same Old Testament passage (Joel 2:32) as did Paul in Romans 10:13. In Acts 2:22-36, the apostles showed why Jesus could be called upon and why we should make that call. They preached the gospel, their message was heard by the great audience, and was believed by many of them. They asked the apostles in verse 37 what they must do, or in other words, "How can we call on the name of the Lord?" Peter answered their query in verse 38, where he told them they must repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. They issued their call upon the name of Christ by repenting and being baptized.
 - a) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."
 - b) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - c) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - d) 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 - e) Acts 2:21: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." [Peter reveals later in the chapter how one calls on the name of the Lord].
 - f) Acts 2:36-42: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren,

what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

- 8) How to call on the Lord's name is illustrated by the conversion story of Saul of Tarsus. He spoke with Christ in a visionary scene on the way to Damascus. The discussion which ensued caused Saul to believe in Christ. He entered the city, where he fasted and prayed for three days. Ananias, the gospel preacher, came to him, and commanded that Saul cease his delay, and to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, **calling on the name of the Lord**" (Acts 22:16). Other details of his conversion are related in Acts 9 and 26. Paul made this call on the Lord's name by being baptized. "Calling on the name of the Lord" is an Old Testament description of a New Testament process; what the Old Testament said in a figure of speech (Joel 2:32), the New Testament presents in plain language (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). To call on the name of the Lord is simply to believe and obey the gospel of Christ! Thus, an alien calls on the name of the Lord by believing the gospel, having faith in Christ, repenting of sins, confessing his faith in the Lord, and being baptized into Christ.
- 9) Faithful Christians are those who call on the Lord's name as they live the Christian life (Acts 9:14). Saul had "authority from the chief priests to bind all **that call on thy name**." To call on his name is to make an appeal to Christ for salvation by believing and obeying his will, sincerely doing everything the Lord requires. He saves only those who do so, whether the individual is an alien sinner or a Christian. The alien is saved from the guilt of his past sins; the Christian is delivered from this world and hell into heaven.
 - j. Thus, in the final part of the verse, Paul refers to all those who have obeyed the gospel, who continue to worship and serve God, and over whom Christ is Lord—regardless of the century or country.
3. Verse 3: "Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ."
 - a. Grace was a common Grecian greeting and *peace* was the Jewish counterpart. The two terms used together would include in the greeting all that is good, whether temporal or spiritual.
 - b. The apostle pronounces these blessings of God and Christ upon them all. Despite their internal disputes and error, he wanted the best for them.
4. Verse 4: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ."
 - a. Expressions of gratitude were always a part of Paul's inspired epistles. Since Paul and the Holy Spirit saw fit frequently to speak words of thanksgiving, such ought to characterize us. The apostle was grateful on their behalf for the grace given to them. This grace of God included all the many blessings and advantages furnished by their gracious Father, inclusive of pardon, providential assistance, certain spiritual gifts, and opportunities to serve the cause of Christ.
 - 1) Philippians 1:3-4: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy."
 - 2) Colossians 1:3-4: "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:3: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."
 - b. Despite the sinful conditions that prevailed in the congregation, there was much for which he could be thankful. The grace of God also includes his willingness to be patient with his fallible followers.

The longsuffering of God is important to everyone, whether we realize it or not.

- 1) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
- 2) 1 Peter 3:18-21: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
- 3) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
- 4) Revelation 2:21: "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."
- c. Christ is the means by which we access God's grace (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:4-5). His gospel reveals the practical steps and requirements by which we reach heaven's mercy.
 - 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 4) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 5) Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
5. Verses 5-7: "That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - a. Verse seven connects the thoughts of this passage to the spiritual gifts God gave in that early age of the church. They had been enriched in all necessary things, with two particulars being identified.
 - b. Verse five speaks of the things in which they had been enriched. Some had received the gift of "utterance," a reference to the gift of speaking the gospel in foreign tongues (Acts 2:1ff; 1 Cor. 12:10; 13:1-2). Others had been given the gift of "knowledge" (1 Cor. 12:8). This was supernatural knowledge—information provided by revelation.
 - 1) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 14:29-30: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace."

- 4) Ephesians 3:3-5: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - c. Verse six mentions the fact that the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them. When they exercised the spiritual gifts they had received, they thereby confirmed the gospel (the testimony of Christ). The primary purpose of miracles of healing, tongues, etc., was to confirm the gospel as truth (Mark 2:1-12).
 - 1) Mark 16:17-20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - d. Verse seven specifically mentions the subject of gifts, and that these brethren were not deficient in receiving spiritual gifts. One of the proofs of apostolic powers was the ability to confer spiritual gifts by laying hands on others and bestowing the gifts.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 12:12-13: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."
 - 2) Acts 8:14-17: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 19:1-6: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."
 - 4) Romans 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
 - e. The saints in Corinth were as well endowed with spiritual gifts as any other congregation. There was no reason they should feel inferior to any other church. Since Paul had planted the church there, and they had spiritual gifts, his apostolic office was thus proved.
 - 1) The second clause of verse seven pictures them as patiently waiting for the second coming of the Lord. The Bible nowhere indicates that Christ would return during the first century. Some in Thessalonica developed this misconception, and a few of them had given up their secular work (2 Thess. 3:10-13), but Paul showed them their error.
 - 2) Even Christ did not know when the second coming would be (Mark 13:32-33). He perfectly understood every jot and tittle of the Old Testament; he knew every particle of the New Testament; since he did not know when his return would be, we know that the Bible does not in any way
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identify that time! Those brethren went about their daily tasks with the realization that the Lord could come at any time, and with the knowledge they might die and enter eternity at any given moment. There was and is the continuing need for every Christian to "watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33).

6. Verses 8-9: "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - a. God is dependable; we may rely without hesitation or doubt on his faithfulness. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:10; cf. 1 Cor. 10:13).
 - b. Christ would confirm them to the end. Perhaps implied in the statement is the thought that they ought not to place their trust in the spiritual gifts. Although those were tremendous powers, yet there was no assurance that the miracle-worker would retain his salvation. Peter had received Holy Spirit baptism, yet he blundered (Gal. 2:11-15). Their trust must therefore be placed in the Redeemer, not in those temporary spiritual gifts which would soon be removed, or in some man or some human system. [See the article by Wayne Jackson at the end of this chapter for additional information about being confirmed to the end].
 - c. In order for the Lord to confirm anyone unto the end, the individual's cooperation is required. Our part is to believe and obey *unto the end* (Rev. 22:14; Matt. 7:21-23; 10:22; Rev. 2:10). Our obligation includes a continuing diligent effort to attain spiritual growth (2 Pet. 3:18; 1:5-12); regular, sincere, scriptural worship (John 4:24; Heb. 10:23-31) is part of our duty; and a steadfast, unmovable and abounding life of work in the Lord's kingdom (1 Cor. 15:58) is crucial. Paul is not talking about re-confirming the truth, but rather about confirming the faith of the saints.
 - d. This passage does not teach the sectarian doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. Truth cannot contradict itself.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 2) Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:15: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
 - 4) James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
 - 5) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - e. The "day of our Lord Jesus Christ" is a reference to the second coming of Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:28: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

- f. God is faithful to do his part in the salvation of each soul, but that individual must perform his duty; God saves us by his grace, but we appropriate the benefits of his grace by our faith and obedience.
 - 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) Romans 5:21: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 4) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - 5) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

B. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17: The Problem of Division.

1. Verse 10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - a. Paul could have bluntly commanded them to rid themselves of the party spirit, with which they were contaminated, based on the authority of his apostolic office, but he was directed by the Holy Spirit to issue the instructions to that end in the form of a tender appeal. *I beseech you* is a plea.
 - b. Although it was stated in the form of a gentle plea, it is nevertheless a direct command. Notice that his appeal emanated from the *name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that is, by the authority of Christ: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). This is the tenth time in ten verses that Paul has mentioned Christ.
 - c. The strong commanding appeal called on them (and us) to speak the same things and to have no divisions. Before there can be unity, there must be absolute adherence to the same standard by all. Think of the turmoil and confusion that would exist if we did not have absolute standards in weights, measurements, and financial matters in the economic realm!
 - 1) Because the one standard God has established in the religious and spiritual realm is not seriously followed by all, there is utter chaos. That one standard is the revelation given by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14; Phil. 1:27; 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:9-14; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).
 - 2) But men replace God's word by their own wisdom; they elevate their creeds, disciplines, and manuals to the position the Bible deserves; they will read into the Scriptures ideas that are foreign to the teachings of God; the result of any of these situations is confusion and condemnation (John 17:20-21).
 - d. The apostle forbids anything that would cause divisions among the true children of God; he requires that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment. If such were impossible, it would not have been required.
 - 1) The church in Jerusalem was thus perfectly joined together at the first, and only after sin and error entered into their midst was there division (cf. Acts 4:32; 5:1-11; cf. 6:14; Acts 15).
 - 2) In matters of opinion, the Lord does not expect or require perfect unity, but in all matters of faith and practice, that unity must prevail (Rom. 14).
 - 3) The kind of divisions that existed in the church at Corinth, can plague congregations today. Their divisions were sinful; similar divisions today are no less sinful (Rom. 16:17-18; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 3:1-3).
 - 4) Petty differences would not exist in the church if each saint had the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:1-12). If we all loved God supremely, and loved each other as we love ourselves (Mark 12:29-31; Matt. 7:12), there would be no cause for division, and the solution of every problem would be at hand!
 - a) Proverbs 13:10: "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom."

- b) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
- e. To be of the same mind is possible only if we acknowledge and follow the New Testament. If we set our minds on serving God with the fullness of our beings, and on putting the other person before ourselves, we will be united.
- 1) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - 2) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - 3) Romans 15:5: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
 - 5) Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
 - 6) 1 Peter 3:8: "Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous."
- f. The difference between being of the same mind and being of the same judgment may be the difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion.
- 1) The old restoration adage holds true today: "In all matters of faith, we will be united; in all matters of opinion, we will allow liberty; but in all things, we will show genuine love."
 - 2) If we add to God's word, or take something away from it, or otherwise pervert it, we cause division. The seriousness of such divisions is seen in Romans 16:17-18, where we are told to mark and withdraw from those who teach error: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." We must speak and do according to the directions of the Bible. [The following three passages are cited from the ASV]:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
 - b) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
 - c) 2 John 9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 3) If we bind our opinion on others as a matter of faith, we bind where the Lord did not bind, and thus force a division. We must not forbid what the Lord permits; we must not bind what the Lord does not require; we must follow what the Lord bound.
2. Verse 11: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."
- a. Paul had learned through information furnished him by the household of Chloe that contentions had arisen among the saints at Corinth. *Chloe* is a feminine name. She was likely a respected member of the Lord's church at Corinth; in some way, she had communicated the information to Paul.
 - b. Was it proper for Paul to use such information as the basis of the charge against the brethren? Certainly! Why? For one reason, his understanding of the problem was aided by his apostolic powers, one of which being the "discerning of spirits" (1 Cor. 12:10). He would not write an inspired epistle, which would be read and known by millions of people from that time to the end of time, which relied
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- only on an unsupported rumor as its basis. Paul knew their problem was real.
- c. The information could have been, and doubtless was, passed on to Paul for the good of the church and of those individuals who were involved in these contentions. The strong statements of rebuke which the apostle is shortly to write were not intended to harm the guilty; rather he was intending the reproof to be of help to them (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-5).
 - d. Stoy Pate, a great gospel preacher of the preceding generation, reportedly solved a *gossiping* and *bickering* problem by writing down the statements people made in his presence, and reading them publicly.
3. Verse 12: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."
- a. The apostle addresses the problem directly. Many of the members had aligned themselves after their favorite preacher. Those who loved and respected Paul, had in effect called themselves *Paulites*; others exalted Apollos in the same fashion, and others did the same with Peter; then there were still others who asserted their devotion to Christ.
 - b. To select an admired and powerful man to follow is extremely dangerous, to say the least. When one does so, he is depending on someone to guide him who needs guidance himself!
 - 1) Matthew 15:13-14: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:12: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."
 - c. When a party within a congregation exalts their favorite person as their leader, they drive a wedge between themselves and the rest of the local church. We cannot follow the Lord unless we actually obey the will of the Lord; following the Lord is done by obeying his will.
 - 1) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - 2) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
4. Verse 13: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
- a. The apostle here asks three rhetorical questions. The obvious answer to each of these is in the negative. Christ cannot be divided, and distributed piecemeal to different people. The body of Christ cannot be splintered into warring camps, with each *regiment* on equal and favorable standing with him! Christ cannot be split into parts, his body cannot be splintered, and he cannot be separated from his body (the church).
 - b. Paul was not crucified for the Corinthians. Even if he had been thus slain, he would have been unable to deliver any spiritual blessings. Christ was the only one in all of the universe, seen and unseen, that was equipped and prepared and able to die for the sins of man! He is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16; Isa. 53); he is the only accountable person ever to live on earth without sin (Rom. 3:23).
 - 1) John 8:46: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"
 - 2) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:21-22: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
 - c. They were not baptized into the name of Paul, but into the name of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 10:48; Col. 3:17; Acts 4:12; 18:8). New Testament baptism (the one baptism, Eph. 4:4-5) is the baptism which Christ commanded; no other baptism has any applicability today.
 - 1) The baptism of John passed away when the baptism of Christ [the baptism of the Great Commission] took effect.
 - 2) The baptism of the Holy Spirit ceased with the anointing of the last apostle (John 14:26; Luke
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- 24:49; Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4; cf. 2 Cor. 12:12-13). The miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the house of Cornelius was not identical with what the apostles received in Acts 2; if the two cases were the same, then Cornelius (and others present there) would be equal with the apostles in power and authority.
- 3) The baptism of suffering (Matt. 20:28) was figurative, and not real; the same is true with the baptism of Moses in the cloud and sea (1 Cor. 10:1-11).
 - 4) The baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11-12) is a figurative description of the punishment of hell, and is not presently known on earth.
 - 5) The baptism of the New Testament is intended for every accountable person of every generation, from the beginning of the Lord's church (Acts 2, A.D. 33) until the end of time; it can be accomplished only by the authority of Christ, which excludes the possibility of being rendered in the name of some mere man.
- d. These three questions exposed the error of their divisions. If they could grasp the truths expressed in them, they would be able to see the sinfulness and foolishness of their sectarian spirit.
 - e. Notice the connection in the verse between the suffering of Christ and our baptism into Christ. His death made it possible for our pardon; baptism is the act culminating in the reception of that pardon.
5. Verses 14-16: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other."
- a. The person who baptizes people has no power over those he baptizes, except in the operation itself. Those who were immersed by the apostle Peter had no greater blessing than one who was immersed by some lowly saint.
 - b. There are those who want to attach special significance to the one doing the baptizing or the place of the baptism. Some who reject the connection between baptism and remission of sins will travel to Palestine and be immersed in the Jordan River. Why? They may have undergone some procedure which their sectarian group calls baptism, but they deny baptism has anything to do with salvation. Why are they immersed in Jordan? Some no doubt do so for show; others do it as a source of boasting. In either case, the purpose is wrong, even if the right action is followed.
 - c. Some of the Corinthians had made the common, but serious, mistake of thinking that certain men, especially those who baptized them, ought to be followed. Apollos was a great man, but those he immersed were in no better spiritual standing with the Lord than those baptized by someone of lesser renown. There was no mark of prominence that pertained to those immersed by famous and great men.
 - d. Paul was happy that he had personally baptized only a few of the Corinthians; if he had baptized more, then perhaps there would have been a greater number who would try to set Paul up as their *lord*, and perhaps some would have accused him of baptizing in his own name.
 - e. He mentions Crispus and Gaius in verse fourteen and the household of Stephanas in verse sixteen as having been baptized at his hands (Rom. 16:23; Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 16:15). He could not remember whether he had baptized anyone else in Corinth. Since he was writing by inspiration, why could he not know exactly those he had immersed? Obviously, because such information was unimportant and unnecessary to the epistle. If it had been necessary that such information be listed, every person he had personally baptized could have been called by name. The Holy Spirit guided the inspired men into all truth that pertained to salvation; it was never intended that trivial information should be part of revelation.
6. Verse 17: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."
- a. Christ sent Paul not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. This is an ellipsis, such as is found in John 12:44: "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." The word only is implied in both of these statements. Christ was not denying in the second part of the verse, what he affirmed in the first part; rather, he is saying that one who believes in him, believes not in him only, but also believes in the Father who sent him. Paul is saying that Christ sent him, not to baptize only, but to preach the gospel.
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- 1) John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." [The Lord is not saying that one should not eat meat; he is teaching the need to be more interested in spiritual matters].
 - 2) John 12:44: "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." The word *only* is understood in the verse, or else there would be a direct contradiction in the statement.
 - 3) 1 Timothy 5:23: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." [Paul is not saying that Timothy is not to drink any water, but to use a little wine for medicinal purposes].
- b. Paul's primary mission was to preach the gospel; only inspired men could preach the gospel at the first, since there was no written New Testament at the time. While it was essential to have an inspired man to preach (to reveal and confirm) the truth, anyone could perform the task of physically immersing those who accepted the message.
- 1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 2) Acts 26:18-20: "To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
- c. Thus, as Paul went forth preaching, he usually had with him younger helpers, who could do the baptizing. At Corinth, the apostle immersed only a handful of the many who were baptized (Acts 18:8). With him in the work were Aquila, Silas, and Timothy (Acts 18:2,5). Jesus converted many people to his cause by preaching; it could be said that he baptized each of them, but personally he did no baptizing: "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples)" (John 4:12).
- d. Paul could not have preached Christ without preaching baptism, including information concerning the action, the subjects, and the purposes of baptism.
- 1) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Acts 2:36-38: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Acts 8:5,12: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them....But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
 - 5) Acts 8:35,38-39: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus....And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."
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- e. Christ sent him to preach the gospel, with the aim of converting as many as possible; and every one of these lost souls were to be baptized—for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).
- 1) He did not preach with the wisdom of men, for man in his limited understanding could see no connection between baptism and salvation; neither could they appreciate the power of the cross (verse 18).
 - 2) In order to convert the lost and bring them into salvation, Paul had to preach the gospel; no other message could bring salvation; there was no other Savior but Christ.
 - 3) Paul does not deny the essentiality of baptism, as sectarian preachers assert. The truth is, the physical act of baptizing could be done by almost anyone, but only those with the information readily at hand could preach the gospel then. And only those who know it can preach it today.
 - 4) Christ did not send him primarily or solely to immerse people; he did send the apostle to present the truth to the lost so that they could have the opportunity to respond to the gospel. Far more are instructed in the gospel than obey the gospel. Paul's job was to impart the necessary information; he and others *watered* the implanted seed; but it was God who provided the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Therefore, those who are converted to Christ have God and Christ as the primary causes of their salvation; the preacher was merely a tool to that end. The Corinthian divisions addressed are exposed as foolish, and based on ignorance of the facts.
- f. Paul did not preach the gospel by using “wisdom of words.”
- 1) The apostle did not come to them with the winning ways of man’s wisdom. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).
 - 2) The Greek philosophers and orators thought highly of oratory and sly arguments. Paul’s speech-making was greatly disparaged by those who had been influenced by Greek thought and practice: "For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10). “The great apostle renounced the pretentious rhetorical flourishes so dear to the Greek intellectuals, deliberately rejecting the complicated elocutionary devices which were the stock in trade of the philosophers. The Greek word *sophist* (wise man) had fallen from its glory, and in Paul’s day had come to denote a nimble tongue and an empty brain. Dio Chrysostom described the Greek wise men thus: ‘They croak like frogs in a marsh; they are the most wretched of men, because, though ignorant, they think themselves wise; they are like peacocks, showing off their reputation and the number of their pupils as peacocks do their tails’” (Coffman, p.17).
 - 3) If he had preached with the enticing words of man’s slick speech-making, the result would be the nullification of the cross. To be “made of none effect” is defined by Thayer to mean, “to make void, i.e., deprive of force, render vain, useless, of no effect: passive, Rom 4:14; 1 Cor 1:17” [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft]. If the cross of Christ is made void, the gospel of Christ is nullified. Of course, no one can destroy the cross or the gospel; but the perverted message which a false teacher alleges is the gospel is utterly devoid of any power to save—in that sense the cross is made void, for such a message does not preach the truth and is useless to the soul.
 - 4) In this point is found a powerful lesson for the weak preaching of many modern preachers. Perceiving that the pure gospel is unpopular with liberal audiences, and coveting great numbers and popularity, they proclaim an entertaining message that leaves the hearers ignorant of the truth. Such preaching deprives the cross of its power, and renders the gospel useless—their message is not the gospel and does not proclaim the cross of Christ, hence, the message has no power to save.

C. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31: The Problem of Human Wisdom.

1. Verse 18: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved
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it is the power of God."

- a. Humanity can be divided into three camps: those who are saved, those who are lost, and those who are not accountable for their actions (those who are incapable of knowing right and wrong). Those who are lost (in the process of perishing) consider the preaching of the gospel as foolishness; those who are saved recognize it as God's power to save (Rom. 1:16-17).
- b. The preaching of the cross and the preaching of the gospel are identical; the central truths of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is impossible to preach the gospel without including these fundamental verities. The gospel also includes commands, promises, and warnings.
- c. Modernists reject the reality of the resurrection of Christ, making his death and burial meaningless. To them, the preaching of the Lord's sacrificial death is foolishness.
 - 1) One prominent modern denomination banned "The Old Rugged Cross" from their hymn books for 42 years! Modernism is entrenched in the sophisticated sectarian churches of our time.
 - 2) Modernists scoff at the idea that Christ died and shed his blood for anyone's salvation. They have been known to bristle at the suggestion that God would require the death of anyone for the salvation of others.
- d. God demonstrated his power in the facts of the cross.
 - 1) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."
 - 2) John 3:14-16: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 3) John 8:28: "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 13:4: "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you."
- e. Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, together with his life, his teachings, and the spread of his word following his ascension back to heaven, fulfilled the divine plan which had required centuries of preparation.
 - 1) The very fact that Christ was crucified demonstrates God's power. The Jews tried to kill him on other occasions, but were unable. The Jewish method of execution was by stoning; the Roman method was crucifixion. God had to guide and time events so that the Romans would put Christ to death, thus fulfilling the method predicted for his execution:
 - a) Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance."
 - b) Matthew 16:21: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."
 - c) Matthew 20:17-19: "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again."
 - d) John 3:14-16: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - e) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said,

- signifying what death he should die."
- f) Galatians 3:13-14: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."
 - 2) The fact that Christ was buried following his death suggests God's power. Usually, the bodies of those who were crucified were allowed to remain on the crosses until they had disintegrated; but his body was buried.
 - 3) And certainly his resurrection resulted from a direct act on the part of God, performing a feat that is utterly awesome!
 - f. God demonstrates his power in the cross each time an alien sinner obeys the gospel and is saved; and in each case of an erring Christian turning back to the Lord in penitent prayer (Acts 8:22; Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9).
 - g. God's plan for redeeming fallen man was unrevealed from the dawn of human history until the publication of the gospel. It was impossible for any man to know the plan until God revealed it: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:9-14).
 - 1) His plan was completely different from any scheme a man might have devised: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). Human wisdom could not and would not have developed the gospel plan of salvation! Human wisdom is unable to see how the sacrificial death of Christ could atone for the sins of mankind. But human wisdom could not conceive of a global flood (Gen. 6-9), or how the walls of Jericho could be demolished by the method God devised (Josh. 6).
 - 2) Only those who have humble minds, which are capable of being taught and molded to become like Christ, will appreciate and glory in the gospel. All others will consider the facts of the gospel, along with the commands, promises, and warnings, as foolish (Matt. 13:10-17; Isa. 19:13-14; Acts 17:30-32).
 2. Verses 19-21: "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
 - a. The wisdom of the unbelieving *wise men* of earth is to be destroyed. The gospel has little or no appeal to worldly-minded and proud-hearted men. It requires us to be humble and to place emphasis on spiritual qualities and aspirations, which most are unwilling to do (Col. 3:1ff).
 - 1) Matthew 11:25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."
 - 2) Luke 10:21: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."
 - b. Living only by man's wisdom will lead us into spiritual, moral, political, and physical ruin. The underlying principle of God's revelation is that we must live by his standards.
 - 1) In all those cases of history of which we have knowledge, those individuals and societies which

operated by their own wisdom, and did not follow God's precepts, fell into horrible straits. The poverty of Greek philosophy is seen by the ruins they left behind.

- a) Genesis 6:5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually."
 - b) Judges 21:25: "In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes."
 - c) Romans 1:18-32: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."
- 2) Our nation, and the Western World of capitalism in general, is headed down the same dismal path. We have perverted our constitution to deny God his rightful place in our nation's schools; our schools are teaching our young people that God did not create the universe, that the Bible is not his Word, that the morality of the gospel is outdated, and that you must set your own standards of right and wrong.
 - 3) Man's wisdom, therefore, denies the very essentials of the Bible. It takes man further away from God and deeper into decadence. Instead of enlightening us and improving our circumstances here, it does the very opposite, in the long run.
 - 4) Man's wisdom replaced God's wisdom in ancient Assyria, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome; look at their fate! Man's wisdom has replaced God's wisdom in modern America, and look what we have: utter confusion in the religious world; a society that is crime-ridden; a school system that promotes immorality; a legal system that pampers criminals and encourages crime; a government that promotes abortion, and which is apt to support euthanasia in the near future.
 - 5) Is it any wonder that God will destroy human wisdom? That is what God promised to do to the worldly wisdom during the Old Testament era.
 - a) Isaiah 29:14: "Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid."
 - b) Jeremiah 8:9: "The wise *men* are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom *is* in them?"
 - 6) Human history and the Bible clearly show the evil end of following our own wisdom and not God's. Great learning can be of great help to man, but if it is exalted above God's wisdom or if it contradicts God's wisdom, it will do more harm than good.
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- c. In the final analysis, man's wisdom amounts to nothing and will come to no good. Where are the Stoics and Epicureans of Athens? (Acts 17). Where are the scribes and Sadducees? Where are those others who disputed with God? (Acts 13:44-46). The wisdom of the ancient heathen nations did not preserve them through the ages.
- 1) The Babylonians who boasted of great learning were gone; the Greeks who exalted themselves as the greatest in wisdom had been conquered by the Romans, and were in a state of decline. The ruins of old civilizations were abundant even in Paul's time, and stood as proof of the proposition he is affirming.
 - 2) The theory of evolution, which claims to be built on scientific evidence, is not only a denial of scientific facts, it denies common sense and the Bible. Where will this foolish fancy lead? [See the author's material on Evolution in *Special Studies I*].
 - 3) As God has demonstrated the foolishness of human wisdom by overthrowing ancient empires and societies, so will he destroy those of our modern unbelievers. The generations of men come and go, but God's word remains unchanged; the heavens and the earth will one day be destroyed, but God's word will endure this final day (2 Pet. 3:8-10; Matt. 24:35; John 12:48).
- d. This is only a brief reference to the subject which the apostle dealt with at length in Romans 1:18-32. The world in general followed its own wisdom, and thus did not know God. For a long time following the creation, all men knew God, but they fell into apostasy. For a long time after the flood, all men knew God, but again fell away. As time continued, they went deeper and deeper into debaucheries.
- 1) Despite the claims, worldly wisdom cannot lead one to God; it leads away from God, from godliness, from prosperity, from health, and from heaven.
 - 2) God, in his wisdom, saw fit to devise a plan to redeem fallen man from his folly by preaching. It is not, of course, the *mechanical* procedure of preaching that saves; rather, it is by means of the message of truth that is presented. Preaching saves but only if the gospel is preached; the gospel saves only if it is believed; faith saves only if it does what is commanded (Rom. 1:16-17; James 2:17-26).
 - 3) Preaching was seen as foolish by unbelievers in Paul's day; it is seen as foolish by unbelievers of our day. Preachers are ridiculed and rejected, including those Christians who only preach (teach) privately.
 - 4) But preaching the gospel leads to salvation for those who will listen and learn and believe. One who exalts himself above God's word places himself beyond God's power to save him.
3. Verses 22-23: "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness."
- a. There were those among the Jews and among the Greeks (Gentiles) who considered the gospel to be beneath their dignity. The majority of both of these two great divisions of humanity had problems accepting the simple truths of the gospel.
 - b. The Jews were more interested in outward demonstrations than they were in inward convictions. They sought after signs; they were dissatisfied with a simple presentation of the facts which would lead to proving the gospel; they wanted miraculous demonstrations to convince them; they were not satisfied with just one miracle (cf. Matt. 12:38). The Greeks, accustomed to argumentation and discussion, were more interested in the philosophical exchange than in the truth (Acts 17:16-34; 1 Tim. 1:6; 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:23).
- 1) Without miraculous signs, the gospel could not have been introduced to the world; it could not have been confirmed (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4); it could not have been received and recorded unerringly. Miracles had their place in the first century, but they soon gave place to "that which is perfect" (1 Cor. 13:10; Jas. 1:25; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 16:13).
 - 2) Without intellectual investigation and discussion, the truth cannot be learned. But God's truth does not depend on meeting human standards to be truth. Grecian philosophers sought to find the best manner of life by using their human reasoning. The gospel cannot be learned apart from God's written revelation (1 Cor. 2:9-14). We must use our minds to come to understand that revelation (Cf. Isa. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14; Eph. 3:1-11; 2 Pet. 1:1-12; 3:18).
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- c. With the statement of verse 22 in mind, Paul says that he preached the crucified Christ; to the majority of the Jews, his preaching was a stumblingblock, and to the majority of the Greeks it was foolishness. Human wisdom causes many to reject the gospel (1 Cor. 1:21).
- 1) If one sign did not convince a man of the truth, neither two more signs nor two hundred more signs would do so! (Matt. 12:1-45; Luke 16:27-31; Rom. 10:17). The Jews had developed a faulty mental conception of the Messiah. The idea that the Messiah would be crucified was completely foreign to their notions. When Jesus did not measure up to their expectations, they rejected him (Isa. 52:2-3; John 1:11). They did not examine his claims, his teachings, his works and his life in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures. And they ignored the confirming power of his miracles.
 - 2) We cannot imagine, given our background and experience, the awful sinful conduct that was acceptable to the people of Athens and other such pagan cities. Suicide, infanticide, fornication, idolatry, homosexuality, political persecution, etc., were common. Biblical morality was the exception. No wonder Paul was so stirred over what he saw in Athens (Acts 17:16)! It was no exaggeration that Athens was wholly given to idolatry. "Pretonius satirically said it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens; Zenophon calls the city one great altar, one great offering to the gods" (Boles, H. Leo, *Commentary on Acts*, p.276).
 - 3) Two of the influential philosophies in Athens were the Stoics and Epicureans. The Stoics viewed God as pantheistic and carnal; the Epicureans saw God as imaginary; but Paul set him forth as a real being who cared for his offspring. Instead of man trying to tend to God's needs, man is totally dependent upon God for even his breath and life. See Paul's sermon on Mars Hill in Acts 17.
 - 4) The Epicureans were named after Epicurus (342-270 B.C.) who founded this system. "In their view, the world was formed by an accidental concourse of atoms, and was not in any sense created, or even modified, by the Divinity. They did indeed profess a certain belief in what were called gods; but these equivocal divinities were merely phantoms,—impressions on the popular mind,—dreams, which had no objective reality, or at least exercised no active influence on the physical world, or the business of life....The essential principle of the Epicurean philosopher was that there was nothing to alarm him, nothing to disturb him. His furthest reach was to do deliberately what the animals do instinctively. His highest aim was to gratify himself. With the coarser and more energetic minds, this principle inevitably led to the grossest sensuality and crime; in the case of others, whose temperament was more commonplace, or whose taste was more pure, the system took the form of a selfishness more refined" (Coneybear and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p.285).
 - 5) The Stoics took their name from the place where their founder, Zeno, taught: *stoa*, a painted porch. "Zeno taught that God was the soul of the world, or the world was God; that everything was governed by fate, to which God himself was subject; they denied the immortality of the soul. The Stoic philosophers taught that virtue was its own reward, and vice its own punishment; that pleasure was no good, and pain no evil" (Boles, p.277). "The Stoics were Pantheists....Matter was inseparable from the Deity....The soul was, in fact, corporeal. The Stoics said that at death it would be burnt, or return to be absorbed in God. Thus, a resurrection from the dead, in the sense in which the Gospel has revealed it, must have appeared to the Stoics irrational....The proud ideal which was set before the disciple of Zeno was, a magnanimous self-denial, an austere apathy, untouched by human passion, unmoved by change of circumstance....Nothing could be more contrary to the spirit of Christianity....Christianity is the School of Humility; Stoicism was the Education of Pride. Christianity is a discipline of life: Stoicism was nothing better than an apprenticeship for death" (*The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p.284).
 - 6) The philosophies of these two groups were at odds with the basic tenets of the gospel. Neither of the two systems saw any need of a Savior and the resurrection did not fit their views. The Stoic was indifferent to the circumstances of life, and the Epicurean did not want his selfish desires restrained. The Jew was perfectly content with his version of the Mosaic Law, and believed it would be around for eternity.
4. Verse 24: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."
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- a. In contrast to the many who rejected the gospel message, those who were called saw Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God.
 - b. If Paul had had the opportunity to talk with a nuclear scientist, he would have discussed the gospel with him unashamedly; every accountable person has need of the gospel, including those who are highly educated and intelligent. Although many of the *wise ones* of our day reject the gospel, even scoffing at the atoning blood of Christ, it remains the production of God and will endure the ages.
 - 1) Christ is the power and wisdom of God, not because we believe it so to be, but because it is so! Whether anyone accepts this truth is immaterial to the proposition; the proposition is still true! If everyone on earth believed the earth was flat, it would still be round.
 - 2) God reveals his wisdom and expresses his power to save through Christ. No one can approach God except through Christ (John 14:6); there is only one mediator between man and God (Christ: 1 Tim. 2:4); there is no other name under heaven by which we may be saved (Acts 4:12).
 - 3) God speaks to mankind by his Son (Heb. 1:1-2); his Son communicates God's will to us through the inspired gospel (Rom. 1:16). Everyone who is saved, whether Jew or Greek, accepts the truth that Christ is the expression of God's power and wisdom.
5. Verse 25: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."
- a. Human wisdom sees God's wisdom as foolishness, and expressions of his strength as weaknesses. The unbelieving Jews demanded another sign from Jesus, although they had seen many miracles (Matt. 12:10-15, 22-30, 38-45). The only sign he promised them was the sign of Jonah the prophet, an allusion to the three days and nights his body would be in the grave.
 - 1) Those Jews who witnessed the Lord's crucifixion, failed to appreciate this greatest of all signs: the death and resurrection of Christ. Without the resurrection, his death would have been meaningless. The Greeks, who loved wisdom, failed to see the marvelous wisdom of God demonstrated in Christ.
 - 2) The death of Christ on the cross appeared to demonstrate weakness on God's part; but that *weakness* was stronger than the strength of all mankind! And what the Greeks considered to be foolishness, was wiser than all the wisdom of mankind.
 - b. Only when a man will duly consider all the facts in the great plan of God, will he be able to appreciate the marvelous power and wisdom the plan incorporated.
 - c. In man's wisdom, the plan to capture Jericho, the crossing of the Red Sea, the battle plan by which Gideon was to rout the Midianites, and scores of other cases, all appeared weak and foolish—but the outcome exceeded all human expectations!
6. Verse 26-29: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."
- a. The gospel plan of salvation appeals, not to the high and mighty, but to those of a humble frame of mind. The nature of God's redemptive plan is such that humble, loving service is the only kind of response that avails.
 - 1) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
 - 2) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 3) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 4) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no
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- respector of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
- 5) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
- b. Not many of those who are wise, mighty, or noble by the world's standards are called. More to the point: all are called by the gospel who hear the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14), but not all will render the favorable response.
- 1) Many are called, but few are chosen. It is the will of God that all men respond and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:5; Mark 16:15-16). But only a relative few will believe and obey the gospel (Rom. 10:13-18; Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 13:24).
 - 2) The verse does not teach that none who occupy positions of greatness in the world obey the gospel. There are some who do, such as Sergius Paulus (Acts 13).
- c. The plan God devised by which to save mankind includes certain features that man considers to be foolish. This has been a common practice on his part.
- 1) He saved Israel from the bites of poisonous serpents by having Moses construct a brazen serpent and erect it on a pole (Num. 21:8); he furnished water to Israel by having the prophet speak to a rock (Num. 20:7-8); he caused the walls of Jericho to fall down by having Israel march around it thirteen times and raise up a shout (Josh. 6); he furnished Samson with tremendous strength by having him observe the Nazaritic vow (Judg. 13-16); he gave Gideon victory over the Midianite army by a unique stratagem (Judg. 6-7); he cleansed Naaman's leprosy by having him dip seven times in Jordan (2 Kings 5).
 - 2) The careful Bible student is not surprised, therefore, to see God using a plan that would appear foolish to human wisdom. But God's plans are to convince man that he must depend on the Lord for his salvation and help; that he cannot save himself; that he must humbly submit to heaven's will.
 - 3) If man were to be given a mere list of items to do, he might get the idea that he saves himself; God wants to change man's heart to be like Christ's (Phil. 2:5; 2 Cor. 3:18). A fundamental change in man's whole outlook must be effected. The gospel plan is perfectly designed to do that.
 - a) Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - c) James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
- d. Stating again the principle of verse twenty-seven, Paul affirms that God chose certain things which seem base (insignificant; of no account; despised) in the eyes of the world, to be part of his system. He used things, situations, and people who were despised by the world, to accomplish great things.
- 1) "God depended upon a dead Christ to call them to repentance, to establish the reign and authority of God, overturn the mighty works of man that had been built up in the world in rebellion against God" (Lipscomb, pp.35f).
 - 2) In fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel two, God used his kingdom (the church of Christ) as the means of overthrowing the mighty Roman Empire. The principles of the kingdom attacked the roots of that pagan kingdom, and eventually brought it to its knees. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
- e. Men have no right to glory in their own accomplishments or wisdom (2 Peter 3:10; Heb. 9:27; James 4:14-15). A man's life is only for a moment in comparison to eternity; his works are insignificant in contrast to what God is able to do.
- 1) God labored through the centuries to show man that he must learn to trust the Almighty, instead of himself. Man is prone to go to extremes. Some think they can save themselves; others want to place every particle of responsibility on God and refuse to do anything for themselves.
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- 2) "How incredible it is that a man, a creature of flesh and blood, created of the dust and to the dust certain to return, whose glory at its zenith is only for a moment, whose days are spent in frustration, whose tears flow incessantly, whose very righteousness is filthy rags—how unbelievable is it that such a creature as man should glory before God! Such is the wretched state of Adam's race that only God can give salvation and even God could do so only at the extravagant cost of the blood shed on Calvary" (Coffman, p.21).
 - 3) The gospel plan of salvation is so arranged that no man can give himself the praise for his own salvation. Serving God under Christ gives no man the right to boast; but each is able to see that he ought to give God the glory and render to Christ loving service in view of their gracious blessings.
 - 4) "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).
 - 5) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
7. Verse 30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."
- a. One of the problems among the saints in Corinth was the tendency to boast over certain advantages, perceived or real. This disposition is indicated in verse twelve of this chapter. See also 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.
 - b. All good and necessary blessings come from God (Jas. 1:17). There is nothing that we can say is altogether ours. We may build a house, without the aid of another person; but God provided the material. We may live without paying God a moment's thought, but it is he who gave us life, a body, food, water, air, etc. If God should suddenly withdraw every single one of his blessings, all earthly life would suddenly and violently end! God deserves all the glory for all of our material circumstances and necessities.
 - c. God devised the plan to save man; he sent Christ to execute the plan; he dispatched the Holy Spirit to reveal that plan to us (John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:9-14). Remove Christ from the divine plan and there would be no plan and thus no salvation. In Christ, all spiritual blessings are offered (Eph. 1:3). The greatness of Christ cannot be overstated.
 - 1) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 2) John 1:14.17: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth....For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
 - 3) John 3:14-16: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 4) Hebrews 1:1-8: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - d. Because we are in Christ, there are certain advantages and blessings given to us. Paul lists four of these in this verse.
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- 1) Christ expresses the wisdom of God. Each command, each teaching, each precept, each warning reveals God's wisdom. The Beatitudes are expressions of God's wisdom; the teachings about repentance are gems of wisdom; whatever the Lord inculcated in his word is the wisdom of God. In Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). If we are impressed with this truth, we will be more apt to study the Bible with great fervency and dedication.
 - 2) Christ expresses the righteousness of God. The sacrificial death of Christ made it possible for God to look with favor upon fallen man. God laid upon him the guilt of us all (Isa. 53). But that does not mean that salvation is unconditionally given to everyone. There are conditions which we must meet individually. The condition is faith which expresses itself in obeying the Lord's commands (Jas. 2:17-26; Gal. 5:6; Acts 10:34-35; Matt. 7:21-23). The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17); the Jews refused to submit to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3) and remained in an unsaved state. The state of righteousness pertains to those who do the will of God (Matt. 3:15-17; Ps. 119:172; 1 John 3:7; Acts 10:34-35). But without the faithfulness of Christ, which culminated in his sacrificial death and resurrection, we would have no means of becoming righteous.
 - 3) Christ expresses the sanctification of God. He lived a sanctified life (a life that was wholly dedicated to the cause of God). Because of his faithfulness to his mission, it is possible for us to be sanctified (to be set apart for God's holy purposes).
 - a) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - b) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 4) Christ expresses the redemption of God. God wants to save everyone; in Christ salvation is available to all who desire it (Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 1:7; Matt. 26:28). To redeem is to buy back; Christ paid the ransom for our souls, thus purchasing our redemption.
 - a) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - b) Revelation 1:5-6: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
8. Verse 31: "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
- a. The point of emphasis of this part of the chapter is stated again: Man has no reason to glory in his own achievements; he has every reason to glory in God.
 - b. "Thus said the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jer. 9:23-24).
 - c. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).
 - d. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
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1 Corinthians 1:8 - Confirmed unto the End

by Wayne Jackson

The power to perform miracles was a gift present in the first century church of Christ. How long was this miraculous phenomenon to abide? Some suggest until the very end of the Christian age. One of the passages used in attempting to establish this idea is 1 Corinthians 1:8 where Paul, addressing the saints in Corinth, declared that God “shall confirm you unto the end, that you may be unreprouvable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here is the argument some make. Miracles were designed to confirm (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3,4), and since the confirmation was to continue to “the end” (1 Corinthians 1:8), it is obvious that miracles were continue to the end, i.e., until the coming of Christ.

The argument is flawed in several particulars.

1. The purpose of miracles was to confirm the truth of the gospel (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3,4) - not people *per se*; yet this passage speaks of confirming Christians. Obviously the confirmation here suggested is not the same as in these other contexts.

2. The passage no more asserts that miracles will continue to the end of time than it argues the Corinthians themselves would continue to live unto the end of time.

3. The term “end” (*telos*) can mean “to the uttermost” (cf. John 13:1), and so may not have reference in this context to time as such.

4. Later in this same book Paul contends that supernatural gifts will continue only until “the perfect thing,” i.e., the completion of New Testament revelation, comes (1 Corinthians 13:8ff). The apostle does not contradict himself in 1 Corinthian 1:8 and 13:8ff.

So, underline the pronoun “you” in this verse and marginally note: *Personal confirmation; not truth confirmation as in Mark 16:20*. Then, underscore “end” and note: *Completely - not a time reference. See 1 Corinthians 13:8ff*.

1 CORINTHIANS 2

A. 1 Corinthians 2:1-8: Paul Preached the Gospel Without Using Man's Wisdom.

1. The material of the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians is closely connected. Paul placed particular emphasis in chapter one on God's wisdom versus man's wisdom. In this chapter, he will show that he preached the gospel in Corinth in a manner that ran counter to the dictates of human reasoning, and in the second part he shows the real source of the gospel. Chapter three shows, among other things, that God is the source of all genuine conversions.
2. Verse 1: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God."
 - a. Paul was a highly educated man, having studied at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3); it is more than probable that he studied in his home town of Tarsus, which Strabo exalted above the more famous centers of learning, Athens and Alexandria (Coffman, p.27). Even Festus, the Roman governor of Palestine, acknowledged Paul had *much learning* (Acts 26:24).
 - b. But the apostle knew better than to preach human wisdom. He could not preach both and do a creditable job presenting either; to preach information provided by his secular education would have compromised the gospel; if he had preached what he learned from Gamaliel, he would have violated his Christ-given mission (1 Cor. 9:16; Gal. 1:6-12; Acts 26:1-19). Many of our highly-educated preachers today would do well to learn this basic gospel truth! Some are more capable and willing to quote from faulty philosophers than from the inspired word of God. Paul knew the writings of men (Acts 17:28; Tit. 1:12), but he cited them only to illustrate a greater point.
 - c. God does not speak and act after the manner of men. God's wisdom is superior to, and different from, human wisdom (Josh. 6; 2 Kings 5). Conceited and ignorant men think God's wisdom is foolishness. Many of them have considered the sacrificial death of Christ to have been foolish, but in God's infinite wisdom, he knew it was essential that his Son should die.
 - 1) Many thought that David was foolish in proposing a fight with Goliath, while armed with only a sling. "Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands" (1 Sam. 17:45-47).
 - 2) Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - 3) Luke 24:44-47: "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - 4) John 3:14-17: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
 - 5) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."
 - d. Paul did not come to Corinth, or to any other place, to preach anything else but the gospel. Even though his was a time when oratory, eloquence, sophistry, and human reasoning reigned, and even

though Corinth was situated in the virtual heart of such tendencies, Paul did not come to them with excellency of speech or of wisdom.

- e. He did not use **excellency of speech** in his preaching. *Excellency of speech* is superiority or eloquence in speaking. Because his approach was not the popular method, he had many adversaries who opposed him on this account: "For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10). This has to do with his method of speaking. This does not mean that Paul was a poor public speaker; it does mean that he did not employ the oratorical methodologies of the Greek philosophers. Neither does it mean that Paul could have converted more people to Christ if he had been a better speaker. The apostle was more interested in the message he presented than in the method by which the message was presented. Salvation is not produced by the oratory of man, but by the power of the gospel.
 - 1) Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 3) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
- f. He did not use **excellency of wisdom** in his preaching. The word *excellency* in the verse literally means "the act of overhanging." Overhanging speech is loquacious, smooth, eloquent speech-making; overhanging wisdom is that kind of thinking that exalts the reasoning of human minds. This has to do with what he presented.
- g. The subject matter he taught them was *the testimony of God*. The testimony of God is the information which comprises his declaration to mankind; it is his revealed word.
 - 1) Psalms 19:7: "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple."
 - 2) Psalms 119:88: "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 1:6: "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 1:8: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."
 - 5) Revelation 1:2, 9: "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw....I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
- h. When he preached the word of God (the gospel) to the Corinthians, he did not use human reasonings or flowery speech in instructing them in the truth. The power to save is in the message of the gospel, not in the persuasive, eloquent speech of the messenger!
 - 1) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 - 2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 4) James 1:18,21: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 5) James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

- 6) It is not the thunder, but the lightning, that kills; it is the message, not the messenger, which saves.
3. Verse 2: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."
- a. He was determined what he would preach to them. *Determined* is from the Greek *krino* which means "to determine, resolve, decree" (Vine, Vol. 1, p.305).
 - 1) Acts 3:13: "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was **determined** to let *him* go."
 - 2) Acts 20:16: "For Paul had **determined** to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."
 - 3) Acts 25:25: "But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have **determined** to send him."
 - 4) Acts 27:1: "And when it was **determined** that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 2:1: "But I **determined** this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness."
 - 6) Titus 3:12: "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have **determined** there to winter."
 - b. He was resolved to preach to them the crucified Christ. To preach Christ is the same as to preach the gospel; if one preaches the gospel, he is preaching Christ. To preach Christ includes presenting the truth on the virgin birth of Christ, his baptism, his miracles, his mission, his teachings, his death, burial and resurrection, his ascension, his coming again, his plan of salvation, his requirements for us to follow, his church, and his promises and warnings. When Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans and to the Ethiopian, he preached the details of the gospel. It is impossible to separate Christ from his gospel; one cannot preach one without also preaching the other in the same operation.
 - c. If men refuse to accept and obey the simple gospel plainly presented, it will do their souls no good for the preacher to turn to graveyard tales, high pressure psychological schemes, false doctrine, or a perverted gospel. If the gospel of Christ will not turn a man from his sinful ways to a life of godliness, there is nothing else in heaven or on earth that can cause him to do so. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).
 - d. Preaching Christ is as powerful today as it was during the first century. But as our world has grown more and more self-reliant, self-centered, and infidelic, the gospel has little or no appeal to a great majority of mankind. But it can still save anyone who is willing to believe and obey its message.
4. Verse 3: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."
- a. Paul came to Corinth with certain misgivings, it seems. He sincerely wanted to teach as many of this corrupt city's population as possible, but it was recognized as the vilest city of the time.
 - b. He had a degree of trepidation concerning the work he sought to do in Corinth, sufficiently so that the Lord saw fit to speak to him in a vision: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10). Even an apostle could have a weak moment.
 - c. When he preached in Galatia, he had some kind of infirmity which was noticeable to the people. He later wrote to them concerning this: "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first" (Gal. 4:13). Perhaps some physical ailment hindered his work (2 Cor. 12:1-10).
 - d. In describing the condition of his mind while at Corinth, he states in this verse that he experienced weakness, fear, and much trembling. He recognized the awesome responsibility he bore toward their lost souls. That he was not fearful of being persecuted is evident from his willingness, shown by words and example, to face any sort of tribulation for the cause of the gospel (2 Cor. 11:24-28; 12:10; Rom. 5:1-4).
 - e. He was fearful because the immortal souls of all those in Corinth depended on him, and there was great peril in teaching them out of their grievous errors.
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- 1) Paul was empowered by Christ to serve in the capacity of ambassador (apostle); yet he trembled under the solemn obligation for the safety of men's souls.
- 2) How well do members of the Lord's church today perceive our responsibility toward the lost?
 - a) Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - b) Luke 9:25: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?"
- 3) While we have heavy obligations toward the lost, they also bear the tremendous burden to seek the truth.
 - a) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - b) Acts 17:27, 30-31: "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
- f. We fear and quake when we face some of our duties in the kingdom, such as when we go from house-to-house, trying to set up Bible study sessions. How would we have felt on entering corrupt Corinth, with all of its idolatry, violence, and unbelief? Just because Paul had received Holy Spirit baptism did not make him less fearful or more courageous. Courage must be developed individually; it is not a special gift that we do not have one moment and do have the next.
5. Verse 4: "And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."
 - a. When he presented the gospel to them, he did not use enticing words which were produced by human wisdom. To entice is to entrap, to deceive, to beguile. He never used any kind of underhanded method in teaching them the truth.
 - b. The lessons he taught them were truly filled with wisdom, but not of the wisdom of men. He, being highly educated in worldly learning, could have tickled their ears with gems of interesting information, but that would have done their souls no good. He preached God's wisdom to them.
 - c. They did not have to rely on a mere claim that the message was reliable and true. When the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate for execution, they tried to get the governor to accept his guilt merely on their assertion: "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee" (John 18:28-30). But Paul proved the veracity of his message by powerful miraculous demonstrations supplied to him by the Holy Spirit. He shows the main purpose of miracles was to convince the audience of the truthfulness of the message (cf. Acts 8:14ff).
 - 1) He did not try to convince them that his message was true by using slick presentation techniques or by offering them worldly wisdom. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (1 Thess. 1:5).
 - 2) As he went about the work of preaching the gospel, opportunities were had for him to perform some miracle, and thus convince his hearers that he spoke the truth. When Peter and John entered the temple on a certain occasion, they met a lame man; after healing the man, they gained the attention of the multitude who beheld the miracle. These people were now willing to believe what the apostles presented (Acts 3).
 - 3) As Paul laid hands on some of the converts, he was able to confer certain spiritual gifts to them; as these people exercised those gifts, others were convinced that the truth was being revealed through them. Nine signs are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the

- same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.”
- 4) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 5) Acts 19:1-6: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."
 - 6) Romans 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
 - 7) 1 Thessalonians 1:5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."
 - 8) 2 Corinthians 12:12-13: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."
 - 9) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
- d. Many modern preachers have watered-down the gospel message, and combining this weakened message with pretty little stories and human psychology, present a sweet piece of oratory that falls on ears which gladly receive it, never realizing that they have been duped by preachers who are themselves deluded.
- 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
 - 4) Ephesians 5:11,17: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.... Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:13: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."
 - 6) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
6. Verse 5: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."
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- a. Paul's aim must be ours. He did not want the faith of the Corinthians to stand in the wisdom of man, but on the power of God. Any literal building is only as secure as its foundation. To build our spiritual life on the wisdom of man is to erect it on a foundation of sand. The great majority of religionists have done so, and do not even know of the awful danger in which they daily live! And most of those in this condition will not be corrected! How sad they will not examine themselves and their doctrine in the light of God's word. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5).
- 1) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 2) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-27: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
 - 4) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"
 - 6) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
- b. Man's wisdom is forever changing; what was firmly believed by current thought a generation ago, is often rejected by the next generation. Those who are attracted to human philosophies instead of Christianity must be continually fed a changing doctrine; old ideas grow stale, and must be replaced by newer and fresher concepts. One gimmick must be replaced by a bigger gimmick.
- c. But those who love God's word are always challenged to increase in their knowledge and understanding of it; we can never reach the point where we have mastered the Bible! It remains fresh, living and challenging to our minds.
- 1) 1 Timothy 4:12-13: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:15-16: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - 4) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you
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- again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
- 5) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
- d. God's word never changes; it is therefore reliable; and it is powerful and ever new.
- 1) Jeremiah 23:29: "*Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?"
 - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:21-25: "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
7. Verse 6: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought."
- a. Paul did not preach worldly wisdom, but he did preach God's wisdom. Knowledge of divine things comes through God's revealed wisdom, not from information developed by man.
 - b. Paul spoke this God-given wisdom to those who are perfect (full-grown; mature). But who are these who are perfect? Several views have been advanced:
 - 1) That it refers to certain pagan philosophers. MacKnight thought that the term *perfect* was a reference to the heathen philosophers who deemed themselves to possess perfect comprehension of wisdom (p.36).
 - 2) That Paul was using irony in describing the spiritually-weak Corinthians as "perfect." McGarvey observes: "Paul here begins to correct the impression which his semi-ironical language about the foolishness of God might have made, and proceeds to show that the gospel is the highest wisdom—a wisdom which he had not yet been able to impart to the Corinthians because it could only be comprehended by mature Christians, and so was above the receptive powers of the Corinthians who as yet were mere babes in Christ (1 Cor. 3:10). But if the Corinthians who were developing in spiritual manhood could not receive this heavenly wisdom, much less could the world-rulers who were moving backward, crab-fashion, into nothingness, in accordance with the plan of God outlined in the last section. Thus the apostle reveals the startling fact that progression in philosophical and political worldliness is retrogression as to the kingdom of God, so that the Corinthians in seeking to better their religious condition by bringing these worldly elements into the church, were not only retarding their spiritual growth, but were actually associating themselves with those who were shrinking and shriveling toward the vanishing point" (*A Commentary on Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans*, pp.59f).
 - 3) That it describes those in the church who have matured in the faith, in distinction to those who are new converts or who have not grown up spiritually. A problem with this view seems to be in the fact that Paul spoke God's wisdom to people in and out of the church, and to the babes in Christ and to the spiritually mature. He did not limit his teaching to those who were already established in the faith.
 - 4) That it means Christians as opposed to non-Christians. The truth Paul was advancing could be grasped only by those who were willing and able to focus on the truth of the gospel. Men become Christians because they have a willingness to listen, examine, learn, believe, and obey. Those who reject the gospel are unwilling, for various reasons, to make an honest investigation. During their

- lifetime, many will develop attitudes and prejudices and practices which make it well-nigh impossible for them to properly examine their own hearts and the gospel. They can blame only themselves. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23; cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
- c. Perhaps the thought of the first part of the verse describes those who have accepted the gospel, or who have a willingness to examine its teachings properly, and will then obey; that the mature are those with the kind of heart that makes it possible for them to become Christians. Some live in sin and religious error so long that it becomes virtually impossible for them to see and accept the truth.
 - d. Paul declares that the wisdom he preached was not that wisdom which pertains to this world. What he taught was not produced by the princes of this world. *Princes* is a reference to the rulers in the world.
 - 1) Those in the world have those to whom they look with respect, and from them receive instruction, directly or indirectly. Men and women in high political office are usually trend-setters. When John Kennedy became president, most men in America wore hats; he did not wear a hat; in a short time, it became the fashion for men to forego fedoras on dress-up occasions.
 - 2) In our time, people in the entertainment and sports worlds are role-models for many young people. When the Beatles rose to popularity, long hair came into vogue among young men; it soon afflicted even some old men. Outlandish dress has been taken up by many men and women, young and old.
 - 3) Philosophies, religious views, fashions, games, etc., which originate with men are constantly in a state of flux. What is popular today is apt to be shunned tomorrow.
 - e. The wisdom of the world comes to nothing with the passing of time. Even though a human belief is accepted by the majority of mankind, and persists for thousands of years, or even to the very end of time, what becomes of it then?
 - 1) If everyone on earth believed the earth is flat, it would still be round. The number of people who believe a certain tenet does not prove the tenet is true. The majority is nearly always wrong (Ex. 23:2; Matt. 7:13-14). Reincarnation is said to be the single most popular religious tenet on earth; that more people believe in this doctrine than in any other doctrine. But since it is a false doctrine, and though there will doubtless be millions who believe in it when time ends, what happens to it—and to those who believe it?
 - a) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - b) Revelation 20:12,14-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - 2) The word of God, which expresses heavenly wisdom, will endure the ages of time, and will survive into eternity! It will be the standard used in the Judgment (John 12:48).
 - a) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - b) 1 Peter 1:21-25: "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
8. Verse 7: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."
- a. The apostle once more affirms that he (and all other faithful Christians) speaks the wisdom of God

- in a mystery. He is not saying that he expresses this wisdom in fanciful, unknown words, making God's wisdom shadowy and mysterious.
- b. Rather, he states that this plan of wisdom which God originated had been hidden from the knowledge of man for a long time. When Paul and the other apostles, operating under the direction of the Holy Spirit, revealed this plan to men, it no longer was a mystery. When he spoke on the subject, men could understand what it was that God had developed. When he wrote on this plan, those who read the inspired production could know God's will (Eph. 3:1-11).
 - 1) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:3-5: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - c. This wise plan, developed in the infinite mind of Almighty God, originated before the world began. The plan had the death of God's Son at its heart; in God's plan, the death of Christ on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the world was purposed from before the creation.
 - 1) Isaiah 64:4: "For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."
 - 2) Romans 1:1-2: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:9: "And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:"
 - 4) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - 5) Revelation 14:6: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."
 - d. This plan remained a mystery to men and angels until such time that God openly revealed it.
 - 1) Matthew 13:17: "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:13: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:10-11: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."
 - e. The purpose of this eternal plan was for "our glory."
 - 1) For those among mankind who would live during the Christian Dispensation, the privilege of becoming a Christian and ultimately going to heaven was given to each who would obey the gospel.
 - a) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - b) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - c) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my

- Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
- d) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - e) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - f) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - g) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- 2) The benefits of Christ's death extended backward in time, to cover those who followed the will of God during the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations.
 - a) Romans 3:23-25: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."
 - b) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
9. Verse 8: "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."
 - a. The rulers of this world did not know and comprehend God's plan. Paul confidently affirms that had they understood the identity and mission of Jesus of Nazareth, those who were responsible for his death would not have treated him as they did.
 - 1) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
 - 2) Acts 3:17: "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers."
 - b. The Lord taught the Jews in many places and in different ways that he was the Messiah; he proved his claim by the tremendous miracles he wrought publicly. He showed them how he fulfilled countless prophecies given by Old Testament prophets. The common people generally recognized and believed he was the Christ, but the civil and religious leaders, jealous of their positions and viewing Jesus as a threat, rejected him.
 - c. The Jewish leaders connived to coerce the Roman governor to execute Christ. Pilate was fearful of Christ at one point (John 19:6-12), but he was more fearful of a Jewish revolt. If Pilate had been able to see that Jesus was truly the Son of God, he would not have condemned him. If the Jewish leaders had known his real identity, they would not have sought the Lord's death.
 - d. But those leaders had sufficient information at hand to learn the identity of Jesus. Their hearts were of such intense hardness that the truth did not concern them. They are fully responsible for the horrible works they did in condemning the sinless Son of God.
 - e. It was essential that Christ die as he did. Without his death, burial, and resurrection, the plan that God had formulated in eternity would have come to nothing; we would still be lost in our sins, and be without any possible hope! The death of Christ is at the same time, the darkest deed of human history, and the brightest hope and most glorious blessing that we could have been given! The faithful Christian partakes of the Lord's Supper with mixed feelings; sorrowful that the Innocent One had to
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suffer for the guilty, but happy for his having been willing to endure it.

B. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: How God Revealed His Infinite Wisdom to Mankind.

1. Verse 9: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."
 - a. That Paul is not speaking of the glorious mysteries of heaven is clear from what follows in the context. Having said in this verse that the things he describes had not been seen by human eye, he plainly says in verse ten that those very things have now been revealed by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Since we still do not know the details of heaven, and in view of the fact that the mysteries Paul discusses here have been revealed, those mysteries do not pertain to what is in heaven.
 - c. God prepared for man certain things that no man had ever seen, or heard, or even thought of in his heart. This statement is preceded in the context by the thought of verse seven, that Paul spoke the wisdom of God's mystery to those who are perfect (vs. 6). Because he has been speaking of this plan everywhere he preached the word of God, he was revealing in that same process the mysterious plan of the ages.
 - d. It is true that we do not know the full details of heaven. Generally, the descriptions of heaven given in the Bible are negative, showing that heaven is not like earth. Our finite minds would not be able to comprehend a full description of heaven's beauties.
 - 1) On earth we have suffering, pain, sorrow, crying, and dying (Rev. 21:4); in heaven, these things will not be present. On earth, we face the consequences of sin, but in heaven nothing that contaminates or is impure will be permitted to enter (Rev. 21:27; Heb. 12:14; Matt. 5:8).
 - 2) At God's right hand are pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11). Beautiful beings and sights predominate in heaven (Rev. 21). Heaven offers eternal life (Mark 10:30; Rev. 2:10).
 - 3) But just think of all the details that are not given concerning heaven! How thankful we are that we have been given the information we have. What we know about hell is more than enough to motivate us to avoid going there, and what we are told about heaven is more than sufficient motivation to cause us to make the best possible effort to enter that glorious home of the soul!
Heaven will surely be worth it all!
 - e. This verse fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 64:4: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." The angels desired to learn the details of God's glorious plans, but were not permitted to discover them; holy men of God who predicted a very great many of the details wanted to understand them, but such was beyond their privilege. We have the grand liberty to know it well, and to enjoy the wonderful blessings offered by the glorious gospel of God!
 - 1) Matthew 13:17: "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:10-11: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."
2. Verse 10: "But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."
 - a. The things of verse nine which Paul said no man could discover on his own, have now been revealed; these are no longer unrevealed. By this statement we know that heaven was not the subject of verse nine; we still know little about heaven, but we do know a great deal, all that we need to know, about the *mystery* which God had conceived in eternity and kept secret through all the past ages of time prior to the first century.
 - 1) Ephesians 3:3-5: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ); Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

- 2) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - 3) Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."
- b. God revealed the details of his plan through the work of the Holy Spirit. God was the originator of the plan; Christ was its executor (Heb. 10:9); and the Holy Spirit was the revealer.
- 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."
 - 4) Revelation 3:22: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The Holy Spirit spoke to the seven congregations through the written word.
 - 5) Acts 7:51-53: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." They resisted the Holy Spirit when they rejected the word the Spirit delivered to them (orally or written) by the inspired prophets.
 - 6) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."
 - 7) Acts 1:16: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." The words David spoke or wrote by inspiration were the Spirit's words, not words of his own choosing.
 - 8) Nehemiah 9:20,30: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them....Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands." As God instructed, guided, and warned his people of the Old Testament by the inspired word delivered by the Holy Spirit, so he guides us today through what he revealed by the Spirit through the inspired apostles and prophets of the New Testament. These truths have been preserved through the centuries and are present with us in the written word.
- c. God revealed these things unto us by the Spirit. Christ promised the apostles that they would receive divine guidance by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- 1) Consider these promises made to the apostles:
 - a) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - b) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
 - c) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - d) Luke 24:49: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city
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- of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”
- e) Acts 1:5: ‘For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.’
 - f) Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
- 2) They were given this power in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost day following the Lord's ascension. These apostles had as part of their apostleship the authority and power to lay hands on certain Christians and confer on them one or more of the nine spiritual gifts named in chapter twelve of this epistle [See Acts 8:14ff; 19:1-6; Romans 1:11].
 - 3) The Holy Spirit revealed the fullness of God's plan through the apostles and certain others upon whom the apostles had laid hands to confer spiritual gifts. Some of the apostles wrote inspired letters (Matthew; John; Peter; Paul); some of those men who received spiritual gifts also were led to write inspired epistles (Mark; Luke; James; Jude). The writings produced by the Spirit through these eight men comprise the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.
 - 4) At the first, the inspired word was presented in oral form, but as the needs developed, these inspired men were guided to record inspired epistles or books, which dealt with information God wanted to be preserved for future generations.
 - 5) The oral word is soon corrupted, and ceases to be reliable; but the written word can be preserved in pure form throughout time:
 - a) Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - b) 1 Peter 1:22-25: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
 - 6) Copies of the New Testament books and letters were made, and disseminated among the congregations of God's people of the first century. Although later tyrants tried to destroy all copies of the New Testament, they failed, as is evident by virtue of the fact that it is still with us.
 - 7) All of the pertinent writings of the apostles and prophets were collected in ancient days into one body. One of the most exact sciences is that of textual criticism, which is the work of determining what the exact text of the Bible really is. There are thousands of manuscripts (partial or entire), ancient translations of the original text, and quotations in uninspired writings of virtually all of the text, which when added together and carefully compared, give us an exceedingly accurate reproduction of the original message.
 - 8) The ancient writings of Grecian and Roman historians are accepted today as reliable; their authorship is not questioned; the accuracy of their information is accepted. The Bible has many times the amount of evidence supporting its accuracy and inspiration than the writings of ancient secular historians have in support of their genuineness. *Genuineness* is used in reference to the author of the writing; *authenticity* has to do with the accuracy of the facts included in the writing. It can be established beyond doubt that the Bible is inspired, thus it originated with God; it is both genuine and authentic.
- d. The Spirit searched the deep things of God, and revealed those things to mankind through the inspired apostles and prophets. The Holy Spirit has dwelt with God from eternity; he is an eternal being himself, just as much so as the Father and the Son. He perfectly knew God's eternal plan and revealed it in the New Testament.
3. Verse 11: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."
 - a. No person can know what is in the mind of another person unless that person reveals that information. For me to know accurately what is in your mind, you must give me that data in a message comprised
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- of plain words. You must deliver the message accurately, and I must understand it correctly.
- b. No human can know what is in the mind of God unless God tells it to us in a message made up of plain words. We cannot see the face of God so as to read from the expressions on his face what is in his mind; we do not hear God speaking to us with audible voice so as to decipher more of what is in his mind by the tone of his voice. The only possible way that any human being on earth can know the will of God is for God to deliver to him a message of words.
 - c. *Revelation* is the method God used in letting man know what was in his mind; *inspiration* was the means he used to insure that the message was accurately delivered. We must use the best common sense and wisdom we possess in order to correctly interpret the message so as to properly understand it. We must not read into the text any thought that God did not include in the statement; we must interpret the text so that it meshes perfectly with other statements in the message that address the subject.
 - 1) Ephesians 5:17: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - d. God has once for all time delivered his final message to mankind:
 - 1) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - 2) Psalms 110:4: "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."
 - 3) Hebrews 7:23-24: "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."
4. Verse 12: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."
- a. The we of this verse refers to the same people that us refers to in verse ten. God did not inspire every person on earth to receive his revelation; he did not use every Christian for that purpose; but he selected and empowered certain individuals in the church—the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:5).
 - b. The apostles were the key men in the revelation process. It was to them, and only to them, that Holy Spirit baptism was given; this *baptism* (overwhelming) of the Holy Spirit gave them the power and authority to be witnesses of the resurrected Christ, to bind and loose in the kingdom, to confer spiritual gifts by the laying on of hands and prayers, and to be ambassadors for Christ. No one else had that power and right.
 - c. But the apostles, as noted earlier, had the ability to bestow spiritual gifts on other Christians; some of these could receive and communicate inspired messages to the church and the world; these were prophets inasmuch as they spoke for God (being guided supernaturally).
 - d. The spirit by which the apostles (and other prophets) spoke was the Holy Spirit; it was not by any spirit that pertained to this world. The source of their message was the Holy Spirit who revealed to them the wisdom of God; their source of information was not the wisdom of men.
 - 1) If the message had originated in the thinking of mere men, there would be no value in it for our souls. What good, if any, it might have contained would have had to do only with earthly concerns.
 - 2) Man did not originate this Spirit-given message; no man could have discovered that message; without the Holy Spirit's revelation, no one could have learned the message—or be blessed by it.
 - e. The Holy Spirit being the source of the message, mankind could learn of the glorious and good things which God desired to give to us all.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said
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- unto you."
- 3) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 5) Hebrews 2:9-10: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
 - 6) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 7) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
5. Verse 13: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) American Standard Version: "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual *words*."
 - 2) English Study Bible: "And those *things* we also speak; not in words that man's wisdom teaches, but in *words* that *the* Spirit teaches, combining spiritual *things* with spiritual *words*."
 - 3) New King James Version: "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - b. The information which Paul and the other apostles spoke were the things which the Holy Spirit taught. The apostles did not teach a message of words which originated by human wisdom. The Holy Spirit gave them the very words they used: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13:11).
 - c. Paul states that the spiritual things revealed were *compared* (combined) with spiritual words.
 - 1) The Greek term used is *sunkrinoo*: "1. To join together fitly, compound, combine 1 Cor 2:13. 2. To compare: 2 Cor 10:12" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - 2) "Here again we have a clear claim to inspiration, and not only so, but *verbal* inspiration. Paul did not reason after the manner of worldly philosophers, but imparted his truth under the guidance of the Spirit, who taught him the words to use, so that he taught spiritual truths with spiritual words, a fitting combination. The leaders of our current Reformation did well in conforming to the rule, by seeking to express Bible thoughts in Bible language. To Paul the terms and phrases of theology would have been as distasteful as those of philosophy, because equally man-made and unspiritual" (McGarvey, *ibid.*, p.61).
 - d. One false theory of inspiration is that God gave the writer or speaker only the idea, and left it up to the individual to express the thought in words of his own choosing. This, the theory's proponents claim, helps us resolve the discrepancies between statements in the Bible which are at variance with each other.
 - 1) But the Bible (God's truth) does not contradict itself in any way; we do not need to renounce verbal inspiration and Biblical inerrancy in order to reconcile statements which appear to clash. We need to understand correctly the statements, together with the general context, and the statements will be seen to be in agreement.
 - 2) That the inspiration of the Bible extends to the very words of the text is shown in the Bible itself.
 - a) "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God

of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32). The argument turned on the tense of the verb; God is, not God was.

- b) "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). The argument of this verse turns on the difference between the singular (*seed*) and the plural (*seeds*). The only way such arguments could be reliable is for the very words to have been inspired.
- e. The Holy Spirit chose the exact words which expressed the precise thought he wanted to present to our minds. The inspired men imparted the exact message, right down to the specific words which the Holy Spirit gave them. The message thus imparted presented spiritual truths and used spiritual words, words which the Spirit provided. "But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual *words*" (1 Cor. 2:12-13, ASV).
 - 1) This verse claims verbal inspiration. The Spirit gave the apostles *utterance* when they preached in Acts 2, and on all other occasions when they needed supernatural guidance.
 - 2) An unlearned man could not write accurately and authoritatively about medicine if he had only the general idea given to him; he would have to be given the exact words. Since the apostles did not know God's eternal plan, it would have been impossible for them to write with accuracy and authority about it if all they were given was a general idea.
- f. That the inspired apostles and prophets were given the exact words by the Holy Spirit is clearly shown in the Scriptures consistently.
 - 1) Peter did not even understand what he preached about the Gentiles in the sermon on Pentecost (cf. Acts 10-11):
 - a) Acts 2:4: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - b) Acts 2:36-39: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call." Peter taught here that the Gentiles were to be part of the kingdom, but it was necessary for God to lead him through some experiences and reveal more information to him in order for him finally to perceive the truth (Acts 10-11; see Acts 10:34-35 for a precise statement to this point).
 - c) And even after Peter obtained the full truth on the matter, he faltered on one occasion, when he withdrew from certain Gentile saints: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. 2:11-14).
 - 2) The Old Testament prophets did not grasp the meaning of the prophecies they delivered about the Messiah and his kingdom:
 - a) Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*."
 - b) 1 Peter 1:10-11: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who

prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

- 3) The apostles were promised the words to use when they were called before civil rulers:
 - a) Matthew 10:19-20: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."
 - b) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
- 4) Balaam's donkey was not given the idea to express in his own words; he received the very words, plus the power to speak!

C. 1 Corinthians 2:14-16: The Natural Man and the Spiritual Man.

1. Verse 14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
 - a. Before the simple truth stated in the verse can be correctly understood, it is essential that the *natural man* be identified. Three views have been advanced:
 - 1) That the natural man is an unconverted man (an unregenerated, alien sinner). This position argues that the alien sinner cannot understand the gospel so as to be saved until the Holy Spirit illuminates his mind and enables him to know it. [This view is obviously false—cf. Rom. 1:16-17; Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 10:13-16; Acts 2:36-47].
 - 2) That the natural man is a natural philosopher (an uninspired man). This position maintains that the natural man, who is equipped only with his native powers and senses, cannot discover the plan that existed in God's mind from eternity.
 - 3) That the natural man is a man who rejects or renounces the gospel. This position maintains that the natural man is one who examines the gospel truths only by his human wisdom, and does not accept the proposition that the gospel is God's production, and rejects the gospel as foolishness.
 - b. The "things of the Spirit" are those great truths which the Holy Spirit revealed to the apostles. This is the very point of the immediate context (2:9-16). The point in the general context (1:18—2:16) discusses the differences between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men.
 - 1) The gospel originated, not in human wisdom, but in the infinite mind of God; the gospel was delivered, not by means of human wisdom, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:6-13).
 - 2) The preaching of the cross (the gospel of Christ) is foolish to those who perish (1 Cor. 1:18); in this verse the "things of the Spirit" are said to be foolish to the natural man.
 - 3) The natural man is one who rejects the things of the Spirit (the gospel). The natural man is one who would not and could not have originated the gospel (1:18,21,23). No man, using only his natural senses, could have ever learned God's eternal plan. In the first place, he did not want it; in the second place, it was not possible for anyone to know the mind of God unless God revealed his thoughts.
 - c. No man can learn God's will apart from the revelation that God has given through the Holy Spirit. The natural man, therefore, is one who will not seek God through divine revelation; the natural man is one who willfully rejects the gospel.
 - 1) The natural man is an unconverted man, but not every unconverted man is a natural man (as the term is used in this context).
 - 2) Even one who has been converted can later become a "natural man" by renouncing the gospel. Such a one is then in worse condition than he was in prior to his earlier conversion. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than,

- after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:20-22).
- d. The natural philosopher (cf. Acts 17:16-34) cannot discover God (his identity) or God's will through his human wisdom; a scientist can establish the reality of the Divine Creator by scientific investigations, but he cannot learn the identity and the will of the Creator by his studies of the natural world.
- 1) The whole concept of divine revelation is foolishness to anyone who rejects the gospel. This is an example of the natural man.
 - 2) The man who seeks to discover the will of God by examining his own mind, nature, or through philosophical discussions and human reasoning, is another example of the natural man.
 - 3) It appears that the natural man, therefore, could include the uninspired person because no such individual could ever learn what is in the mind of the Almighty apart from inspiration; and further, that the natural man also includes the one who refuses to properly examine and accept the gospel of Christ.
- e. Paul's simple point in the verse affirms that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit (the truths of the gospel); instead of receiving them (by believing the facts and obeying the commands), he regards them to be foolishness; and because he is a natural man only (without the guidance of the Holy Spirit), he cannot know them; and because he rejects the truths of the gospel, he cannot know them (in the sense of being benefitted) because one must have spiritual discernment in order to perceive their beauty and power.
- f. The last clause of the verse does not mean that the natural man must have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in order to have the capacity to comprehend God's will; it means that the natural philosophers cannot learn God's will by their human wisdom; and that one must have the willingness to perceive spiritual truths in order to grasp the value of God's word. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).
- g. In refutation of the false doctrine that an alien sinner cannot understand the Scriptures until the Holy Spirit "illuminates" God's word to enable him to perceive its meaning, consider the following:
- 1) John 5:39: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." In the previous verses, Christ described those to whom these words were directed as unbelievers. Why would the Lord tell these sinners to search the scriptures if they could not understand them without the direct operation of the Spirit? He would not, therefore the theory is false.
 - 2) Acts 17:11-12: " These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few." The people searched the scriptures with profit prior to their becoming believers. It was only after their search that they came to believe (17:12). "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).
 - 3) Faith comes by hearing God's word, not by a direct operation of the Spirit (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7).
 - 4) The gospel of Christ is God's power to save; we are not saved by a direct operation of the Spirit (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; Jas. 1:21).
 - 5) It is not some direct work of the Holy Spirit that purifies our hearts, but obedience to the truth (1 Pet. 1:22).
 - 6) It is the truth that makes us free (John 8:32) and sanctifies us (John 17:17), not a direct work of the Spirit.
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- 7) The Holy Spirit contends with man through the word which he revealed in the writings of the selected men whom he inspired to receive and deliver that word.
 - a) Nehemiah 9:20: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."
 - b) Nehemiah 9:30: "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
 - c) Acts 7:51-53: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
 - d) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
2. Verse 15: "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."
 - a. The one who is spiritual judges all things, but is not judged by any man. Those who were chosen and empowered to receive and communicate God's word had the ability to distinguish between the truths of God and the products of human wisdom. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:8-10; cf. Acts 5:1-11; 1 John 2:20,27).
 - b. Today, we have the written word of God by which we can determine whether a given doctrine or practice is right; we measure the item by God's perfect standard.
 - 1) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - 2) James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - 3) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 4) 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - c. Without their inspiration, the apostles could not have distinguished truth from error; and without the word of God in written form, we could not know what is right and what is wrong. The Bible gives us the things we are to believe and obey; all of our beliefs and practices are right only if they have the stamp of divine authority upon them, and that authority is only found in the Bible.
 - 1) The inspired apostles were inerrantly led in what they preached and wrote; they proved they delivered the truth by performing miracles (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4).
 - 2) No one had the right to dispute the rightness of their inspired word (Matt. 19:28; 2 Cor. 12:12-13; Acts 13:6-12; Acts 3:1-11; 4:5-16; 5:1-11). Thus, no one could *judge* [condemn] them.
 - d. One must tune his mind to spiritual matters when he reads and studies the Bible. One must become spiritually-minded in his thinking.
 - 1) Nicodemus misunderstood the Lord's statement about the new birth (John 3:1-8), thinking Christ was speaking of a second natural birth. By thinking along that line, the new birth could only be foolishness to a man, but the Lord showed that he had an entirely different kind of birth in mind—a *birth* of the soul.
 - 2) One who reads the book of Revelation from a worldly point of view is doomed to utterly miss the

message of that great book of symbols. A man told me many years ago that he did not consider the Bible to be of any importance because he had read Revelation, and the notion of seven-headed beasts is incredible; since he decided Revelation was preposterous, the rest of the Bible must be no better! But he failed to see that there is such a thing as representative language in the Bible, which figuratively expresses the message.

3. Verse 16: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."
 - a. Isaiah 40:13: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" Man is incapable of instructing the Creator. It is God who does the teaching, and his offspring are the pupils.
 - b. Brother Lipscomb thought that *instruct* ought to be rendered by some other word; citing Acts 9:22, 16:10, Ephesians 4:16, Colossians 2:2, and Colossians 2:19 in which the Greek term is translated by other English words. He stated: "In these passages it means to understand or know so as to be *joined together with him*" (p.44). His view of the verse he described in this fashion: "Who of you uninspired hath known the mind of God, so as to be joined together with him? But we inspired men so understand him that we are united in him in teaching his will, we are laborers together with God" (pp.44f).
 - c. This view requires the rewriting of the verse. Perhaps the best interpretation is to let the verse stand as it appears in the KJV and ASV, simply saying that since no man can know the mind of the Lord, we are in no position or condition to give instruction to him.
 - d. Instead of teaching God, we follow his instructions. In this way, we have the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).
 - e. Christ's disposition was one of obedience to the Father (Heb. 5:8-9; 10:9; Matt. 3:15-17; 26:39). Those who would follow Christ must be willing to obey the will of God, and gladly do so. The attitude that we must obtain and keep is expressed in these words: "Speak, Lord, and thy servant will hear; command, and he will obey."
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1 CORINTHIANS 3

A. 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: Paul Reproves the Saints in Corinth Because of Their Carnality.

1. Verse 1: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ."
 - a. Paul could not address them as spiritually-minded, mature Christians. They had not imbibed the teachings which had been imparted to them through the inspired apostle. The only way they could become spiritual people was through following the revelation God provided (1 Cor. 2:9-13). These saints had allowed themselves to be governed and led by the wisdom of the world. Their divisions furnished evidence of this fact. This thought fits in with 1 Corinthians 2:1-8. In 1 Corinthians 2:9-16, the apostle expanded on the source of his message and the process by which it was revealed. He now returns to the theme of the first part of chapter two. When he first met them, he had to give them the gospel basics in simple words. But even now they were still babes in Christ, and must be addressed in simple language.
 - b. They had allowed themselves to be led by worldly wisdom, which blocked their spiritual growth and development. In effect, they were still spiritual babies.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 14:20: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."
 - 2) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
 - c. They should have become spiritual adults, but they were still babes in Christ; they should have become more spiritually-minded, but they were still carnally-minded.
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) Colossians 3:1-5: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - 3) Hebrews 11:8-16: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been

- mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
- 4) Hebrews 11:24-29: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, notfearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."
- d. To be spiritually-minded is to allow God's word to guide our motives, thoughts, words, attitudes, and deeds; to be carnally-minded is to allow the fleshly appetites of the physical body, the standards of this world, and the rewards of this life to decide the kind of motives, thoughts, words, attitudes, and deeds we will have.
- e. The Christians at Corinth had had sufficient time to make progress in developing greater spirituality, but they had not done so. Paul could not speak to them as he would speak to mature Christians. The language we use in talking with an adult is different from that we use with little children.
2. Verse 2: "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able."
- a. A baby cannot eat food that is intended for an adult; he would choke on it before it could do him any good. A grownup is not apt to eat baby food, even though it would give him nourishment; he wants something more substantial. These points, and other similar ones, fit the situations of spiritual babies and adults.
- b. As human infants need milk instead of meat, so spiritual babies need the *pabulum* of the gospel; they will never progress beyond infancy without it. The Corinthians were still feeding on milk; they had not grown enough to partake of the meat of the gospel. According to the time they had been Christians, they should have become vigorous and healthy.
- c. A little baby is fed by its mother, and is placed in its crib to sleep and play; as he grows older, he is still fed by the mother, and plays on the floor and wanders about the house; it is still some time before he can develop to become a productive member of the family and society. As he grows, he learns. The purpose of eating and playing is to develop strength and size, but not merely for the sake of getting bigger and stronger. One grows and increases in strength and knowledge and skill, not to boast of that development, but to use it for himself and others.
- d. A person obeys the gospel, and becomes a babe in Christ. He is fed the milk of the gospel for the purpose of developing strength, knowledge, maturity, and skill; these are not to be gained for the purpose of boasting, but to use to the glory of God, to obtain even greater powers, and for the good of others. What good is done if a Christian gains a great knowledge of the Bible but does not use it to help others grow? What good is done to hone our talents to win souls, if we never exercise those abilities?
- e. The same gospel is fed to young and old Christians; the younger ones need it to grow; the older ones need it to remain healthy and to gain even greater health and strength. The older ones in the faith should be better able to love and appreciate the truths of the gospel; it should become more dear to them with each passing year. Although our physical bodies decline in health and vitality with the years, our spirits ought to grow stronger and healthier as we grow older, so that on the day of our passing from earthly scenes, we will be at the apex of our spiritual growth, and prepared for heaven.
3. Verse 3: "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"
- a. Paul charges them with carnality, listing three reasons: envying, strife, and divisions (factions). These base practices stand in direct opposition to the principles of the gospel. One who is spiritually-minded is one who sincerely wants the best for others, and is happy when others are blessed with success; he
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is not envious of their advantages.

- b. One who is spiritually-minded does not foment strife. Although he must contend earnestly for the faith on occasion (Jude 3; Eph. 5:11), he does not enjoy controversy. And he will not be party to unnecessary strife.
 - c. Because he loves the Lord and all other souls, he will not weaken the cause of Christ and make it more difficult to win souls by dividing the congregation. While there are times when division is necessary due to sin or religious error (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6), the spiritually-minded person will not countenance unwarranted division, and will do all within his power to keep factions of any kind out of the congregation.
 - 1) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - d. The apostle raises a rhetorical question: *Are ye not carnal and walk as worldly-minded men because of your envying, strife, and divisions?* To ask it is to answer it. They were guilty of such!
4. Verse 4: "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"
- a. Their strife and divisions came about when they aligned themselves behind their favorite preachers. By saying they were of Paul or of Apollos, they showed their carnal disposition.
 - b. They were being more in tune with this world than with the spiritual truths of Christ's gospel.
 - 1) Psalms 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore."
 - 2) Matthew 5:9: "Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."
 - 3) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
 - 4) Acts 4:32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 6) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 7) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
 - 8) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

B. 1 Corinthians 3:5-15: Paul's Sets the Work of Preachers into Proper Perspective.

1. Verses 5-6: "Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."
 - a. Why were they exalting Paul and Apollos (or any other man)? Who were Paul and Apollos? They were merely servants (ministers) of Christ. Their positions and nature did not put them above any other saint. There was no reason for them to be held up as being worthy of reverence.
 - b. Paul brought the gospel to Corinth; later, Apollos came to Corinth and taught them further, and

encouraged them. These two preachers had necessary work to do in the process, but in the final analysis, they were only servants of Christ.

- 1) Acts 18:1-8: "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - 2) Acts 18:24-28: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."
 - 3) Acts 19:1: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples."
 - c. Paul and Apollos were merely the tools the Lord used to bring the Corinthians into a knowledge of the gospel. These preachers could not even claim the credit for their ability to impart that information. The information had been given to them by revelation; and the talents (however many or few, great or small) they used in the operation, were from God.
 - d. Paul planted the gospel in their hearts when he preached it to them; Apollos watered the planted seed; but it was God who brought forth the fruit. Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians, speaking the words the Lord gave him to present; Apollos worked with them to encourage their obedience; but it was God who provided the power (the gospel) by which they were saved.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"
 - 3) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 4) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - e. God used Paul and Apollos as essential elements in the conversion process; they did the planting and watering. But they used the seed which God provided (Luke 8:5; Rom. 1:16-17); God gave them the ability and opportunity to preach and teach the gospel; God placed in the gospel all the information and motivation that men need in order to believe and obey.
2. Verse 7: "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."
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- a. Paul states the proper deduction to be obtained from these facts: the one who planted is not worthy of praise for the work he did; the one who watered does not deserve credit for their obedience; it is God, who gave the increase, who deserves the credit!
 - b. The farmer plants the seed and cultivates the growing crop; he brings the harvest into the barn; but God created the seed, gave the sunshine and rain, and blessed the farmer with the strength and ability to do his part. Therefore, God ought to get the credit for the increase—whether in the material or spiritual work of planting, watering, and having a good harvest.
 - c. One of the most important lessons to learn in the gospel, and oftentimes the most difficult to learn, is to give God the glory! All our efforts are for his glory and cause, not ours.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:15: "For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."
3. Verse 8: "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."
- a. Having shown in verse five that he and Apollos were servants of Christ, Paul in verse six delineated their individual but coordinated efforts in the conversion of the Corinthian saints. In verse seven, the apostle showed that neither he nor Apollos was worthy of praise; God gave the increase, and thus it is he that ought to be honored.
 - b. In the present verse, Paul affirms that the one who planted and the one who watered are one. He is not saying they were the same individual, but that their efforts were united to produce the end result: the salvation of the Corinthians. Each one had an important part in the operation; neither should be exalted as "Lords." The *oneness pentecostals*, if they are consistent, must say that Paul and Apollos are the same individual. They use other such expressions which affirm the oneness of God and Christ to argue for their one-person-godhead view.
 - c. As Apollos and Paul both worked to produce the harvest of souls, each would receive a reward according to his work. This thought is the point of focus from here through verse fifteen.
 - 1) The gospel preacher will be judged according to his faithfulness, not on the number of people he immersed. Noah was able to persuade only seven other people to enter the ark, and they were members of his own family; Peter and the other eleven apostles convinced about 3,000 people to obey the gospel (Acts 2). Was Peter more important than Noah on account of the greater number of converts?
 - 2) Noah was just as faithful as Peter; the difference between the results of their preaching is to be found in the differences between the messages they presented and between the kinds of hearts possessed by the two different audiences. The gospel is greater than the message Noah preached (in that it offers greater blessings, etc.); Noah's audience was altogether made up of stubborn and rebellious people; Peter's audience had many in it who had been prepared for his message by the work of John the Baptizer and Christ, plus there were miraculous demonstrations accompanying the sermon on Pentecost Day.
4. Verse 9: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building."
- a. We (the apostles, prophets, and other teachers of the word) are laborers together with God; we are God's fellow-workers. They worked in harmony with God, doing what he required of them. They (the apostles, inspired prophets, and other teachers of the word) were all equals with each other as they did the will of God (2 Cor. 6:1). The apostles possessed greater authority and power.
 - 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - 2) Acts 10:39-42: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the
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- people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead."
- b. This means that none of the apostles was more important than another. Although Peter, John, and Paul are more conspicuous in the book of Acts than the other apostles, their reputation did not make them more valuable or have greater authority than the other apostles.
 - 1) It was wrong for the Corinthians to exalt Peter, Paul, or any other man, to a position of lordship over them. It is wrong to exalt Peter over the other apostles and give him *primacy*, as the Romanists have foolishly done.
 - 2) It was wrong for the Corinthians to align themselves behind Paul (*Paulites*), or Cephas (*Cephasites*), etc. We all must honor and obey Christ if there is to be any hope of our salvation.
 - 3) It is wrong for a preacher (or anyone else) to be exalted above the other saints by the use of special titles such as *reverend, pastor, father, etc.*
 - a) Job 32:21-22: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing* my maker would soon take me away."
 - b) Matthew 23:8-12: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."
 - c. Ye (the saints in Corinth and elsewhere) are God's husbandry and God's building. Two figures are used to describe Christians. Each of these figures emphasizes the unity of God's people, and the importance of each Christian to the whole.
 - 1) Christians are God's husbandry, his field where the seed has been planted and must be watered and cultivated. The inspired teachers of the first century had special work to do in this *field*. And each saint, consistent with his abilities and opportunities, has work to do in God's field today [cf. Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 13:3-30; Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-6].
 - 2) Christians are God's spiritual building (Eph. 2:22; 1 Pet. 2:1-11). In this figure, Christ is the chief cornerstone; the foundation is comprised of the apostles and prophets; the stones are individual Christians. Each component of this building is important; each must fill his place.
5. Verse 10: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."
- a. Paul, as an inspired apostle, had received divine directions and authority to do the great work God had given him. Using the figure of a wise master builder (chief architect), Paul describes his work of preaching the gospel. He had laid the foundation for the congregation in Corinth; another (Apollos) had continued the work on the building. Paul was supernaturally guided in the work which he did there.
 - b. In this case, as in all others, those who take up the work of completing the building must use great caution, lest they destroy the work of those who have gone before.
 - c. Included in this is an inherent warning against introducing false doctrine or other sinful practices. Only the pure word of God will build up and embellish the church of our Lord. Care must be exercised by all of those who serve in any capacity in the Lord's work.
 - 1) Luke 9:23: "And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
 - 2) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 3) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
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- 4) 1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:1-5: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
6. Verse 11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
- a. The foundation that Paul laid in his preaching was Christ; there was no other possible foundation. Only by preaching the pure and complete gospel can the foundation of Christ be laid at any time or any place.
 - 1) Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."
 - 2) Matthew 16:16-19: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 3) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 4) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 5) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - b. Christ is the only Savior (Acts 4:12); he is the only Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); he is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16); he is history's only sinless accountable person (Heb. 4:15); his death is the only death that has any redeeming power.
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 4) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - c. The only way the foundation of Christ can be laid is by preaching and teaching his word, the gospel, which is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2). To build on any other foundation is folly (Matt. 7:21-29).
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- d. There are other figures in the Bible which are used to emphasize the preeminence of Christ.
- 1) He is the head of the church.
 - a) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - b) 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 might have the preeminence."
 - c) Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."
 - 2) He is the king of the kingdom.
 - a) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - b) Acts 2:32-38: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 3) He is the only door into the sheep fold: "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7).
 - 4) He is the chief cornerstone: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*" (Eph. 2:20).
7. Verse 12: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble."
- a. Even though the right foundation has been laid, the wrong kind of building can be erected. Paul names six kinds of material, grouped into two categories, that might be used; only one of these groups is acceptable.
 - b. One can continue the building by using gold, silver, or precious stones. These are obviously the right kind of materials. In every civilization, these are valuable and desirable. Since the church is being described by Paul, and inasmuch as the church is comprised of individual Christians, it follows that the costly and precious materials named here are individual Christians. The spiritual house of God is valuable and precious only if the very best materials are used. Gold, silver, and precious stones are not only valuable, but they also endure.
 - c. One can continue the building by using wood, hay, and stubble. These are relatively cheap, and will not endure the fires that test the faith of all Christians.
 - 1) Some who *obey the gospel*, (who outwardly seem to be sincere, and who go through the motions
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- of becoming Christians) may not be genuinely converted. They are only wood, or hay, or stubble; they will not be worth much to the Lord, and will not endure. A congregation which receives into its membership those who are in adulterous marriages, or who are accepted on their sectarian *baptism*, or who are unwilling to give up sinful ways, or who put worldly recreation above serving the Lord, is taking to its bosom those who have not been genuinely converted. They have merely gone through some outward motions. Such a congregation is trying to build itself up using "wood, hay, stubble." It is doomed to failure. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" (Prov. 6:27-28).
- 2) In the work of the preaching, there are many who do not preach the truth, and many who will not preach the whole counsel of God, and many who pervert the gospel by adding to it, deleting from it, or making changes to it. The converts that are made by these preachers are only as valuable as the message they have accepted (Gal. 1:6-12; 1 Cor. 4:6 (ASV); 2 John 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19).
 - 3) Converts that are only partially committed, who merely "join the church," are not really converted at all; they are wood, hay, or stubble; the first trials they face will cause their shallow faith to evaporate, or when they finally see the truth of the gospel, they flee.
8. Verse 13: "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."
- a. The faith of every convert will be tested; the outcome will reveal the nature of the "stuff he is made of." The parable of the sower illustrates the different kinds of hearts possessed by those who are exposed to the gospel (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8).
 - 1) Those represented by the wayside soil hear the gospel, but before they come to believe it, the devil steals it out of their hearts. Any accountable person can believe the gospel, if he will investigate it with an open mind; and any believer can obey the gospel, if he will allow his faith to lead him. But Satan has many servants who will rob a man of the seed of the gospel before it germinates and takes root in his heart. Many times these are people of the world; oftentimes it is people who follow false doctrine; and often it is those who hate the truth.
 - 2) Those represented by the rocky ground soil are those who hear the word and believe, but because they have no deep commitment to the truth, their faith soon weakens, and they fall back into a life of sin.
 - 3) Those represented by the thorny ground soil are those who hear the word and obey it, but when the trials of life arise, or when the cares of the world appear, they fall away. Compare: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica..." (2 Tim. 4:10).
 - 4) Those represented by the good ground soil are those who hear the word, and believe and obey it with their whole hearts; they remain faithful and grow to spiritual maturity; these are those who are productive of much good in the Lord's kingdom. The ranks of these are comprised of faithful elders, diligent deacons, dedicated teachers, loyal preachers, and faithful saints who are always at their posts of duty.
 - b. Every man's work will be tested and the results will be made manifest. The identity of the *day* is difficult to ascertain, but likely it refers to the occasion in which a man's faith is tested.
 - 1) Job 23:10: "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:12: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."
 - c. The testing of a Christian's faith may be severe, as it was during the persecutions of the first century. If one is not fully dedicated to the proposition of remaining faithful, his faith will quickly be overturned. One who falls away, may later repent and regain his salvation.
 - 1) Luke 22:31-32: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."
 - 2) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
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- 3) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - 4) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
9. Verses 14-15: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
- a. The **work** of a gospel teacher, that Paul contemplates here, refers to those who are taught by him so as to become Christians. Paul's work, in the light of this verse, included the Christians at Corinth who learned the gospel by his preaching (1 Cor. 9:1d). What happened when certain ones of his converts fell away and died in a lost condition?
 - b. If his converts remained loyal, Paul would have a reward; if some of his converts fell away and were lost, Paul would still be saved, although he would suffer loss.
 - c. Does a gospel preacher's eternal salvation depend on the faithfulness of his converts? If so, why would any man want to become a preacher? It is clear that any Christian's eternal salvation does not depend on the faithfulness of anyone else. The Lord taught that the individual who endures to the end would be saved (Matt. 10:22); he based our eternal salvation upon our own faithfulness, not that of another person.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:9: "Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - d. Paul plainly stated, however, that a gospel preacher would suffer loss if one or more of his converts does not endure. Does this mean that the preacher, who has done everything within his power to encourage his converts to remain faithful, loses a portion of his heavenly reward if he cannot get that person to remain loyal? It seems greatly unfair to a man who has dedicated his life to the proclamation of the gospel, having foregone many advantages he could have had by following a secular work, who has suffered many things at the hands of an uncaring world and indifferent brethren, to miss out on certain blessings of heaven solely on account of some weak, undedicated member of the church who fell away!
 - e. If this is not the case, then, what did Paul mean when he said the gospel preacher would suffer loss? It is certainly true that a faithful preacher will suffer loss when he learns that some person he has taught and baptized has fallen away; he is even more critically hurt if that fallen saint dies in that sinful state.
 - f. But what did Paul mean by the statement, "but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire"? Perhaps he means that the pain he felt when one of his converts fell away was as severe as a painful burn; that when they contracted the guilt of sin, he felt the pain of their guilt (but only they were guilty).
 - 1) When they remained faithful, he rejoiced.
 - a) Philippians 2:16: "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

- b) Philippians 4:1: "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved."
 - c) 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20: "For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? *20* For ye are our glory and joy."
 - d) 2 John 4: "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father."
 - e) 3 John 4: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."
 - 2) Paul was grieved when anyone among the saints fell into sin (2 Tim. 4:16; 1 Cor. 5:1-6).
 - 3) Apparently, John felt a deep sense of loss when one of his "little children" fell into sin; that he would be incomplete if they should lose their salvation. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8).
 - g. The Bible teaches consistently and firmly that a man's salvation depends on his own faithfulness, not that of others. God graciously provides for our salvation, but our part is faithful, loving service. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). It is still the case that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). Since it is the case that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son, it also follows that the teacher shall not bear the iniquity of the student.
 - h. This passage has been abused by some for their own gain by inserting into the text the false doctrine of purgatory. Macknight spoke of the "Romish clergy, perceiving that this doctrine, properly managed, might be made an inexhaustible source of wealth to their order, have represented this fire of purgatory as lighted up from the very beginning of the world, and have kept it burning ever since, and have assumed to themselves the power of detaining souls in that fire, and of releasing them from it, according to their own pleasure; hereby they have drawn great sums of money from the ignorant and superstitious" (Vols. I-II, p.53).
- C. 1 Corinthians 3:16-23: God's Temple Must Be Kept Pure.
1. Verses 16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are."
 - a. The church is God's temple: "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). This passage teaches a different message from that of chapter 6:19. Paul speaks from the viewpoint there of individual Christians; here he speaks of the entire church, describing it as God's temple.
 - b. Here he says that *ye* (you Christians) are the *temple* (singular) of God. God has only one temple; Christians comprise that one temple. A temple is a building devoted to a religious purpose; but God's temple is a spiritual building made up of living stones.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:5-11: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past *were* not a people,
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- but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."
- c. As Christians are known by several different descriptions (disciple; saint; etc.), so the church is depicted by various terms. In the New Testament, the Lord's church is described under several different figures, including these:
 - 1) It is a kingdom—with Christ as the King.
 - 2) It is the body of Christ—with the Lord as its head.
 - 3) It is God's family—with Christ as the elder brother.
 - d. Verse sixteen states that the Holy Spirit dwells in the temple of God, the church. The fact is given here; the reason for the statement of the fact appears in the next verse.
 - 1) After the tabernacle was completed, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Ex. 40:34).
 - 2) On the completion of Solomon's temple, "...the cloud filled the house of the Lord, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:10-11).
 - 3) As the glory of God filled the tabernacle and temple, so the glory of God and the Spirit of God fill the church of Christ, God's spiritual temple (2 Sam. 7:1-13; Eph. 3:1-21). The Spirit abides in the church as the church imbibes the teachings of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-14; Rom. 8:1-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - e. An extremely strong curse is placed upon those who defile God's temple, the church. Vine says the word *destroy* means *to corrupt, to bring into a worse state*. If the temple is defiled, it ceases to be usable to God since he will not commune with evil (2 Cor. 6:14-18).
 - 1) The Christians at Corinth were defiling God's temple by their divisions, envying, and strife. That they may have been sincere was of no consequence; they were still committing sin!
 - 2) Unless they ceased their sinful conduct, they would accrue to themselves a far worse condition—God would destroy them.
 - a) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - b) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
2. Verse 18: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."
- a. The apostle again warns against the wisdom of the world. The subject being discussed is maintaining the purity of the church, thus it is with this thought in mind that the saints are cautioned against using the wisdom of the world. To use worldly wisdom in doing the work of the Lord or in an effort to build up the Lord's church, results in contaminating the Lord's temple (the church).
 - b. If we were to install in the work or the worship service of the church, some innovation which grows out of human wisdom instead of the Lord's will, we desecrate the church and pollute our own souls. Liberal elders, preachers, and others in the church, seeing that the pure gospel of Christ is hated by the majority in the world, have adulterated the worship, the work and other aspects of the church in our generation; all such gimmicks and misguided inventions may gain the world's attention and respect, but not the Lord's!
 - c. Paul warns further that if one thinks he is wise in this world, let him become a fool that he might become truly wise. Worldly wisdom causes a man to be self-deceived; he thinks he *knows* what God wants, so he invents *better* expressions of worship.
 - d. "Self-deception is the most common phase of deception among men....Many of us while gratifying the flesh imagine we are following the Spirit. Many preachers preach for money and ease and imagine they are preaching to save souls. Often we build fine houses to gratify our pride and persuade
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ourselves that we are doing it to serve God. Most of life's failures come from self-deception. We deceive ourselves as to our abilities, and undertake to do things we have no capacity to do. After years of close observation I feel sure that nine-tenths of the failures in life come from overweening confidence in self" (Lipscomb, pp.54f).

- e. To be pleasing to God, one must first become a fool as far as the world is concerned.
3. Verses 19-20: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."
 - a. Paul quotes from Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11 in these two verses. God is infinitely wise and knowing; there is nothing that he does not know and understand if he so chooses.
 - b. Knowing the full details of the creation of the universe, and seeing the foolish theories men invent to explain the existence of the universe apart from God, how idiotic such men must appear in the Creator's sight! These men are obviously intelligent and highly educated, but they are terribly foolish when they try to reason God out of his universe!
 - c. Men think they know a better way to worship God, so they install various innovations in the worship services that have no Biblical authority to be used. Such men are self-deceived; they are actually performing services that please themselves and stroke their own egos. Their *wisdom* is foolishness!
 - d. "Whenever men reject the word of God, or any part of it, because it does not agree with their own conceptions of what is right, they are in essential elements infidels. When a man tests the Bible and its truth, or any part of it, by his own judgment and opinions of what is right instead of those by that, he has rejected the word of God, and as the rule of faith for man....God so overrules as to destroy men with that by which they had devised to save themselves" (Lipscomb, p.56).
 - e. God knows that the wisdom of men is empty and will come to nothing. The most powerful denominations of the past are growing weaker, even though they are richer and more highly educated than ever before. They have followed doctrines and practices of their own design, thinking that their wisdom was mightier than God's. They are beginning to reap the reward of their own folly! Those denominations that are presently in the midst of expansions, riches, and prominence in the world, will inevitably taste the same defeat their predecessors are experiencing. And beyond this life, there is the horrible fate of eternal rejection—because they walked not in the ways of God.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 4) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - f. Jewish unbelievers and the pagan world in the first century began a series of persecutions against the church of Christ in an effort to eradicate it utterly from the earth. In their wisdom, the fiendish plot they devised was certain to destroy Christianity, but they failed to understand that they were fighting against the God of heaven! God knew their plans, and turned them to their own destruction. The Roman army destroyed Judaism; and the principles of the gospel ate away the foundation of the Roman Empire until its enemies were able to overthrow it. Matthew 24:1-35; Daniel 2.
 - g. The gospel of Christ will endure forever (Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:22-25). The church of Christ will exist as long as the gospel (Luke 8:11; Eph. 5:25-27). All those enemies of the Lord's church will eventually be overwhelmed by the Lord, and will be exposed as evildoers before the eyes of all.
4. Verse 21: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours."
 - a. In view of what he has just presented, Paul concludes that the Corinthians (and all Christians) were not to glory in men; men are not divine beings; men are capable of error; men operate by worldly

- wisdom, not by the wisdom of God. Those men who brought the gospel to them did not do so for their own glory; those men (Paul and Apollos) were seeking to bring glory to God by their preaching of the gospel, and trying to bring blessings and hope to the Corinthians by the same process.
- b. When the Corinthians aligned themselves behind their favorite preachers, they were giving glory to man, not to God. Even though the man might have been great and good, he was still a man. Giving glory to man instead of to God contains no benefits for those who do so.
 - c. But all those things which Paul and the other inspired preachers delivered to those to whom they preached were for the good of the hearers; they revealed and proffered blessings to them; they did not preach for their own personal benefit. Therefore, all those things which they revealed to the Corinthians (and others) belonged to the Corinthians (and to all others who would receive those bounties).
5. Verse 22: "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours."
- a. A Christian can enjoy the sunshine and air, and the beauties of earth, as much as anyone can; we can derive as much satisfaction from beautiful flowers as the one who grew them. The gospel is not given for any individual's exclusive use; it is for the good of all.
 - b. Although Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and others had to travel many hard miles, endure countless difficulties and persecutions, they did so for the benefit of those who had the privilege of hearing the glorious message of the gospel they preached; they were the means by which the Corinthians heard and obtained the blessings of the gospel; those blessings were for them and all others who will obey the gospel.
 - c. God was behind their mission and he gave the message. Life is ours; live it to God's glory, not to the glory of some man, even if he is a great man.
6. Verse 23: "And ye are Christ's; and Christ *is* God's."
- a. Christians belong to Christ; they do not belong to some preacher (not even to Paul or Peter); and even Christ does not belong to himself, but to God.
 - b. Since we belong to Christ, we also belong to God, for Christ belongs to God. The practice of exalting a man must, therefore, cease!
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1 CORINTHIANS 4

A. 1 Corinthians 4:1-5: The Proper View of Ministers.

1. Verse 1: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."
 - a. Paul continues the same general theme as that of the previous chapter. The proper way for the saints to view ministers of Christ, such as Paul and Apollos, is to see them as servants (ministers); they are no more important than other Christians. They are certainly not worthy of exalting as the Corinthians had done. So Paul instructs them to account them as servants and stewards of the mysteries of God.
 - b. A minister is one who serves; a steward is one who is charged with tending to the affairs of the master. As the servant (minister) is accountable to the master for the kind of service he renders, so the steward is held accountable for properly and faithfully handling the master's affairs as a trustworthy employee must. "And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:1-12).
 - c. The Master's goods which Paul was charged with handling were the mysteries of God. His obligations were to receive the revelations of the gospel and dispense them faithfully to all that he had opportunity to teach; his duty was to be done even though harsh persecutions interfered. He was held accountable unto God for fully discharging his duties even though family members or high-ranking officials opposed his work.
 - d. He was charged with carefully, accurately and fully relaying the information he received, without allowing fear or anyone's demand for favor to influence him away from his duties. And he had to live up to the demands of the gospel in his own life.
2. Verse 2: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
 - a. An unfaithful steward cannot discharge his obligations to his master; it is essential to the position that the steward be faithful; this is the very nature of a steward's duty. Paul, as a steward of Christ, was charged with the responsibility of relaying the truths of the gospel which he was given by inspiration to those who needed it.
 - b. As a steward, it was not his prerogative to receive the adulation of the ones he served; that praise was to be directed to God. The obvious point of this passage is to show the brethren that they ought not to exalt Paul or any other man to the place of honor and authority that only the Lord deserved.
 - c. Every Christian is a steward. The specific obligations depends to some degree upon the type and degree of the talents he possesses and the opportunities he is given. But every child of God bears responsibility.
 - 1) 1 Peter 4:10: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:17: "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."

- 3) Ephesians 5:16: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
 - 4) Titus 1:7: "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre."
 - 5) Luke 12:42-48: "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
3. Verse 3: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self."
 - a. Paul was not so much concerned with the judgment that the Corinthians, or any other men, might pass upon him. He is concerned, as he indicates in the next verse, with the judgment which God passes. His own judgment of himself might or might not be right; God's judgment is all that matters in the final analysis. The apostle does not have to answer to any man, but he must answer to the Lord; it is the Lord whom he serves as steward, and thus he must be keenly aware of how the Lord measures him.
 - b. It is to his own master that a servant must answer. An employee must answer to his employer, not to some other employer. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4). The apostle in Romans 14 is discussing such scruples as eating meat; in matters of conscience, each man must decide for himself what he is to do. If a servant pleases his master, the third party has no need to be concerned. That servant may not please this third party, but if the master is happy with the servant, the third party must keep quiet about it; it is none of his business. God is pleased with the Christian who does not eat meat because of scruples against doing so; God is pleased with the Christian who has no scruples against eating meat.
 4. Verse 4: "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord."
 - a. Paul states that he was not conscious of having done anything wrong in the discharge of his duties as steward. But he thought that he was doing right when he persecuted the church (Acts 23:1; 26:9). He was fully aware that the conscience is not a perfect guide since it might not be properly *set*. A conscience is like a clock, in that they both must be accurately set before they report the correct information.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:12: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."
 - c. 1 Timothy 1:5: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."
 - d. 1 Timothy 1:19: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck."
 - e. 1 Timothy 3:9: "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."
 - f. 1 Timothy 4:2: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
 - g. 2 Timothy 1:3: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."
 - h. Titus 1:15: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."
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- i. 1 Peter 3:16: "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."
 - j. 1 John 3:19-21: "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."
 - k. 1 Samuel 24:5: "And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt."
 - l. Romans 2:15: "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."
5. Verse 5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."
- a. The apostle cautions the brethren against prejudging a person or situation before the coming of the Lord. Only then, in the final Judgment, will the full truth be revealed.
 - b. At that time, in the final judgment (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12), will the evil things that were covered up and concealed from our human sight be uncovered. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest before-hand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid" (1 Tim. 5:24-25).
 - c. The faithfulness of the godly may not be fully known until the judgment, at which time it will be unveiled in all its glory.
 - d. The Corinthians had prejudged Paul, Apollos, and others in that they had lined up behind one or the other of these great men. Their judgment was premature even though they had decided that these men they exalted deserved to be exalted.
 - 1) Paul here points out that since the Lord's judgment has not been revealed as yet, we may not know the real condition of a man. Some men live their lives on earth without being recognized as godly men; others live their lives with daily accolades attesting their godliness, which may in fact be misplaced!
 - 2) The apostle, in this logical way, shows them the danger of exalting some man: they may have misplaced their trust in him.
 - e. Passing judgment in and of itself is not forbidden. John 7:24 shows that we may pass judgment only if it is *righteous* judgment (judging with all the pertinent facts in view). Matthew 7:1-5 teaches a much-needed lesson against harsh, unfair judging. Immediately following that passage is the Lord's injunction requiring us to decide whether or not a man is a spiritual swine (Matt. 7:6). There are several duties we cannot discharge without passing judgment:
 - 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) Philippians 3:2: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

- f. When the Judgment of the last day is completed, it is then that all who deserve praise from God will receive it. Until then, we may not be able to know fully in every case whether a man is what he ought to be.

B. 1 Corinthians 4:6-13: The Corinthians and the Apostles Are Contrasted.

1. Verse 6: "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and *to* Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another."
 - a. The ASV offers this rendering: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
 - b. In the context, Paul is uprooting the basic cause of their divisions: They were exalting their favorite preachers to a position of lordship over them. He has offered several arguments to show why this was wrong.
 - 1) He showed that Christ is not divided and that they were not baptized in the name of Paul (or in the name of any other man); Paul did not make disciples to himself, but to Christ (1:10-17).
 - 2) In a lengthy discussion, Paul showed that the wisdom of man was at variance with the wisdom of God; they were divided because they used their wisdom instead of God's wisdom, which caused them to glory in themselves and not in God (1:18-31).
 - 3) Paul said he preached the gospel to them by the power of the Spirit so that their faith would not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; his message did not originate in himself, but was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2:1-16).
 - 4) He rebuked them for their divisions, affirming that their strife proved that they were carnal (worldly-minded) (3:1-4).
 - 5) The apostle showed them that he and Apollos were servants of God, and thus unworthy of the exaltation the Corinthians were giving them; they were working with God; they were not his equals (3:5-9).
 - 6) He pointed out that the only foundation that is acceptable and durable is Christ; and that one must be very careful how the spiritual building is erected on this one foundation (3:10-15).
 - 7) The church is the temple of God, and one who defiles that temple will be destroyed; they were on the verge of defiling the temple by the divisions they were fomenting (3:16-20).
 - 8) Paul, Apollos, and Cephas belonged to Christ, and Christ belonged to God; the Corinthian Christians also belonged to Christ; the Corinthian saints were on the same level with the apostles (not counting the special authority and powers the apostles possessed) and were not to be placed on a par with Christ; they all were Christ's (3:21-23).
 - 9) He has shown in this chapter that he and Apollos were stewards of God, and as such were accountable to God for the way they discharged their office; only God could know whether they were faithful or not, and the full picture of their service would not be revealed until the Judgment; hence, for the Corinthians to exalt some man as their lord was to presume that man was faithful.
 - c. Paul states in this verse that he has used himself and Apollos as representative of those men who had been exalted by the Corinthians as their lords. He did so in order to teach them a much-needed lesson: that they might learn to stay within the confines of God's written word (the entire revelation would be recorded).
 - 1) By exalting mere men as their spiritual lords, the Corinthians were going beyond that which is written; they were wrong to do so.
 - 2) Paul and the others who had been exalted had had nothing to do with this practice; they were against such practices; the Corinthians must learn the sinfulness of the practice, and cease to exalt men; the divisions and strife which resulted from the practice placed them beyond the authority of God's word.
 - d. In reality, those individuals who exalted their favorite preacher were actually trying to exalt themselves. The apostle accuses them of being "puffed up" against each other.

- 1) Thus, one who claimed to be a follower of Paul might think that because his lord was an apostle, he was more important than one who followed Apollos, who was not an apostle. And the one who followed Peter might think that because he followed this great apostle, he was greater and more important than one who followed Paul, a man who did not personally walk with the Lord during his earthly ministry.
- 2) There may have been some men among the church at Corinth who had exalted themselves to positions of lordship over others in the congregation. If that is the case, what Paul says here and in the next verse severely denounces their superiority complex. This seems to be the case (4:17-21).
- e. The warning against going beyond that which is written shows that we must have authority for our beliefs and practices: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). The only location where we can find the Lord's authority expressed is in his written word.
 - 1) John 20:30-31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 3:14-15: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 4) 1 John 2:1-2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."
- f. We must respect the silence of the Scriptures; if we do not, we will go beyond that which is written.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 7:7: "In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?" David wanted to erect a more permanent and substantial house for God; God's response is stated in this verse: "Did I tell you to build it?" The implied answer is negative; hence, David had no authority to build such a house, and if he had built it anyway, he would have violated God's will.
 - 2) Hebrews 7:12-14: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Why could not Christ be a priest on earth? Because the Law of Moses had not authorized one from the tribe of Judah to serve in a priestly office; it had only authorized certain ones from the tribe of Levi to serve in such a capacity. Therefore, the Law had to be replaced (by the gospel) before Christ could become High Priest, and he serves in that capacity in heaven, not on earth. Christ respected the silence of the Old Testament Scriptures.
 - 3) Acts 15:24: "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment." Those teachers who went out from the Jerusalem church acted contrary to God's will when they taught something for which they had no authority. Neither the apostles nor any of the other inspired men at Jerusalem had given those men the right to require circumcision of the Gentile converts.
 - 4) Balaam did not have the right to do or to say anything which God's instructions had not included.
 - a) Numbers 22:18: "And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more."
 - b) Numbers 24:13: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond

the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak?"

- c) Numbers 22:20: "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do."
 2. Verse 7: "For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?"
 - a. Addressing their problem of being puffed up (proud) in their own sight, Paul asks them some soul-searching questions. The questions he raises shows that no Christian is more important than another saint; that no saint had the right to feel more important or more valuable than another (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12). First, what was there about them that made them different or more important than others? In spiritual concerns, was there anything they had that exalted the Corinthians above anyone else in the church?
 - b. Second, he asks them what do they have which they did not receive from some other source. Did they have anything that they had of their own design? In the final analysis, is there anything that a man has which cannot be traceable back to God? God is the giver of all good and perfect gifts (Jas. 1:17); God provides us our life, our talents, our health, our opportunities, our food, clothing, our means of making a living, and our strength. The items we manufacture are made from parts God has supplied.
 - c. In view of the fact that we do receive what we have, why did they glorify themselves as if they provided all those things by their own hand?
 - d. If there were some in the church who had taken upon themselves the position of authority, competing with others for supremacy in the church (as seems to be the case), Paul's questions strips them of their self-glory.
 - 1) If his point has to do with spiritual gifts these individuals had, his queries show that they did not generate these miraculous powers; rather, they received them from the Lord through the hands of an apostle (in their case, Paul).
 - 2) Regarding the spiritual blessings conferred upon them when they obeyed the gospel, they did not earn or generate these blessings by their own power; these were gifts from God, gifts which they learned about through the preaching and teaching done by the apostle.
 - 3) The natural talents they received from their parents, originated with God. If they had a natural ability to teach, or serve as an elder or deacon, or lead singing, or lead public prayers, their ability was derived from God. That did not make them more valuable than those with fewer or lesser natural talents. A man with an outstanding talent is not a better man than one with no talent for sports. A man well-blessed with good looks, fine intellect, or good personality is not superior to another man less-blessed in these areas. Yet the well-blessed individuals often despise others who are not so well-blessed.
 - e. If Paul's points in the questions are general, having application to any of the saints, he is showing that no one has the right to glory in himself. If his points are specific, having application to those who gloried in themselves because of their spiritual gifts, they did not have the right to be exalted in their own eyes.
 3. Verse 8: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."
 - a. The apostle may be using irony to denounce the self-importance the false teachers had taken upon themselves. The false teachers would be those who had exalted themselves to be rulers over the church. If he is addressing these words to the church as a whole, he is seeking to deflate their ego and help them to see that they have no cause to be self-exalted. Using biting language to drive home his point, Paul describes them as being full and rich, and that they had reigned as kings, having no connection with the apostles.
 - b. Paul states that he would be glad if they did have such positions of honor, so that those who were instrumental in their conversion could reign with them instead of suffering the deprivations and persecutions that now were upon Paul and the other apostles.
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- c. His ironic statements registered his strong disapproval of their proud dispositions which had led to the strife, envy, and divisions which now characterized them. Paul was not offering petty objections against insignificant problems; he was writing by the inspiration of God, and was registering God's disapproval of their faults. Their problems were severe and dangerous.
4. Verses 9-11: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace."
 - a. Paul identifies who he meant by his use of the pronoun *we* in the previous verse. While these men at Corinth had exhibited vainglory in exalting themselves, Paul regarded himself and the other apostles as having been relegated to the lowest possible estate.
 - b. Everywhere they went preaching the gospel, the apostles met with opposition and persecution. The apostles occupied the office which had the greatest authority, responsibility, and power in the church.
 - 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:28: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."
 - 3) Only the apostles had the power to confer spiritual gifts (Acts 8:14-24). All of the other inspired workers in the church obtained their spiritual gifts through the apostles; the apostles received their authority and power from Christ (Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4; John 14:26; 16:13). But that great authority did not make the apostles to be more valuable as individuals than any other Christian. [Note: Cornelius received his miraculous powers directly from heaven, the purpose of which was to convince the Jewish Christians who were with Peter that the Gentiles had the right to receive the gospel—Acts 10-11].
 - 4) The authority and power the apostles received were not given to them for selfish purposes. They had the power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and accomplish many other marvelous works, but these powers did not deliver them from hardships or give them positions of honor and respect among men.
 - 5) From outward indications, it appeared that the apostles were designed especially to die for the Lord, to be doomed to an ignominious death; that instead of receiving honor, they were given the place of least honor.
 - 6) Using a graphic figure of speech, he describes the apostles' status in life as a *spectacle* unto the world, to angels, and to men. The marginal rendering of *spectacle* is *theatre*, possibly a reference to the arena where gladiators fought to the death, and where others were forced to fight wild beasts. In the stands which surrounded these arenas, thousands of bloodthirsty spectators watched the life and death struggles going on before them. The mere fact is stated regarding the angels being witnesses to the grisly scene the apostle described; that angels are aware of human affairs is clear, but no details are given here.
 - c. Further drawing the contrast between these Corinthians and the apostles, Paul says that they are wise in Christ but the apostles were fools for Christ; they had exalted themselves to positions of honor, but the apostles were shown dishonor.
 - 1) Paul is still using ironic language to draw a strong contrast between those sinful Corinthians and the suffering apostles. They were strong, but the apostles were weak; they were honored, but the apostles were despised.
 - 2) Using human wisdom as the standard, the apostles were foolish, weak, and worthy of despite because they willingly endured persecutions for Christ's sake; but in the light of man's wisdom, the vainglorious men of Corinth were wise, strong, and honored because they sought positions of glory for themselves.

- 3) Anyone with even a casual understanding of the nature of the gospel will recognize that those glory-seekers at Corinth had their reward now, but that the apostles' reward was yet to be given.
 - a) Matthew 23:12: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."
 - b) Matthew 6:2: "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."
 - c) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - d) Philippians 4:12: "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."
- d. Even at the present time, the apostles were suffering hunger and thirst, went without proper clothing (cf. 2 Tim. 4:13), were buffeted (Acts 16:23; 23:2), and had no certain dwellingplace. When the apostles accepted the mantle of Christ, they willingly forfeited the normal comforts of life; and because they were faithful in the discharge of their duties to the Lord, ungodly men opposed and persecuted them in every possible way.
 - 1) Acts 16:23: "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely."
 - 2) Acts 23:2: "And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:13: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments."
5. Verses 12-13: "And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day."
 - a. The apostles were not often privileged to be supported by the brethren, but rather found it wise and often necessary to work with their own hands to provide for their necessities.
 - 1) Acts 18:2-3: "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:7-9: "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*."
 - b. When they were reviled by their enemies, they did not return in like kind, but rather blessed them. As the Lord had done on the cross, so the apostles did now.
 - 1) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
 - 2) Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. *19* Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body

on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

- c. When they were persecuted, they patiently endured it (cf. Matt. 5:43-48). Paul called on them to imitate his example (1 Cor. 11:1). The false teachers at Corinth were not reviled or persecuted; if they were willing to compromise the truth in one matter (in exalting themselves), they would not be hesitant to deny other features of the gospel in order to avoid persecution. False teachers are not often persecuted.
- d. When the apostles were defamed, they entreated their enemies, pleading with them to believe and obey the gospel (cf. Acts 26:24-31). It is a hard thing to endure when men speak reproachfully of us because we are faithful Christians, calling us by ungodly names and attributing all sorts of evil to us.
 - 1) Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, wrote to Emperor Trajan about 112 A.D. asking for advice as to how he should deal with Christians who met on an appointed day to sing hymns "to Christ as if to God" (*Epist. X.96*).
 - 2) Tacitus, a Roman historian, in *Annals* (115 A.D.) speaks of "Christus, who in the reign of Tiberas the emperor was condemned to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate" (XV.44).
 - 3) Suetonius, another Roman writer, declared that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome as they "were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus" (*Vita Claudii XXV.4*).
- e. Paul said that the apostles were made to appear as the filth of the world, as the offscouring of the earth. The filth that is swept up or scoured off a dirty floor is repulsive; the enemies of the gospel considered the Lord's apostles to be no better than the dirt and filth swept from the floor of a squalid hovel, and treated them as such.
- f. We must remember what Paul said in other places, lest we get the idea here that he was complaining. He said elsewhere that he gladly accepted the persecutions of his enemies, for that indicated that he (and the other apostles) was pleasing to the Lord.
 - 1) Acts 5:41-42: "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:7-12: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

C. 1 Corinthians 4:14-21: Paul Explains the Intent of the Words He Has Just Used.

1. Verse 14: "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*."
 - a. He did not pen the foregoing (or anything that follows) for the purpose of bringing unnecessary shame upon them. Rather, he expressed the strong words to them for the purpose of warning them of the error of their ways.
 - b. Paul was not bitter at his lot in life; he was happy to serve Christ in any capacity. He warned them for their own good, and for the benefit of the gospel.
2. Verse 15: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."
 - a. During their lifetime, they might have ten thousand teachers, but they had only one father. A teacher in secular subjects is interested in communicating the information he is hired to teach; he may not have any concern over the conduct of the student outside the classroom. But the child's father is interested in the entire scope of his offspring's life; he will teach, but he will also warn of dangers.

- b. They might have had ten thousand teachers in Christ, but Paul thought of himself as their father; he was deeply concerned with their affairs; he wanted only the best for them, thus he was willing to warn. He had their best interests at heart, just as a father wants the best for his children.
- c. He had begotten them through the gospel. They were his children in the faith in that he had been the one who taught them the gospel, which in turn brought them into the church (Acts 18:8; cf. 1 Tim. 1:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:1). We are inherently concerned with those we have taught and baptized.
- 1) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:1-2: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope; Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:1: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
 - 4) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
 - 5) 2 John 1:4: "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father."
 - 6) 3 John 1:3-4: "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."
- d. The gospel is the means by which the new birth is accomplished. *New Birth* is a figure of speech; it is equivalent to *obeying the gospel*.
- 1) John 3:1-8: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."
 - 2) James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
 - 3) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- e. The process which the Lord called the new birth in John 3, he described in literal language in other passages, such as Acts 8:1-39 and Romans 10:13-18.
- 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 2:36-38: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus
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- Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - f. Paul was in Christ (Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:27) and he had so taught these Corinthians that they could also enter Christ (Eph. 1:3).
 - 1) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 3. Verse 16: "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."
 - a. In view of the fact that he was, in a figure, their father, he pleads with them to follow him. He is not advocating what he denounced beginning in 1:10-17. They had set certain men up as their idols; he strongly opposed such actions. Here and in chapter 11:1 the ASV uses *imitators* instead of *followers*.
 - b. But being an apostle, and teaching the full truth of the gospel by inspiration, and living the Christian life, they could use him as an example of what a Christian is to be.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:1: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."
 - 3) Philippians 3:17: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."
 - 4) Philippians 4:9: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 3:9: "Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."
 - 6) 1 Thessalonians 1:6: "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."
 - 7) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
 4. Verse 17: "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."
 - a. To encourage their imitation of himself (as he followed Christ), Paul sent Timothy to them so he could remind them of what Paul taught and how he lived. The apostle's life was proper to be imitated only to the extent that he followed the gospel himself. Not having the written word of God, the Corinthians would be able to see in Paul the kind of lives, words, motives, and attitudes they should have.
 - b. Paul had great love and respect for Timothy.
 - 1) Here he calls him his *beloved son*, and affirms the faithfulness of Timothy.
 - 2) 2 Timothy 1:5: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:14-15: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
 - 4) Philippians 2:19-20: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state."
 - c. Timothy taught what Paul instilled in him. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).
 - 1) These things Timothy was to teach to the Corinthians, the Philippians, and every other person and congregation. What Paul taught in one place, he taught elsewhere; what he taught one congregation (or one Christian), he taught to the rest.
 - 2) All the inspired preachers taught the same truths, and the inspired message they recorded was

- unified (Gal. 2:1-10). If we correctly understand that written message, we will all understand it alike.
5. Verses 18-19: "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power."
 - a. He plainly states that some of them were "puffed up" with pride. They recognized the authority the apostle possessed, for they had observed certain miraculous events wrought at his hands. Despite knowing the power the Lord had given him, they retained their "puffed-up" disposition, as if there was no possibility that Paul would return. If he should return, they knew that he would be forced to take some kind of action against them.
 - b. In verse nineteen, he announces his intention to return to Corinth, if the Lord permitted; and when he came, he would not be interested in listening to the speech of those who were puffed up, but would know the power.
 - c. He would return for the purpose of "deflating" those who had inflated egos. He would use his apostolic power to set things right. He implies that some kind of strong action would be taken against these false teachers who sought to undermine his apostleship.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:1-3: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:10: "For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 12:20-21: "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 1:19-20: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."
 - 6) 1 Corinthians 5:1-7: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
 - 7) 2 Corinthians 12:20-21: "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."
 - 8) 3 John 9-10: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church."
 6. Verse 20: "For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power."
 - a. The kingdom of God does not rest on words only, but on power. The miracles that were wrought in
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the first century proved that point. The Pentecostals today offer nothing but empty claims to prove they are able to work miracles.

- b. A genuine apostle could prove his apostleship easily by supernatural works; false teachers can offer only empty words.
7. Verse 21: "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?"
- a. He asks them what they want: do they want him to come to them with a rod or in the spirit of meekness? If they said the latter, that would require repentance on the part of the evildoers. If he came with the rod, that would imply some kind of punishment would be meted out when he arrived. That apostles had the power to afflict is seen in at least two cases (Acts 5:1-11; Acts 13:6-12).
 - b. This punishment was the Lord's doing, and has no direct parallel today. The strongest action we are permitted to take is the withdrawal of fellowship.
 - 1) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
 - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."
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1 CORINTHIANS 5

A. 1 Corinthians 5:1-8: Paul Reproves Their Toleration of the Incestuous Brother.

1. Verse 1: "It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."
 - a. The apostle here begins to deal with the second great sin of the Corinthians, a loose and condoning attitude toward sin in their own ranks.
 - b. Broadly stating the source of the charge, Paul asserts that it was commonly reported that fornication was in evidence among the saints at Corinth, including the gross situation of one member who was carrying on an incestuous relationship with his father's wife. If the woman involved was the younger man's fleshly mother, the apostle would have said so, instead of using the ambiguous "his father's wife." Rather, the woman was the man's step-mother.
 - c. Although the Gentile world had reached nearly the lowest depths of moral depravity, this erring saint had done something that was frowned upon by those pagans. The Old Testament forbade inter-marriage between blood relatives (Lev. 18:6ff); it outlawed such conduct as that practiced by this Christian (Lev. 8:8; Deut. 27:20). The New Testament also forbade such conduct.
 - 1) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 2) Colossians 3:3-5: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who* is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - d. The evidence indicates that the man's father was still alive: "Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you" (2 Cor. 7:12). Here Paul refers back to his initial reference to the case at hand, saying that he did not address the matter primarily to punish the offender or to see justice done for him who was offended (the man's father), but to express his concern for them all.
 - e. There is no indication about the relative ages of the wife and the son. Possibly they were of the same general age, but that is by no means sure, since older women and younger men have been known to get involved with each other. The text suggests that the illicit relationship being discussed was still in progress (he "*hath* his father's wife"—ASV).
 - f. *Fornication* is the broad category of sexual misconduct. Adultery, incest, homosexuality, and other such sins are subcategories of fornication.
2. Verse 2: "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."
 - a. The whole congregation should have been in mourning over this immoral situation, but they were *puffed up* concerning it. Apparently, they considered themselves above sin, but when they allowed this sinful member to go unrebuked, they tolerated sin and brought themselves under condemnation. Paul condemns their lax attitude toward this sin. Strong denunciation of sin is common in the Bible.
 - 1) Revelation 3:1: "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."
 - 2) Revelation 3:15-17: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

- 3) Isaiah 3:9: "The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves."
 - b. Did the church have elders? Possibly, but no reference is made to them. If there were elders in the church, it was their obligation to remedy the problem. The resolution of the problem fell to the apostle Paul.
 - c. Those who become guilty of sin are to be disciplined.
 - 1) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
 - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."
 - d. Some object to the practice of withdrawal on the basis of the parable of the tares, thinking that the Lord requires us to wait until the Judgment before the *tares* can be removed from the *wheat*.
 - 1) This interpretation clashes with the plain commands stated in the passages listed above. This fact is sufficient to show the conclusion is wrong.
 - 2) The parable itself shows the truth Christ affirmed. The seed represents the children of the kingdom; the tares represented the children of the devil; the field is the world (not the church). In the Judgment, the Lord will separate his people from all of those who are part of the world (which is described as *his kingdom* in this context).
 - 3) The Parable of the Tares:
 - a) Matthew 13:24-30: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."
 - b) Matthew 13:36-43: "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - e. In the meantime, each local congregation of his people is to follow the requirements of the New
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Testament to withdraw from those members who walk disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6). The church at Corinth had not been obeying this precept.

3. Verse 3: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed."
 - a. The apostle was not physically present in their midst at the time he wrote the letter, but he was in their presence spiritually. He was fully appraised of the situation, and sincerely desired for the right thing to be done.
 - b. His conclusion was the proper judgment on the matter, for he was supernaturally guided in the information he wrote.
4. Verses 4-5: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."
 - a. When they came together (at the gathering of the church), they were to withdraw from the guilty person. Paul would be present in spirit, in that the instructions he gave would be the guiding influence of the action contemplated, and his heart would be with them in that action.
 - b. The withdrawal process was ordained by the will of Christ: *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 1:10). It was by the *power* (authority) of Christ. The decision to discipline the man was not theirs to make; they were not told to *vote* on the man's guilt or innocence, but to implement the orders the Lord had sent them by the apostle Paul's inspired letter.
 - c. The action they were to take was described in verse two as the perpetrator *being taken away from among you*. In verse five, that action is depicted as his being delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh."
 - 1) Certainly Paul is not commanding them to execute this sinful saint. Those who walk not according to the truth of the gospel are to be disfellowshipped (2 Thess. 3:6), not slain or beaten (2 Thess. 3:14-15). Reference is made to the mortifying of the works of the flesh in Colossians 3:5 (cf. Rom. 8:12-13). To mortify our earthly members is to cause them to cease leading us into sin.
 - 2) Paul delivered certain wayward members unto Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck; Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:19-20). The object of this *deliverance unto Satan* could be accomplished only if these men remained alive in this world. It was Paul's aim in the discipline process to cause these offenders to learn not to blaspheme. In eternity, it is certain that they will learn this great precept—but then it will be too late to profit them. However, if they could learn it in this life, they could amend their ways and be saved. It is a painful experience to be cut off from the warm fellowship that faithful Christians share, but which is lost when one is disciplined.
 - 3) "It probably means that he was separated from the fellowship of the church, from all association with the brethren in Christ, regarded and treated as a heathen; that by these influences he might be brought to realize the enormity of his sin, and turn from fleshly lusts, and be restored to a life of holiness, and to the fellowship of the church that he might at last be saved" (Lipscomb, p.75).
 - d. The purpose of the withdrawal was to save the soul of the offender. He would suffer from the discipline, but the aim was for the good of his soul. He would suffer from the withdrawal, and be brought back to his senses. The procedure worked: "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many. So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:4-11).

- e. The passage clearly teaches that a brother in Christ can so sin as to lose his soul. This person was a part of the Corinthian church of Christ; he committed sin; he stood condemned as a sinner; the church was told to discipline him so that his spirit could be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20).
- f. Our eternal salvation is obtained in the next world (in heaven): The "day of the Lord Jesus" is the last day, the time when it will be is not revealed in the Scriptures.
- 1) Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."
 - 2) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 3) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:3-9: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 - 6) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 7) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- g. In exercising church discipline, grave danger posed by sin is recognized, the welfare of the sinner is the initial point of interest, and the general welfare of the church is directly involved in the long run.
5. Verse 6: "Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"
- a. What Paul called being "puffed up" in verse two, he describes as "glorying" in this verse. The saints at Corinth evidently thought they had no need to fear falling into sin. In the church of our time, there seems to be an attitude similar to that of the Corinthians.
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- 1) We recognize the possibility of sinning, and admit that we commonly commit sin, but many of us have a difficult time identifying our most recent specific act of sin. We often openly admit our sinful tendencies, and seem to take pleasure in afflicting ourselves with this knowledge, possibly thinking that this self-imposed affliction will erase or ease our guilt.
 - 2) Many of the current generation of church members are developing the attitude that they do not frequently sin. Doctrinal deviations are placed in the realm of opinion, and denied to be a source of sin. The grace of God is given too loose an interpretation by some, giving the impression that grace will automatically and unconditionally cover every transgression.
 - 3) Many modern preachers emphasize the positive so much, that little or no time is spent condemning sin and issuing warnings against such. Sin is not often identified and discussed. Brethren are continually told how great they are that many have begun to believe it! Judging from some bulletin items written by local preachers, every member is the picture of perfection, there is no cloud on any horizon, and the congregation is utterly without any imperfection!
 - 4) The glorying of the brethren at Corinth is rivaled by that of many of our modern brethren. As Paul mildly described it, such *glorying is not good*. Their glorying [being puffed up] was not so much that they were glad of the erring brother's sin, but that they thought that this sin, as well as virtually any other sin, was insignificant—that the more they sinned, the greater the grace they received. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1-2).
- b. Because of their attitude of ignoring the seriousness of sin and taking pride in their own supposed strength, Paul warned them of the folly of such dispositions. A little leaven, Paul reminds them, is capable of spreading its influence throughout the whole lump.
- 1) Leaven is used in the Scriptures in a good sense and an evil sense (Matt. 13:33; 16:6). As leaven can permeate an entire lump of dough, exerting its power throughout, so a Christian's influence can be spread through the entire congregation. The nature of the influence depends of the nature of the individual.
 - a) Matthew 13:33: "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."
 - b) Matthew 16:6: "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."
 - 2) If the incestuous man was allowed to continue his sinful lifestyle, others would be affected. Other saints might get the idea that they ought to follow his example; outsiders might develop the wrong idea about the church, thinking that their pagan ways were superior to the way of Christ.
 - 3) For the benefit of the sinful person, the church, and the lost, it was essential for them to take the action Paul ordered them to take.
6. Verse 7: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
- a. Paul alludes to the Old Testament regulations governing the Passover (Ex. 12). As the Israelites were to put leaven out of their houses during that special occasion, so the church at Corinth was to disfellowship the wicked man so that the whole church could avoid being contaminated by his sin. To purge is to get rid of any tainting agent, to cleanse (cf. 2 Pet. 1:9).
 - b. The sinful man was to be removed from the *lump* (the congregation) so that they could become a new lump. As a new lump, they would be uncontaminated and fresh. This is the way each Christian and each congregation must be if either is to be of use to the Lord. There is the continuing need for our examining ourselves in the light of the Scriptures (2 Cor. 13:5; Jas. 1:21-27), and make whatever changes are indicated.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"
 - 2) James 1:21-27: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he
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is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."

- c. For this reason, preachers and teachers must persevere in studying the Bible, and presenting Bible lessons to show what God requires of us.
 - d. Christ is said to be our Passover. The Old Testament Passover did not typify the Lord's Supper. The analogy between the Passover lamb and Christ shows several points of comparison.
 - 1) Both are without blemish (Ex. 12:5; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:21; Heb. 4:15).
 - 2) The Passover lamb was to be slain at evening (Lev. 23:5; Ex. 12:6; cf. Matt. 27:45-50).
 - 3) The blood of the Passover lamb produced the deliverance of ancient Israel when the death-plague passed over Egypt (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7; Matt. 26:28).
 - 4) The bones of the Passover lamb were not to be broken (Ex. 12:46; cf. John 19:36-37; Ps. 34:20).
7. Verse 8: "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth."
- a. Reference is not here made to the Lord's Supper. The point under consideration is Christian living. The church is to be purged of the evil leaven (the sinful member) so that each of its members could be clean and pure, and thus be able to live the Christian life.
 - b. Christ is depicted as our feast. As we partake of his word, we partake of him figuratively.
 - 1) John 6:32-35: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." [This passage does not refer to eating the Lord's Supper, but describes the disciple's relationship to the Master].
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:6: "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."
 - 4) Hebrews 6:5: "And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come."
 - 5) Hebrews 13:10: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."
 - 6) 1 Peter 2:2-3: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious." [Many years ago an Ethiopian King who had been *converted* to Christianity thought that he could feed his soul by eating two pages of the Bible each day. He met with no adverse effects until he reached the colored pages; the chemicals on those pages killed him. The blessings of the Bible do not come from the literal pages, but from the inspired message revealed on the pages].
 - c. All great blessings are given to Christians through Christ, including the privilege of eating the Lord's Supper. The full blessings of a nation are reserved for those who are legal citizens.
- B. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13: Christians Are Not To Keep Company With Sinners.
1. Verse 9: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators."
 - a. Paul alludes to another epistle he had sent to them. If knowing the contents of this other letter was essential, it would have been preserved for us, or would be included in another part of the text that has been retained for our use.
 - b. The apostle mentions one significant matter discussed in that other epistle, hence we have that detail taught here; if there was anything else in the former letter we needed to know, it is included in other
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- parts of God's written revelation in our possession (Jude 3; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).
- c. Not everything that Paul (or another apostle) spoke was inspired; similarly, not everything that they wrote was inspired. Peter might have written a letter to his wife, but that private letter would not have to be inspired. It is possible that Paul had written a non-inspired letter to the brethren in Corinth; if so, there would have been no need for its preservation.
 - d. Paul taught in the former letter, and restated here, that Christians are not to company with fornicators. A fornicator is one who practices one or more of the vile acts classified as fornication. To "company with" such a person is to associate with him in any manner which would condone his act or encourage him to continue in that practice; and surely we must not put ourselves in a position to be influenced by that individual to do evil.
2. Verse 10: "Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."
- a. We cannot live in this world without some degree of contact with the people of the world. Even our Lord had dealings with sinners, including the high priest and his associates, and the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - b. Paul correctly stated in this verse that if we must cut off every possible contact with fornicators or other sinners, we would have to leave this world altogether. He names several kinds of sinners, placing them on the same level: fornicators; covetous; extortioners; idolaters.
 - c. Where on the earth could one go and conduct a normal life without coming in contact with sinners? "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Even members of the church occasionally commit sin (1 John 1:7-10).
 - d. What the Lord is forbidding, therefore, is not living in total isolation from sinful men, but having no fellowship with them to the extent of condoning their wicked ways or encouraging them in their rebellion against the will of God. Christians must live this life in this world, but we are prohibited from partaking of the evils of the world; we are in the world, but not part of the world.
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - e. This was especially true of Corinth, a place widely known for its wickedness. How could any of the saints live in Corinth without *rubbing shoulders* with the sinners who resided there? They could not avoid having some degree of contact with the sinners of the world, but they had more control in regards to the sinful ones in the church. This is the very point of the context.
3. Verse 11: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."
- a. In this epistle, Paul writes that a faithful Christian must not keep company with a brother who is a fornicator. This shows clearly that a brother can become guilty of this heinous sin. Such an erring saint will be lost if he does not repent (Gal. 5:19ff; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). The apostle's statement requires our ability to recognize a fornicator, thus there is a reliable standard by which a brother's fornication can be identified.
 - b. He expands the list beyond fornication to include any Christian who becomes covetous, or practices idolatry, or is a railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner. He names these several kinds of sin which members of the church might practice, but these are not intended to exhaust the list of possibilities; these are representative of any and all sins; no sin is to be condoned or encouraged or practiced.
 - c. We are not permitted to eat with such people. Other passages shed light on this thought:
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 3:14: "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no
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- company with him, that he may be ashamed."
- 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) Matthew 18:17: "And if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 5:13: "...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."
- d. That the Lord is not here forbidding us to eat the Lord's Supper with such a person is seen from the following considerations:
- 1) We have no way (or authority) to prevent a disfellowshipped brother's partaking of the Lord's Supper. If we do, how? Do we have the right to get a court order to prevent his doing so? No (1 Cor. 6). Do we have the right to bar or eject him physically from the building?
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 11:28 shows that eating the Lord's Supper is an individual matter; we do not have the right to refuse it to anyone.
- e. Since we cannot physically or legally prevent a wicked person's eating the Lord's Supper, and since we have the ability and requirement of refusing to eat with him, the kind of meal indicated is a common meal.
- 1) If a Christian gets involved in sin, his guilt is exposed to the church and he is disfellowshipped, faithful saints are to do nothing that would encourage him in his sinful condition. The purpose of the discipline is to make him become ashamed of his wickedness, and repent. Also, the church is kept pure by that process.
 - 2) If another Christian associates with the disciplined member in such a way as to suggest that he condones the erring member's sins, or if he encourages the erring member's continuation in that sin, the purposes of the withdrawal of fellowship have been undermined.
 - 3) One of the most visible and effective ways of having fellowship with another person is to share a meal with him. This is what the apostle is trying to prevent in the case of those who are disfellowshipped.
4. Verse 12: "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?"
- a. It is not our responsibility to judge (in the sense of condemning and consigning unbelievers to the lower reaches of Torment).
 - b. Christ did not come to condemn the world, because the world was already under the condemnation of sin (John 3:17-18). When those of the sinful world stand before the Lord in the Judgment, the purpose of their being there will not be to determine their guilt or innocence; their guilt will have already been abundantly established. The purpose of the Judgment will be to announce formally the verdict; no one will be able to refute that ruling. There will be no appeal of the verdict!
 - c. Paul was not concerned about judging those who were entrenched in the world of sin; he preached the gospel to them and gave them the opportunity to obey, but he did not try to coerce them: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:44-48).
 - d. But every faithful Christian is seriously concerned about the welfare of all the other members. He will do what he can do to encourage their faithfulness, and to urge their repentance when they fall. We judge in the sense of doing all within our power to keep the church pure. Those who will not repent are to be disciplined; in this way we *judge* our brethren.
5. Verse 13: "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that
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wicked person."

- a. God does the judging and condemning of the wicked. Each congregation has both the right and the God-given responsibility to administer discipline to those members who become unfaithful. Often, brethren argue that those members who fall away, refuse to attend, and perhaps join some manmade denomination, have already withdrawn their fellowship from us, and that we have no need to go through the motions of withdrawal.
 - b. This argument fails to take into consideration that we must break fellowship with them, not only for their good, but for the good of the church and other precious souls who might otherwise obey the gospel. We have the responsibility to identify and separate ourselves from those who are out of step with the truth! If we do not do so, weak members might be emboldened to follow the wayward member into apostasy.
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1 CORINTHIANS 6

A. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8: Lawsuits Among Brethren Are Forbidden.

1. Verse 1: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?"
 - a. This verse implies that, although we are Christians, we can still have problems with other saints. Christians must have the right attitude toward each other. We must develop characters that are willing to suffer wrong rather than to do wrong, to return good for evil.
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Romans 12:17-20: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."
 - 3) Matthew 5:39-41: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."
 - 4) When brethren get into a lawsuit over a church building, even if you win the case, you may still lose. The influence of the church can be greatly weakened, if not destroyed, in the community. Nevertheless, the case may be necessary in the interest of the Cause—if the truth of the matter is brought to light in the hearing.
 - b. The *unjust* are the unbelievers (verse 6). Why go to court before unbelievers when the matter could be settled among the saints? Civil government was ordained by God, but it is usually oriented toward humanistic concepts, and is not concerned with spiritual values and standards.
 - c. Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."
 - 1) This illustration is from the Law of Moses but the principle is still true. Our differences ought to be settled out of court, being arbitrated by our brethren if necessary.
 - 2) There will be differences among brethren (Matt. 18:15-17). The differences Paul deals with here are not doctrinal; these problems are matters of personality conflicts and opinions, and private offenses.
 - d. The word *dare* indicates the dire nature of one Christian suing another Christian. The practice is sinful, and is utterly inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the gospel.
2. Verses 2-3: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"
 - a. Some of the Corinthians appear to have been boastful of their knowledge (cf. 8:1). Five times in this chapter, Paul uses the expression, "Know ye not?" (6:3, 9, 15, 16, 19). In this verse he raises the same question in a slightly different arrangement.
 - b. The apostle shows that saints have the capability of resolving problems that develop. He states that we shall judge the world, and that this qualifies us to judge the smaller matters that arise between brethren.
 - c. How do saints judge the world? The question is raised, but no direct answer is given as to how and when this judging will be done. Coffman, Clarke, and others have suggested that Paul's question here is sarcasm. "First, the matter of human beings judging men and angels is just such a thing as would have been advocated by the conceited false teachers in Corinth..." (Coffman, p.82). This view says the apostle was denouncing their attitude of thinking their knowledge was superior, and that he was

- not saying that we will judge angels. But this interpretation has to be read into the text; it is not an obvious or clear view.
- d. Perhaps the principle of Matthew 12:41-42 applies: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."
 - 1) When the Judgment is convened at the end of time, all men will be gathered before Christ's judgment seat; the faithfulness of the godly will stand as a reproof of those who lived in sin; and those who are approved on that occasion will fully concur with the Lord's judgment that the rest should be sent away from the Lord.
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Those wicked angels will be consigned to hell because of their rebellion against God. The godly lives of the saints will stand as reproof of their evil conduct, and the saints will concur with the judgment they receive.
 - e. Hebrews 11:7: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
 - 1) The righteous conduct and preaching of Noah condemned the wicked people of his generation; our godly conduct and faithful proclamation of the gospel will reprove the world of its sin.
 - 2) Before we can preach the gospel to the lost, we must first make the decision who is lost; and before we can restore an erring saint, we must decide that he has erred from the truth (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20). This decision is a judgment, although our conclusion does not consign anyone to his eternal destiny.
 - f. The point of the passage is clear: in view of the fact that saints are to judge the world and angels, we are therefore capable of deciding issues that pertain to this life among ourselves, without having to expose our inner troubles before the unbelieving world. Convincing the world of the rightness of Christianity is difficult enough without such things complicating the issue: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12).
3. Verse 4: "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church."
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) "If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church?" (ASV).
 - 2) "If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?" (NKJ).
 - 3) "So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church?" (ESV).
 - b. The ASV renders this verse in the form of a question: "If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church?"
 - c. This may be intended as a reproach to the members who sought to resolve their problems before heathen tribunals. That is the point of the context.
 - d. Paul is not telling them to seek out the least qualified among their number to settle their differences, for in the next verse he tells them to find a wise man from their ranks to solve the problems.
 - e. The brethren could have asked those who possessed a pertinent spiritual gift to exercise his special power to decided the issue; some of those gifts would have enabled the individual to reach the proper decision: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:8-10).
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4. Verse 5: "I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?"
 - a. They were boastful over their superior knowledge and attainments and spiritual gifts; could they not find at least one man with sufficient wisdom to settle their inner conflicts? The question implies an affirmative answer.
 - b. Paul shames them for their unholy practice of exposing the Lord's cause to the contempt of the unbelievers.
5. Verse 6: "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers."
 - a. Their disputes may have concerned such things as an inheritance, property lines, and negligent injuries. Whatever the nature of the strife, the scriptural method of handling the problem is to settle it among saints.
 - b. What is wrong with going before civil authorities with a problem between brethren? The fact that the church's trouble is unveiled in public, which would cause the gospel to be denigrated. Lying behind that is the breakdown of brotherly love to the point where the difficulty cannot be solved within the church or between the individuals.
6. Verse 7: "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"
 - a. It would be better that the innocent party in the strife should be defrauded by the other party, rather than the cause of Christ being defamed in a civil court.
 - b. One of the key ingredients making Christianity different from the religions of men is the willingness on the part of Christians to suffer in behalf of the truth.
 - 1) Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - 2) Matthew 5:43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
 - 3) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
7. Verse 8: "Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren."
 - a. By insisting on their *rights* before a pagan court, Christians commit sin. "Unless there were efforts to wrong and defraud one another there would be but slight cause for differences among brethren. If each would look to his brother's interest instead of his own, the occasions of difference would be greatly lessened" (Lipscomb, p.85).
 - b. If the Lord's requirements are being followed by two Christians, a significant problem could scarcely develop.
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Mark 12:30-31: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:24: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*."
 - 4) Philippians 2:4: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of

others."

- c. The church's standing in a community and the influence of individual Christians are important issues, and are of far greater importance than the selfish aims of worldly-minded members.

8. Significant facts regarding the matter of litigations between brethren.

- a. The scope of the lawsuits Paul's considers is limited to matters "that pertain to this life" (verse 3). The Greek term (*biotikos*) means "pertaining to life and the affairs of this life" (Thayer, p.102).

- 1) It was used by the Greeks to refer to business matters (Wayne Jackson, "Christian Courier," December, 1981, p.29). "It had to do with 'questions relating to our life on earth on its merely human side, or to resources of life, such as food, clothing, property, etc.'" (ibid., pp.29f; quoted from Robertson & Plummer). The word is used only here and in Luke 21:34 (cf. Matt. 6:31).

- 2) Paul is not dealing, therefore, with spiritual matters; civil authorities have little or no interest in deciding a religious matter (cf. John 18:29-31; Acts 18:12-16). Civil authorities are concerned only if civil or criminal law is involved. Civil law has no concern over a congregation's questions regarding how many cups to use in serving the Lord's supper, or when the services will be, or whether it is right or wrong to support an orphan's home.

- 3) Paul is giving inspired guidance regarding civil matters, and teaches that it is wrong for one Christian to sue another Christian in a court of law over such secular things as property disputes and financial matters.

- b. There are some situations in which it is right for a Christian to be involved in a worldly court with another Christian.

- 1) The Lord gives the innocent marriage partner the right to obtain a legal divorce from an adulterous mate (Matt. 19:9). This requires a legal action before a temporal court.

- 2) If an evil member of the church sues me in a legal suit before a temporal court, I have the right to make a defense. Paul defended himself against false charges brought against him by his enemies (Acts 22:1; 25:11-12). Christ set forth a defense against the charges of his enemies (John 18:33-38; 19:7-11). If it is right to defend ourselves against the charges of ungodly alien sinners, it is right to defend ourselves against the charges an ungodly erring Christian brings against us.

- 3) If we see a fellow-Christian commit some criminal action, such as murder or armed robbery, we are under moral and legal obligation to turn in the offender; our testimony is apt to be required in court.

- 4) "I Corinthians 6:1-8 is not a license allowing church-property pirates to run rough-shod over brethren who have sacrificed for years to have a place in which to work and worship God. This writer knows of a situation in which a factious minority of false teachers within a local congregation confiscated several thousand dollars from the church treasury, along with the deed to the property, and then pad-locked the building—all of this in a power struggle to take over the facilities. Surely faithful Christians have the right to legally protect themselves against renegades such as these who flaunt the law in the pursuit of their own base causes" (Jackson, ibid., p.31).

- 5) In order for the truth to be demonstrated and our own innocence established, a case may arise in which we ought to pursue a legal suit; if we do not do so, our influence may be compromised and the Lord's cause humiliated.

- c. God has always required those who serve to use their best judgment in solving problems. He has given us definite restrictions and requirements in many cases, and guides us by precept in other situations.

- 1) We need to give ourselves to a lifetime of study and meditation to learn God's will, to develop all the godly traits, and to obtain the greatest degree of wisdom. In this manner, together with fervent prayers, we will be able to solve internal disputes and other problems between brethren.

- 2) The greatest degree of caution and introspection must be used before going before worldly judges with an issue between brethren.

B. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: Unrighteousness Will Keep Us Out of Heaven.

1. Verses 9-10: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived:
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neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

- a. What does he mean by "the kingdom of God?" The expression is applied in the Scriptures to the church (Matt. 3:1-2) and to heaven (2 Pet. 1:11; Acts 14:22). Since he is speaking to Christians (1:1-2), and Christians are in the church already, heaven is the reference here. The instruction of the passage is designed to warn them that they will not be able to go to heaven if they die guilty of sin. One is deceived if he thinks he can enter heaven while carrying with him the guilt of sin (Rev. 21:27).
- b. The apostle states kindly, but firmly, that those sinners who are guilty of the sins he specifies will not go to heaven! Of course, he does not intend to identify every possible sin, but gives a representative list of some of the more common violations of God's word (cf. 1 John 3:4; 5:17).
- c. The sins Paul names are these:
 - 1) The unrighteous are those whose lives do not measure up to the righteous standard God has established in his word. They were living in violation of God's will. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10; cf. 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 22:11). *Unjust* and *unrighteous* mean the same.
 - 2) Fornicators will not be all allowed into heaven. Fornication is the broad category of sexual sins. This sin is so awful that it can cause a person to miss heaven! It is not an innocent act. "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:16-18).
 - 3) Idolaters are also excluded from heaven. There are millions around the earth who still bow before images, which is one of the most senseless errors one can imagine (cf. Isa. 44). The Bible teaches that anything that replaces God in our hearts and lives is idolatry.
 - a) Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor **covetous man, who is an idolater**, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."
 - b) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and **covetousness, which is idolatry**."
 - 4) Adulterers will not be permitted to enter into God's holy presence. An adulterer is one who commits fornication by being unfaithful to his (or her) spouse. The effect of adultery is great in that one's spouse and children are affected. It is sufficient to cause the dissolution of the marriage and the scattering of the family. Yet many heedlessly plunge themselves into ruin by this corrupt action.
 - 5) Those who are classified as effeminate will be barred from heaven. These are those who are used by sodomites; they are often young boys. Often this type of fornicator dresses and acts like a woman. Likewise excluded are those who are abusers of themselves with mankind. These are the sodomites who use young boys or other men for their sexual pleasure. "This [homosexuality] was the cancer in Greek life that invaded Rome, and brought the vaunted empire to destruction. Fourteen of the first fifteen Roman emperors practiced this vice; others guilty of it were Socrates and Plato. Nero castrated and married a boy called Sporus, which he held as his wife, and at the same time married Pythagoras and called him his husband! Barclay's conclusion may not be denied that: In this particular vice in the time of the early church, the world was lost to shame; and there can be little doubt that that was one of the main causes of its degeneracy and the final collapse of its civilization" (Coffman).
 - a) Deuteronomy 23:17: "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel."
 - b) Revelation 22:15: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."
 - c) Genesis 19:5,8: "And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them....Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye

to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof."

- d) Romans 1:24-25,27: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves....For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."
- 6) Thieves, covetous, and drunkards will be kept out of heaven. The seriousness of these sinful acts is clearly and effectively affirmed by the statement of the text. Our criminal justice system often coddles thieves, but God says thievery will cause one's soul to be lost! Our economic system rewards those who are covetous, styling those who practice it as "good businessmen." Drunkenness is encouraged by our loose moral standards and desire for "a good time." "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:5-6).
- 7) God refuses to allow revilers to live in his presence. To revile is to rail against, to speak reproachfully. The sinful act includes those who blaspheme God, who revile Christ, who speak against God's people, or verbally abuse God's truth.
- 8) Extortioners are also barred from entering the city of God. The term is also used in Matthew 23:25; Luke 11:39, and Hebrews 10:34; these passages give a good view of the meaning of the word.
- a) Matthew 23:25: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."
- b) Luke 11:39: "And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness."
- c) Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
2. Verse 11: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
- a. Some of the Corinthian saints had formerly been guilty of these very sins. Their conversion to Christ removed from them the guilt and the practice of these horrible spiritual crimes. Corn can be converted into cornmeal; cornmeal is converted into cornbread; gems can be converted into cash. To convert means to change from one form or state into another.
- b. Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." The conversion of these Corinthians is given a three-fold definition in the text: they were washed, sanctified, and justified.
- 1) They were washed when they were baptized (immersed) in water for the remission of sins, at which point they contacted the blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:22,12; 1 Pet. 1:18-25; Acts 10:47-48; 22:16; 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; cf. John 3:5). To learn what Paul meant by *washed*, we need only to look at what he did in being saved: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).
- 2) They were sanctified in this same operation. *Sanctify* means "to set apart." When they were baptized, the Lord added them to his church (cf. Acts 2:36-47), or in other words, the Lord translated them into his kingdom (Col. 1:13-14). Being thus set apart from the world, they were able to serve the Lord acceptably.
- 3) The same process of obeying the gospel resulted in their justification. To be justified is to be considered to be utterly free from any wrong-doing.
- a) Deuteronomy 25:1: "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that *the judges* may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked."

- b) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - c) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - c. The process by which they were washed, sanctified, and justified grew out of the authority of Christ. Only by his name is salvation possible.
 - 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 4) Philippians 1:11-12: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."
 - 5) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 2:4: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."
 - d. The Holy Spirit is involved in the process of washing, sanctifying, and justifying. His work was that of revealing and confirming the word of God. Because of his work, we may learn how to be saved. Without the gospel, we would be ignorant of God's requirements for salvation.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And
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this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

C. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20: Abuses of Christian Liberty Condemned.

1. Verse 12: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."
 - a. The apostle is not saying that everything is lawful, that nothing is unlawful or sinful. That notion would violate the very statements he had just written! It would also contradict what he stated in many other places.
 - 1) Romans 8:12-13: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 4) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - b. However, some things are lawful, but not expedient to do; although we may have the right to enter into a certain activity, and do so without committing sin, it may be unwise of us to participate. Expediency involves the use of wisdom.
 - 1) The brethren in the first century had the right to marry, but due to the "present distress" (1 Cor. 7:26), remaining unmarried might be the wise decision.
 - 2) We have the right to have or not have a gospel meeting each year, but wisdom says that it is to our spiritual advantage to have one.
 - 3) A thing is expedient only if it is right, and even then it must be governed by wisdom or moderation.
 - c. Even in those activities which are right, Paul affirmed his intention not to be brought under the control of any of them. He illustrates the matter in the next verse. Consuming soft drinks is permissible, but one should not become so addicted to them that he must have them regardless of the costs, or the adverse effects on his health they might have.
2. Verse 13: "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body."
 - a. The natural appetites of the fleshly body have God-given means of being gratified. We hunger and thirst; God has given us food and drink to satisfy these daily needs.
 - 1) The body needs food to survive; God provided us with the means of eating and digesting food, thus providing the body with sustenance.
 - 2) Paul cautions us that the body is not intended to endure forever; all material things will one day be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10-11). If our greatest concern is the feeding of the body, what will we do when both the body and its food are no more? "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27).
 - b. The body is designed to be used in serving the Lord; it is not designed to commit fornication. The natural sexual desires of the body are God-given, and God has given the means by which they may be gratified: in marriage (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:1-9).
 - 1) Misusing the body by committing fornication brings God's condemnation upon the individual (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21).
 - 2) Fornication in every instance is unlawful; it violates God's will and causes the soul of the guilty individual to be lost.
 - c. Some of the Corinthians may have reasoned along this line: the body has the natural desire for food;

eating food to satisfy the body is lawful; the body has natural sexual desires; since the desire for food may be gratified by eating, the sexual desires of the body may be satisfied by fornication. Fornication is always prohibited, and although eating food is natural, there are certain limitations:

- 1) Eating must not be done to excess:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 6:12: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 2) Eating certain meats (such as were forbidden under the Mosaic Law or meat that had been offered to idols) was wrong if a weak brother was made to violate his conscience by another's participation (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8; 10:23-33).
 - 3) Gratifying the appetite for food to the exclusion of our spiritual responsibilities to God is wrong. We are to seek God's kingdom and righteousness first (Matt. 6:33).
 - d. Some of the Corinthians may have reasoned along this line: if one could eat the meat that had been offered to idols without committing sin, then one could commit fornication with one of the priestesses who plied her trade in service to idols; if the meat could be eaten without sin, then one could also partake of this other item offered at the idol's temple. The apostle shows in the context (before and after this verse) that fornication is always sinful.
3. Verse 14: "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power."
 - a. The belly (symbolic of the fleshly need and appetite for food) will not be raised up, but the body (the spiritual body which we need to enter heaven) will be raised up.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:50-53: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality."
 - 2) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - b. Our resurrection is assured because of the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:19-20). Fleshly bodies cannot enter into heaven (1 Cor. 15:50), which means that we must have a spiritual body for eternity.
 - c. This spiritual body will not be able to be gratified by fleshly food; in fact, there will be no material food in eternity! If our primary concern in this life is to satisfy the natural appetites of the fleshly body, and ignore our obligations to God, all will be lost for us in the next world. The exact mechanics of the resurrection are not delineated in the Scriptures. Since the physical body will be raised but cannot enter heaven (1 Cor. 15:50), it follows that the resurrected body will be changed into a spiritual body. The Lord's physical body ascended from the earth in the sight of the apostles (Acts 1:9-11). He soon disappeared from their sight when he entered the cloud, but when he entered heaven, he occupied his eternal spiritual body.
 4. Verses 15-16: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh."
 - a. Our bodies are members of Christ. When we obey the gospel, Christ adds us to his spiritual body, the church. It is unreasonable that a member of the Lord's body should be joined to a harlot. In the strongest language, the apostle denies the rightness of such an action: "God forbid!"
 - b. The marital relationship is defined in the Bible as the man and his wife becoming one flesh. Paul appeals to their sense of rationality by saying that one who is joined with a harlot has become one flesh with her. To do so is to contaminate a part of the body of Christ (our own self). When we pollute our soul, we shame the body of Christ.
 5. Verse 17: "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."
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- a. To be joined to a harlot is to become one flesh with her. When we are united with Christ, our spirits become one. Our ties with him are spiritual, not physical.
 - b. The obvious import of this passage is that a Christian, being united with Christ, must not become united with a harlot; in doing so, he dishonors himself and his Lord.
 - c. The ultimate penalty for the guilty person is to be excluded from heaven. If one cannot enter heaven, there remains only one other place where he can spend eternity: the place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41-46).
6. Verse 18: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."
- a. *Flee fornication* is an imperative; it is a command of God (1 Cor. 14:37). Even though having the benefits of God's wondrous grace, our acts of disobedience will condemn our souls as definitely as Adam's sin brought him under the condemnation of God (Gen. 3).
 - 1) Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 5) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 6) Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."
 - 7) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - 8) Revelation 22:11-14: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - b. Fornication involves the use of the body; the sin begins with the lust in the heart (cf. Matt. 5:27-28). The natural desire is not sinful, but scriptural marriage is the only avenue by which it may be gratified. The desire for strong drink, on the other hand, is an acquired desire; no one has it until he develops the craving for it; it is not a natural desire.
 - c. How is this statement to be understood: "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." Some of the scholars offer the following comments:
 - 1) "This is to be taken *comparatively*. Sins in general; the common sins which men commit do not *immediately* and directly affect the body, or waste its energies, and destroy life. Such is the case with falsehood, theft, malice, dishonesty, pride, ambition, &c. They do not immediately and directly impair the constitution and waste its energies....The more immediate effect [of these other

- sins] is on the mind; but the sin under consideration produces an immediate and direct effect on the body itself" (Barnes, p.107).
- 2) "This does not teach that fornication is greater than any other sin; but it does teach that it is altogether peculiar in its effects upon the body; not so much in its physical as in its moral spiritual effects. The idea runs through the Bible that there is something mysterious in the commerce of the sexes, and in the effects which flow from it. Every other sin, however degrading and ruinous to the health, even drunkenness, is external to the body, that is, external to its life. But fornication, involving as it does a community of life, is a sin against the body itself, because incompatible, as the Apostle had just taught, with the design of its creation, and with its immortal destiny" (Hodges, pp.105f).
 - 3) "Fornication takes the body as a whole and makes it the instrument of sin. It joins the body of sinful union to a body of death, so that it becomes one flesh with the condemned harlot, thereby severing itself from the life in Christ, and thus it strikes directly at the body's future state" (Lipscomb, p.93).
- d. In committing fornication, we sin against our own body. We are never the same again. It is a sin against God (Gen. 39:9); it is a repudiation of the institution of marriage, the arrangement in which God has given us the right to satisfy sexual desires. It assaults the foundation of a nation, which rests on marriage and the home. It is an attack against the gospel, which enjoins us to live righteously, soberly, and godly, and to disavow all ungodliness and worldly lust (Tit. 2:11-12).
7. Verse 19: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"
- a. Paul affirms that our physical beings are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Without stating the means by which the Spirit indwells our bodies, he asserts that the Spirit is within us. How does the Spirit dwell in our bodies? Is it a direct, personal indwelling? Or is he in us only in some representative manner? This passage only states the fact; it does not reveal the manner of his presence in us.
 - b. 1 John 4:15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." How does God dwell in us? Not directly: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. 6:16). God dwells in us in some indirect, representative manner.
 - c. Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17).
 - 1) That Christ dwells in us is obviously stated in the above quotations, but in neither of them is it affirmed that he resides in us directly or personally.
 - 2) The fact is stated that he dwells in our hearts *by faith*. The definite article is in the Greek text, hence Christ dwells in us by the faith (by the gospel: Jude 3; Acts 6:7). When an alien sinner hears, believes, and obeys the gospel, Christ resides in that individual as his word abides in his heart, guiding and directing his life.
 - 3) Since Christ does not dwell in us personally, and since the Holy Spirit is another member of the Godhead, it follows that his residing in us is also an indirect presence.
 - d. Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." "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" (Col. 3:16).
 - 1) In these parallel passages, the Spirit is said to abide in the saints in the first text; but in the second, it is the word of Christ with which we are to be filled.
 - 2) Therefore, the conclusion is that the Holy Spirit indwells us as the Spirit-given message of the gospel fills our minds, guiding and leading us along the paths of righteous and godly conduct.
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- 3) We have no reason to believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in us directly and personally, any more than to believe God and Christ dwell in us directly and personally. There is every reason to think that the Holy Spirit dwells in us in exactly the same way that Christ does: that is, as we permit the word of Christ to reside in our minds and control our thoughts, motives, and actions, only to that extent and in that manner does Christ abide in us.
8. Verse 20: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
 - a. The price with which we have been bought is the blood of Christ. Man was lost in sin; God loved his fallen offspring; Christ was sent to effect the redemption plan.
 - 1) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 3) 1 John 2:1-2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."
 - b. For this cause, we ought to use our bodies to the glory of God, not to his dishonor. Both our spirit and body belong to God. He made our physical body and formed our spirit within it.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - 2) Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."
 - 3) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - 4) Hebrews 12:9: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"
 - c. It is the spirit of man that is made in the image of God.
 - 1) Genesis 1:26-27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
 - 2) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 3) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - d. The context deals with fornication, but the principle of the case permits applications to be made to smoking noxious weeds and drinking alcoholic beverages. We should use our bodies so as to bring the greatest possible glory to God; this requires that we keep it as pure as possible from all contaminating influences.
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1 CORINTHIANS 7

A. 1 Corinthians 7:1-9: Paul States Some Rights and Obligations of Married Life.

1. Verse 1: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman."
 - a. The Corinthians had written Paul with some questions regarding marriage. His first comment is given here: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."
 - b. Since truth cannot contradict itself, what he said here does not clash with what God said in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Marriage was established by God; it is for the good of both man and woman. It is the proper atmosphere in which to rear children, and the only arrangement in which God permits sexual activity.
 - 1) Genesis 2:18: "And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:3: "Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 7:2: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."
 - c. Brother Lipscomb observed: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.—Not to be connected with woman in marriage. This he teaches not as a general truth, for he does not contradict God, who said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18.) In verse 26, he explains, "that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, namely, that it is good for a man to be as he is." The "distress" means the persecution then raging against the Christians. On account of these it was best if a man could restrain his lusts not to be married. There are some special cases, as of Paul himself, in which a man can devote himself without the care and distractions of a family to the service of God. But more evil than good comes of attempting it by those who cannot be continent. It is true now, as in the beginning, that "it is not good that the man should be alone." And the universality of marriage is a mark of the morality and virtue of a community. [Gospel Advocate Commentaries].
 - d. The apostle is not laying down a new commandment, but was speaking in regards to special circumstances: "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment" (1 Cor. 7:6).
 - 1) Paul's comment here is based on the then-present conditions of persecution. Life would be easier for Christians under those harsh circumstances if they were not married. "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be" (1 Cor. 7:26).
 - 2) Therefore, while marriage is the will of God and is in the best interests of men and women in most cases, it is not always expedient; remaining unmarried would be much easier for the saints during periods of severe persecution. Suppose a Christian was arrested and told to revile Christ; if the penalty was to have his wife and children tortured, he might yield. And providing for a family would be hard during persecution.
 - e. Conflicting views are advanced on the meaning of this opening statement.
 - 1) Some have thought that the observation that it was good for a man not to touch a woman stated the position of some in the church at Corinth; that it was good for a man to remain celibate. But there is no proof for this position. Living a celibate life is not a morally-superior lifestyle. "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say*, that *it is* good for a man so to be....But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you" (1 Cor. 7:26,28).
 - 2) Others assert that the statement is Paul's, and that he is not arguing that a man ought to remain unmarried, but that he is advising married couples to abstain from sexual relations on occasion so

- that they can give themselves more fully to spiritual activities. Verse five makes this point, but that passage is separated from verse one by the information in verses two through four. Verses two through five are given in distinction to verse one.
- f. The most natural view to take of verse one is that Paul is responding to the matters about which they had written to him; that the observation is his inspired comment regarding their inquiry. In the verses which follow, he expounds on the matter, giving words of sound counsel and wise caution.
 - g. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. The word used is not *agathon*, good, but *kalon*, fair; 'an excellent thing.' In ver. 26 he limits the word by the clause, 'good for the present necessity.' There is no limitation here, and it is probable that Paul is quoting the actual words of the letter which he had received from Corinth. There had sprung up among them some antinomians, who, perhaps by perverting his own teaching or that of Apollos, had made liberty a cloak of lasciviousness. In indignant reaction against such laxity, others, perhaps, with Essene proclivities, had been led to disparage matrimony as involving an inevitable stain. Gnosticism, and the spirit which led to it, oscillated between the two extremes of asceticism and uncleanness. Both extremes were grounded on the assertion that matter is inherently evil. Ascetic Gnostics, therefore, strove to destroy by severity every carnal impulse; antinomian Gnostics argued that the life of the spirit was so utterly independent of the flesh that what the flesh did was of no consequence. We find the germs of Gnostic heresy long before the name appeared" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
2. Verse 2: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."
 - a. In view of the great danger posed by the lusts of the flesh which could lead to fornication, Paul said that marriage is to be entered. He therefore teaches by implication that the only situation in which sexual desires may be gratified is in marriage.
 - b. He teaches also that marriage is between one man and one woman: each can have only one.
 - 1) Genesis 2:18-24: "And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
 - 2) Matthew 19:4-6: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
 - 3) Romans 7:1-3: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."
 - c. The danger of fornication was greater than the possibility that a Christian would be forced to deny Christ because of a threat to the spouse or children. God does not require us to marry; he does not require that we remain single; he does forbid fornication.
 - d. Today, those who reject the inspiration and authority of the Bible allege that marriage between two of the same gender is permissible under the United States Constitution. Neither the constitution nor the Bible permits such an outrage. Human sources have always defined marriage as a union between
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a man and a woman. The despicable perversion of homosexuality has undermined every society where it became an accepted practice. It was widely practiced in ancient Greece and in the Roman Empire. One prominent cause of their destruction was rampant immorality. A major civilization has been discovered in South America, lying in ruins. Artifacts have been discovered depicting homosexual activity. Undoubtedly, this wicked taint was at least a major contributing factor in the demise of that society.

- 1) Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
 - 2) Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."
3. Verses 3-5: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give ourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."
- a. In marriage, the husband and wife have mutual responsibilities. Each is to fulfill these obligations. If one does not, the danger of fornication has not been removed by the marriage. However, if both parties are agreeable, they may abstain from the marital relationship for a time, in the interest of fasting and prayer.
 - b. Neither the husband nor the wife has the power (i.e., the right or authority) under ordinary circumstances to deny the spouse the marital privileges. By virtue of becoming husband and wife, each cedes to the other certain sexual rights; neither belongs exclusively to himself anymore. Therefore, each is to render that which is due to the other.
 - c. What was taught in verse three in a positive affirmation is stated negatively in verse five. If one of the parties in the marriage will not render *due benevolence* to the other, the other person is defrauded. In a sense, the other spouse is robbed. The same word is used in 1 Corinthians 6:8 (cf. Mark 10:19; Jas. 5:4).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:8: "Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren."
 - 2) Mark 10:19: "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother."
 - 3) James 5:4: "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."
 - d. The apostle lists an exception to the general rule: if both are agreed, they may refrain from the marital relationship *for a season* so that each may engage in a special period of fasting and prayer. But a word of caution is inserted: this is not to be a continuing abstinence lest Satan gain an upper hand.
 - e. *Incontinency* means "an inability to contain" one's sexual appetites. There is a danger, therefore, in a married couple's abstinence: one or the other might face a temptation to commit adultery they might not be able to overcome.
4. Verses 6-7: "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that."
- a. This rule of expediency (7:1,26) is not a commandment of God, or else Paul could not give an exception. It was a common-sense rule which applied for the time then present. Verse 6 applied only to marriage during "the present distress." A similar situation today would call for the application of this rule of expediency.
 - b. Few are able to subdue the natural desires of the flesh. These desires were given us in the way we are designed; these desires have a proper release: in scriptural marriage. Some circumstances make it impractical for a person to get married, but it is better to marry (even during persecutions) than to fall victim to fornication.
 - c. Marriage is not required; neither is it forbidden. Some need marriage; others do not. Paul left the choice up to the individuals.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:3: "Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." Those who
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forbid marriage are making a law God did not make.

- 2) Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." The marital state is not less spiritual than celibacy; celibacy is not more spiritual than marriage.
 - d. For the good of the kingdom, it would be better if Christians remain unmarried so they could give their full time and energy to spiritual things. But the apostle is not suggesting that celibacy leads to an enhanced spiritual state. With the context in mind, his point relates to the present distress of that time of persecution. One who was not married could devote his full attention to the things of the kingdom, and be able to go places that a married man could not go.
 - e. But not every person can subdue the passions of the flesh. Each of us has varying degrees of fleshly appetites. Our weaknesses vary, as do our strengths; what is a strong temptation to one may have little or no effect on some other person. An activity that is difficult for one to do, might be easily accomplished by another.
5. Verses 8-9: "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."
- a. To those who are unmarried or widowed, Paul says it is better in their case to remain unmarried. "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry....I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:11,14: young widows are meant).
 - b. Again, the statement is qualified by the condition named in verse 26. For the time of "this present distress" it was better for the unmarried to remain unmarried.
 - c. But once more he adds, if they cannot maintain purity, they are to marry; it is better to marry than to *burn* (in the desire, and later in torment).

B. 1 Corinthians 7:10-16: Paul's Gives Counsel For Those Christians Who Were Already Married.

1. This section answers the second question the Corinthians has raised: "Is marriage to be dissolved when one party is a Christian and the other is not?" The answer Paul gives indicates the question.
2. Verses 10-11: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."
 - a. Both Paul and the Lord taught that marriage is intended to last until the death of the husband or the wife. Christ taught this in Matthew 19:3-12, giving fornication as the only exception. Paul taught the permanent nature of marriage here, and he spoke by inspiration.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 7:21,40: "Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather....But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."
 - b. Notice the authoritative nature of verse 10. They are to stay together in the marriage; this is the rule. If the wife departs from the husband, she is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.
 - c. This rule (remain unmarried or be reconciled) applies to all time, not merely to that "present distress." How do we know? Because Paul stated that his point here was identical to the point Christ made (in Matt. 19:1-9). Only the exception named by the Lord applies if remarriage is contemplated.
 - d. It is not the will of God (as stated through Christ and Paul) that marriages be ended by divorce.
 - 1) Matthew 5:32: "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."
 - 2) Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
 - e. God hates "putting away" (divorce): "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness

between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (Mal. 2:14-16). However, he gives an innocent party in marriage the right to put away an adulterous mate, and remarry (Matt. 19:9).

3. Verse 12: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away."
 - a. Paul would have to address the aspect of the question that pertained to the case of a believer married to an unbeliever since the Lord had not directly dealt with this.
 - 1) The Lord had not specifically addressed the subject of what a Christian was to do if his or her mate was a non-Christian. But his statement on marriage encompasses the marital union of both believers and unbelievers. This is seen by his reference back to the very beginning of the race (Gen. 2:24) and by his unconditional use of *whosoever* (which includes all marriages). This is a significant point since some have falsely argued that the Lord in Matthew 19 spoke only of the marriage of believers.
 - 2) What is the meaning of *the rest*? Some scholars think that the reference is to the rest of the question, but others say Paul was speaking of the people who were in mixed marriages.
 - 3) Lipscomb: But to the rest say I, not the Lord:—[The contrast here and in verse 10 is not between commands given by Paul as an inspired apostle and as a private individual. He expressly claims that all "the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (14:37), and he speaks of that knowledge into which he was guided as given by the Holy Spirit, as "by the word of the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:15). He must therefore not be regarded as here claiming apostolic authority for some things he writes and not for others. The real point of the contrast is between a subject on which the Lord while on earth gave direct instruction, and another subject on which he now gives his commands through an inspired apostle, as was promised by Jesus on the night of his betrayal: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." (John 16:13.) The Lord had given instructions regarding divorce (Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18), and Paul here has only reiterated what he had already commanded]—Gospel Advocate Commentaries.
 - b. Christ had only shown that the sanctity of marriage was such that only one action was sufficiently strong to cause its dissolution: fornication on the part of one. If one should put away his wife (except for fornication) and married another, he was now in the state of adultery with his new mate. Nothing but fornication could dissolve that original union. This is true of all marriages, whether the individuals are believers or unbelievers.
 - c. To cover the subject properly, the apostle needed to address the case of marriage involving a Christian whose mate was a pagan unbeliever. Should the Christian divorce the unbelieving spouse?
 - 1) Paul states plainly that the brother is not to put away his unbelieving wife if she is content to continue the marriage. But what if the unbeliever is not content to remain with the believer? Paul deals with this aspect of the subject in verse 15.
 - 2) *Put away* in the verse is from the Greek *aphiemi*; it is the same word used in verse 13, translated "[not] leave him." The Greek word translated "depart" in verse 10 is *chorizo*. Greek scholars show that these two terms can be used to mean either separation or divorce [Gary Workman, "The Restorer," Vol. 12, No. 5, pp.5f].
4. Verse 13: "And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him."
 - a. But what about a situation where a man obeyed the gospel but his wife refused to do so? Could they still live together as husband and wife? Should the Christian put away his unbelieving wife? Jews who married pagans were told to dissolve those unions (Ezra 9-10; Deut. 7:3). Perhaps this Old Testament situation prompted the question. In Old Testament times, it was essential that the bloodline

- of the Jew be kept identifiable, and the nation free from the pollutions of the idolatrous and sinful people of the times.
- b. Paul plainly states in this passage that they were to continue to live together if that suited them both. His point is applied to the believing husband in verse twelve and to the believing wife in verse thirteen. Their marriage was right and proper; let it continue.
5. Verse 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."
- a. This verse says that the unbelieving mate is "sanctified" by the believer. It is obvious that *sanctified* cannot be used here in its usual [spiritual] sense, for an unbeliever cannot become a child of God merely through being married to a Christian; he must personally obey the plan of salvation (Mark 16:15-16).
 - 1) Marriage is not a Christian institution; it is provided for all men. Paul is not saying that a marriage between two non-Christians is an adulterous affair.
 - 2) *Unclean* could have reference to the better environment under which the children grow up when one of the parents is a Christian. Children of pagan parents would grow up under the evil influences of idolatry and sin, thus would truly become unclean; the chances of their obeying the gospel as adults would be slim.
 - 3) "By his connection with his believing marriage partner, he was sanctified, rendered fit ceremonially for cohabitation with the believer" (*ALC*, 1956, p.32). "...When one party of a previously consummated union became a Christian, that did not result in their marriage becoming adulterous" (*ALC*, 1963, p.194).
 - b. If the marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian was not recognized by the Lord as proper, their children would not be properly trained; this seems to be the best understanding of the verse.
 - 1) The marriage of two people who are not Christians is a proper marriage (providing a prior divorce does not disqualify one or both). Paul states that it is the unbelieving spouse that is sanctified, not the marriage itself.
 - 2) The apostle is not implying that the children of unbelievers are illegitimate. There is a difference between *unclean* and *illegitimate*, and a different Greek word is used for each idea (7:17; Heb. 12:8).
 - 3) The Pulpit Commentary observes: "But now are they holy. This does not necessarily imply that they were baptized as infants, but only that they were hallowed as the fruit of a hallowed union. See the remarkable words of Malachi (Mal 2:15). 'If the root be holy, so are the branches' (Rom 11:16)." [Note: There is no authority in the New Testament to baptize babies or little children].
6. Verse 15: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."
- a. This verse discusses the case of a Christian who is married to one who is not a Christian, and the unbelieving mate is not content to live with the believer. This statement has been abused and misused, and has been made a point of major contention by some.
 - 1) Some have missed the point by saying this gives the Christian the freedom to marry again if the unbelieving mate deserts the believer; that desertion alone gives a second scriptural right for divorce and remarriage.
 - 2) To understand the statement, the context must be carefully analyzed, and the Lord's restriction given in Matthew 19:9 must not be ignored.
 - b. What is the believing mate to do when the unbeliever leaves?
 - 1) Does the departure of the unbeliever give the believer the right obtain a divorce and to remarry?
 - 2) Should the Christian, in the interest of keeping the marriage intact and for the good of the children, stay with the unbeliever even if that would require giving up Christianity?
 - 3) These were momentous questions to the Corinthians; some of them were evidently faced with these very situations.
 - c. Paul says, if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; the believer is not under bondage in such cases:
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but God has called us to peace. The word *cases* is not in the original; and the word *such* is plural in the Greek and can either be neuter or masculine (the spelling is the same). *Such* therefore can refer to "things" or "persons." Paul's answer brings up some questions:

- 1) Does "not under bondage" mean that the believer (whose unbelieving mate has left) is no longer bound to the marriage? Does the departure constitute scriptural divorce?
 - 2) If that is the case, is the believer now free to remarry? If so, must a legal (secular) divorce first be obtained?
- d. A study of the Greek words Paul used sheds light on the subject.
- 1) The Greek word for *bondage* ("douloo") is a different word from *bound* ("deo") in verse 39. *Deo* is used in those verses where the marriage bond is described (1 Cor. 7:27, 39; Rom. 7:2). *Douloo*, which occurs 133 times in New Testament, is never used in reference to the marriage bond (unless 1 Cor. 7:15 is the exception).
 - 2) The form of *douloo* (*dedoulotai*) used in 1 Corinthians 7:15 is in the perfect passive indicative, third person singular. "The use of the *perfect tense* is tremendously important and significant. The Christian—the deserted Christian—does not stand, and—in fact—*never did stand under the kind of bondage indicated in the word douloo*. But, the deserted Christian *has been* under the kind of bondage indicated in the marriage bond. This very construction makes it impossible for the bondage under consideration in this passage to be the marriage bond. The perfect tense means: is not *now*, and in fact *never has been*, in the kind of bondage referred to" (Roy Deaver, *Studies In 1 Corinthians*, p.388).
- e. What "bondage" is meant? Greek scholars report that the term in the original language expresses total binding, an absolute, servile obligation; to be bound as a slave (see Workman, "The Restorer," Vol. 12, No. 6, p.4).
- 1) The Greek expression is *dedoulotai* (perfect tense, passive voice). "The force of the Greek perfect tense is a past action with a present result: 'has been enslaved.' But since there is a negative particle in front of the verb, it reads 'has not been enslaved'....A positive statement in the perfect points to an action that took place in the past, such as 'Art thou bound unto a wife?' (v.27) or 'A wife is bound...' (v.39). However, a negative statement in the perfect declares that *no such action* has taken place in the past....Paul did not say, 'They are *no longer* in bondage.' Nor did he say, 'They have been set free.' The negative perfect tense has him saying, 'They have never been in bondage'" (ibid.). Since the Christian was indeed married (bound) to an unbelieving mate, the bondage of the verse does not refer to the bondage of marriage.
 - 2) The Christian has never been under the bondage that requires him (or her) to remain with an unbelieving spouse when doing so would require giving up his (or her) faith. The obligation of a Christian to his (or her) mate is not so rigid that it takes precedence over his (or her) obligation to Christ.
 - a) Matthew 10:37: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."
 - b) Luke 14:26: "If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."
- f. "But God hath called us to [in—ASV] peace." Rather than breaking up the marriage, the believer should do all within his (her) power to keep it going, being willing to sacrifice everything in its behalf, *except obedience to God*.
- 1) The departure in the situation the apostle describes is one initiated by the unbeliever; he (or she) departs because it is his (or her) desire to do so.
 - 2) The Christian does not have the power to force the unbeliever to stay; civil law does not require it; an appeal to the unbeliever to stay on the basis of the teachings of the gospel will not affect the decision since that person does not believe the gospel.
 - 3) "The Christian has not been 'enslaved' but has been 'called...in peace.' For this reason he should not try to maintain a marriage with a non-Christian who is in opposition to it" (Workman, ibid., p.6).
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7. Verse 16: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"
 - a. There is a possibility that the believing mate will be able to bring about the conversion of the unbelieving mate, but this is by no means certain. The best situation is for the two to remain as husband and wife, because of the possibility of converting the unbeliever. "Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:1-7).
 - b. However, the statement could carry the idea of the futility of converting the unbelieving mate: "Let him depart."
8. Matthew Henry made the following comments on this section:
 - a. "In this paragraph the apostle gives them direction in a case which must be very frequent in that age of the world, especially among the Jewish converts; I mean whether they were to live with heathen relatives in a married state. Moses's law permitted divorce; and there was a famous instance in the Jewish state, when the people were obliged to put away their idolatrous wives, Ezra 10:3. This might move a scruple in many minds, whether converts to Christianity were not bound to put away or desert their mates, continuing infidels. Concerning this matter the apostle here gives direction. And,
 - b. "In general, he tells them that marriage, by Christ's command, is for life; and therefore those who are married must not think of separation. The wife must not depart from the husband (v. 10), nor the husband put away his wife, v. 11. This I command, says the apostle; yet not I, but the Lord. Not that he commanded any thing of his own head, or upon his own authority. Whatever he commanded was the Lord's command, dictated by his Spirit and enjoined by his authority. But his meaning is that the Lord himself, with his own mouth, had forbidden such separations, Matt 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18. Note, Man and wife cannot separate at pleasure, nor dissolve, when they will, their matrimonial bonds and relation. They must not separate for any other cause than what Christ allows. And therefore the apostle advises that if any woman had been separated, either by a voluntary act of her own or by an act of her husband, she should continue unmarried, and seek reconciliation with her husband, that they might cohabit again. Note, Husbands and wives should not quarrel at all, or should be quickly reconciled. They are bound to each other for life. The divine law allows of no separation. They cannot throw off the burden, and therefore should set their shoulders to it, and endeavour to make it as light to each other as they can.
 - c. "He brings the general advice home to the case of such as had an unbelieving mate (v. 12): But to the rest speak I, not the Lord; that is, the Lord had not so expressly spoken to this case as to the former divorce. It does not mean that the apostle spoke without authority from the Lord, or decided this case by his own wisdom, without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He closes this subject with a declaration to the contrary (v. 40), I think also that I have the Spirit of God" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

C. 1 Corinthians 7:17-24: Paul Shows That We Are To Abide In Our Calling.

1. Verse 17: "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches." The ASV gives this rendition: "Only, as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches."
 - a. "In these verses Paul sets forth a counterbalance to what has just been said. The word 'only' (v.17) introduces a caution or limitation following the permission to allow a non-Christian mate to rupture the marriage. To offset a possible tendency on the part of the Corinthians to dissolve all marriages
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- with unconverted partners, Paul sets forth an injunction that elaborates on what he said in verses 12-14: Be content to remain in whatever social circumstances you were in at the time of your conversion. The Christian is under no obligation to change cultural situations that are not sinful. Therefore, do not seek to disrupt your marriage on account of becoming a Christian. Paul makes it clear that what he writes to them he ordains for all (v.17)" (Workman, *ibid.*, Vol. 12, No. 7, p.2).
- b. The apostle begins to discuss some social connections that may exist in the life of one who obeys the gospel. What he says has some obvious limitations, for if one was a bootlegger, the apostle is not suggesting that he could remain in that line of work. All sinful activity must be put away when one becomes a Christian.
 - c. Christianity is not such a revolutionary system that it destroys organized society. Whatever social circumstance one is in at the time of his conversion to Christ, let him remain therein. If one's spouse does not obey the gospel, remain in that marriage (in accordance with verses 10-16).
 - d. This principle (which Paul illustrates in the next several verses) is not one that the apostle taught only to the Corinthians; he ordained the same in all of the congregations. This shows that the brethren were united in belief and practice in all localities.
2. Verse 18: "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised."
- a. Paul illustrates the principle he is discussing by calling attention to the basic division of humanity (Jew and Gentile). There is no need for a Gentile to become circumcised; there is no need (indeed, no possibility) for a Jew to become uncircumcised (physically). Circumcision can offer no spiritual advantages (Acts 15).
 - 1) Galatians 2:3: "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised."
 - 2) Galatians 5:2-3: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."
 - 3) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 4) Galatians 6:12-15: "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."
 - b. The word *circumcision* is sometimes used in the Scriptures as a reference to the Jews, and *uncircumcision* is used in reference to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:6-9). If these words are understood in this connection, which appears to be the case, then the apostle is teaching that when one becomes a Christian, he is still a Jew or Gentile by birth; by religion he is now a Christian. There is no need to try to alter his nationality or bloodline.
3. Verse 19: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."
- a. This is what the apostle also wrote in other passages:
 - 1) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 2) Galatians 6:15: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."
 - b. God had commanded that Abraham, and later the Israelites, be circumcised; he had definite purposes in mind by this requirement. But under the gospel, circumcision is not required. Many of the Jews were blinded to this matter, and so were some of those Jews who accepted the gospel. Being circumcised adds nothing to one's spiritual stature, but doing what God requires does. We must obey God's will.
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- 1) 1 Samuel 15:22: "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
4. Verses 20-21: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather."
- a. Again, the limitation of the statement is understood. The apostle is not saying that a man, who followed a dishonest, illegal, or sinful occupation or practice prior to his conversion to Christ, may continue his wicked lifestyle after becoming a Christian. Repentance demands the cessation of all such activities.
 - b. However, in those matters that are not wrong, these may be practiced; there is no need for a man to take up a new line of work when he becomes a Christian, if his present occupation is consistent with the moral and spiritual standards of the gospel.
 - c. The Lord did not include in the gospel a divine mandate requiring the immediate, unconditional release of all slaves. Had he done so, the economy of the Roman Empire, which was based on the slave system, would have been destroyed, bringing financial devastation on millions. When the principles of the gospel were gradually accepted by many, and incorporated into the constitutions of nations, slavery dissolved. Undoubtedly, greater hardship would have resulted by the sudden dissolution of slavery by divine fiat than was faced under the current rule of slavery.
5. Verse 22: "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. "
- a. Instructions governing slaves who obey the gospel are given in the New Testament, insuring that there were no better workers among the slave population than those who were members of the Lord's church.
 - 1) Ephesians 6:5-9: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good things any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."
 - 2) Titus 2:9-10: "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."
 - b. If one was a slave prior to his conversion, Paul tells him to "care not for it." Even a slave can serve the Lord with honor and success. The unbelieving master and his fellowservants can see the change the gospel has made in his life, and perhaps these may be won to the Lord.
 - c. A Christian servant was bound to his earthly master according to civil laws, but he was also bound to the Lord. There were certain requirements he must meet to maintain approval with Christ. There were blessings which he had in Christ: although he was bound to an earthly master, he was free from the bondage of sin, free from the terror of death, free from the guilt of sin, and free from the wrath that is to come upon the ungodly.
 - 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 3) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 4) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of

doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

d. In Christ, the earthly distinctions are not recognized; each person occupies the same standing before the Lord.

1) Galatians 3:27-29: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

2) Colossians 3:10-11: "And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all."

6. Verse 23: "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

a. All Christians are bought with a price, whether their earthly circumstance is that of a slave or that of a king. If one is a slave, let him not be ashamed; if he is a king, let him not be haughty. The same price paid for the king who obeyed the gospel was likewise paid for the slave who obeyed.

b. Because we are bought with a price (the blood of Christ), we are to serve God; we are not to serve men. Paul does not contradict himself in this statement. A Christian slave is to serve his earthly master in the material realm; he is to serve God in the spiritual realm thus, *render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's* (cf. Matt. 22:21). We cannot serve two masters in things that pertain to the soul.

1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

2) Luke 16:13: "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

3) Galatians 1:10: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

7. Verse 24: "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

a. We are to be content with our social circumstance, if it is an honorable and scriptural situation. If we can serve Christ more fully in another station in life, make that change if possible. But in those cases where a change is not feasible, be content with your present status.

b. The apostle's point is that our nationality, social standing, or financial condition has nothing to do with our salvation. Cornelius was not told to leave the army (Acts 10:34-35), or to give up his servants or his money.

D. 1 Corinthians 7:25-35: Paul's Counsel For the Current Circumstances.

1. Verse 25: "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."

a. The question Paul answers in this section concerns the rightness of virgins entering into marriage. He had earlier discussed the rightness of marriage itself, and had given some instructions regarding the marriage of two believers to each other and of the case where a believer and a non-believer were married. This new subject addressed was about whether a Christian who had never been married should marry.

b. He affirms plainly that he had no commandment from the Lord on this subject. "The language, so far from being a disclaimer of inspiration, is an express claim to help from the Lord in forming this duly considered judgment. From his familiarity with the teaching of the Lord he gives his judgment as one who has obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy" (Lipscomb, p.109).

1) In the recorded teachings the Lord had delivered during his personal ministry, there was nothing that directly addressed the question Paul sought to discuss. Being an inspired apostle of Christ, he had the information and the authority to present the proper instruction regarding the question before him. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you

- things to come" (John 16:13).
- 2) The nature of the question was such that nothing direct and all-inclusive was in the offing. The response he gave, therefore, was one of expediency. This information Paul called his *judgment*. Verse 26 shows the case at hand to be limited by the "present distress" they were entering. The counsel he offers concerning the question is given beginning in verse 26.
- c. But before presenting his inspired counsel on the matter, he draws attention to the fact that he was one who had obtained mercy from the Lord to be faithful to the Lord's will.
 - 1) He affirms his faithfulness to Christ, which implies that his answer would be one on which they could depend to have been given from the right motives.
 - 2) He had obtained mercy, he says, and that implies that he stood in need of mercy. He had violently opposed the cause of Christ, persecuting many innocent followers of the Lord (Acts 26:1-23; 1 Tim. 1:11-13). He had obtained mercy (i.e., pardon from his many sins) when he came to believe and obey the gospel (Acts 9:1-6; 22:16).
 - 3) Those who knew anything about the history of Paul, understood that he had turned from the Jews' religion to Christianity, and in pursuit of the cause of Christ, he had gone into many foreign lands, enduring privation and persecutions of all sorts (2 Cor. 11:24-28). Only one who was sincere and zealous to the ultimate degree would have done so! Therefore, the Corinthians, who knew the apostle's case personally, could accept his inspired counsel, trusting it without doubt.
 - 4) One "who is known to seek supremely the glory of God, should not be disregarded or slighted. Paul had a special claim to give this advice, because he was the founder of the church at Corinth" (Barnes, p.126).
 - d. That Paul's counsel is not merely from human subjective reasoning is indicated in his statement in the midst of this counsel: "...if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." How could anyone know what is and what is not sinful without the verification of the standard of God's word?
 - 1) The instruction he offers did not originate from anything the Lord personally taught while on earth (cf. 7:10,12). Being an inspired apostle of Christ, he gives inspired counsel that helps them to know what they ought to do in meeting the situation about which they had asked.
 - 2) In view of the present distress, as he points out, one could spare himself and others a good deal of trouble by remaining unmarried. This is sound advice, even without inspiration!
 - e. The word *virgins* that is mentioned especially pertains to the unmarried daughters in a man's family. In those days, the father of the household had much to say with regards to whether his daughter was to marry. The Corinthians had asked if the Christian father should give his daughter in marriage. What Paul says in regards to the daughter, would, by implication, also apply to the unmarried sons, to some degree.
2. Verse 26: "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be."
 - a. The word *suppose* is translated *think* in the ASV. He considers it wise for one to remain as he is (i.e., unmarried). Notice the appeal to the present distress. In 2 Corinthians 6:4, Paul mentions certain *distresses* through which he had gone. These distresses were certain hardships forced upon him by those who opposed the gospel.
 - b. The Corinthians were facing a period of persecution. There had been some of it present when Paul first brought the gospel to them (Acts 18). The distresses would get worse before they got better! Hence, in the light of these troubles, a person would be wise to remain unmarried, as Paul discusses in the verses which follow.
 - c. Could the distress have any connection with the predicted fall of Jerusalem? (Matt. 24:1-34). Very likely. It was in connection with the siege and fall of Jerusalem that the greatest tribulation ever to be visited upon the human family would occur (Matt. 24:21-22). Christ's description (in Matt. 24) of Jerusalem's fall includes the following:
 - 1) Matthew 24:6-8: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers
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places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows." The forty years (about) between the time Jesus uttered these words until the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. were filled with warfare and rumors of wars; there were also many famines, pestilences and earthquakes. These were all general signs which have pertained to many periods of human history. They are put before the disciples as fairly common occurrences but which would be present prior to the "end" he is discussing in this part of the chapter. When they saw these signs, the end would not be immediately forthcoming; this end would occur only after the details of verse 14 were fulfilled. It is significant that peace prevailed in the Roman Empire at the time the Lord spoke these words. But this peace would not be long-lived. The wars Jesus mentioned involved first century kingdoms, not nations of our own century.

- a) A severe famine is named in Acts 11:27-30, which occurred during the days of Claudius Caesar, who died in 54 A.D. This famine is mentioned by Suetonius and Tacitus (Roman historians, unbelievers), and Eusebius. Josephus says that the famine was so severe in Jerusalem that many people starved to death. Four times during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) famines occurred in Rome, Palestine, and Greece.
 - b) Several great earthquakes are reported for that time period by ancient writers. Josephus described in detail an earthquake that took place in Judea during this time.
 - c) The Lord said pestilences would occur. Epidemic diseases often follow earthquakes. Josephus speaks of a pestilence that afflicted Babylonia in 40 A.D. (Antiq. 18. 9,8). And Tacitus describes one that took place in Italy in 66 A.D. One pestilence in Rome resulted in 30,000 deaths.
 - d) These awful tragedies would not be the end itself, but merely the beginning of sorrows. Worse things were yet to come!
- 2) Matthew 24:9: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." Persecution would be brought to bear on the saints. Some of them would be slain, and they all would be hated by the general population of the world. Some of these persecutions are named in Acts 4 (Peter and John), Acts 5 (the twelve), Acts 7 (Stephen), Acts 12 (James is slain and Peter is imprisoned), Acts 8 (the whole church scattered). See also 1 Peter 4:16ff; 2 Corinthians 4:8-11; 11:24-27. Tacitus says the Christians were "a class of men hated on account of their crimes" (see McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.205).
 - 3) Matthew 24:10: "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." Many of the saints would stumble, some would betray others, and some would hate the others. Luke 21:16 says that they would be betrayed by parents, brethren, kinsmen, and friends. For instances of Christians falling away, see 2 Timothy 1:15, Acts 20:29, Romans 16:17-18, 2 Tim. 4:10, 16, and 1 Timothy 1:19-20.
 - 4) Matthew 24:11: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." Many false teachers would arise. The New Testament shows many cases of this, including I John 4:1, 2 Peter 2:1, 2 Timothy 3:13, Jude 4ff, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Galatians 1:7ff, 2 Timothy 2:17-18, and Titus 1:10-11.
 - 5) Matthew 24:12: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Iniquity means "lawlessness, unrighteousness" (Vine, p.260). When iniquity abounds, the love of many grows cold—people are influenced away from their love of God. The song "Jesus is Coming Soon" twists this passage to fit the time just before the coming of Christ, and thus promotes one of the greatest errors of modern times—premillennialism. Since the Lord later taught that there will be no signs warning of the approaching end of time, then this passage could not have application to then; if it did, we would have a sign of the Lord's coming (vv 36-44).
 - 6) Matthew 24:13: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The "end" the Lord is speaking of in this section of the chapter is limited by the statement in verse 34 to "this generation." While it is true that a Christian must endure to the end of his life if he expects to go to heaven (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22), this is not the "end" being discussed in this setting. It is the end of the Jewish system, for this is the subject he is discussing. The salvation is the preservation of their physical lives (cf. vv 15-20; Luke 21:18-24). The end the Lord is contemplating is connected
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to the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world; it will come only after that great effort has been completed.

- 7) Matthew 24:21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." See also Luke 21:23-24 and Mark 13:19. Notice that the time when this great tribulation was to be is the same as when the abomination of desolation came and when the saints were to flee from Judea and Jerusalem. We know that this great tribulation is not something that is to occur at the end of time because of the information preceding its mention and by the limiting statement of verse 34. There is no reason for taking the statement of verse 21 as a figure of speech. Jesus said plainly that the suffering of that period of time was unparalleled in history. It had greater suffering than that which was experienced during Noah's flood (those people died quickly, in a relatively painless way); it was greater than when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (their death was not preceded with any long period of agony); it was greater than the suffering felt by those who died in either of the atomic explosions in Japan (for those mostly died instantly). In fact, when Josephus' record is consulted, we have much reason to understand it literally. He reports that:
 - a) 1,100,000 Jews died at Jerusalem during the siege and fighting, and another 97,000 were captured and placed in slavery. How foolish the Jewish bravado of Matthew 27:25: "His blood be on us, and on our children."
 - b) Women ate their own babies, men broke into houses and stole food from children's mouths, and neighbor robbed neighbor for the food they had.
 - c) Rich Jews swallowed gold, deserted to the Romans, hoping to get away with some of their wealth. When the soldiers discovered the scheme, they began killing those who surrendered, ripping open their bodies in search of the coins. Thousands died in this fashion, two thousand in only one night.
 - d) Many were beaten and tortured by the Roman soldiers; thousands were crucified, many in various bodily positions as jests. This was done until all of the wood had been used as crosses, and even places to erect crosses were filled!
 - e) By actual count, 115,880 bodies were carried through one gate in three months; there were 600,000 in all thus disposed of. When the bodies could no longer be thrown outside the city, they were stored in large houses within the city.
 - f) Thousands of the captives were later forced to fight beasts and each other in arenas; this for the enjoyment of spectators.
 - g) Jerusalem was overthrown and the temple was utterly destroyed; Matthew 14:2 was literally fulfilled. When the Romans broke into the city, Josephus said, "...They slew whomsoever they found, without distinction, and burned the houses and all the people who had fled into them; and when they entered for the sake of plunder, they found whole families of dead persons, and houses full of carcasses destroyed by famine, then they came out with their hands empty. And though they thus pitied the dead, they had not the same emotion for the living, but killed all they met, whereby they filled the lanes with dead bodies. The whole city ran with blood, insomuch that many things which were burning were extinguished by the blood" (*Wars*, Book VI, chap. 8,5; chap. 9,3).
- 8) Matthew 24:30: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." All the tribes of the earth shall mourn. Luke's account gives this additional information: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:26). [In the Greek, "heaven" is in the plural, showing that God's abode is not the location where this shaking will take place]. The mourning would be the outgrowth of the terrible things included in this great tribulation. All the Jewish people, not only those who were present to face the terrible ordeal, but those who were living in many places throughout the Empire (Acts 2:5), would mourn over the evil which was befalling their nation. The consequences of this great tribulation would also have effects on other people and nations. The suffering and the resulting sorrow of such a tremendous

- tribulation, in which well over a million people died under the most horrible of circumstances during a 3-5 five month span, would certainly cause a terrible mourning on the part of many. The word "earth" of this clause can be either earth or land, including the occupied earth in the former case, or the land of Palestine in the latter. Those mourning would be especially those who were enduring the suffering and death, and extend to all the others who were sympathetic to them, or who also had to endure the consequences of Israel's great plight.
- 9) The church underwent a great persecution, first from the Jews, and later from the Romans. The extent of these persecutions encompassed Christians wherever they were. The collateral suffering would also be extensive.
- d. These verses from Matthew 24 give a drastic and frightful picture of the times in which Judaism was destroyed. Surely these great events would be elsewhere mentioned in the Scriptures, in which the brethren were prepared and cautioned over the great upheavals and dangers accompanying those great events. The present distress Paul mentioned very likely is a reference to these events. The following passages probably allude to them also: Hebrews 10:25; Romans 16:20; 1 Peter 4:7ff; James. 5:8. Note: The "Realized Eschatology Theory" (which falsely claims that the second coming of Christ took place in 70 A.D.) finds no Biblical support. No one who understands and believes the Bible will condone this error.
3. Verse 27: "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife."
- a. This is part of his "judgment" on the question. Notice the authoritative nature of the statement.
- 1) Are you bound to a wife [are you married]? Do not seek to be loosed from her. If one was married when the difficulties came, he must not use those hardships as an excuse to obtain a divorce.
- 2) Are you loosed from a wife [are you unmarried]? Do not seek to marry. The following verses, as well as verse 26, give the reasons for the answer.
- b. Why? Because of *the present distress*. In view of the necessities which a severe persecution incurs, it is better to be responsible only for yourself than for a wife and family also. Besides the hardship of providing for their needs and protecting them from harm, there was the difficult nature of arranging for flight from persecution. Add to that the extra leverage a wife and family would give the oppressor, and Paul's counsel is seen to be wise.
- c. The word *loosed* is not used in the Scriptures as a synonym for divorce.
- 1) If it does mean divorced from a wife here, then the counsel he gives in verse 28 directly contradicts his counsel of verses 10-11. In verses 10-11, he commands the parties to remain unmarried; in verse 28, he says it is all right if they marry.
- 2) Further, the Lord showed in Matthew 19:9 that remarriage after a divorce is permitted only if the former spouse was guilty of fornication, and that one who divorced for some other reason and remarried, committed adultery in the process. Adultery is always sinful.
4. Verse 28: "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you." "But shouldest thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Yet such shall have tribulation in the flesh: and I would spare you" (ASV).
- a. Again, notice the authoritative nature of his statement. This does not sound like the words of a humble but uninspired man! The statement bears the features of an inspired, authoritative pronouncement.
- b. The apostle states that a father has not committed sin if he gives his daughter in marriage, even in the time of persecution; and the daughter is free from sin if she enters into marriage.
- c. However, the apostle hastens to add that if the individuals involved were to remain unmarried, thus heeding the sage counsel of the apostle, they would spare themselves and others much trouble.
- d. Although the utterance is given in an authoritative manner, what it entails is not an absolute legislation that allows only one response. It is not sinful for these virgins to marry; it is not sinful for the fathers of these virgins to give their blessings to the marriages; but it is wiser for them to remain unmarried until the present distress had run its course. Such marriages would not involve sin, but would bring
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- problems which could have been avoided if the marriage had not been entered. But in either case, sin was not involved.
- e. What Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5 concerning younger widows marrying has a different background. Although the same general time-frame still existed, the apostle willed that these younger widows marry and have families; if they did not do so, in the case he deals with there, they would fall victim to spiritual problems. The conditions involved in this latter situation differ from that of our text.
5. Verse 29: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none."
- a. The time is short. He could have reference to the shortness of life or perhaps he means that the time is short before the present distress was upon them in its full force. Compare: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:7-19).
 - b. The practical significance of the statement would be the same to the brethren: they would need to use the best possible wisdom with regards to marrying since time on earth is short, or since there is only a short time before the persecutions come in earnest. The Lord's cause must be placed first in either case.
 - c. Nothing is said in the verse or context that could logically lead one to think Paul is saying that the time before the Lord returns is short. He is writing by inspiration; the Lord did not come in a short time; to say Paul spoke of the second coming here is to say that inspiration erred!
 - d. If Paul's point here has to do with the shortness of the interval of time before the distress comes into its full bloom, then he is teaching a practical lesson. During the time of the distress, those who had wives would be as though they were unmarried. It would be a time when everyone would have to fend for himself. Persecution could cause families to be separated by their oppressors; the tormentors would not be concerned with the well-being of a man's family if they had reason to believe he was a Christian.
 - e. If his point has to do with the shortness of life itself, then he is saying that we must put the Lord first, even before our families. Our earthly existence is intended for only a little time, and marriages pertain only to this sphere of life; there will be no marrying in heaven (Matt. 22:30). In view of eternity, we must live our lives on earth placing primary emphasis on serving Christ. So whether a man is married or single, his affections must be set on heavenly considerations and aspirations, not on pleasing his wife or on maintaining a comfortable and pleasing earthly status.
6. Verses 30-31: "And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."
- a. The apostle continues the thought introduced in the previous verse.
 - 1) Understanding his point to have reference to the soon-to-come distress, the time was shortly to be upon them when those who were married would be treated as if they were unmarried, for the
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- persecutors would have little regard for keeping a family intact, or sparing a father or mother because of their children.
- 2) If he is simply speaking of the shortness of human life on earth, he is showing that our greatest concern must be in maintaining the proper standing with the Lord, not with our spouse or children.
- b. In verse 30, he says that the time was coming when those who wept would be as though they wept not; and those who rejoiced, as those who rejoiced not, and those who bought, as though they owned nothing.
- 1) Tears would not touch the tormentors to cause them to spare the torture; and those who rejoiced would quickly have the cause of their joy taken away by the persecutions; and it would not matter to those who persecuted the saints, whether the land, house, or possession had a very great sentimental or financial value to them; they would be stripped of their property anyhow.
 - 2) If his point has reference to the shortness of human life on earth, he shows that our greatest interests must be on things spiritual and eternal, not on things of an earthly nature. There are many sorrows, pleasures, and possessions that we know on earth; we are not to allow any of these to deter us from serving our Master.
- c. In verse 31, the apostle teaches a lesson on using this world, and not abusing it. Christians are uniquely equipped to view this world in its true and proper perspective.
- 1) We know it will utterly pass away when the Lord returns, and all that it contains will be burned into nothingness (2 Pet. 3:10-11). It was originally created from nothing and it will return to nothing (Heb. 11:3).
 - 2) We are able to use the blessings of this world to the best profit, and not fall victim to their alluring appeals (2 Cor. 4:16-18; 5:1-11; Col. 3:1-3). It is easy for one whose eyes do not perceive spiritual realities to think that worldly goods, honors, and lusts are the greatest goals to be obtained, but in the end all of these must be left behind (1 Tim. 6; 1 John 2:15-17).
7. Verses 32-33: "But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife."
- a. It is the apostle's sincere wish that the brethren live without anxiety. We should not be without due concern, but neither should we be filled with worry (Matthew 6:19-34).
 - 1) Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
 - b. An unmarried, dedicated Christians will put the Lord first; this is his first and foremost concern. He has the time and freedom to do more for the Lord's cause than one who bears the responsibility of tending to a wife and children. This is a general rule, but is not always the case, for many single saints spend their time, energies, and funds on worldly pursuits. Paul is an example of the rule; he dedicated his life to preaching the gospel far and wide, and spent himself in building up the church of Christ.
 - c. On the other hand, the general rule for a married man is that his wife occupies the place of primary concern to him. In times of persecution, he would naturally be concerned with her welfare; and in times of peace, he will usually be interested in tending to her needs and desires. It is natural and easy for him to allow the wife to take up valuable time which might otherwise have been spent in the Lord's service. Of course, the husband can have the same effect on the wife.
 - d. The apostle is not encouraging celibacy; he is not denigrating the holy bond of the marriage institution. God did not originate marriage in the beginning, declaring it to be essential to mankind's well-being and happiness, and then speak ill of it. Marriage is just as important and right for Christians as it is for anyone!
 - e. Neither is Paul saying that celibacy necessarily offers a holier manner of life. An unmarried person can be just as selfish, sinful, and vain as any married person. There is nothing sinful about a scriptural
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marriage; there is nothing especially holy about being unmarried. One can be a faithful Christian whether married or unmarried; he can serve Christ profitably in either state.

8. Verse 34: "There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."
 - a. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. One is married and the other is unmarried (obviously). But Paul is discussing the difference between various people with different marital situations.
 - b. An unmarried woman (a virgin; perhaps he also includes a widow) is in a position to do much good for the Lord. Such a person has the time, opportunity, and means of offering more service to the Lord than a lady who has the added duties of wife and mother. Again, this is a general rule only, for many married women serve the Lord with great effectiveness, and many single women serve him only to a minimal degree.
 - c. The unmarried woman is able to dedicate herself fully to the Lord's cause, and is minded to keep herself pure in body and spirit. The married woman must spend much time in tending to her family's material needs, leaving less time for serving Christ.
9. Verse 35: "And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."
 - a. Paul states his purpose for writing these things. He did not intend to cast a snare upon them: it was not his aim to create a more difficult situation for them.
 - b. But rather he sought to give them some inspired counsel which would work to their spiritual profit. He wanted the best for them in their efforts to serve the Lord.
 - c. With the distress of verse 26 in mind, we may especially see how his counsel would give them a better circumstance in serving the Lord. There would be less "distraction" if they were unmarried when the persecutions assailed them. Their minds would not be burdened with fears for the safety of their families, and with providing for their material needs. To meet the distressing times with less difficulty, his counsel was given.

E. 1 Corinthians 7:36-38: Instructions For Fathers of Unmarried Daughters.

1. Verse 36: "But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry."
 - a. However, the counsel he gives them is not intended to answer every situation. If there is the desire on the part of a virgin daughter to marry, and the father wishes to give his blessing to her marriage, Paul encourages them to arrange the marriage; there is no sin involved.
 - b. *If she pass the flower of her age* likely is a reference to the daughter having reached the marriageable age. It is better for her to marry. As Paul stated earlier (verse 9), it is better for them to marry than to burn in lust.
 - c. This verse indicates the control a father of that time exercised over his daughter. The father would not be doing wrong to permit his daughter to marry, even in the distressful times of persecution.
 2. Verse 37: "Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well."
 - a. On the other hand, if the father has resolved in his heart, having examined the situation thoroughly, and finding in his wisdom that it is better for his daughter not to marry, he has the right to decline her the right to marry.
 - b. The case Paul envisions is that of a father who is a faithful Christian, and a daughter who loves and honors her father and is likely also a faithful Christian. The daughter would know that her father was giving her the best possible guidance, and would not be inclined to rebel against his wise and loving authority.
 - c. Paul describes such an action as good.
 3. Verse 38: "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better."
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- a. The father who decided under the circumstances of his case that it was proper for his daughter to marry, and thus gave consent, did well. There was no sin in so-doing.
 - b. The father who, after careful consideration of the case, decided to turn down the daughter's desire to marry, did better. The hardships of the times for Christians was the deciding factor in his judgment. In view of the many difficulties which his decision would preclude, Paul could endorse this decree as the better verdict.
4. Some scholars make the man in this section to be the prospective bridegroom, instead of the father of the prospective bride. The KJV and the ASV indicate it is a father-daughter situation; other translations make it the bridegroom and bride status. In either case, it is the male who makes the final decision; Paul's counsel would apply to both cases.

F. 1 Corinthians 7:39-40: The Marriage of Widows.

1. Verse 39: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."
 - a. This simply sets forth God's divine decree for marriage: it is until the death of one of the partners (cf. Romans 7:1ff). The death of the husband gives the wife (the widow) the right to enter into another marriage. By implication, if the surviving mate is the husband, he has the right to marry again.
 - b. While this passage gives the person described the right to remarry, it does not require remarriage. And it does not give that person the unconditional right of remarriage. The condition is stated: The remarriage is to be "only in the Lord." Two views of this conditional statement have been suggested:
 - 1) That the only person the Christian widow [or widower] may consider for a husband [or wife] is another Christian. The natural understanding of the condition seems to support this view. The difficulty with it is suggested by applying this meaning to the phrase in Ephesians 6:1: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord...." Does a child have the right to disobey his parents if they are not Christians?
 - 2) That the Christian widow may remarry, but only in accordance with the teachings of the Lord. She would not have the right to marry a man who had obtained an unscriptural divorce (Matt. 19:9). The difficulty with this view is that it seems to deny the plain import of the condition: Only "in the Lord."
 - c. From the following considerations, it is clear that the safest application of the passage to a real-life situation is to marry only a Christian.
 - 1) If we married a faithful Christian, a companion would have been found who is supportive of our faith and thus could encourage us in our quest to serve the Lord with dedication. If we married an unbeliever, we would forfeit that support.
 - 2) Marrying "out of the Lord" shows our own shallow conviction: we are willing to risk our soul for the sake of the marriage; marrying "in the Lord" shows our desire to be well-pleasing to the Lord.
 - 3) Virtually all of the scholars and saints through the centuries have believed "only in the Lord" means to marry only another Christian. Although this does not necessarily prove this to be the real meaning, it does show that the view is the natural, unforced interpretation of the phrase.
 - 4) The natural view of the phrase [*only in the Lord*] is to take it as meaning to marry someone who is also "in the Lord" (i.e., a faithful Christian).
 - 5) The many verses in which this expression, or one similar to it, is used teach the lesson that "in the Lord" describes the state of being in the Lord (i.e., a reference to spiritual location). The use of the expression in Ephesians 6:1 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 Christ taught (Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers*, Vol. I, pp.91-95).
 - d. The first view poses some questions that are difficult to answer.
 - 1) What should be done to a Christian widow who marries a non-Christian?
 - 2) Why should this restriction apply only to a widow or widower and not to a Christian who marries the first time?
 - e. Barnes offers these comments on the verse: "[Only in the Lord] That is, only to one who is a Christian;

with a proper sense of her obligations to Christ, and so as to promote his glory. The apostle supposed that could not be done if she were allowed to marry a pagan, or one of a different religion.... The reasons at that time would be obvious:

- 1) They could have no sympathy and fellow-feeling on the most important of all subjects, if the one was a Christian and the other a pagan....
 - 2) If she should marry a pagan, would it not be showing that she had not as deep a conviction of the importance and truth of her religion as she ought to have? If Christians were required to be 'separate,' to be 'a special people,' not 'to be conformed to the world,' how could these precepts be obeyed if the society of a pagan was voluntarily chosen, and if she became united to him for life?
 - 3) She would in this way greatly hinder her usefulness; put herself in the control of one who had no respect for her religion, and who would demand her time and attention, and thus interfere with her attendance on the public and private duties of religion, and the offices of Christian charity.
 - 4) She would thus greatly endanger her piety. There would be danger from the opposition, the taunts, the sneers of the enemy of Christ; from the secret influence of living with a man who had no respect for God; from his introducing her into society that was irreligious, and that would tend to mar the beauty of her piety, and to draw her away from simple-hearted devotion to Jesus Christ. And do not these REASONS apply to similar cases now? And if so, is not the law still binding? Do not such unions now, as really as they did then, place the Christian where there is no mutual sympathy on the subject dearest to the Christian heart? Do they not show that she who forms such a union has not as deep a sense of the importance of piety, and of the pure and holy nature of her religion as she ought to have? Do they not take time from God and from charity; break up plans of usefulness, and lead away from the society of Christians, and from the duties of religion? Do they not expose often to ridicule, to reproach, to persecution, to contempt, and to pain? Do they not often lead into society, by a desire to please the partner in life, where there is no religion, where God is excluded, where the name of Christ is never heard, and where the piety is marred, and the beauty of simple Christian piety is dimmed? AND IF SO, are not such marriages contrary to the law of Christ? I confess, that this verse, to my view, proves that all such marriages are a violation of the New Testament; and if they are, they should not on ANY plea be entered into; and it will be found, in perhaps nearly ALL instances, that they are disastrous to the piety of the married Christian, and the occasion of ultimate regret, and the cause of a loss of comfort, peace, and usefulness in the married life" [Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
2. Verse 40: "But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God."
- a. The Christian widow (or widower) is free to marry another Christian if she desires, but Paul says that she would be happier if she remained single. This point is true because of the distress he mentions in the context. The apostle is interested in her spiritual well-being and happiness; he is not being inflexible.
 - b. False teachers had belittled Paul, denying his apostleship. His words here, given by inspiration (14:37), provide a gentle affirmation of his true authority. He claims to have the Holy Spirit, which means he is making a claim to being inspired.
 - 1) His wording has been correctly called a subtle way of implying certainty. This exalted his teachings above those of false teachers who taught contrary to what Paul taught.
 - 2) There was no need for Paul to go into great detail to prove his apostleship to the faithful saints at Corinth.
 - c. They were well-acquainted with his dedicated service and supernatural works he did in their midst.
 - 1) Acts 18:1-11: "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth....And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I
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will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

- 2) 2 Corinthians 11:24-28: "Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 12:12-13: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."
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1 CORINTHIANS 8

A. 1 Corinthians 8:1-3: Knowledge That Puffs One Up.

1. The problem of eating meats that had previously been offered in idol worship, which Paul discusses in this chapter, is remote from our modern society, but what he presents certainly contains principles that are ever pertinent to Christians.
 - a. He sets forth the precept that regardless of how strong and enlightened a Christian may feel from the infection of heathen idols, even if he knows the idol is nothing but the symbol of a non-existent thing, he must be careful not to hurt the conscience of a brother not as strong or as enlightened as himself. He shows, therefore, that love also, not knowledge only, must be used in determining how a Christian must conduct himself before his brethren.
 - b. The brethren living in heathen societies were taught the folly of idolatry. The council at Jerusalem issued the inspired decree that the saints were to abstain from eating meats which had been offered to idols (Acts 15:29). The saints in Corinth were not ignorant about the nature of idols, for some of them had actively practiced idolatry prior to their conversion to Christ (see 6:9-11). They understood that idols were nothing of themselves, that they had no life, no power, no will, and no being.
 - c. To eat meat that had been used earlier in pagan religious services honoring a non-entity (an idol) was innocent in and of itself. However, if a Christian's partaking of it made it more difficult to teach the heathen the errors of their ways, or if his eating it caused another Christian to violate his conscience by also eating this meat, the first Christian was in error.
 - d. The council's decree revealed the error of idolatry, and that a saint must in no way encourage idolatry; he must keep himself as free from such *pollutions* as possible. Paul's inspired counsel in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 put the council's decree into perspective; he does not contradict it.
 - 1) There was nothing permanent about the ban against eating meats which had been used in an idol's temple. The prohibition was an expediency, designed to inculcate in the hearts of the believers the awareness of the contaminating effect of idolatry, and thus to encourage this conviction in the minds of unbelievers and weak Christians.
 - 2) But as the saints became more knowledgeable of the true situation, they came to see that an idol was nothing and hence the meat offered in an idol's temple had not been tainted with some moral corruption by having been thus used. This meat had neither an evil nor a good moral status. The significance of the meat lay in the perception the individual had in his mind concerning it.
 - 3) This chapter addresses the question of whether a Christian should eat this meat.
2. Verse 1: "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."
 - a. Paul brings up the subject of "things offered to idols." The previous chapter began by addressing the subjects concerning which they had written him. He discussed their inquiries that related to marriage. Obviously, they had also requested some information on the rightness of eating meats that had been offered to idols. This subject he is now ready to investigate.
 - b. The brethren were well-acquainted with the nature of idols, knowing that they were inanimate objects. But the apostle cautions that knowledge can have a detrimental effect on us. It is not his purpose to disparage our obtaining knowledge, but to warn about the abuses of knowledge.
 - 1) Without knowledge of the gospel, no one can be saved (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19-20; John 6:44-45; Eph. 5:17). When Paul entered a city on his preaching excursions, he reasoned with those who showed interest (Acts 17:1ff; 24:25; cf. Isaiah 1:18).
 - 2) Without increasing in knowledge, a Christian could never come to spiritual maturity (2 Pet. 3:18; 1:5-12; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:6,13-16; Heb. 5:12-14).
 - 3) No inspired man would or could deliver a message which contradicted other inspired truths.
 - c. Zeal without knowledge can cause great harm. The Jews who rejected the gospel had a large measure of zeal, but their zeal was misguided (Rom. 10:1-3). Earlier in life, Paul had himself been guided more by zeal than by knowledge of the truth.

- 1) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 2) Acts 26:9-11: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 1:12-15: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
- d. But knowledge without love can be equally devastating. The apostle will show in chapter 13 of this book that even great knowledge without love is profitless to the soul (13:1-3).
- 1) This chapter shows that an idol is nothing, and that the meat offered in an idol's temple is not morally contaminated.
 - 2) But he will also show that a Christian, who knows that an idol is nothing and that therefore to eat the meat earlier used in idol worship is sinless of itself, if his partaking of the meat causes another Christian (who does not have that knowledge, and believes it is sinful to eat that meat) to follow his example and violate his conscience, that first brother has committed sin (verse 13).
 - 3) The knowledge he has concerning the idol and the things sacrificed to the idol can cause a man to develop an arrogant disposition, and look down on the brother with less knowledge in the matter. Such a person might ridicule the other brother's lack of knowledge, and insist on doing what pleases himself, without regard to the effect such an attitude and conduct might have on the weaker saint. Knowledge in such a case has caused him to be "puffed up." In reality, this brother is weaker than the other. One believes it is sinful to partake of the meat; his knowledge is immature. But the other, whose knowledge is correct, has a weakness in love, and thus proceeds to destroy his brother.
 - 4) Knowledge without love gives the individual a superiority complex, and that disposition leads one in the opposite direction to the attitude the Lord requires.
 - a) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - b) Mark 12:31: "And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - c) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law."
 - d) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - e) 1 Corinthians 10:24: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."
- e. On the other hand, brotherly love will edify. Rather than being haughty because he possesses superior knowledge on the subject, the loving saint will forego his privileges in the interest of the weaker brother's spiritual welfare. There are some things that must not be done because of a detrimental effect it has on the weaker ones among us.
3. Verse 2: "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."
 - a. Under the best of circumstances, no man knows as much as he could or should know; there is always room for increasing our knowledge. If one begins to think that he is superior to others because he knows more than they know, let him take warning: his knowledge is not perfect; he does not know everything!
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- b. One attitude true knowledge gives is the awareness that there is still more to learn, far more than he will ever have time, strength, and capacity to master.
 - c. True knowledge will promote the welfare of the church in general, and the spiritual prosperity of individual saints in particular: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1-2).
 - d. While spiritual maturity apart from knowledge is impossible, knowledge is not the primary end. Knowledge is intended to develop greater faith, trust, love, humility, kindness, zeal, godliness, and obedience. Possessing knowledge *only* is insufficient for anything of itself, except to give greater responsibility and accountability. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1).
 - e. "The knowledge that is not guarded by humility and love does harm both to its possessor and to other Christians" (Lipscomb, p.118).
4. Verse 3: "But if any man love God, the same is known of him."
- a. "To love God is to so honor and serve him as to seek his will that we may do it. If one properly esteems God as the great source and center of all things, honors him, and acts from a sense of duty of him, he is known and approved by God, for 'the Lord knoweth them that are his.' (2 Tim. 2:19)" (Lipscomb, p.119).
 - b. It is impossible to love God and hate a brother in Christ. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20).
 - c. If we love God, we will seek to edify our brethren, and to promote their happiness and welfare, instead of doing those things which might tear them down or influence them in the wrong way.
 - d. To be *known of God* means to be known in the sense of being approved by him (Matt. 7:21-23). God will not and cannot approve of us if we do not show love for the brethren and for him.

B. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6: An Idol is Nothing.

1. Verse 4: "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."
- a. Our knowledge tells us that an idol is nothing and that the meat sacrificed to an idol is nothing. We know this because of the information the gospel furnishes us; this is part of the fundamental truths of the word of God, which teaches us that there is one Father in heaven and one Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:1-6; John 3:16).
 - b. Since the idol is non-existent, the sacrifices offered to an idol have not been contaminated with evil. This is far from saying that anyone can worship an idol with impunity! Idolatry is sin; it takes the devotion that rightfully belongs to the Living God and directs it toward a non-entity.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 15:23: "For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:14: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."
 - 4) Galatians 5:20: "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies."
 - 5) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - 6) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which

burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

- c. An idol is merely a non-living object which has been carved from wood, or shaped from stone or metal; it is a creation of a man; it has no being, no life, no power. "Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it*? ye *are* even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is* no God; I know not *any*. They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that* is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; *yet* they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish *it*. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; *and* their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand? Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou *art* my servant: I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me" (Isa. 44:8-21).
 2. Verse 5: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many)."
 - a. It is a matter of common knowledge that there are many such items on earth which are called *gods*. But just because they are thus called, does not make them such.
 - b. Hindu religion recognizes the lowliest beings of God's creation as gods, but that does not make them divine.
 3. Verse 6: "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."
 - a. Christians have a superior understanding of reality. Our basic training has shown us that there is only one God, and only one Lord (Christ). These are not mere assertions, but were established as undeniable facts by the best possible proofs: miraculous demonstrations; fulfilled prophecies; sacrificial lives of those who taught the gospel.
 - b. God is the ultimate source of all things, including authority. Since the Father is the source of all things, his authority is superior to that of Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-19: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Christ received his authority from the Father.
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:27-28: "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:6: "One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."
 - c. Christ is the one Lord.
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- 1) John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
- 2) Romans 1:4: "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
- 3) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
- 4) Ephesians 4:4-6: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."
- 5) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- 6) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

C. 1 Corinthians 8:7-13: Love For the Saints Forbids Our Being a Stumblingblock to Them.

1. Verse 7: "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."
 - a. The knowledge indicated in verse six is not known or held by everyone. In fact, at that time only a small part of Roman society had accepted those truths about God and Christ. Even in the church of that time, there were some who did not recognize the practical aspects of those truths.
 - b. If a Christian thought that the idol represented a real being, who had power to act for or against a human, his understanding of the truth was incorrect. Our spiritual strength is directly proportionate to our grasp of the truth.
 - c. If one still feared an idol or had faith in its being, his grasp of the truth was weak. We can see how difficult it would be for a man, who had worshipped an idol all his life, to give up his reverence for that idol. While he must accept the basic truth that there is one God in heaven and that Christ is his only begotten Son, yet it might be another matter for him to completely and forever wipe from his mind the awe for his idol which had been inculcated in him from his earliest childhood.
 - d. Such a person would have much difficulty in separating the meat, which had been sacrificed to the idol, from the idol itself. His faith was not sufficiently strong to give him a firm conviction that the idol was utterly without existence. Certainly, a Jewish Christian would find it a great obstacle to bring himself to eat meat which had been used in an idol's temple, since he had been taught throughout life the sinfulness of heathen deities. A person of his stripe would be unable to see how one could eat that kind of meat without connecting it with the idol to which it had been sacrificed.
 - e. Their conscience, being weak, could easily be defiled. The conscience is a wonderful tool in keeping us on the strait and narrow way that leads to heaven. It assails us when we do what we believe to be wrong; it commends us when we do what we believe is right. "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:15). David's conscience "smote him" when he

- degraded King Saul (1 Sam. 24:1-5).
- 1) Some have thought that opposing God and Christ was the right thing to do, hence their consciences did not afflict them when they acted against the truth (John 16:2; Acts 26:9ff).
 - 2) It follows, therefore, that if our minds have been taught error, our conscience may mislead us; but if we have been taught the truth, it will encourage us to stay on the path to heaven.
2. Verse 8: "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse."
- a. Meat, in and of itself, is neither evil nor good; it cannot either commend us to God or cause us to be separated from God. If we do not eat meat, we are not made more spiritual; if we eat meat, we are not made less worthy.
 - b. This is the way things are under the gospel system. Under the Mosaic Law, certain kinds of meat were forbidden; if an Israelite under the Law violated this prohibition, he committed sin. These distinctions have been removed under the gospel (Acts 10-11).
 - 1) Leviticus 11:41-47: "And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth *shall be* an abomination; it shall not be eaten. Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon *all* four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat; for they *are* an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy. This *is* the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-5: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."
 - c. Paul is in the process of showing a situation in which one Christian must refrain from partaking of meat which had been used in an idol's temple, that case being one in which a member with improper understanding is made to stumble by violating his conscience when he sees another brother eating that kind of meat.
3. Verse 9: "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak."
- a. Christians have the right to eat meat which has been offered in a temple, providing his own understanding about it is correct, and exercising his liberty will not cause another Christian to stumble.
 - b. Take heed, Paul warns, lest we become a stumblingblock to our weak brethren by insisting on our right to eat. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).
4. Verses 10-11: "For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols. And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"
- a. The question affirms the folly of the action described. If a brother who does not yet grasp the truth about idols sees a more enlightened brother sitting in an idol's temple eating meat, although he believes he ought not follow the example of that brother, but he does so anyway, he thus violates his conscience and commits sin: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).
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- b. In burning an animal's carcass on the altar, part of the body was consumed by the fire, part of it was given to the priest as payment for his services, and the remainder belonged to the one making the sacrifice, or perhaps he had to buy his portion from the priest. The priest or the worshipper could sell his portion to the public. One can suppose that this was the chief source of meat consumed by the average person of the time (1 Cor. 10:25). The English word *shambles* refers to "benches" or "stools" where meat was sold. It came to refer to a slaughterhouse, or a place where a great slaughter occurred, and later to any scene of destruction or disarray.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 10:25: "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake." Shambles... "*makellon*, a term of late Greek borrowed from the Latin *macellum*, denotes a 'meat market,' translated 'shambles' in 1 Cor 10:25. The word is found in the koine, or vernacular Greek covering the time of the NT, illustrating this passage (see Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 274). A plan, drawn by Lietzmann, of a forum in Pompeii, shows both the slaughterhouse and the meat shop next to the chapel of Caesar. Some of the meat which had been used for sacrificial purposes was afterwards sold in the markets. The apostle enjoins upon the believer to enter into no inquiry, so as to avoid the troubling of conscience (contrast v. 28)" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - 2) "The result of a brother violating his conscience was that he would *perish*. This is from the same word used in John 3:16, and thus refers to his eternal ruin. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
 - 3) This verse is a devastating blow against the Calvinist theory that says it is impossible for a saved person to so sin as to be lost. Paul plainly states that a *brother* can sin and perish.
 - 4) The cause of this brother being lost is a simple affair. One arrogant or ignorant brother, knowing it was not wrong to eat the meat indicated in the passage, and who insisted on his right to eat it, can cause a weaker brother to violate his conscience in the matter and be lost! It could be possible that the brother causing the offense might not even know of the offense at the time.
- c. Our influence is extremely important and powerful!
5. Verse 12: "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."
- a. The enlightened brother, by insisting on his rights, also becomes guilty of sin. He sins against the Lord who died for him; and he sins against the weak brother.
 - b. There are two causes of the disaster:
 - 1) The ignorance on the part of the weak member. If he had only learned more quickly and more fully the truth on the subject, he would not have violated his conscience. If he had only been more committed to keeping his conscience pure, he would not have fallen victim to the temptation. If he had only availed himself of the "way to escape" available to him, he could have kept from stumbling. If he would only repent, and resolve to do better, he would not die lost (1 John 1:7-10; Jas. 5:16; Acts 8:22).
 - 2) The arrogance of the enlightened brother. If he had only paused to consider the possible effects of his actions, the offense might not have been committed. If he, on seeing what he had instigated, had gone to the weak brother, expressing genuine sorrow over his misdeed and repenting of it, and asked the other to also repent, neither would perish.
 - c. Again, our influence is powerful; it ought to be used wisely. We cannot afford to be indifferent or arrogant; we must always be on guard.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
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6. Verse 13: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."
 - a. Paul's determination, stated by inspiration in this verse, must be our commitment. Realizing the extreme misfortune of any who die lost, and recognizing the power of our influence, we must determine that we will never do anything which could lead to the loss of anyone's soul.
 - b. Brethren sometimes argue heatedly in favor of the rightness of social drinking. They usually understand the severe danger involved in drinking, and will admit that drunkenness is sinful. When one considers the matter Paul discusses in this chapter, a subject that is neither right nor wrong in itself, and concludes that souls can be eternally lost due to our insisting on having our way, how much more should we be committed to avoiding the same result when the far more dangerous subject of alcohol is involved.
 - c. Hell is too awful to contemplate, heaven is too wonderful to miss, and eternity is too long, for any of us to be the cause of someone losing his soul!
 - 1) Matthew 25:41-46: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:31—11:1: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
 - 3) Romans 14:13: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."
 - d. Does this mean that we must always give in to the professed scruples of every objecting brother?
 - 1) Many objections have been raised through the years which are alleged to be equal to the *meat-offered-to-idols* case of this chapter, including the following:
 - a) The use of individual communion cups.
 - b) Dividing the congregation into classes for Bible study sessions.
 - c) Using uninspired literature as study guides in Bible classes.
 - d) Having women to teach classes for children.
 - e) Passing the collection plate instead of having each member place his contribution on the table.
 - f) Putting a baptistry in the building instead of using an outside body of water for baptisms.
 - 2) There are some questions that need to be answered in connection with the subject:
 - a) Are we required to always give in to the demands of *weak* brethren that these and other such things not be done, in the interest of their tender consciences?
 - b) Must we give in to the demands of a *crank* who is more interested in getting his own way than in the peace and prosperity of the congregation?
 - c) How can we identify a man who is sincere in stating his scruples?
 - d) How can we know whether a man is merely trying to get his own selfish way?
 - 3) It is always best to follow the safest course. If we have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the objector, then assume that he is sincere. Knowing the individual, as we learn to know them with time, we will have learned if the person is sincere. If his history is one of honestly endeavoring to live right, we must forego our rights in the interest of his soul. If his history is one of an opinionated objector, *born in the objective case and in the kickative mood*, he needs to be set straight by the brethren.
 - 4) The principle of the chapter does not apply to one who is contentious. It does not apply to one

who is unwilling to study to improve his knowledge and understanding. It does not apply to one who will not discuss the issue with an open mind, who will not listen to reason or scripture.

- 5) In order for one to use the apostolic precept of 1 Corinthians 8 as a means of opposing a certain activity, the objector admits the rightness of the action; he opposes the practice on the grounds that his knowledge on the subject is weak, and that if others practice it, he might be emboldened to follow their example, and violate his tender conscience in so-doing. A contentious man is not apt to make these admissions. There is a great gulf that separates the brother with a weak conscience and the brother who is always objecting to something.
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1 CORINTHIANS 9

A. 1 Corinthians 9:1-6: Paul's Liberty.

1. Verse 1: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?"
 - a. In this chapter, Paul deals with those who invoked the principle of Christian liberty. He shows that he is an apostle and could claim authority, but even he must live by this principle of abstaining from certain things for the good of the church and of weak brethren, as well as for his own spiritual welfare. The apostle understands Christian freedom, but he also recognizes Christian responsibility.
 - b. *Am I not an apostle?* The question implies that some in Corinth had doubts about his apostleship.
 - 1) Some harsh criticism had been made against Paul: "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10). This kind of response is common from those who reject what a gospel preacher presents.
 - 2) Paul had proved his apostleship by demonstrating the signs which only an apostle could work. "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong" (2 Cor. 12:11-13).
 - c. *Am I not free?* He had the liberty to do anything that was authorized and right for a Christian to do. "The *liberty* referred to here is doubtless the privilege or right of abstaining from labour; of enjoying as others did the domestic relations of life: and of a support as a public minister and apostle. Probably some had objected to his claims of apostleship that he had not used this right, and that he was conscious that he had no claim to it" (Barnes, p.151).
 - d. *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* One of the strongest objections anyone could make against Paul's apostleship was to assert he had not been with Christ during his personal ministry.
 - 1) But Luke the inspired historian gave three reports of Paul's vision of the Lord as he journeyed to Damascus (Acts 9, 22, 26). Paul stated plainly here and in 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 that he had seen Christ. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22).
 - 2) This was a prerequisite of apostleship. The work of the apostles included bearing witness of the resurrected Christ; their testimony was proved correct by miraculous demonstrations which they were equipped to do.
 - a) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - b) Acts 10:38-42: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead."
 - c) Acts 26:16-19: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and

inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

- 3) There are some today who allege that they are apostles; the popes assert they have been appointed to succeed the apostles. But none of these have seen Christ; if they have, where is the proof? Where are the miracles which prove their testimony to be true? The proof is nonexistent!
- e. *Are ye not my work in the Lord?* Paul had been the teacher who brought them to Christ. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15).
 - 1) Why would Paul have made the exceeding long and hazardous journey to Corinth to preach the gospel if he did not have the obligation to do so? There was no financial gain to be had; there was no earthly glory to be obtained; there was only hardship and danger.
 - 2) How was he able to convince these Corinthians, who were pagans when Paul came to their city, that his message was true? By performing miraculous works (2 Cor. 12:12; Acts 18:1-8). "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7; cf. 1 Cor. 12-14).
 - 3) The very fact that these Corinthians were Christians was proof that Paul was an apostle, else they would never have obeyed the gospel.
2. Verse 2: "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."
 - a. There were others in places where Paul and his work were not well-known who may have had cause to doubt Paul's apostleship; however, if they only knew the facts, they would be convinced he was not a deceiver.
 - b. The Corinthians, among whom Paul had labored for 18 months (Acts 18:1-8), knew both the man and the work he did; they had every reason to know assuredly that he was an apostle (2 Cor. 12:11-13; 1:7).
3. Verses 3-5: "Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"
 - a. Plainly referring to the fact that there were some who disputed his claim to be an apostle, this inspired man from Tarsus sets forth his response to those who would put him to the test. He does not resort to bluster or wild assertions; he presents undeniable evidence that his apostleship is genuine.
 - b. Coupled with verses 1-3, the statements which follow give a strong defense of his office. Some had evidently questioned his office because he provided for his own subsistence, while others received remuneration from the church. Paul shows in the context that he had the right to take the pay, but he was not obligated to do so.
 - c. *Have we not power to eat and to drink?* Paul had the right to be sustained (in food and drink) by the brethren. By proving his apostleship, he proved his right to be supported by those whom he served.
 - 1) The word *power* means *right* or *authority*: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he **power** [authority or right] to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12). The right to eat and drink is not a reference to partaking of these essentials in an idol's temple; the context shows he is speaking about the common practice of taking daily sustenance at the expense of those he served.
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."
 - d. *Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife...?* Paul had the same right to be married and have a family, the same right that Peter, other apostles, and the Lord's brethren had to do so. If he was married, there would be the necessity of providing for his wife and family; he could sustain them by taking his rightful support from the brethren.
 - 1) It is clear from this verse (5) that other apostles, including Peter, were married; they had the right

to be married, and to lead about the wife (i.e., take the wife with them as they made their journeys preaching the gospel). With transportation and communication as primitive as existed then, it is unlikely the apostles could tend to their families' needs if they were separated from them.

- 2) Catholic dogma alleges that Peter was the *chief* apostle and that he was an unmarried man. But the inspired record teaches plainly that Peter was married! [See Matthew 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38; 1 Corinthians 9:5]. How could a man have a mother-in-law without having a wife? The Lord taught that there was to be no difference in authority among the apostles (Matt. 20:20-28), and Paul showed that he was equal to any of the twelve (2 Cor. 12:11-13).
 - 3) The *brethren of the Lord* are named: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?" (Matt. 13:55; cf. Mark 6:3). Catholic doctrine maintains that Mary remained a perpetual virgin, but the Bible says she had these four other sons and at least two daughters!
4. Verse 6: "Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?"
- a. Is it the case, Paul asks, that the other apostles have the right to be married and follow a more normal lifestyle, and that he and Barnabas have no right to do the same?
 - b. Logic shows that all of the apostles had the same right when it came to being married and having a family. Not only so, but each had the right to receive financial support from the brethren as they conducted the Lord's work of preaching the gospel.
 - c. Paul had the right to refrain from secular work so as to give himself fully to his work as an apostle. But if he did that, the brethren would need to support him. Since he was unmarried, and thus had only minimal needs, he was able to ply his trade as tentmaker in order to provide for his own essentials. And as he told the Thessalonians, he declined to take support from the church so that he could be an example to them: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thess. 3:8-12).
 - d. The point of this argumentation must be as Barnes suggested, that Paul's enemies at Corinth had denied his apostleship because he did not receive pay for his service to the church.
 - 1) The apostle shows here, however, that he had the right to receive their support, but did not do so for good reason. "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself" (2 Cor. 11:7-9).
 - 2) Apparently the criticism had been made against both Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas was not an apostle of Christ as were Paul, Peter, et al. The word *apostle* denotes one who is sent on a mission; the twelve were selected and specially empowered to act in Christ's behalf. Barnabas was an apostle of the church at Antioch (Acts 14:14; 13:1 ff). He was given the name *Barnabas* by the apostles (Acts 4:36); the wording of the statement shows that he was not part of the group of the apostles of Christ (cf. Matt. 19:28; 2 Cor. 5:18-21).

B. 1 Corinthians 9:7-14: Illustrations Illuminating the Truth Being Discussed.

1. Verse 7: "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"
 - a. Paul uses some common illustrations from life to show that those who participate in the endeavors he mentions, have the right to partake of the fruit produced. The purpose this serves is to show that he and other preachers of the gospel have the right to partake of the bounty of the saints, i.e., to receive financial support for the labors they put forth.
 - b. A man who goes off to war does not have to provide for his own support while he serves in the

- military forces. The nation whose army it is in which he serves is obligated to furnish him his livelihood.
- c. One who plants a vineyard, and tends to it, has the right to eat the fruit produced by the vineyard. It was through his expense of time and effort that the fruit was grown; he has every right to eat it.
 - d. One who tended a flock had the right to drink the milk produced by the flock. No one denied the shepherd this right.
2. Verse 8-9: "Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?"
- a. The precept he is discussing was one that was addressed in the Law of Moses. It prohibited the Israelites from muzzling the ox that treaded out the grain, separating the grain from the husks.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 25:4: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out *the corn*."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 5:18: "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:6: "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits."
 - b. The wheat was cut down and spread over the threshing floor; oxen were led to walk on the wheat so as to separate the grain from the stalk; fans were then used to blow away the chaff.
 - c. The ox was providing a very useful service to the farmer, and must not be kept from taking a bite of the grain as he did his work.
 - d. God took care of oxen, in this case, by human instrumentality. The question with which verse nine closes may be taken as elliptical, saying that God does not take care of oxen *only*, but others also.
3. Verse 10: "Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope."
- a. The ASV has a clearer rendition: "Or saith he it assuredly for your sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because the that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking."
 - b. Considering the word translated *no doubt*, Barnes observes: "The word here, therefore, means that the principle stated in the law about the oxen was so broad and humane, that it might certainly, surely, particularly be regarded as applicable to the case under consideration. An important and material argument might be drawn from it; an argument from the less to the greater. The precept enjoined justice, equity, humanity: and that was more applicable to the case of the ministers of the gospel than to the case of oxen" (p.158).
 - c. Using the illustration of the man plowing a field, Paul states that the plowman should be able to plow with the hope of partaking of the crop that will be produced in the field he is preparing for planting.
 - d. Then he uses the illustration of one who is threshing the wheat, that he should live in hope of partaking of the grain which is being threshed.
4. Verse 11: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"
- a. The apostles had sown spiritual seed to those who heard and obeyed their inspired message; he affirms by his rhetorical question that it is to be expected that the apostles receive of the worldly wealth possessed by the brethren.
 - b. This is simply another way of stating the rightness of gospel preachers being financially supported by those they serve. It is an argument from the greater to the lesser: gospel preachers provide spiritual sustenance for the people, and are to receive wages from those people.
5. Verse 12: "If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ."
- a. Although not identifying who these others are, Paul says that others were partaking of this right, and were receiving wages from the church at Corinth. Probably these were certain of their own members who had risen to teaching positions with them.
 - b. Paul does not condemn these for getting these benefits, but states that he and others involved in
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preaching to them had greater right. Paul had not taken advantage of his right, but rather had done without certain things lest there be some problem to develop over his receiving their support.

- c. Because one has a right to a particular benefit does not mean that it is wise to avail himself of it; there might be some disadvantage or problem that would result.
6. Verse 13: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?"
 - a. Yet another illustration is in the offering, this one taken from the situation that prevailed in the temple. Those priests who served in the temple had the right to partake of the benefits which pertained to their position. The Law gave the priests a certain portion of the animals that were sacrificed. Leviticus 6:16,26; 7:31-33; Numbers 18:24-32.
 - b. This is a case that has much in common with the situation of those who preach the gospel. The priest ministered in a spiritual role; he had the right to receive his due portion of the animal offered by the worshipper. Paul and other preachers served in a spiritual capacity; they had the right to a portion of the material prosperity of the brethren.
 7. Verse 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."
 - a. Here is a direct statement affirming the truth which Paul has amply illustrated in the examples he has cited in the above verses.
 - b. Where did the Lord ordain this law? Perhaps in Luke 10:7: "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house."
 - 1) As Coffman has suggested, however, the real reference might be to some statement the Lord stated orally, which was not recorded elsewhere.
 - 2) Paul said in Acts 20:35 that the Lord had taught, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This statement is recorded only in Acts 20:35.

C. 1 Corinthians 9:15-23: Paul Practiced Self-denial Even Though He Had Rights.

1. Verse 15: "But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void."
 - a. Paul has shown in the context that he had the right to receive financial support from the church; the example of other apostles and preachers, the principles given in the law of Moses, the command of Christ, and common sense, all establish his right to receive wages.
 - 1) By foregoing the right to obtain support from the church, Paul is not intimating that he is not a full-fledged apostle. Some of his enemies were using this argument to neutralize Paul's claim to apostleship. [This is evident from the arguments he presents].
 - 2) By not taking wages, he refuted all charges of preaching for money. When an enemy alleged that he would take wages if he were a genuine apostle of Christ, he could point to the miracles he wrought which could be performed only by a true apostle (cf. 2 Cor. 12:11-13).
 - 3) His reason for not exercising his right in this matter was to avoid hindering the gospel of Christ (vs. 12). His enemies would twist his acceptance of wages to make it appear that he was preaching for financial profit, and in this manner would likely be able to undermine his influence.
 - b. We must remember that Paul's influence was not limited to the first century, but extends to the end of time. It was essential that his example be perfectly in tune with the Lord's will, for if his enemies could sustain, or appear to sustain, a charge of inconsistency in his life in some gospel principle, the cause of Christ would have been severely damaged—then and now. So the apostle was resolved to take no risk.
 - c. He had not sought or accepted any wages; he was not writing to encourage them to give him any pay. He considered the principle at stake to be of greater value than his own life.
 - 1) To have accepted wages, even though he had every right to be financially supported by the church, would have exposed him to charges from his enemies of preaching for financial gain. Some in Corinth, some in other places, and many others in later generations, would believe the charge.
 - 2) To the extent the charge was believed, to that degree would the gospel of Christ lose its power to

- influence obedience to God. The cause of Christ and the salvation of countless souls were at stake! Paul recognized, therefore, that the cause to be served (the gospel) was of far greater importance than the advantage to be obtained (a more comfortable earthly lifestyle) by accepting financial support.
- d. He insisted on retaining his right to *glory*. The glorying he mentioned was the gladness he felt in refusing wages. If he received their support, he could not have this glory—it would have been voided.
 - 1) He had rather die than give up the grounds for self-satisfaction, which was preaching the gospel without any charge to those to whom he preached.
 - 2) "The genius of the holy apostle was profoundly correct in such a discernment; and, through his own self-denial and sacrifice, he placed all subsequent generations of men under a debt of appreciation and gratitude" (Coffman, p.135).
 2. Verse 16: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"
 - a. Paul was under the divine directive to preach the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."
 - 3) Acts 26:16-20: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
 - 4) The other apostles were under the same constraint: "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).
 - b. "What an indictment of one's life must it be for him to turn away from preaching the truth of God to a perishing world in order to avoid inconvenience, poverty, deprivation and hardship, and with a view to possessing a greater share of the earth's wealth, honor and privilege! It is to be feared that the spirit of the apostle Paul is as rare upon earth now as it was then" (Coffman, pp.135f). "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:7-9).
 - c. By declining financial support from the church at Corinth, Paul had to subsist on the meager wages he could earn plying his trade as tentmaker working at odd hours. He experienced hunger, suffered from lack of proper clothing and shelter, and faced the hardships and persecutions that commonly fell upon zealous Christians in that pagan world.
 - d. Despite the many difficulties, Paul refused to give up preaching the gospel! He could have made a good living if he had devoted his life to a secular work, but that would have earned him the displeasure of God! *Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.*
 - e. Although he dedicated his life to preaching the gospel, suffering intense privations and persecutions all the while, he did not count himself worthy of glory. He was motivated to preach the gospel by powerful incentives:
 - 1) He remembered the persecutions he had brought upon many saints prior to his conversion to Christ

- (1 Tim. 1:12-16; Acts 26:1-11; Eph. 3:8-11).
- 2) He respected and believed the instructions he received from Christ (Acts 9:1-6; 26:16-23).
 - 3) He loved his fellowman, especially the nation of Israel (Rom. 10:1-3; 9:1-3).
 - 4) He earnestly believed that men were lost without the gospel (Rom. 1:14-17; 10:1-3).
 - 5) He recognized that he had a personal responsibility to save as many lost souls as possible (2 Cor. 12:15; Rom. 1:14-15).
- f. Why is it that only a few men feel a burning need to preach the gospel? Why is it that so few in the church see and feel the need to preach? Doubtless, it is because the motivations which stirred the soul of Paul to preach, are not in them. Not everyone has the capability to preach, but every Christian must have the intense desire to teach the lost and encourage the saved in whatever ways are open to him.
 - g. Why is it that so few preachers are willing to be content to preach the gospel, the whole gospel, the unadulterated gospel, and nothing but the gospel? Why is it that many will preach only the parts that are pleasing to them? Why is it that many are more interested in preaching and hearing some sensational or entertaining theme, to the neglect of the simple truths of the gospel? 2 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:1-16; Galatians 1:6-12.
3. Verse 17: "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." The ASV gives this translation: "For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me."
 - a. If Paul preached the gospel willingly, he would receive a reward (2 Tim. 4:6-8). If he preached the gospel only because he felt the obligation, and thus preached without his heart being in the work, he must face the accounting of the *stewardship* the Lord had given him.
 - b. By preaching the gospel willingly, the apostle probably refers to his preaching without pay; that he preached only because he wanted to preach, for the spiritual rewards involved, and not for any pecuniary motive.
 - c. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:1-2; cf. Luke 16:1-12; 1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 5:16; Titus 1:7; Luke 12:42-48).
 - 1) Paul's commission came directly from Christ; his work was that of a steward, which required faithfulness to the Lord's will if he expected to be blessed by the Lord.
 - 2) If Paul did not fulfill his duty to Christ, he would have to give an accounting of his stewardship, which would bring punishment upon him. Ignoring or rejecting the duty could not remove the obligation.
 - 3) If he did not preach the gospel, many Gentiles would die lost, and Paul would lose his own soul.
 - d. Paul was faithful to the heavenly commandment, even though his obedience led to many privations, distresses, and oppressions; he fulfilled his duty; he preached the gospel faithfully, cheerfully and fully. Because Paul was faithful, men and women living now have access to the gospel, for more than half of the New Testament books were penned by this great apostle.
 4. Verse 18: "What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel."
 - a. What is his reward for preaching the gospel? His immediate reward was the immense satisfaction of having provided, without charge, the information and occasion for the lost to obtain salvation! The grandest feeling of happiness and fulfillment we may experience in this life is perhaps that of guiding some lost soul into Christ. Money cannot purchase this gratification. Only eternity can reveal the full significance of the work.
 - b. His willingness to preach the gospel without monetary remuneration, gave evidence that Paul had an eternal reward awaiting him. One who received wages for his work of preaching might be accused of preaching merely for pay, but such a charge could not be sustained against Paul.
 - c. Paul had a right to receive wages for his work, but if he demanded pay, his enemies would use it against him. Since his work and influence were intended to reach to the end of time, the apostle did not give his enemies any legitimate excuse to sabotage his endeavors.
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- d. The apostle renounced his right to be supported by the brethren at Corinth. He received support from churches in other places, but he was not being harassed by unscrupulous foes in those places. See 2 Corinthians 11:1-15; 10:9-11.
 - e. Paul considered it a grand reward to sacrifice himself for the benefit of others. He was willing to go above and beyond the call of duty. His service to others was a reward in and of itself, but there remained for him the great rewards of heaven (2 Tim. 4:6-8; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2 Pet. 4:3-12).
5. Verse 19: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more."
- a. The apostle continues the thought introduced in the previous verse, that he considered it a personal reward to be able to sacrifice himself for others. Christ taught that greatness in his kingdom is measured by humble service, not by doing some great deed or occupying a position of repute.
 - 1) Matthew 16:24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."
 - 2) Matthew 20:20-28: "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
 - 3) John 15:12-13: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
 - b. He stated here that he was free from all men. No one had any claim on him since he supported himself. "*Though free from all*, i.e., independent of all men, and under no obligation to conform my conduct to their opinions, *I subjected myself to all*" (Hodge, p.163).
 - c. Paul devoted himself to the work of Christ so fully that he might gain more souls to the Master. Implied plainly in the statement is the inestimable value of salvation and the utter tragedy of being lost.
 - 1) Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - 2) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - d. The method by which he gained the more is illustrated in the next three verses.
6. Verses 20-22: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."
- a. When working among the Jews, Paul conducted himself as a Jew so as not to unnecessarily offend any of them, and make it more possible to win them to Christ. He had been used to following these practices all his life, so no great change was required on his part.
 - 1) Acts 20:16: "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."
 - 2) Acts 21:20-26: "And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest,
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brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them."

- 3) Acts 23:6-7: "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided."
- b. Of course, he did not participate in any kind of Jewish activity which would have violated any part of the Law of Christ. When he went into a new city, he usually met with the Jewish people at their synagogue; this would give him a ready-made audience to whom he could introduce the gospel message.
 - 1) He did not give any unnecessary offense to the Jews. When he enlisted Timothy as a fellow worker, he circumcised that young man so that the Jewish people would be more inclined to hear him, for they knew that Timothy's father was a Greek, and had not followed the Jewish rite of circumcision (Acts 16:3). However, Paul did not require Titus, a Greek, to be circumcised (Gal. 2:3).
 - 2) In those practices common to the Jews which were harmless, Paul could participate in them, but he did not leave the impression that the Law was still binding. His participation simply made it possible to reach more of the Jews with the gospel.
- c. When working among the Gentiles, he adopted certain of the Gentile practices that would help break down their prejudice toward him and the gospel. Again, he would not have violated any gospel precept or in any way compromise the Lord's word. "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" (Gal. 2:3).
 - 1) *Those who were without law* is a reference to the Gentiles. The Law of Moses had been given to the Israelites not to the Gentiles.
 - 2) Paul hastens to add that when he became as those who were without the law, he continued to follow the Law of Christ (the gospel). By becoming like the Gentiles, in part he means he did not observe the features of the Mosaic Law which he participated in when with the Jews.
 - 3) If he had observed some of the innocent Jewish ceremonies while laboring among the Gentiles, this would have become a stumbling-block to them.
 - 4) The parenthetical statement shows conclusively that the gospel is *law*. It is called the law of Christ, the law of faith, the law of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:2; Rom. 3:27; 8:1-3). God's grace and Christ's law are not mutually exclusive; God's grace operates through the law of Christ.
 - a) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - b) Romans 5:21: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - c) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

- d) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
- d. When working among those classified as weak, Paul said he conducted himself in such a way that he did not offend them unnecessarily. The weak is likely a reference to those Christians who were weak in their understanding about certain aspects of Christianity.
- 1) Some Jewish Christians had scruples against eating the kinds of meat that were prohibited under Moses' Law. When Paul was around such people, he did not ride roughshod over their tender consciences, but rather did not do in their presence what they thought was wrong, even though the eating of meats is perfectly in harmony with the gospel (Rom. 15:1; 14:1ff; cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-3).
 - 2) Some Gentile Christians, as well as those with a Jewish background, thought it was wrong to eat meat which had been used in a sacrifice to an idol (1 Cor. 8). When Paul was among such individuals, he did not put a strain on their conscience; he did not eat the offending meat.
 - 3) Paul complied with their customs and practices as long as doing so did not violate the gospel. He was willing to sacrifice personal privileges and rights rather than possibly antagonize the weak.
- e. He became all things to all men so that he might be able to bring about the salvation of some. Paul did not hesitate to preach the whole counsel of God, even if doing so generated prejudice and hatred on the part of some in the audience.
- 1) If the truth offends someone, there is nothing a faithful Christian can do about it; he is under a divine duty to preach and teach the word of God without fear or favor. Those who do not love the truth sufficiently to accept it, cannot be saved anyhow; if we compromise the truth, they will still be lost, and so will we be!
 - a) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - b) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - c) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - d) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
 - 2) In those matters that are innocent, which do not conflict with any principle of the gospel, a Christian may take part; particularly so if that will break down prejudice and make it possible to teach the lost. Paul accommodated himself to the various peculiar customs and values held by the different people he contacted, as long as he could do so without violating either his conscience or the gospel.
- f. Under the best of circumstances, there is always too much prejudice against the truth; we need every advantage to win precious souls to the truth; we do not need any situation to develop that will hinder us from that worthy end. We, as did Paul, need to sacrifice our personal rights and privileges in the interest of the salvation of others.
7. Verse 23: "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."
- a. "Hitherto Paul has dwelt on the duty of self-denial for the good of others; now, however, he rises higher—to the absolute necessity of it to eternal salvation even of himself, as an indispensable feature of Christian character. So we see that in work for the good of others we must not be unmindful of our own good; and there is nothing more conducive to our spiritual benefit than faithful, self-denying service for Christ" (Lipscomb, p.137).
 - b. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16).
 - c. Self-denial and eternal reward are connected in the Bible.
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- 1) Mark 8:35: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."
- 2) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
- 3) Luke 22:42: "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."
- 4) Philippians 2:5-12: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

D. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27: The Obligation to Practice Self-denial.

1. Verse 24: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain."
 - a. Paul alludes to the famous Isthmian games held near Corinth every other year. "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" (Lipscomb, pp.137f).
 - b. In the races that were run, there may have been many competitors, but only one could be the winner. The prize was a wreath of pine leaves (ibid.).
 - c. But in the Christian race, every participant can win; we are not striving against each other, but against our own weaknesses of the flesh and spirit. Satan is the real enemy of our successful race. We are admonished by the apostle to so run that we may attain the prize.
 - 1) Hebrews 12:1-2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 3) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
2. Verse 25: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."
 - a. Each of the participants in the physical race was temperate in all things in preparation for the race, and during the race he put forth his best effort in order to win the prize. There were some kinds of food

- and activity that must be avoided if they were to have a chance of winning. The prize was one that lasted only a short time, and had little intrinsic value. The real prize was the glory and fame that went with the win. But even these were short-lived. "Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:30).
- b. The prize for which we run the Christian race is incorruptible. There are some things we must avoid if we are to finish our race. We must be temperate in all things that are right; we must totally abstain from everything that is evil of itself (2 Pet. 1:6). The prize will be worth all the sacrifice and effort we put forth (Rev. 21; Heb. 12:1-11).
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 2) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - 3) James 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
 - 4) 1 Peter. 5:4: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - 6) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 3. Verse 26: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."
 - a. The allusion here is to the boxing contests of the games. The serious competitor who sincerely wanted to obtain the prize, did not allow indifference to enter into his training or the contest; he was not playing a child's game. The contest itself was not mere shadow-boxing.
 - b. The Christian fight permits no pretense or indifference; it is not shadow-boxing; there is a real goal to be gained; there is a real enemy to battle. To lose the contest is to lose all that matters. But the enemy can be defeated.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 2) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
 - 5) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - 6) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 7) 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
 4. Verse 27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - a. To buffet the body does not mean to inflict physical injury to it, but to deny it the things it desires, if
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those desires are wrong. The appetites of the flesh must be brought under bondage to the spirit, and the spirit must be guided by the word of God.

- 1) Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."
 - 2) Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."
 - 3) Galatians 5:17: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."
 - 4) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
- b. Our physical lusts must be controlled; our thoughts must be governed; our motives must be ordered after the dictates of the Bible; our emotions are to be guided by God's will; and our actions are also to be held in subjection to the word of God.
- c. Paul was willing to sacrifice in these matters lest he, after preaching to others, be rejected. The Greek term for "castaway" is *adokimos*. It is properly translated as *reprobate* elsewhere:
- 1) Romans 1:28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 13:5-7: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:8: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."
 - 4) Titus 1:16: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."
- d. "It is thus crystal clear that the apostle Paul, even after the world-shaking ministry of the word of God which characterized his life, considered it possible that he himself could become reprobate and lose the eternal reward. It was for the purpose of avoiding that possibility that he buffeted his body, walked in the strictest discipline, and devoted every possible effort to the service of the Lord" (Coffman, p.142).
- e. This verse is one of many in the Bible which explicitly teaches the possibility of a Christian committing sin and losing his soul.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 8:11-12: "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.... When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."
 - 2) James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
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1 CORINTHIANS 10

A. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13: The Case of Israel in the Wilderness.

1. Verses 1-2: " Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (KJV). "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (ASV).
 - a. The word *for* shows the connection between the following remarks and those which immediately preceded. As Paul brought chapter nine to its conclusion, he strongly showed the necessity of Christians maintaining firm control over the appetites of the flesh, bringing them under the rule of the word of God. This passage illustrates this important aspect of Christianity by examining the experiences of Israel in the wilderness. The example surveyed is one showing what Christians must not do. Neither Paul nor any other inspired man thought it was wrong to teach negative lessons.
 - b. It was not the apostle's purpose to keep the brethren in ignorance, but would use every proper means to acquaint them with the demands of Christ. The Old Testament is filled with meaningful illustrations and principles which help us in our service to the Lord.
 - 1) Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
 - 2) The Jewish people knew the story of Israel in the wilderness, but Paul was drawing some essential lessons from their experiences which would assist the brethren in living the Christian life.
 - 3) The Christians in Corinth were primarily from the Gentile background. The story of Israel in the wilderness would be enlightening to them in its information and instruction in the principles involved.
 - c. The forebears of all the Jews were with Moses in the wilderness wanderings, and were under the cloud, and had passed through the sea. They all shared in these experiences.
 - 1) The cloud was the symbol of God's presence. "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night" (Ex. 14:19-20). When the cloud moved, that was the signal for Israel to begin the daily journey (Ex. 13:20-22).
 - 2) They all passed through the midst of the sea, just as Moses described that experience in Exodus 14. Paul's wording of the event places inspiration's stamp of approval on the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. This was not a swampy lowland they crossed, but a full-fledged sea, for Paul speaks of their passing "through the sea."
 - d. They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. *Baptism* literally means "an immersion," and has the figurative meaning of being "overwhelmed." As Israel passed through the midst of the sea, being hemmed in on each side by the two great walls of water, and above by the overshadowing cloud, they can accurately be described as having been baptized. They were covered up by the walls of water and cloud; and they were overwhelmed by these elements.
 - 1) By being thus enclosed, hidden from the sight of the Egyptians, and overwhelmed, they were baptized unto Moses. This was a figurative baptism; it was not identical to New Testament baptism, but it is a type of it.
 - 2) Some sectarian debaters in the past have argued that the Lord's church began in the days of Abraham, and in a feeble attempt to justify infant church membership, twist this passage to teach infant baptism. They argued that all of the Israelites, including infants, experienced this baptism. But what proves too much, proves nothing. All of the Israelites passed through the sea and were thus baptized, but so also did all of the sheep and other animals they carried with them! If this episode proves the rightness of infant baptism for today, it also proves the rightness of baptizing animals today!

- 3) Other sectarian debaters have argued against the essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins, saying that the Israelites were saved by the blood of the passover lamb, and that the benefits of that blood were received prior to this "baptism." However, the blood of the passover lamb was not shed for all of Israel; it was intended to benefit only the firstborn! Israel escaped from Egypt only after they had crossed the sea; they were saved from the Egyptian army only after the crossing; and they sang their song of deliverance after they got safely to the other side (Ex. 15). Alien sinners are saved only after meeting the conditions of scriptural baptism.
 - a) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - c) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
- 4) All who were under bondage in Egypt were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and today, all who are under the bondage of sin must be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27; John 8:34). Babies are not under the bondage of sin (Matt. 18:6; 19:14; Ezek. 28:15). All of the Israelites were under Egyptian bondage.
- 5) Their baptism unto Moses placed them under his inspired leadership. Having left the land of bondage, and now facing the challenges of surviving in the trackless wilderness before them, they were constrained to follow God's duly-appointed leader, or perish. Their baptism placed them into a relationship with Moses they had not known before.
- 6) Our baptism places us in Christ where salvation is enjoyed, and under his authority; we will survive our figurative wilderness only by following the directions given by our Leader.
- 7) Their salvation was physical; our salvation is spiritual. God saved them after they had crossed the sea (Ex. 14:30); we are saved after we have been baptized (1 Pet. 3:21).
2. Verses 3-4: "And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."
 - a. They all ate the same spiritual food.
 - 1) Psalm 78:23-25: "Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full."
 - 2) Exodus 16:15,31,35: "And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat....And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey....And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan."
 - 3) Nehemiah 9:15,20: "And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them....Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."
 - 4) This food (manna) is called spiritual food because it came from heaven. It was, however, literal food, for it sustained Israel for forty years.
 - 5) Christ is our spiritual food. To study, learn, believe, and follow the instructions of his holy word, will strengthen the soul as literal food gives strength to the physical body.
 - a) John 4:34: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
 - b) John 6:31-35: "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread

of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

- c) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
- b. They all drank the same spiritual drink. When Moses brought forth water from the rock, all the people had access to its life-giving flow (Ex. 17:5ff; Num. 20:1-11). The miraculous flow of water from a rock occurred twice, 39 years apart. But this rock did not follow them. Christ, the spiritual Rock, did follow them, and it was he who was the source of this supernatural supply of water.
 - 1) Some have falsely argued that because Christ was the Rock who followed Israel, that Christ and God are the same person. The conclusion does not follow, for Genesis 1:1-26 presents three different persons in the Godhead (cf. Col. 1:15-17; John 1:1-3). Each of the three divine beings operated in the creation, and each was involved in the affairs of Israel; they are especially involved in the New Testament (2 Cor. 13:14; Rom. 15:30).
 - 2) Christ is the source of living water in the gospel age; all spiritual blessings are found only in him.
 - a) John 4:14: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
 - b) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - 3) The figure of a rock is applied to God, also.
 - a) Deuteronomy 26:4: "And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God."
 - b) Deuteronomy 32:4: "*He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he."
 - c) Deuteronomy 32:15: "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."
 - d) Deuteronomy 32:18: "Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee."
 - e) Isaiah 17:10: "Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips."
 - f) Isaiah 26:4: "Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength."
3. Verse 5: "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."
 - a. Despite having received many blessings from God in the initial stages of their journey, they did not retain a proper standing with him. They rebelled on many occasions in a short period of time—by the time they came to Kadesh Barnea two years after leaving Egypt (Deut. 2:14). At this point, having demonstrated their rebellious disposition and become hardened therein, God determined that they should remain in the wilderness until that whole generation of rebels had died.
 - b. It was no overstatement for Paul to say that many of the Israelites were not well-pleasing to God. Of the adults twenty years old and older who left Egypt, only Caleb and Joshua survived the wilderness to enter Canaan, a ratio of 2 to 603,550 men! (Num. 14:28-34). Our Lord's statement in Matthew 7:13-14 takes on a significance of huge proportions in this light: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 1) Only eight people survived the flood of Noah's day.
 - 2) Only seven thousand in Israel had not turned to idolatry in Elijah's day (1 Kings 19).

- 3) Only a remnant in Israel was faithful in Malachi's day (Mal. 3:16-18).
- 4) Only a remnant of the Jews obeyed the gospel (Rom. 9,10).
- 5) And only a small percentage of earth's population today is willing to obey the gospel.
- c. It is a foolish mistake for one to think he cannot lose his standing with God. The Israelites enjoyed many blessings from God, but lost them all, plus their lives and doubtless also their souls, because they lost their faith. Psalm 106:12-36; Hebrews 3:12ff.
4. Verse 6: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."
 - a. The experiences of the Jews serve us as examples. "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?....And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague....And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted" (Num. 11:4,33-34).
 - b. This case is a vivid illustration of how, even after enjoying God's blessings, one can fall. If we sin as they did, which is possible or else Paul would have said nothing about it, we will be punished and excluded from God's promises just as they were. God's punishments are sure even though they may be long in coming: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow; because he feareth not before God. There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just *men*, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked *men*, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also *is* vanity" (Eccl. 8:11-14).
 - c. The information included in the Old Testament is not given to fill up space; there are definite purposes served by what God included (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
5. Verses 7-8: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand."
 - a. The reference here is to Exodus 32:1-6: "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."
 - b. They had been accustomed to idolatry in Egypt, so it was a natural thing for them to turn to such things. "To play" refers to those lively, lascivious dances which occurred at heathen festivals (Ex. 32:18,19,25). The Corinthians came from an idolatrous background; it was easy for them to be overcome by it again.
 - 1) Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."
 - 2) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - c. The command forbids fornication. There was a danger involved, or else Paul would not have issued the warning. In those days and in that place, fornication was a continuing problem; it has become such

in our own time and country.

- 1) Paul states that 23,000 fell in one day because of this sin; but Numbers 25:1-9 gives the number as 24,000. The answer to the seeming discrepancy lies in the time factor Paul gives: in one day. Numbers simply gives the total of those who fell during the plague.
 - 2) Moses had the leaders of the people hanged (Num. 25:5); Jewish tradition listed this number as 1,000 (Coffman, p.153).
- d. Fornication in ancient times was frequently a consequence of idolatry. Heathen temples had priestesses who were religious prostitutes. The temple of Venus had more than a thousand such harlots. The Corinthians needed this lesson due to the low state of morality among the citizenry.
6. Verses 9-10: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."
 - a. This is a warning against tempting (making trial of—ASV) Christ. If one sees how much sin he can do, or sees how close to the edge of sin he can get without becoming contaminated, he is making trial of the Lord. The very disposition that would lead one to such a situation is sinful itself. Those Israelites tried God by speaking against him, showing they did not trust him (cf. Num. 21). When they complained, God sent fiery serpents among them, destroying many of them.
 - b. The murmuring of the Israelites led to some of them being destroyed by the destroyer. This probably is a reference to the case of Korah (Num. 16). The people murmured and some were destroyed; the earth swallowed them. Possibly the reference is to the case of the evil report brought by the ten spies, which was believed by the nation (Num. 13,14).
 7. Verse 11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
 - a. What happened to those people back there prefigures what will happen to those today who walk in their own way. Those experiences were recorded and preserved through the centuries to serve as lessons for the Gospel Age. God does not desire the condemnation of any man's soul.
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:31-32: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye."
 - 2) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - 3) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - b. The great lessons contained in those Old Testament cases are both positive and negative; they teach us what to do and what not to do. The stories admonish us to stay in the old paths of God's word.
 - c. "The ends of the world" is translated "the ends of the ages" in the ASV. The Patriarchal Age and the Mosaic Age preceded the Christian Age. This verse teaches that the Christian Age is the last period of earthly time.
 - 1) When Christ returns, the Christian Age ends; time ends; the world will be no more (2 Pet. 3:8-12; Heb. 9:28). The universe, the earth, all things that pertain to the material earth, will be consumed. All of humanity will be gathered before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12); each will be installed in the destiny (Heaven or Hell) which his earthly life demands (Rev. 20:12-15).
 - 2) The New Testament elsewhere speaks of the Christian Age as "the last days" (Acts 2:16-17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:3).
 8. Verse 12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - a. *Wherefore* indicates a conclusion based on the preceding information. In view of the cases of the

- Israelites who fell into sin, and in view of the fact that we are living in the last days of earthly time, one who supposes his spiritual status to be secure, ought to take heed to the true situation.
- b. If it was not possible for a Christian to fall, why did the inspired apostle give this sober warning? It is possible to fall! Some will argue that if one falls, he was never saved, but one cannot fall unless he is standing or elevated; since the fall depicts the state of condemnation, the condition prior to the fall was that of salvation.
 - 1) James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - c. The warning is demanded because of the severity of falling. If one could fall and not be lost, there would be no real cause for a warning to be issued. But in view of the consequence of falling, the warning is sorely needed.
 - d. To fall means that one is bound for eternal condemnation: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. 1:6-10).
 - e. Note: See the sermon outline at the end of the chapter on "Overcoming Temptation."
9. Verse 13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
- a. The temptations we face are the same as others have faced. Enticements to sin are all categorized under three headings: those that appeal to the fleshly lusts, those that appeal to the eye, and those that appeal to the desire for vainglory.
 - 1) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - 2) Eve was tempted in these three avenues (Gen. 3:6); so also was Christ (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). Although none of us can hope to avoid or overcome every temptation, we have the encouragement that comes with the knowledge that others face the same ordeals.
 - b. God is faithful, even though we face temptations. It is not sinful to be tempted; sin comes only after we give in to the enticement and violate a precept of God's word (1 John 3:4). God would not allow Satan to place on Job too great a burden for him to bear. God will never turn against us, but will do all that is consistent with his nature and his will to assist us.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:9: "God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (KJV). "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (ESV).
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- 3) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - c. God will not allow us to be tempted above our means to resist. This is so only if we are faithful Christians and are daily striving to gain greater strength, who put God's righteousness and kingdom first, who walk in continual communion with him by studying his word and praying regularly.
 - d. God will provide a way to escape from the temptation for the faithful saint. If we have studied his word and learned it, we will have developed the desire to overcome, we will be motivated to overcome, we will have the wisdom to overcome and to avoid many situations in which temptations are found; and in his providence, often he provides the means to escape the allurements. The point of this part of the verse is to assure us that God wants us to overcome temptations and remain guilt-free, and that he provides us the means to overcome, but we must appropriate the means.
 - e. Great wisdom is expressed in this passage of scripture. The inspired apostle issues the warning that there is a grave danger of our falling into sin and losing our souls; but it closes with the promise that we have been given a powerful means of standing fast in the faith. Just because there is the possibility of falling, that does not say that we will fall.
 - f. The key to overcoming temptation is to master the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
- B. 1 Corinthians 10:14-22: Idolatrous Feasts Are Prohibited.
1. Verse 14: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."
 - a. In view of the foregoing information in the context, Paul admonishes his beloved brethren to flee from idolatry. The warning would not have been needed if idolatry was not dangerous—and available.
 - b. The apostle is about to address the subject of eating meats which had been offered to idols, and prefaces those remarks with a strong word of caution regarding idolatry. Although there is nothing morally contaminating about the meat, the brethren are warned against idolatry and all its attendant evils. Idolatry was the besetting sin of Corinth.
 - c. We serve what we worship; if one worships money, money has become his master (Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:5). If a Christian genuinely worships God, there will be no difficulty in getting him to live right, living a life of obedience to God.
 2. Verse 15: "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."
 - a. What he has said and is about to say are matters they can understand. He gives them credit for having enough wisdom to comprehend the truth he is teaching.
 - b. With their past experiences, and with their knowledge of God's will, they would be able to understand the truth on the subject.
 3. Verses 16-17: "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? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."
 - a. The Corinthians had perverted the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17ff), but Paul uses the Supper as it should be eaten to illustrate the connection between the worship offered and the one to whom the worship is directed.
 - b. The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of Christ's blood. The cup (a reference to the contents) is directly connected to the blood of Christ; and the bread we break is the communion of the Lord's body. To break the bread means to eat it. We *bless* the cup and bread in that we *give thanks* for them.
 - 1) Matthew 26:26-27: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it."
 - 2) Luke 9:16: "Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude."
 - 3) Luke 22:17-19: "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God
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- shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."
- 4) John 6:11: "And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would."
- c. Our eating of the Lord's Supper binds us together with the Lord. To partake of the Supper cements us together as a unified body of worshippers who partake of the benefits of the Lord's body and blood. This was a basic truth of the gospel system which the Corinthians should have already fully grasped; if they could see this truth, they would be able to see why idolatry was sinful.
4. Verse 18: "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?"
- a. Using the case from Israel's past, Paul illustrates this same truth. Those who partook of the animals which had been used as a sacrifice, were partakers of the altar upon which the offering had been made.
- b. One could not separate between the sacrifice and the altar; all of those who participated in the sacrifice were joined together with the one to whom the offering had been made.
- c. "The question is not as to the intention of the actor, but as to the import of the act, and as to the interpretation universally put upon it. To partake of a Jewish sacrifice as a sacrifice in a holy place was an act of Jewish worship. Therefore to partake of a heathen sacrifice as a sacrifice, and in a holy place, was of necessity an act of heathen worship" (Lipscomb, p.155).
5. Verse 19: "What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?"
- a. The rhetorical questions are obviously intended to elicit a negative answer. The idols were nothing; the animal which had been offered was nothing.
- b. Merely because the unfortunate animal had been burned as a sacrifice to an idol did not turn the remains of the animal into a morally-corrupt *roast*. Anyone who ate of this meat did not contaminate his soul simply by eating it.
6. Verse 20: "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."
- a. Pagan sacrifices were offered, not to the Living God of heaven, but to demons. Paul has already said that this is not intended to suggest that the idols are anything (verse 19). Although the idols are nothing, there is such a being as Satan; this vile being is not to be honored in any way!
- b. If a Christian attended a sacrificial feast in a pagan temple, he became a joint-participator with those heathens who took part in the service. In reality, the Christian would be offering worship to demons, and thus to the arch-demon, Satan. We serve the purposes of the one we worship!
- c. We are not permitted, either by logic or scripture, to divide our devotion or service between God and another.
- 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
- 2) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
- d. The principle of the passage prohibits a Christian from worshipping in the religious services of sectarian churches which offer a perverted form of worship. Virtually all of them use mechanical instruments of music in their worship; in this or in a variety of other ways, they have polluted the worship God has ordained (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Col. 3:16-17). God dealt severely with those who changed true worship in the past, and accuses all who do so of vain worship (Lev. 10:1-2; Mark 7:6-13).
- 1) Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."
- 2) Mark 7:6-13: "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites,

as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

7. Verse 21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."
 - a. Paul sternly affirms that it is impossible to drink the Lord's cup and the cup of demons—with impunity. One can certainly do both, but one cannot do so without incurring the Lord's wrath!
 - b. God does not permit one of his people to worship him on one occasion and to worship the devil on another. No man can serve two masters at the same time! (Matt. 6:24; 12:30).
 - 1) Joshua 24:14-15: "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
 - 2) 1 Kings 18:21: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word."
 - c. The point the apostle made is one which forbade the Corinthian saints to participate in a heathen service; neither they nor any other Christians can divide their devotion or service between God and another.
 - d. God has always reserved the right to demand the kind of worship he wants.
8. Verse 22: "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"
 - a. God describes himself as a jealous God (Ex. 20:5). This is not petty jealousy. For the good of our souls, God will not permit any follower to serve him half-heartedly or part-time. It would be unfair to ourselves, to others, and to God for any so to do. Without our whole hearts being devoted to God's will, we cannot be changed back into the glorious and pure image possessed before sin contaminated us.
 - 1) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
 - 2) Matthew 18:6: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea."
 - 3) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - 5) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

- b. God will not share us with anyone else anymore than a right-thinking husband would be willing to share his wife with another man. Christians are married to Christ (Rom. 7:1ff); idolatry is spiritual adultery, and thus is forbidden. As literal adultery is able to destroy a marriage, so spiritual adultery separates us from our Lord.
 - c. To incur the jealousy of God is to bring upon our own heads the wrath of the Almighty.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:31: "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"
 - 2) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is a consuming fire.*"
- C. 1 Corinthians 10:23-33: Liberties Regarding Privately Eating Meat Offered to Idols.
1. Verses 23-24: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."
 - a. Two principles are given in these two verses: one relates to our own welfare and the other to the welfare of others. A Christian is gravely concerned with his own spiritual state and of all other Christians. We can neither be careless about our own condition, nor unconcerned about that of others.
 - b. Christ was concerned about others, often showing compassion to them (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34). His mission to earth expressed his love for the lost (Luke 19:10). Paul was concerned about others (Rom. 9:1ff; 10:1-3; 1:14-16). We are to be concerned about others (Matt. 7:12; Phil. 2:1-11; Rom. 12:1-21; Gal. 6:1-10).
 - c. Of course, the apostle does not mean that any thing is lawful for him to do; rather, he is saying that things which are not wrong of themselves he has the right to do. He has identified many things in his inspired writings which are wrong in any circumstance (cf. Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). But some lawful things are not expedient.
 - 1) It was lawful for him to receive wages from the Corinthian church, but since that would have exposed him to charges from his enemies there, he would not accept money from the church. Meats which were prohibited under the Mosaic Law were lawful for Paul to eat since he was now a Christian (1 Tim. 4:1-3); but he would not eat meat of any kind if doing so would cause a brother to stumble (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8:13).
 - 2) The context (verses 23-33) speaks of eating meats offered to idols; although there was nothing morally wrong with the meat, yet it was not expedient for him (or any other saint) to eat it lest a weaker brother be led to violate his conscience by eating it also (1 Cor. 8:6-13).
 - d. Eating meat from a heathen altar might be lawful, but that does not mean it will edify others; our great concern for others will keep us from placing a stumbling block in their way, or from doing anything that might result to inhibit their edification.
 - 1) If our influence leads a fellow-saint to violate his conscience and stain his soul, we have done him real harm; and if we hinder his edification, we have harmed him.
 - 2) If one of the Christians in Corinth entered an idol's temple and partook of meat there, his example would teach the pagans that worshipping idols is consistent with Christianity! The example would doubtless harden them in their pagan religion.
 - e. Instead of seeking to please himself, a faithful Christian will forego any of his rights and privileges if by engaging in them he hinders the spiritual well-being of another. This is the key to the passage.
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Matthew 22:39: "And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
 - 3) Mark 12:31: "And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - f. One of the greatest battles we must fight is the one that involves our personal wants. Selfishness is doubtless the greatest cause of sinful and criminal conduct in the world. Thieves, murderers, adulterers (to name a few), are motivated by selfishness.
 - 1) One of the primary differences between Christians and people of the world is this: true saints are
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- selfless; they are willing to put the other person's welfare before their own. This is the essence of Christian love. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31; cf. Matt. 7:12).
- 2) The actions, the dispositions, and the words of a Christian are such that their possible impact on others is calculated before they are expressed.
2. Verses 25-26: "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."
 - a. The subject is the eating of meats which had earlier been offered in sacrifice to an idol. The *shambles* is a word denoting the market places where that meat could be purchased. The word *shambles* originally was used of the "benches" or "stools" where meat was sold. It came to refer to a slaughterhouse, or a place where a great slaughter occurred, and later to any scene of destruction or clutter.
 - b. Some of the meat offered for sale in the marketplaces was from the idol temples; some of it was not. Therefore, those who bought meat there should not inquire as to the source of a particular cut of meat. If they had no knowledge of its origin, their conscience was not likely to be endangered, if they thought it was wrong to eat meat that had been used in a pagan temple. In this case, ignorance is good.
 - c. Paul shows in verse 26 that the meat, regardless of its source, is free from moral contamination; this is so because "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."
 - 1) The entire earth belongs to God; and everything that is part of the natural earth is God's; if a thing belongs to God, it is pure and good. All animals belong to God; their flesh, therefore, belongs to him. There is nothing morally or spiritually impure about any kind of flesh. However, as Paul has already taught, if one sincerely believes that eating meat that had been used in an idol's temple was wrong, he ought not to partake of it.
 - 2) There are things which mankind produces which can be wrongly used. Drugs can be produced which are good for our health, but to use them for recreation is wrong; alcohol can be used for good medical purposes, but is wrong when used for pleasure; weapons have good usages, but become wrong when they are used in robbing or murdering. A writing pen can be used to write truth or error.
 3. Verse 27: "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake."
 - a. If some unbeliever invites you to a feast in which meat is served, if you do not know that the meat has been used in an idol's temple, you cannot violate your conscience. And if other Christians are present, your example will not have an adverse effect on them, if they do not know the origin of the meat.
 - b. The prohibition in Acts 15 against eating meat used in idol worship possibly has reference to partaking of it in a public place, especially in the pagan temple itself. Also, the church was still in its infancy when the council at Jerusalem was held; by the time Paul wrote to the Corinthians, a great deal of the body of gospel truth had been revealed, and the saints had grown considerably. After more information had been revealed and assimilated by the saints, they could perceive the truths Paul presents here. At the time of Acts 15, eating meat offered to idols was prohibited; but now with greater knowledge and better understanding, the brethren could eat the meat with a good conscience, provided a weaker brother was not harmed.
 - c. The verse shows that association with the unconverted is not prohibited, since this was the case of a Christian accepting an invitation of a non-Christian to a feast.
 - d. This verse and verses 25-26 show that eating meat that had been used in idol worship was a matter of indifference, except where conscience (the individual's or others who knew about it) was involved.
 4. Verse 28: "But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."
 - a. If the host volunteers the information that the meat had been used in an idol's temple, for the sake of your own conscience and for the benefit of the host, do not eat it. If you do not eat it, your conscience will not be violated, and your abstinence will not encourage the host to think that the idol was harmless. Be aware that his purpose for giving the information might be his way of testing your faith.
 - b. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." The statement as used here means, since the earth
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and all that is in it belong to God, we ought to be submissive to his will. It is better to offend our unbelieving host, than to offend him who owns the entire earth!

5. Verse 29: "Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?"
 - a. This may be an elliptical statement, saying we must be concerned, but not only about our own conscience. We are not allowed to run roughshod over another person's conscience. We should not encourage him to do what he thinks is wrong. His conscience does not establish what is right and wrong—God's word does that; but God's word also teaches the need to maintain a pure, unviolated conscience.
 - b. Even though we have the right to eat the meat indicated in the passage, we must refrain from doing so for the sake of others. If a weak Christian knew you ate meat at the feast (of verse 28), realizing that it had been offered to an idol, your involvement might lead him to violate his own sense of right and wrong in the matter.
 - c. "[Conscience, I say, not thine own] I know that you may have no scruples on the subject. I do not mean that with you this need be a matter of conscience. I do not put it on that ground, as if an idol were anything, or as if it were in itself wrong, or as if the quality of the meat so offered had been changed; but I put it on the ground of not wounding the feelings of those who are scrupulous, or of leading them into sin. [For why is my liberty...] There is much difficulty in this clause; for as it now stands, it seems to be entirely contradictory to what the apostle had been saying. He had been urging them to have respect to other people's consciences, and in some sense to give up their liberty to their opinions and feelings. Macknight and some others understand it as an objection: 'Perhaps you will say, But why is my liberty to be ruled by another man's conscience?' Doddridge supposes that this and 1 Cor 10:30 come in as a kind of parenthesis, to prevent their extending his former caution beyond what he designed. 'I speak only of acts obvious to human observation: for as to what immediately lies between God and my own soul, why is my liberty to be judged, arraigned, condemned at the bar of another man's conscience?' But it is probable that this is not an objection. The sense may be thus expressed: 'I am free; I have liberty' to partake of that food, if I please; there is no law against it, and it is not morally wrong: but if I do, when it is pointed out to me as having been sacrificed to idols, my liberty—the right which I exercise—will be misconstrued, misjudged, condemned (for so the word *krinetai* seems to be used here) by others. The weak and scrupulous believer will censure, judge, condemn me as regardless of what is proper, and as disposed to fall in with the customs of idolaters; and will suppose that I cannot have a good conscience. Under these circumstances, why should I act so as to expose myself to this censure and condemnation? It is better for me to abstain, and not to use this liberty in the case, but to deny myself for the sake of others.'" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
6. Verse 30: "For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?"
 - a. This question is from the standpoint of the Christian who is addressed in the preceding verses. He might ask, "Since I have the right (the liberty) to eat this meat, why should I be castigated for partaking, seeing I give the proper thanks for the food?"
 - b. "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea" (Mark 9:42). To "offend" is to cause a Christian to stumble into an act of sin. With this thought in mind, the question is more than adequately answered.
 - c. "'If I partake by grace; if by the grace and mercy of God, I have a right to partake of this; yet why should I so conduct as to expose myself to the reproaches and evil surmises of others? Why should I lay myself open to be blamed on the subject of eating, when there are so many bounties of Providence for which I may be thankful, and which I may partake of without doing injury, or exposing myself in any manner to be blamed?' [Why am I evil spoken of] Why should I pursue such a course as to expose myself to blame or censure? [For that for which I give thanks] For my food. The phrase 'for which I give thanks' seems to be a periphrasis for 'food,' or for that of which he partook to nourish life. It is implied that he always gave thanks for his food; and that this was with him such a universal custom, that the phrase 'for which I give thanks' might be used as convenient and

appropriate phraseology to denote his ordinary food. The idea in the verse, then, is this: 'By the favor of God, I have a right to partake of this food. But if I did, I should be evil spoken of, and do injury. And it is unnecessary. God has made ample provision elsewhere for my support, for which I may be thankful. I will not therefore expose myself to calumny and reproach, or be the occasion of injury to others by partaking of the food offered in sacrifice to idols.'" [Barnes' Notes, *ibid.*].

7. Verse 31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
 - a. The first of three principles by which to guide our actions is given in this verse: namely, whatever we do, do it to bring glory to God. If this is the basic motivation for our lives, we will not be apt to hurt anyone else, not even ourselves.
 - b. Christ gave up his status in heaven so that glory might accrue to God. His earthly mission has brought about the conversion of many men, who glorify God.
 - c. I Peter 4: 11,16: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen....Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
 - d. 2 Corinthians 4:15: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."
8. Verse 32: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God."
 - a. The second principle is stated in this verse: Do not be a stumbling block: not to the Jews, not to the Gentiles, and not to the church. If our aim is to so-conduct ourselves that no other person is encouraged to commit sin by our influence, we will not be apt to cause any injury to anyone's soul.
 - b. In the case being discussed, if we abstain from things offered to idols, we will not cause any Jew to lessen his abhorrence to idols. We might have the opposite effect if we partook. If we ate the meat described in the context, the Gentiles would be encouraged to continue their idolatry, thinking that Christianity condoned it.
 - c. By eating the meat before the eyes of the church, our example would encourage other Christians to follow us; or, the members might get the idea that we are honoring an idol, and thus damage our influence for good. The church may properly be called *the church of God* for he was the designer of it (Eph. 3:8-11). It is the church of Christ, because the Lord died to purchase it (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).
9. Verse 33: "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."
 - a. The third principle by which we may encourage faithfulness in others is to put them first. Paul is guided to use himself as an example of the precept. He sought always to put the interests of others before his own.
 - b. This principle is simple love in action. Love (*agape*) is the willing of good to others. If I love my fellow saint, I will do what is possible to bring about the best good for him; and I will do nothing that will bring harm to him. If a decision must be made that will result in good for him or good for me, I must choose the former.
 - 1) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."
 - 2) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - 3) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
 - 5) Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

- 6) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world: Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 7) Luke 6:31-36: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same....But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again....But love ye your enemies, and do good....Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."
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Overcoming Temptation

INTRODUCTION.

A. The world's greatest and ugliest problem is sin.

1. Sin contaminates every accountable person:
 - a. Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - b. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
2. Sin is very broad in scope.
 - a. It includes any act which violates God's word in some overt way.
 - 1) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 2) 1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."
 - b. It extends to words.
 - 1) Matthew 12:36-37: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
 - c. It includes evil thoughts and motives.
 - 1) Matthew 5:27-28: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."
 - 2) Matthew 15:18-20: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."
 - d. An action that violates our conscience is sinful: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).
 - e. And even religious tenets that are taught or practiced without divine approval is sinful.
 - 1) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 2) 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - f. Sin is also done by an omission of our God-given duty.
 - 1) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - 2) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - 3) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the

more."

- 4) John 9:41: "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." ["Their profession, 'We see,' thus became a perpetual barrier to their other sins and increased their responsibility. Their claim to superior knowledge compounded their guilt. Thus, their sin was against the truth by which alone they could be led into the light, and their words became witnesses against them! (Matt. 23:31.)...The Lord's solemn affirmation, 'Your sin remaineth,' is a fearful pronouncement of the effects of the real, spiritual blindness which had possessed them and which kept them from realizing and accepting the truth" (Guy N. Woods, *Commentary on John*, p.202)].
- 5) John 13:17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." [But what if they did not do those things?].
- 6) John 15:22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." ["Here is clear and unmistakable evidence of the fact that men are to be judged in proportion to the opportunities they enjoy. The greater the opportunity, the greater the guilt, and the greater the guilt the greater the punishment awaiting them. (Matt. 11:21-28; Heb. 10:25-28)" (Woods, *ibid.*, p.333)].
- 7) James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." [This passage implies there is a stricter standard for those who know the most. Cf. Luke 12:47-48].

3. Sin deceives.

- a. Romans 7:11: "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*."
- b. 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
- c. 1 Timothy 2:14: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."
- d. Hebrews 3:13: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

4. Sin spreads.

- a. 1 Corinthians 5:5-6: "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"
- b. David's sin affected not only himself and Bathsheba, but Uriah, the infant, his family, and the nation of Israel (2 Kings 11-18).

5. Sin has awful consequences on a nation that is afflicted with it.

- a. Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
- b. Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."

6. Sin has an awful penalty for those who die guilty of it.

- a. Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
- b. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
- c. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- d. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

B. The awfulness of sin exemplifies the gravity of our lesson on "Overcoming Temptation."

1. The best answer to sin is to avoid it completely, never to fall victim to it. But since this is impossible for accountable people, another response is needed.
2. The gospel is God's remedy for the guilt, the practice, and the consequences of sin.
 - a. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - c. 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
3. But to avoid future sin, one must learn to overcome temptations as they present themselves to us.
 - a. While none of us can live above sin, the gospel provides the guidance and help to conquer temptations.
 - b. Mark 14:38: "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak."
 - c. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

DISCUSSION.

A. To understand sin, we need to know the process by which sin is committed.

1. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). Its definition is "to miss the mark." *Sin* was used originally to describe what an archer did when his arrow failed to hit the target.
 2. James 1:13-15 gives the technical process by which sin is committed: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 - a. God is not the instigator of sin; rather the lust of man lies at the heart of every sin. Many of the appetites of our fleshly beings have God-given methods of gratification, but when they are appeased by unlawful means, or when they are given priority above spiritual requirements (Matt. 6:33), sin is the result. But many appetites we develop have no sinless means of satisfaction (gambling, drinking, killing, etc.).
 - b. Our lust is allowed to come to the forefront; it is enticed by some situation or development; when we succumb to the enticement, we transgress God's will; at that point, we are separated from God. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2).
 - c. When sin has run its ultimate course, and we die still in its grasp, we are consigned to the Devil's Hell, forever separated from God (Matt. 25:30-46; Rev. 20:12-15).
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3. The key to overcoming temptation is to identify and subdue the lusts (the strong desires) of the mortal part of us. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).
- B. To understand temptation, we need to know the paths by which it can come.
1. Temptations approach us through three different avenues: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).
 - a. They can come by means of the lust of the flesh. These are appeals made through the desires which arise from the evil appetites of the flesh, and find expression through the flesh. *Flesh* is used here, not in reference to skin, muscle, bone, and tissue, but to the lusts which are gratified by means of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).
 - b. They can come by means of the lust of the eyes. These are desires which are aroused through the appeal of objects by the way they look. We lust for them because they are very appealing to us in appearance.
 - c. They can come by means of the pride of life. These are evil desires for worldly honor; they appeal to our vanity. Evil actions are often produced because of our desire for the praise of men, to have something that will cause others to honor us or be jealous of us.
 2. Eve was tempted through these very avenues: "And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6).
 - a. She saw that the forbidden fruit was good for food, and she thought that she *just had to have it!* There was more than enough food in Eden to satisfy her hunger, and God had warned them against eating from this tree. Her hunger was not sinful, but her desire to eat this fruit certainly led her astray.
 - b. She was tempted through the lust of the eyes. She saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the sight. Prohibited things often are pleasant to see. Beer commercials portray this "Beelzebub's Brew" as very desirable. They do not show the alcoholic in the gutter, the mangled bodies of the victims of a drunk driver, the shattered life of the imbiber, or the ruined home of his innocent family.
 - c. She was tempted through the pride (vainglory) of life, the desire to be as wise as God. But what a lie the devil had told her!
 3. Christ was tempted through these same three avenues (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).
 - a. When the Lord completed his fasting, Satan enticed him to turn stones into bread. But he prefaced his directive with the doubt-inducing thought, "If thou be the Son of God...." To obey the command of Satan would be sinful; to misuse supernatural powers would be wrong; hence, Jesus reproved the injunction with a reference to Scripture. This was an appeal to the lust of the flesh, an appeal that could not be satisfied by the means propounded by the devil.
 - b. Satan then brought the Lord to a pinnacle of the temple, and directed him to cast himself down, for God had promised in the Scriptures that nothing untoward would happen to him. Christ replied that to tempt God (to put the Father to the test) was wrong, and cited the Old Testament reference to prove it. This was an appeal to the lust of the eyes, and could not be gratified without violating the will of God. It would look mighty good to jump from a great height and not be hurt! Think of the great notoriety this ostentatious display would have produced for him! But this kind of notice was opposite of what the Lord wanted.
 - c. The Devil took him up into a high mountain, and showed him the kingdoms of the world, promising that he would give all these to the Lord if he would worship him. Christ replied that it was God who was to be worshipped and served, not Satan, and again cited the proper scriptural authority. This was an appeal to the pride of life, and could not be accomplished without committing sin.
- C. To meet temptation, we need to know the specific appeals to which it can be made.
1. One of the most common temptations today is through appeals to our sexual appetites.
 - a. All sorts of sexual conduct (really, *misconduct*) is promoted by movies, songs, magazines, television
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- programs, advertisements, television commercials, current fashions, and perhaps in a host of other ways.
- b. Lustful desires must be controlled: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:27-28).
2. A desire for wealth and the things that money can buy is prominent in our worldly society. Money is required to provide the things essential to life and comfort, but contentment does not necessarily accompany a big bank account. The pitiful end of Howard Hughes clearly illustrates this fact. It has been reported that Hughes' grandfather was a gospel preacher.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 12:10: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
 - b. Philippians 4:11-13: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
 3. A craving for political or social influence and the power that comes thereby, can lead unsuspecting souls into sin and perdition. Seeking the praise of men or preeminence over men has been the cause for many to forfeit the glories of heaven.
 - a. John 12:42-43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."
 - b. 3 John 9-11: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."
 4. Vainglory has led many of our brethren from the highway of holiness. Why is it that some want to have elaborate church buildings and boast about huge offerings and large gatherings? While we would not judge the motives of anyone, it is clear that pride is apt to be the motive of some. "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:1-5).
 - a. When preachers, elders, and Christians are willing to accept any kind of compromised "gospel" because their "numbers" will be enhanced thereby, we can know their real motive is not to please God and save souls; it is a means of self-gratification!
 - b. Many bulletins contain "great swelling words" of boasting about the size of their crowds, the dimensions of their buildings, the number of baptisms, and the amount of their contributions. Is this not self-aggrandizement?
 - c. Without the support of truth, such achievements are utterly without meaning, for the Moslems can put anybody to shame if only numbers and dollar signs are considered. God is glorified only if we follow his will!
 - d. By following God's requirement to develop and maintain humility, this evil disposition can be overcome.
 - 1) Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Philippians 2:3-8: "*Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man

also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

- 3) James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
- e. Many are led astray from holiness by anger, malice, hatred, and resentment.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."
 - 2) Colossians 3:8: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
5. Many fall victim to temptation because they have not learned to subdue their tongues (Jas. 3:1-12).
 - a. Proverbs 10:19: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips *is* wise."
 - b. Matthew 12:36-37: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
6. Many fall into sin due to trials and hardships. The loss of a spouse can be devastating, especially in the case of a decades-old marriage. Ill health, a severe or crippling injury, a fire, the death of a child, the loss of a job, or the traitorous work of a supposed friend, can be enough to overturn our spiritual equilibrium.
 - a. Hebrews 12:6: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
 - b. Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
 - c. Revelation 3:19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."
7. An evil habit can lead to a thoughtless practice of sin. The best solution is never to develop such a habit. But when one has fallen into the routine of drinking, smoking, using profanity, thinking evil thoughts, embellishing the truth, gossiping, backbiting, etc., it is with great difficulty that such a practice is broken; but with diligence on your part, the encouragement of your Christian friends, and with the help of God, you can beat it!
 - a. Romans 15:1-2: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification."
 - b. Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*."

D. We need to know that temptations can be successfully met.

1. An understanding of the danger involved, if we are successfully tempted, will help us overcome enticement. Depending on the nature of the sin involved, we stand to lose our happiness, our health, our family, our spouse, our job, our friends, and our souls! Nothing is worth an eternity in Gehenna! No pleasure or earthly advantage is worth obtaining at the cost of heaven!
 - a. Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - b. Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he

- hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
2. We need to understand what we will miss if we fall victim to temptation.
 - a. Psalms 16:11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
 - b. Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - c. Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 3. We must be able and willing to recognize temptation for what it is: an allurements of the devil to entice us away from our Savior. Temptation is presented in such a pretty package that we often fail to see it for what it is. Or in the heat of a moment of anger or passion, we act wickedly before we take thought.
 - a. Genesis 4:8: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."
 - b. 2 Samuel 11:1-4: "And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house."
 - c. Genesis 3:1-6: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."
 - d. 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
 - e. 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - f. 1 Timothy 2:14: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."
 4. We must have a desire to overcome the temptation. We are not apt to defeat the devil's allurement accidentally. And it is certain that we cannot meet a real temptation without wanting to overcome it.
 - a. Daniel 1:8: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."
 5. We must believe what God has said in his word. If we do not believe the Bible, we will think there is no reason to flee from temptation. In our mind, we would say there is no such thing as sin or the penalty for sin. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:10,11).
 6. We must know the Bible if we want to be fully equipped to defeat temptations. The Lord used the word of God to put Satan to flight (Matt. 4:1-11).
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- a. Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
- b. 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
7. We must pray with regularity to avoid temptation. How many of our troubles could have been eluded if more prayers had been offered? How many problems have been averted because we did pray?
 - a. Matthew 6:13: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
 - b. Mark 14:38: "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak."
8. We need the support and encouragement of our fellow-saints to overcome many of our temptations. If we seek their company, and keep away from unsavory people, places, and situations as much as possible, much less temptation will befall us; and with the influence of our brethren to hearten us, we are more apt to remain loyal.
9. We need to worship regularly with the saints, so that the greatest depth of strength may be developed within us. No one can worship God sincerely and scripturally, and not receive strength. The songs will build us up; studying God's word together will supply us with resources with which to do battle with Satan; giving will develop a spirit of sacrifice so that we are better prepared to forego some of the desires which could otherwise lead us into sin; in eating the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of his tremendous gift and our relative unworthiness—it is thus able to inspire us to loyalty; and prayers to God cannot but help us.
10. We need to trust God to live up to his promise to help us in temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - a. The apostle reminds us that we are not the only one to face temptations. From the Garden of Eden to the end of time, Satan busily does his evil work! Christ faced every kind of temptation, and did not falter (Heb. 4:15). Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, the prophets, the apostles, and all of the New Testament saints, faced temptations.
 - b. God is faithful to his promises.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
 - 2) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - 3) Each person has his own special strengths and weaknesses, and we all have a breaking point. An aged person does not face the same temptations as a young person; ambition and sins of the flesh may assail the young, and the old may have to overcome cynicism, loneliness, and resentment. Satan will attack us at our weakest point. Often, our weak points are counter-balanced by strengths.
 - c. God will make a way of escape. He does not say he will remove the temptation, but will make a way to escape. The escape might be through flight (2 Tim. 2:22); it might require fighting (Jas. 4:7); prayer will be needed (Matt. 6:13; 26:41).

CONCLUSION

A. When we are overcome by temptation, God has provided the remedy.

1. For the alien sinner, one who has never known God, the requirements are plain.
 - a. Hear the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
 - 2) Acts 15:9: "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."
 - 3) Acts 16:32: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."
 - 4) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
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- b. Believe the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 3) Acts 8:36-37: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - c. Repent and turn from the practice of sin.
 - 1) Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - d. Confess faith in Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 3) Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
 - e. Be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins.
 - 1) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 4) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 5) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - f. Remain faithful. Christians are to realize that they cannot live above an occasional stumble into sin, thus need all the help they can get.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even
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Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

- 3) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
2. For the erring Christian, the requirements are plain.
- a. Repent of the evil that has been done. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).
 - b. Confess the fault.
 - 1) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - 2) 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - c. Pray for forgiveness.
 - 1) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - 2) Acts 8:24: "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."
 - 3) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
3. Temptation is not a sin of itself; it is the occasion for sin to develop.
- a. Our Lord was tempted on many occasions, but that did not make him sinful. It is the yielding to temptations that is sin.
 - b. The devil does not spend much time on those already securely in his clutches; he is after those who are holy to some degree. Therefore, when temptations come, that may indicate that Satan needs to work on you some more; you are not yet under his control.

B. Some illustrations may help us appreciate the information we have studied.

1. "Don't Pay Too Much For The Whistle." Benjamin Franklin, well-known American writer, scientist, and diplomat, wrote of a childhood experience that deeply affected him. One holiday when he was seven years old, his friends filled his pockets with coins. He immediately started for the toy shop, but on the way he was distracted by the sound of a whistle. Franklin was so intrigued by the sound of the whistle that he offered its owner all of his money for it. With great excitement he ran home to tell his family about his purchase, but they laughed at him and explained that he paid four times what the whistle was worth. Franklin's joy soon turned to bitter tears; but he often remembered the lesson in later life when he was tempted to buy some unnecessary object, and would think, "Don't pay too much for the whistle."
 - a. Unfortunately, many of us are paying too much for the whistle when it comes to sin. It looks so alluring to us, and presents such a grand picture, but we seldom stop to look at the actual cost.
 - 1) Sin costs us our serenity. It robs us of our peace of mind. In Isaiah 57:20-21 the writer pictures the wicked "like the tossing sea which cannot rest." David knew the cost of sin with Bathsheba. Night after night what he had done reverberated in his consciousness. He could not forget it, and in Psalm 51:3 he says, "My sin is ever before me."
 - 2) Sin costs us our self respect. Sin fills our lives with bitter memories and regrets. Imagine the apostle Paul as he went to worship with the saints in Jerusalem. Perhaps he saw children whose parents he had imprisoned, or a widow whose husband he had killed. Although he felt the forgiveness of God, he also remembered the pain of that sin.

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- 3) Sin ultimately costs us our soul. Adam and Eve paid the price of their sin by being separated from God. Romans 6:23 promises that sin still demands the same price.
 - b. No pleasure that sin can give is worth what it costs. "Don't pay too much for the whistle." [Ron Stough].
2. It was almost 1:00 in the morning when the phone rang in the Winters' home. Dr. Leo Winters, the highly acclaimed Chicago surgeon, was awakened with a start. Tonight it was a young boy, they said, tragically mangled in a late night accident. Could not someone else handle it? Not this time. This time his hands were possibly the only ones in the city, or maybe even in the whole region, which were skilled enough to save.
 - a. The quickest route happened to be through a rather rough area, but with time being a critical factor, it was worth the risk. He almost made it through the worst of the neighborhood. Almost. Then, at a stop light, his door was jerked open by a man in a grey hat and a dirty flannel shirt. "I've got to have your car!" the man screamed, pulling him from his seat. Winters tried explaining the gravity of his situation, but the man was not listening.
 - b. The doctor wandered for over 45 minutes looking for a phone. When the taxi finally got him to the hospital, over an hour had passed. He burst through the doors and into the nurses' station, but the nurse on duty only shook her head. Too late. The boy had died just about 30 minutes earlier. "His dad got here just before he died," the nurse told him. "He is in the chapel. Go see him. He is awfully confused. He could not understand why you never came."
 - c. Without explaining, Dr. Winters walked hurriedly down the hall and quietly entered the chapel. At the front knelt the huddled form of a weeping father—in a grey hat and dirty flannel shirt. Tragically, he had pushed from his life the only one who could save.
 - d. I have the strange feeling that I have known that same father. With his marriage coming apart, he just could not find the time for the Lord. With his business on the rocks, he will have to put off his decision about Jesus. Tragically, he is pushing from his life the only One who can save. [Jay Utley].
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1 CORINTHIANS 11

A. 1 Corinthians 11:1-3: God's Order of Authority.

1. Verse 1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
 - a. This verse logically connects with the previous chapter. The apostle closed that chapter by using his own case as a proper example for other Christians to imitate.
 - b. Every Christian ought to be able to make this same statement truthfully. Paul is the proper example for others to imitate only because he followed Christ; and if we follow the Lord as we ought, others can safely imitate our example. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).
 - c. When Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians, very little of the New Testament had been recorded; and they did not likely have direct access to much of it. Paul had lived the Christian life before them during the time he had spent in their midst. By seeing what he did and did not do, and hearing what he spoke and did not speak, they could have a good idea how to live as they should. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9).
2. Verse 2: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you."
 - a. The Corinthian church had many internal problems, which included:
 - 1) Dividing into factions.
 - 2) Condoning immorality.
 - 3) Lawsuits between brethren before unbelievers.
 - 4) Riding roughshod over the tender consciences of weaker brethren.
 - b. But they had their strengths, which the apostle notices here. They remembered Paul in all things, and generally kept the ordinances which he had delivered to them. Most of them accepted his apostleship, and took to heart the truths he taught them. When a spiritual question arose, it was to Paul they turned for information (7:1).
 - c. In commending the Corinthian brethren for keeping the ordinances he delivered to them, he is not suggesting that their obedience was flawless. To the contrary, his condemnation of their several faults shows that the compliment given here is to be understood as only a general observation. In the main, their conduct was proper; they generally followed the instructions he had delivered to them.
 - d. The word *ordinances* is a reference to the inspired oracles revealed by the apostles. The word is translated *tradition (s)* in other passages.
 - 1) The term commonly is used to identify the teachings and practices which were developed and handed down by one generation to another. Christ strongly condemned the religious traditions which had been developed by uninspired Jewish teachers of the past and passed on down to unsuspecting generations. Tradition is the greatest source of religious error today.
 - a) Matthew 15:2-9: "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. *Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
 - b) Mark 7:3-13: "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash,

they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

- c) Colossians 2:8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."
 - d) 1 Peter 1:18: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers."
- 2) The term is used here and elsewhere in reference to inspired truth.
- a) "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15).
 - b) "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).
- e. They were still spiritual infants, and needed much encouragement and instruction before they could achieve maturity. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:1-2). They were holding fast to the ordinances they knew and understood; their desire was right, but their understanding and development were incomplete. Paul introduces the information that follows with a word of commendation so that they will be aware of his genuine concern for their welfare.
3. Verse 3: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."
- a. Having commended their general obedience to the truths they had been taught, Paul begins to show that there were deficiencies in their conduct regarding the role women were to occupy. "Before mentioning the thing which he intended first to condemn, he states the principle on which that condemnation rested; so that, by assenting to the principle, they could not fail to assent to the conclusion to which it necessarily led. That principle is, that order and subordination pervade the whole universe, and is essential to its being" (Hodge, p.206).
 - b. They needed to understand that Christ is the head of every man; that man is the head of woman; that God is the head of Christ. The head of a body is that part of the body which is in charge of the whole body. The human head gives directions to the body, and the body acts accordingly. The right hand might be instructed to scratch the left shoulder; the legs might be ordered to run; the speaking system might be directed to give utterance to a certain idea. If the head is irresponsible, the body is apt to do something foolish or criminal.
 - c. The Divine "Chain of Command is set forth in the Scriptures.
 - 1) God the Father is the chief authority—in time and in eternity:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under

him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

- b) Ephesians 4:6: “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”
- 2) Christ possesses all authority under the Father (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9-11; Acts 4:12; Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 26:39). The submission of Christ to the Father's will did not destroy their inherent equality. Their cooperation in executing the divine plan for human redemption required that the Son fulfill the earthly mission on which the Father sent him (Gal. 4:4; John 17:4).
- 3) The Holy Spirit was sent by Christ, thus indicating that Christ has greater authority, but that does not destroy their inherent equality.
- d. The man has authority over the woman. This is God's arrangement; it is not subject to mankind's approval. The subordination of the woman to the man does not destroy their inherent moral worth and equality (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:22-24).
 - 1) The president of the United States occupies a higher political office than does the mayor of a small city; that office gives him greater authority than the mayor possesses. However, that greater authority does not make the President a more valuable person before God than the mayor or anyone else. Each person has his own unique role in society, and each sustains the same responsibilities to obey the law that governs them all.
 - 2) The man and the woman have different roles in God's arrangement, but the distinctive role of each does not make either more or less important than the other, in the family or in the church.
 - 3) When a woman gives up her unique role in the family, and competes with men in the secular workplace, she sometimes loses more than she gains. That woman has the right, and in our present economic environment, the need, to work in order to augment the husband's income for the good of the family, is granted. But by becoming enured by the harshness and conflicts of secular work, the wife is apt to lose much of the tenderness of motherhood.
- e. Christ accrues no dishonor by being in subjection to the authority of God; the church is not dishonored by being in subjection to the authority of Christ; man is not dishonored by being subject to the authority of Christ; the woman suffers no dishonor by operating in subjection to the man (in the family and in the church).

B. 1 Corinthians 11:4-16: Regarding Women and Men.

1. Verses 4-5: "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."
 - a. "It is God that has arranged the natural order of subordination, and those who would change it not only are in conflict with God, but they also bring public shame to themselves even when this subordination is manifested in local customs and they violate it" (Ron Wilson, Sermon Outline on 1 Cor. 11, 1973).
 - b. Throughout the Bible, God required that the distinction between man and woman be maintained. This applied to the clothing they wore and the positions they filled in life.
 - c. Praying or prophesying is an act of religious devotion. For a man to engage in either with his head covered, was to dishonor his head; for a woman to do either without her head covered, was to dishonor her head. The statement of the verse is simple on the surface, but there are some difficult questions that must be answered before one can understand its meaning.
 - 1) Are these restrictions eternal principles that have always applied to the man and woman who prayed or prophesied?
 - 2) Were these regulations merely ancient customs and only applicable to those people living back then?
 - 3) Before a woman's prayer is acceptable to God today, must she put a covering over her head?
 - 4) Is it a condition of acceptable prayer for a man that his head be uncovered as he prays?
 - 5) What kind of covering is meant? Is it the individual's hair, or is it a veil?
 - 6) What (or who) is the head that is dishonored? The apostle had just stated in verse three that the

- head of the man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man. It seems clear that the head that is dishonored when the woman prays uncovered is her husband, and the head that the man dishonors when he prays with his head covered is Christ. Of course, when one dishonors Christ, he dishonors himself; and a wife who dishonors her husband, dishonors herself.
- 7) Does the apostle imply that Christian women had the right to pray and prophesy in the public assemblies of the church, when men are present? If so, then he contradicts what he is to write in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Obviously, he does not suggest here that women have the right to violate a principle of truth stated elsewhere; and he does not contradict what he wrote elsewhere.
- d. Coffman argues at length that the covering meant throughout the context is the individual's hair. His principal argument seems to be the statement of verse 15: "Her hair is given her for [*instead of*] a covering." This idea will be tested as we proceed through the passage.
 - e. It is important to a proper understanding of the passage to set forth key Greek words used in the context, and find the meaning of each.
 - 1) The Greek term *kata* (with *kephales*: head) translated "having his [head] covered" is a preposition "denoting motion or diffusion or direction from the higher to the lower...down from, down" (Thayer, p.326). As used in the verse, it means "a veil hanging down from his head" (Thayer, p.227). Vincent says: "...having something hanging down from his head. Referring to the tallith, a...shawl....Romans, like the Jews, prayed with the head veiled...Greeks remained bareheaded during prayer or sacrifice, as indeed they did in their ordinary outdoor life....The Greek women rarely appeared in public, but lived in strict seclusion. Unmarried women never quitted their apartments, except on occasions of festal processions....Even after marriage they were largely confined to the *gynaeconitis* or *women's rooms*" (p.786).
 - 2) The Greek term used to speak of a woman being uncovered (verse 6) translated "uncovered" is *akatalupto*. Thayer says this word means "not covered, unveiled" (p.21).
 - 3) The Greek term used to speak of a man being covered (verse 7) translated "not to cover" is *kataluptesthai*. Thayer gives its meaning as [not] "to cover up, to veil or cover one's self" (p.331).
 - 4) The Greek term (*katalupron*) translated "uncovered" in verse 13 (spoken about a woman) is from the same word used in verse 7 and carries the same meaning.
 - f. The final statement in verse five affirms that a woman who prays with her head uncovered has brought the same dishonor upon her head (her husband) that she would have brought upon him had she been shaved. In some cases, cutting off the hair was a sign of grief or trouble (Deut. 21:12; Isa. 7:20), but through the ages, many societies have classified women who shear off their hair as harlots or adulteresses.
 - 1) When Paris was liberated by the allied army during World War II, the loyal Frenchmen apprehended those women who had collaborated with the Germans, shaved off their hair as punishment, and paraded them through the streets of the city.
 - 2) "Among the Jews a woman convicted of adultery had her hair shorn, with the formula: 'Because thou hast departed from the manner of the daughters of Israel, who go with their head covered, therefore that has befallen thee which thou hast chosen.' According to Tacitus, among the Germans an adulteress was driven from her husband's house with her head shaved; and the Justinian code prescribed this penalty for an adulteress, whom, at the expiration of two years, her husband refused to receive again. Paul means that a woman praying or prophesying uncovered puts herself in public opinion on a level with a courtesan" (Vincent, pp.786f).
 - 3) The religious prostitutes of the great temple of Venus (Aphrodite) at Corinth are said to have shaved their heads, that having a bare head was one of their identifying features. Paul, therefore, in saying that the Christian ladies of the church at Corinth who appeared in worship with uncovered (unveiled) heads, placed themselves in the same condition as if their heads had been shorn or shaved. That action identified them with the harlots of the temple, and with adulteresses, and not with saintly women who lived in godly subjection to their husbands.
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2. Verses 6-7: "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man."
 - a. Notice how Paul used the situation of being uncovered as being distinct from being shorn. The covering of the immediate context is that furnished by the customary veil of the time; if a woman refused to wear it, she might as well be shorn of her hair, for the consequence of either case was identical.
 - 1) The woman he depicted as being uncovered was not shorn; thus, the covering was not the hair in this instance; she had no covering, but she still had her hair.
 - 2) If (or since) it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, she ought to be covered. The consequence of being shaved was shame for the woman; to be uncovered would produce the same result.
 - 3) If the covering throughout the context is the hair, and since she would dishonor her head by praying while having her hair shorn or shaved, how long does the hair have to grow before she may safely pray again? What about the woman who loses her hair due to an accident, or disease, or medical treatment, or through a miscarriage of justice, or by an act of violence? Is she banned from worship until such time that her hair grows to an acceptable length?
 - 4) If *shaved* and *uncovered* are identical conditions (i.e., a woman is uncovered only because her hair has been cut off), how could she be covered if she was shaven? The requirement of the case is that she is to be covered. She would have to wait until such time that her hair naturally grew in order to *obey* the requirement; but since growing hair is a natural process, it is not something that is subject to the will of the individual.
 - b. The man ought not to be covered, since he is the image and glory of God.
 - 1) Notice that the decision for the man to be uncovered is within the power of the individual; it is something that he *ought* to do (i.e., be uncovered in prayer).
 - 2) If his hair is the only covering being discussed in the context, then the only choice the man has is whether to cut his hair, and if so, how short. If the covering considered is a veil, we can see how the man would have a real choice: he could wear one (and disobey the injunction of the verse) or he could leave it off (and obey the injunction).
 - 3) In view of verse 14, men must not wear their hair long; to do so would be to break down one of the distinctions identifying him as a man. A Christian male who respects God's authority, and who sincerely wants to do what is right, will not see how close to the line he can come without violating God's word.
 - 4) The reason given for the injunction against a man wearing the covering of the text is *he is the image and glory of God*. "The only sense in which the man, in distinction from the woman, is the image of God, is that he represents the authority of God. He is invested with dominion" (Hodge, p.210). Both man and woman were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), but man has this one significant difference: he has authority over the woman. However, the man is neither purer nor more intelligent than the woman, and he is not more important to the cause of Christ than is the woman. The woman occupies the same relative position to the man that the man occupies in relation to Christ, and which Christ occupies in relation to God: that of a subordinate.
 - 5) The woman is the glory of the man. "All her comeliness, loveliness, and purity are therefore an expression of his honour and dignity, since all that comeliness and loveliness were made of him, and for him. This, therefore, ought to be acknowledged by a suitable manner of attire; and in his presence this sense of her inferiority of rank and subordination should be acknowledged by the customary use of the veil. She should appear with the symbol of modesty and subjection, which are implied by the head being covered. This sense is distinctly expressed in the following verse" (Barnes, p.204). "She is the glory of the man....She always assumes his station; becomes a queen if he is a king, and manifests to others the wealth and honour which may belong to her husband" (Hodge, p.210).
 3. Verses 8-9: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created
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for the woman; but the woman for the man."

- a. These two verses amplify the truth that man has authority over woman (in the church and in the home). The first man did not come into being by the instrumentality of any woman; however, the first woman came from the first man. God made Adam from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7); later, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, opened up the man's side and removed a rib, which he used in constructing Eve.
 - b. Adam was not created for Eve, but Eve was created for Adam (Gen. 2:18-23). She was intended to be Adam's help meet, a "suitable helper." God never intended for Eve to be a slave to Adam. In marriage, the wife is to be a close companion and helper to the man; she occupies a position of subordination to her husband, but only in authority. "And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:18-23).
 - 1) A man usually has greater physical strength than a woman; and he has greater authority than the woman in the family and in the church. The man and the woman are equal in value before God; they are basically equal in intelligence. There is no inherent difference between men and women in capacity to obtain knowledge and develop wisdom.
 - 2) God, in his infinite wisdom, saw fit to give man the headship of the family, and to occupy the positions of authority (and thus bear the primary responsibility) in the church. Only men are to preach publicly; only men are to be appointed to be elders and deacons; the apostles were all men.
 - a) Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing."
 - b) 1 Timothy 2:8-15: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."
 - 3) Does the principle under consideration teach that women are not to be civil rulers, or occupy any other position in life which places them over any man? If so, how does one account for the position to which God appointed Deborah (Judges 4:4-5)? But also notice that God did not select any woman to serve as king in Israel.
 - c. God placed man in charge of woman; this was part of his original plan. He created Adam first. Paul showed in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, that the woman owes her position of subordination to the fact that (1) Adam was first created and that (2) she was in the transgression first, and influenced her husband to violate God's orders, also.
 - d. The apostle will show in verses eleven and twelve that both the man and the woman are important to each other.
4. Verse 10: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels."
 - a. The difficulty of the passage is illustrated by Barnes' remarks: "I do not know what it means; and I regard it as one of the very few passages in the Bible whose meaning as yet is wholly inexplicable"
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- (p.205).
- b. Because God intends for woman to be subordinate to man, the woman ought to have *power* on her head. The context (11:1-16) teaches the truth that they are to be in subjection to men (in the church and in the family); because of their subordinate role with respect to men, they are to display that subordination in their demeanor, in their speech, and in their dress.
 - c. "The direction applies to her, whether in public or private. It is necessary for a woman to approach God with the tokens of her subjection to man in secret prayer, or private teaching as in public, just as it is necessary for man to approach God as a servant of Christ in private or in public" (Lipscomb, p.166).
 - 1) Paul does not speak exclusively here to either a married or an unmarried woman; what he says has equal application to the married and the single.
 - 2) The *power* (*authority*—ASV) is described in the margin as "a covering, in sign that she is under the power of her husband." However, the passage does not directly speak of husbands and wives; rather, it speaks of man and woman.
 - 3) "This *covering* or *veiling* of the women was not an apostolic ordinance to be observed by all Christian women *only in public worship assemblies for all future Lord's days*, but rather the observance of a recognized social custom of the first century such as the "holy kiss" (Rom. 16:16), or the washing of feet (John 13)" (Dan Billingsly, ADL, 1982, pp.330f).
 - d. "The apostle had asserted and proved that the woman is subordinate to the man, and he had assumed as granted that the veil was the conventional symbol of the man's authority. The inference is that the woman ought to wear the ordinary symbol of the power of her husband. As it was proper in itself, and demanded by the common sense of propriety, that the woman should be veiled, it was specially proper in the worshipping assemblies, for there they were in the presence not merely of men but of angels" (Hodge, p.211).
 - e. The main point of the verse appears fairly simple: Women ought to wear a covering on their heads as an outward sign that they recognize and accept their subordinate role in life. This verse, however, does not identify the nature of the covering. Most commentators say it was a veil; others (such as Coffman) argue that the covering was the woman's uncropped hair that is the covering.
 - f. The most difficult part of the verse seems to be the concluding statement: *Because of the angels*.
 - 1) Some commentators think Paul alludes to the presence of angels during public worship gatherings, and that the angels will report to God whether the women were covered or not. However, God does not need to have the report of angels in order to know what occurred in any such gatherings (Prov. 15:3; Heb. 4:13). The point of the passage is not to be limited to the worship assemblies.
 - 2) Some writers make the allusion to angels a reference to the leaders of a given congregation (cf. Rev. 2-3). This is not the likely meaning.
 - 3) Perhaps Paul's point has reference to the nature of angels themselves. Angels are created beings; they were made a little higher than man, but inferior to the Godhead. They are *ministering servants* (Heb. 1:14). They were created to serve the will of God, and in biblical cases, they rendered certain services to men. As angels are subject to their Creator, women are to be subject to the men (in the church and in the family).
5. Verses 11-12: "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God."
- a. These two verses temper the point of verses eight and nine. While it is true that men bear authority over women, it is also true that men and women need each other.
 - b. The only man who never had a mother was Adam, and he came into being only by virtue of God's special creative work (Gen. 2:7). Every other man (male human being) who has ever lived came into this world through the unique instrumentality of a woman. Even the so-called *test-tube babies* could not have been without the seed of a woman. Even Jesus was born of a woman, although he had no human father. His birth of a virgin was truly unique.
 - c. But it is also true that no woman ever lived except through the instrumentality of man. The first
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- woman was made from the rib taken from the first man. Every woman came from some man; there is no exception to this rule.
- d. Verse twelve restates the proposition in different words. The woman is of the man, and the man is also by the woman. No woman would be here without the man (her father); no man would be here without the woman (his mother). Men and women are mutually dependent upon each other in order to continue the race.
 - e. Since the two leading thoughts in the two verses are parallel, so the concluding statements are parallel also. "In the Lord" (verse 11) and "all things of God" (verse 12) show that the arrangement discussed in the verses are the Lord's doing; he created mankind, and assigned the roles which man and woman are to fill.
 - 1) "The apostle's single object is to show the true nature and limitations of the subordination of the woman to the man. It is a real subordination, but it is consistent with their mutual dependence; the one is not without the other. And this mutual dependence is...by divine appointment—according to the will of the Lord..." (Hodge, p.212).
 - 2) When Paul showed that men and women are mutually dependent on each other because of God having arranged it so, he removed any cause for complaint from either gender. If a woman seeks to complain about her role in life, it is with God that she must contend; and if any man protests his heavy responsibilities, it is with God that he must battle.
6. Verse 13: "Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?"
- a. The apostle appealed to their natural sense of propriety. He asks, "Is it comely [seemly; suitable; proper] for a woman to pray to God while uncovered?" The question is intended to elicit a negative reply.
 - b. This question leads to Paul's observation in the next two verses that *nature* teaches that it is shameful for a man to have long hair, and that long hair is a glory to a woman. From what we have learned about societies of men of earlier times, the prevailing practice has been for men to wear short hair and for women to let their hair grow long. It was a mark of effeminacy for men to have long hair; it was a mark of infidelity and shame for a woman to crop off her hair or shave her head.
 - c. There are certain actions that we inherently know to be wrong. We have the native understanding that murder is to be avoided.
 - 1) As far as we are told, Adam and Eve and their family had not been told that murder was wrong. Neither Adam nor his wife would have encouraged Cain to slay Abel (Gen. 4); they would have prevented that crime if they had been present. They *knew* it was wrong.
 - 2) Paul spoke of the Gentiles doing *by nature* the things contained in the Law of Moses (Rom. 2:14). They had not been taught the Law, but there were certain precepts which they knew inherently were to be observed or avoided.
 - d. This inherent knowledge of right and wrong can develop into a custom in a society. Later generations may not know why they do or avoid doing a certain action, but the source was native sense of right and wrong. In many cases, what is at stake is appropriateness, rather than right and wrong (righteousness and sin).
 - e. Paul addresses the question to their sense of propriety: Is it seemly for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? By making the appeal on this basis, he seems to place the matter in the realm of custom, and not as part of God's revealed requirements for all the rest of the Christian Age.
 - f. We know by revelation, by common sense, by customs that have been practiced throughout human history, that marriage is the bond of a man and a woman—not between two men or two women, or between a human and an animal.
7. Verse 14: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?"
- a. There have been some notable exceptions, but the general practice of most civilizations has been for men to have short hair and women to have long hair; this is one of the primary distinctions between men and women. Women's hair will naturally grow longer than men's hair.
 - 1) We have seen some women with hair down past their waist, but have you ever seen a man with hair that long? Such would be an exceptional case—in the past. We see many unseemly and
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- strange practices today.
- 2) Only those men in the Old Testament who were Nazarites properly allowed their hair to grow long (Num. 6:8; Ezek. 44:20). There were such men as Absalom who wore long hair, but they did it for improper motives (2 Sam. 14:26).
- b. God has always intended for the sexes to be kept distinct.
- 1) The Law of Moses forbade men wearing clothing that belonged to women, and women from wearing men's clothing. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Deut. 22:5).
 - 2) Sexual activity between members of the same sex is strictly forbidden in the Old and New Testaments.
 - a) Leviticus 20:13: "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - 3) The length of a person's hair is to be kept within the general limits of the gender of the individual.
- c. "That which is universal we say is according to nature. It is such as is demanded by the natural sense of fitness among men. Thus we may say that nature demands that the sexes should wear different kinds of dress; that nature demands that the female should be modest and retiring; that nature demands that the toils of the chase, of the field, of war—the duties of office, of government, and of professional life, should be discharged by men. Such are in general the customs the world over; and if any reason is asked for numerous habits that exist in society, no better answer can be given than that *nature*, as arranged by God, has demanded it. The word in this place....refers to a deep internal sense of what is proper and right; a sense which is expressed extensively in all nations, showing what that sense is" (Barnes, p.207).
- d. The word *long* is, of course, a relative word. Compared to the ordinary length of a woman's hair, the man's hair is to be shorter. The Lord did not give us any measurement, but our good sense will tell us how long is too long. The passage calls for the distinction between the sexes to be maintained even with respect to the length of the hair. Those who want to please God will not see how close to the line they can come, but will stay well within the limits—we will not stray to the right or to the left.
- e. Even nature teaches that long hair on a man is a *shame*. This implies that a higher authority (God) agrees! The verse calls on them to use their natural understanding and training to answer the question. Both God and their natural custom said that a woman wearing cropped hair and men wearing long hair were shameful.
- f. "While in all nations in the world, women wear long hair, and men short hair, is it nature that suggests it? It does not mean custom. The fact so universal, and the declaration of the apostle, seems to settle this. Sometimes nature suggests a custom. A practice prompted by nature becomes a custom, and is said to be from or by nature. How came the custom to be universal among all nations and in all parts of the world, if there is not something in nature to suggest it?" (Lipscomb, p.168).
8. Verse 15: "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."
- a. Nature teaches that long hair on a woman is a glory to the woman. "The same instinctive promptings of nature which make it proper for a man to wear short hair, make it proper that the woman should suffer hers to grow long" (Barnes, p.208).
 - b. A woman's hair is given to her for (*anti*: "instead of") a covering. This word [*anti*] is also translated "for" in the following passages:
 - 1) Luke 11:11: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he **for** a fish give him a serpent?"
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- 2) James 4:15: "**For** that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."
- c. Coffman thinks this is proof that the covering of the passage is hair, not an article of clothing. "This would have been the ideal place for Paul to have said that a mantle thrown over a woman's head and shoulders is a glory to her, if he ever had such a thing in mind. On the contrary, it comes out here, as it does in every verse in the whole passage, his subject was 'hair!'" (Coffman, pp.175f).
- d. Barnes observes concerning a woman's hair: "It is given to her as a sort of natural veil, and to indicate the propriety of her wearing a veil. It answered the purposes of a veil when it was suffered to grow long, and to spread over the shoulders and over parts of the face, before the arts of dress were invented or needed. There may also be an allusion here to the fact that the hair of women naturally grows longer than that of men" (p.208).
9. Verse 16: "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."
- a. One who is contentious is one who is eager to get involved in controversy, for the sake of disputation; he is not sincerely searching for truth. Clearly setting forth biblical arguments will have no effect on such a person.
- 1) "With such disturbers of the peace of the church all argument is useless. Authority is the only thing that will silence them. The authority here adduced is that of the inspired apostles, which was decisive, because they were invested with the authority not only to preach the gospel, but to instruct the church and to decide everything relating to the worship" (Lipscomb, p.169).
- 2) The only voice a contentious person will hear is the voice of authority. Paul's reply to the contentious in the matter he has just discussed was to state bluntly that *we* (the inspired apostles) had no such custom, and such a custom was not held by any congregation of the Lord's people anywhere.
- b. The word "custom" [*sunatheian*] means "an established practice or habit." The *custom* which Paul denies that he and the other apostles had was the one which permitted women to appear in public, or to pray, with uncovered heads. "But ye have a **custom**, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" (John 18:39).
- 1) It is clear that Paul did not discuss a practice at such length, only to deny the importance of it with his last remark. Verse sixteen, therefore, is not to be taken as a statement which dismisses the entire subject as one of no importance.
- 2) The custom which was not held by the apostles or the church anywhere was that which permitted the women to pray with head uncovered and men to pray with head covered.
10. Concluding observations.
- a. "Did Paul require women to wear a covering in the church in Corinth? He did, indeed; I have never seen any other 'explanation' of this passage that, in my view, has the slightest merit. I see not how any other conclusion can possibly be drawn. All efforts otherwise, such as to make the hair the covering considered; or, to make man 'the covering' (an absurdity!), fail in the light of the clear teaching of this passage, particularly in the Greek text. Paul taught the Christian women in Corinth to wear a covering (veil) on their heads when they engaged in public worship. He taught that men were to worship with uncovered heads. The 'covering' involved was something that could be put on or off at will, thus evidencing the fact that it was not the *hair* which women were to wear but something additional, otherwise, only bald headed men could pray!
- 1) "Did Paul intend that this practice (of women covering their heads in worship) should be always and everywhere observed? I once thought so, but upon more mature study and much reflection on this matter I now believe that (a) Paul did not originate the custom of covered heads for women *but sanctioned a practice already recognized*; and, (b) that while the *headship* relation continues, the manner by which it is indicated does not, and that Christian women who sit in public assemblies today with uncovered heads, do not thereby evidence insubordination to men.
- 2) "I believe this matter is in exactly the same category as the instruction of the same apostle regarding the kiss as a mode of greeting (Rom. 16:16). 'Salute one another with a holy kiss.' Here is an edict addressed to the church in Rome. It bade them salute (greet) one another; and the method designated is by 'a holy kiss.' Are we to suppose that it was the intent of the Holy Spirit

to fix this mode of greeting upon the church henceforth; and, are all of us today who do not follow this mode of greeting in rebellion against God? I do not think so; it was not a method of greeting which the apostle originated; he simply took what was already done and sanctioned it—made it a *holy* form of greeting. Similarly, the ‘covering’ to which Paul alludes in I Cor. 11 was established and recognized widely and he ruled that Christian women were not to veer from a practice which would subject them to the criticism of the people of that day.

- 3) “...Not the slightest change has occurred in the relationships of men and women; both are to be subordinate to their heads; but, they do not indicate it as they did in Corinth and other countries of the ancient world. It is, of course, entirely in order for women to wear a covering in public worship and, if they are disposed to feel uncomfortable without it, they ought by all means to wear it; but, the average Christian woman who wears a hat or veil to church today does not do so as a proof of her submission, nor do those who omit it indicate thereby rebellion against God and men. The mere omission of it is no more an act of disobedience than is the failure to stand at the door and greet each member with a holy kiss. Though Paul enjoined both the covering and the kiss, I do not believe that he intended that either must be practiced in our land and in our day” (Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers*, pp.95-97). [This is a very clear and convincing explanation].
- b. "Corinth was made up of Greeks, Romans and Jews, and all these three elements of her population were found in the church to which Paul wrote. The Jew and the Roman worshiped with covered, and the Greek with uncovered, head. Naturally a dispute would arise as to which custom was right....Now, in the East in Paul's day, all women went into public assemblies with their heads veiled, and this peplum, or veil, was regarded as a badge of subordination, a sign that the woman was under the power of the man. Thus Chardin, the traveler, says that the women of Persia wear a veil in sign that they are 'under subjection,' a fact which Paul also asserts in this chapter. Now, the symbolic significance of a woman's head-dress became the determining factor in this dispute. For a man to worship with a covered head was an act of effeminacy, a disgrace to his head, and for a woman to worship with uncovered head was likewise disgraceful, for it would at once be looked upon as a bold assertion of unwarranted independence, a sign that she had laid aside her modesty and removed from her sphere. From this passage it is plain that it was not intended that Christianity should needlessly vary from the national customs of the day. For Christians to introduce needless innovations would be to add to the misconceptions which already subjected them to persecution. One who follows Christ will find himself conspicuously different from the world, without practicing any tricks of singularity" (McGarvey & Pendleton, p.110).
- c. "The *example* and *teachings* of the Lord and his apostles lead the church in all cultures to observe the respectable laws and customs of each generation, but we must never make customs into covenant ordinances. A woman's subjection before man is apostolic doctrine (Eph. 5:22-24); it should be observed by the church in the home, in society, and in church assemblies, but the veil or artificial covering was a recognized custom prevailing in Corinth during the first century, and it has since passed with the customs and culture of that age....However, today, in our culture, the sign of authority of the man over the woman is witnessed in *the gracious behavior* of the Christian woman in the home and in the church assembly....Is there a brother today who will contend that all Christian women since the first century who worship God without the artificial covering or veil have sinned against God, and that all Christian men who permit such are also guilty before God? If they so believe, and are not making an issue of this matter before the church today, they are also guilty of sin and just as lost as all the others (Jas. 4:17). While many commentators hesitate to take a stated position on this question, and some brethren waver as to what the passage really teaches, it is either a matter of faith and ought to be so taught, or it is a matter of custom and not a permanent ordinance for the New Testament church. The twentieth century church, by our study and practice through the years, has repudiated the doctrine of the artificial covering. We cannot, like the Catholics or others, bind a veil, hat, handkerchief or Kleenex on our women as a matter of faith! Any brother who so contends cannot fellowship the church today without violating his own conscience!" (Dan Billingsley, *Studies in I Corinthians*, 1982 Annual Denton Lectures, p.331).
- d. A survey of verses 1-16:
 - 1) Verses 1-2: Paul called on the Corinthians to follow him as he followed Christ. He complimented

them for their having kept the inspired traditions which he had delivered to them.

- 2) Verse 3: He called their attention to the fact that God is over Christ, Christ is over man, and man is over woman. This is God's ordained arrangement.
- 3) Verses 4-5: A man who prayed or prophesied with a covered head dishonored Christ; a woman who prayed or prophesied with an uncovered head dishonored man.
- 4) Verse 6: If a woman was uncovered she was to be shorn. This shows that a woman could be uncovered while still having a full head of hair. The covering and her hair were different.
- 5) Verse 7: A man who donned a veil would present himself to the world and the church as effeminate; he would be dissolving one of the prime distinctions identifying the sexes. Man is the image and glory of God, and the woman is the glory of the man.
- 6) Verses 8-10: The first man did not come from a woman, but every woman (including Eve) came from man. Woman was created for man; man was not created for woman—hence, man has the authority. Therefore, woman ought to have power (authority) on her head: she ought to be veiled, for in that age in Corinth, the veil was an outward sign which showed that the woman who wore it recognized her subordination to man.
- 7) Verses 11-12: However, just because man has the authority over woman does not make him independent of her, or that he is superior to her. Every woman has a father and every man (except Adam) has a mother. This is as God arranged it.
- 8) Verses 13-15: Paul asked them to discern by their inherent training (customs) whether it was comely for a woman to pray unto God with her head uncovered. Natural practices and inclinations teach that long hair on a man is shameful, but long hair on a woman is her glory. Verses 14 and 15 are illustrations of verse 13. Their inherent inclinations which taught them long hair on a man was shameful and that long hair on a woman was right, also taught them that it was shameful for a woman to pray to God without a covering.
- 9) Verse 16: The Corinthian men were taught to pray and prophesy with uncovered (unveiled) heads, and their women were taught to pray and prophesy with their heads covered (veiled), because to do otherwise would violate current custom. They were to follow this custom so as to avoid as much trouble with unbelievers as possible; the apostles had not taught that men should be covered and women should be uncovered; rather, as long as the custom prevailed for men to be uncovered and women covered, Christians were to so do.

C. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34: Abuses of the Lord's Supper.

1. Verses 17-18: "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it."
 - a. The Corinthians were instructed to meet on the Lord's day to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is not a meaningless ceremony, but is intended to keep the memory of Christ fresh in our minds. If one eats it without the proper contemplation of Christ's death, the supper is void of benefit; our eating it in this way will do more harm than good.
 - b. Paul had learned that the Corinthian saints were split into cliques when they assembled to eat the supper; he partly believed the report. He had no praise for them in this lapse into carnality.
 - c. To worship God falsely does much harm and no good: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:7-9).
2. Verse 19: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."
 - a. Faithful Christians are sorely discouraged when divisions in the local church occur. However, we need to see the situation as God sees it. If false doctrine enters a congregation, the members are tested: will they hold fast to the truth or will they turn aside after the false doctrines of men?
 - b. God has no use for those who will give up the truth for error! When Adam and Eve failed their test of faith in the Garden of Eden, God had no choice but to drive them away from his presence. If we

- had been there, we would have had to agree with God's action, or else be removed from the garden, also.
- c. Every Christian and every congregation will face tests of faith. These tests must come if we are to mature. Mankind is prone to crave that which is new, or exciting, or forbidden. If we do not grow in knowledge of God's will and in determination to walk with God, we will be disposed to follow some new doctrine, and thus fail the test.
 - d. When those who believe and practice false doctrine, or who follow other sinful ways, depart from a congregation, or are excluded therefrom, the church is stronger; and the faithful are made manifest. We should not be shocked or overly dismayed when divisions occur over sin or error; that simply means that God has tested some of our brethren and found them wanting. We should rejoice that we did not fall into their evil ways.
3. Verse 20: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper."
- a. Their coming together into the assembly included the eating of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). However, because of the evil practices associated with their observance of the supper, it was impossible for them to partake of it acceptably. The occasion identified is the one in which they all came together into one place. This calls for the church to have regular meetings in which all the members are present.
 - 1) A congregation that divides into classes for the purpose of studying the Bible is fulfilling the requirement of instructing the members. Bible classes is an excellent method of edifying Christians and teaching the young and others.
 - 2) However, when a congregation divides the worship assembly into separate groups, it fails to "come together into one place." Such a practice also discourages the unity and fellowship so necessary for the strength of a congregation. "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" (1 Cor. 14:23; cf. 14:26).
 - b. The ASV gives this rendering of the verse: "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper." The next two verses show that the Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a common meal in which some were drunken and others went without food. This was not eating the Lord's Supper, and as long as they continued this perversion, it was impossible for them to eat it (acceptably to God).
 - c. A common meal and the Lord's Supper are incompatible. They are mutually exclusive. One feeds the spiritual man and the other nourishes the physical man. The Lord's Supper glorifies God; a common meal in the place of the Lord's Supper brings shame to the partakers and angers God.
 - d. They assembled in the wrong spirit and for the wrong motives, thus the act was wrong. Paul condemns their practice because what they offered was a perversion, not an act of worship. Since the Supper is the Lord's, it is only the Lord who has the right to set the procedures by which it is to be eaten.
 - e. Some scholars think that the Corinthians ate a common meal in connection with the Lord's Supper, while others say that they had turned the Lord's Supper into a regular meal. In either case, Paul condemns the practice.
4. Verse 21: "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."
- a. Paul had already stated that when they came together, division was present in the ranks of the believers. When Christians congregate, unity and fellowship and love are to be enjoyed. In this verse, the apostle accuses them of disunity, selfishness, drunkenness, gluttony, and respect of persons, in addition to their perverting the Lord's Supper.
 - b. This is the trend people adopt if they have not been fully taught. Under the best of circumstances, Christians have a struggle to remain on the narrow way (Matt. 7:13-14; 26:41; Luke 13:24).
 - 1) When preachers will not preach the whole counsel of God, when elders will not require that teachers and preachers present all of the unadulterated truth, or when members will not study the Bible, we should not be surprised to see them embrace the same kinds of practices the Corinthians
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- followed.
- 2) Offering free food as a method to draw big crowds is apt to succeed in attracting a crowd, but such material sustenance will not enliven the soul and cannot make the church stronger.
 - c. The members brought their own food according to their means. The poor had nothing to eat, while the rich had an abundance. On one hand, some would eat gluttonously, and others would be hungry. The word *before* shows that they did not all eat at the same time.
 - d. Paul accuses some of them of being drunken.
 - 1) This offers no proof regarding the nature of the fruit of the vine. Their drunkenness could have stemmed from the meal (assuming the meal was kept separate from the Supper), but the Supper itself had been perverted to the extent that it was nothing more than a common meal.
 - 2) Were these saints drunken to the point that they passed out? That is not very likely, however Paul says they were drunken. Drunkenness occurs somewhere between the first drink and the time the drinker becomes unconscious. The only safe course is totally to abstain from any alcoholic beverage!
 - e. Paul had taught them the truth about observing the Lord's Supper during his initial work at Corinth. He worked and worshipped with them for at least eighteen months (Acts 18:11). By word and example he would have shown them the proper way of partaking of the Supper. However, in the short period between the time he left them and the time of this letter, the brethren had grossly perverted the Supper.
 - 1) The Romanists claim the antiquity of their practices and doctrines as the primary source of authority for their peculiar dogmas and works. Even if they could trace these back to the first century, that would not be sufficient authority for them. To what would they have trailed them? To the faithful practices of the Lord's church, or to the perversions that began to run rampant in the latter part of that century?
 - 2) The only authority for religious beliefs and practices is the inspired word of God. If a person has to appeal to tradition for authority, that implies he cannot find authorization for his dogmas in the Bible!
5. Verse 22: "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."
- a. There are several things about the Corinthians' practices which Paul condemns:
 - 1) Their eating and drunkenness.
 - 2) The selfishness of those who had food but would not share it with those had none.
 - 3) Their perversion of the Lord's Supper.
 - 4) Their eating at different times. Even if they were eating the Supper, they were not partaking of it together.
 - 5) The divisions that were in evidence in their assemblies.
 - b. "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" Some brethren view this statement as barring the practice in the church building. There are several things wrong with this conclusion:
 - 1) There is no evidence that any of the congregations in the first century owned a meetinghouse. They gathered in public places or on private property. Many references are made in the New Testament of congregations meeting in private homes. Eating and drinking may be done in a private home, even if a congregation holds its meetings there. Does the house become holy when the brethren congregate, and return to its common status when the saints disperse?
 - 2) This implies that there are places more holy than other locations. However, Christ taught that there were to be no special, holy places as under Judaism. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and
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- they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:20-24).
- 3) If it is wrong to eat in the church house, it would also be wrong to drink water, and yet every church building has provisions for the people to drink water.
 - 4) If it is wrong to eat in the meetinghouse, it would be equally wrong to have a bathroom.
 - 5) If it is wrong to eat in the building, why is it not wrong for mothers to feed their infants there?
 - 6) Paul's obvious point in the statement is to denounce their practice of mixing the Lord's Supper with a common meal. The holy and the secular are to be kept separate. Common meals were to be eaten outside the assemblies; the Lord's Supper was to be eaten in the assemblies. If this simple procedure was observed, their perversion of the Supper would be halted, and that sacred feast could be observed properly.
- c. Does this passage forbid Christians gathering together for a common meal? Certainly not. Jude 12 speaks of the brethren having "feasts of charity," a clear reference to them eating meals together, but we must not intermingle profane activities with sacred exercises (worship).
 - d. When they perverted the Lord's Supper, they showed scorn for the church of God. In their eating the common meal selfishly, they shamed those Christians who did not have food.
 - e. How could they expect Paul to praise them for such practices? There was much to condemn about these matters, but nothing that was praiseworthy.
6. Verses 23-26: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."
 - a. Paul sets before them the truth regarding how to observe the sacred feast. His information was not obtained from uninspired sources, but by the revelation he obtained from Christ (Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:37). This information was not something new to them; he had delivered it to them when he was with them.
 - b. On the night in which Christ was betrayed, in the meeting with the apostles in the upper room, the Lord took bread, gave thanks for it, broke it, and instructed the apostles to eat it.
 - 1) This lifeless, broken bread represented the broken body of the crucified Savior. Foolish men have misapplied the Lord's words, and claim that the bread actually becomes the literal flesh of Christ after the priest "blesses" it. This error results from failing to recognize a figure of speech. One of the basic elements of sacred hermeneutics is knowing how to identify whether a statement is literal or figurative. That the bread is still bread can be learned from a simple examination of it: it looks like bread, it tastes like bread, and it has only such ingredients that are consistent with bread. When Christ instituted the Supper, his body was intact after the disciples ate; they did not consume his physical body. Paul called it *bread* (verse 26).
 - 2) The bread is intended to remind Christians of the suffering death the Lord accomplished on the cross. As we eat the bread, we remember his sacrifice.
 - 3) There is no contradiction between the two facts that (1) no bones of the Lord's body were broken during the crucifixion (John 19:31-37) and (2) Paul's statement about Christ's broken body. Although none of his bones was broken, his body was broken, in that he died. His body was broken by the crucifixion and by the spear which pierced his side. [Some ancient manuscripts do not include *broken* in the verse].
 - 4) The bread was unleavened. The Passover Feast, during which the Supper was instituted, was eaten with unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8,15; 133,7; Dt. 16:3). The feast of unleavened bread accompanied the Passover, in which leaven was not even permitted in Jewish houses.
 - 5) See also:
 - a) Matthew 26:26-29: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

- b) Mark 14:22-25: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
 - c) Luke 22:15-22: "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!"
- c. The Lord took the cup, and likened it to his blood which was to be shed. As often as his followers partook of it, they were to do so in remembrance of him. It reminds us of his shed blood.
- 1) The life of the flesh is the blood. To say that Christ shed his blood for us, is equivalent to saying that he gave his life for us.
 - a) Genesis 9:4-6: "But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
 - b) Leviticus 17:11-14: "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man *there be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For *it is* the life of all flesh; the blood of it *is* for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh *is* the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off."
 - 2) The blood of Christ sealed the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-13; 10:29). His blood provided the means for salvation to the lost.
 - a) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - b) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 - c) 1 Peter 1:18-23: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
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- 3) That which we drink is not the cup, but the contents of the cup. *Cup* is used figuratively to represent that which is contained in the cup. There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in the New Testament, which requires Christians to drink from the same container. It is a matter of expedience that individual containers are used in serving the fruit of the vine.
- d. The Corinthians were reminded that they proclaim the Lord's death each time they partake of his Supper. The frequency of partaking of the Supper is not specified in the passage, but Acts 20:7 shows how often it to be eaten.
 - 1) The saints came together upon the first day of the week to break bread; since every week has a first day, they met to partake every first day of the week.
 - 2) God did not tell the Israelites, in so many words, to remember every sabbath day (Ex. 20:8), but they all understood that to be God's meaning. One who profaned even a single sabbath day, faced the prescribed penalty; he did not have to profane every one of them. Thus, God intended that *every sabbath day be remembered and kept holy*. [The Sabbath pertained to the Mosaic Law; it is not part of the Gospel of Christ].
 - 3) The Lord's Supper is to be eaten every Lord's Day until the return of Christ. The millennial theory asserts that the kingdom will not be established until the return of Christ. However, Christ said that the Lord's Supper was to be eaten in the kingdom (Luke 22:15-20); but the Supper is to cease when the Lord returns (*till he come*); therefore, the kingdom has come.
 - 4) As long as faithful Christians eat the Lord's Supper each first day of the week, they perpetuate the memory of him who died for us. It is important that we keep the death of Christ alive in our memories. Sometimes, sobs are heard when a dog dies, but when the Lord's Supper is being eaten, whispering is heard. The occasion of eating the Lord's Supper ought to be a time of sober reflection and gratitude. Mementos such as pictures, a lock of hair, or some personal possession, by which we remember some departed loved one, are very important to us. The Lord's Supper ought to be infinitely more so!
7. Verses 27-30: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
 - a. The manner with which we partake of the Supper is extremely important to our souls. To eat it with a thoughtless or irreverent manner is sinful, making our worship null and void. We would be no better than the Corinthians, who were strongly denounced for their perversions of the Supper.
 - 1) The apostle specified both the bread and the cup, and showed that the same person partook of both. Some sectarians think that only the priest should drink the cup, but both Paul and the Lord showed that each one is to partake of both elements.
 - 2) If we eat the Supper unworthily (in an unworthy manner), we become guilty of the body and blood of Christ. We partake of it unworthily if we take the emblems without inward, sincere desire to commemorate the death of the Lord. A perfunctory observance will bring no glory to God, no honor to Christ, and no nourishment to our souls.
 - 3) To partake of this hallowed repast unworthily, profanes both it and him who gave it. "He incurs the guilt of treating lightly the slain body of the Lord Jesus" (Lipscomb, p.173). In the absolute sense of the word, none of us is worthy to eat the Supper, but each of us can eat it in a worthy manner.
 - 4) "If any person shall partake of this solemn rite without discernment of the event it memorializes, or without regard to the obligations imposed by it, or without any consistent effort to partake of it continually and faithfully throughout his life, or until the Lord comes, or without the due reverence and appreciation due such an ordinance—then such a person becomes guilty of the body and the blood of Jesus, the meaning of this being that he, in a spiritual sense, has become a crucifier of the Lord himself" (Coffman, p.186).
 - a) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of

the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."

- b) Hebrews 10:29: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
 - b. To partake of this solemn feast in a worthy manner, is described in verse 28. One is to examine himself. The purpose of this inward examination is not to discover whether he is worthy to partake. Rather, the design of the introspection is to insure that his aim and attitude are proper, to set himself in the right frame of mind so that he can partake of the feast in a worthy manner.
 - 1) Some questions would be entirely in order during this self-examination:
 - a) Am I eating the Lord's Supper to perpetuate the memory of Christ?
 - b) Am I eating it out of gratitude for what he did for me?
 - c) Am I giving honor to him in the way I eat it?
 - d) Do I bring glory to him in eating it by living as I live?
 - 2) Such an examination would remove all shameful behavior and attitude on our part. Some men may think that this examination is beneath their dignity as males, but without it we cannot eat the Lord's Supper acceptably; and if we do not worship as we ought, how can we expect to enter heaven, or be happy there even if we entered? Such pride will cause our souls to be lost.
 - c. In verse 29, Paul declares that one who eats and drinks unworthily (in an unworthy manner), eats and drinks damnation to himself (to his own soul). Why? Because he does not discern the Lord's body.
 - 1) The apostle told the Corinthians that because they improperly partook of the Supper, their gatherings did more harm than good. He shows here that such is true of every other Christian who does not eat it properly. Without the honest examination of our motives, without sober thinking as we eat, and without a sincere attitude, our eating of the Supper will do us more harm than good.
 - 2) We must rightly discern the Lord's body for our observance of this memorial feast to do us any good. The Corinthians failed to make the right distinction between the Supper and an ordinary meal. Our failure to recognize it as God's appointed symbols of Christ's body and blood will make our worship meaningless. Anyone who eats the spiritual feast carelessly, does so irreverently, and so accrues condemnation to himself.
 - 3) The acts of worship we offer and the spirit with which we offer them, are important to the welfare of our souls! How sad it is that anyone should rob himself of heaven's blessings by failing to learn the truth about worship.
 - d. Because they failed to discern the Lord's body and blood in the Communion, many were spiritually sick, and many were spiritually dead. This spiritual sickness and death was brought about by improper observance of the Lord's Supper. This illustrates the importance of this act of worship to our souls!
 - 1) A good way to see if you are drifting away from the Lord is to examine your attitude while eating the Supper. Ask yourself, "Am I doing this merely out of habit? Is it a mere formality?" What do you think about as the emblems are being passed through the audience? An accurate gauge of your spiritual status can be obtained by noting the manner in which you eat the Lord's Supper.
 - 2) These sick and sleeping Corinthians were afflicted with a spiritual malady. Some were grievously sick, and others were already spiritually dead, although each of these was physically alive. The sinful woman Paul described to Timothy was physically alive but spiritually dead: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6).
 - 3) If improper observance of the Lord's Supper produces spiritual ailments that can result in eternal banishment from God, then proper observance of the Supper will provide spiritual health and vitality, and yield eternal acceptance in the presence of God.
8. Verses 31-32: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."
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- a. By closely examining themselves to insure their scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper, Christians can prevent their being judged and condemned by God. The passage plainly proclaims that a Christian's conduct in this life has a direct impact on his eternal destiny.
 - b. The Corinthians had fallen short of the standard of God's expectations. That did not mean that all was lost. If we have our faults pointed out to us, we have opportunity to make the necessary changes. If the Corinthians, who had so horribly polluted the Lord's Supper, would repent, they would be spared the condemnation that resides upon the sinful world. If they did not change, they would find themselves under condemnation with the world.
 - c. The chastening of the Lord was administered by the apostle through this corrective message. It was delivered, not to hurt them, but to help them. Cf. Hebrews 12:5ff.
9. Verses 33-34: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."
- a. Notice the tender expression of fondness the apostle has for the saints. He instructs them to *tarry* one for another when they assemble to eat the Supper. He means, they are to eat it at the same time. Their worship is to be done jointly, as a unified body.
 - b. The eating of verse 33 is partaking of the Lord's Supper; the eating of verse 34 is placed in contrast to that of the preceding verse. If one is hungry, let him satisfy that hunger prior to coming to the assembly; the assembly is not the time to gratify physical appetites.
 - c. If they try to satisfy their physical hunger in the worship assemblies, the gathering brings condemnation upon them. The worship service is not the time to eat a common meal, but to honor God. If they and we will follow the counsel of the inspired apostle, we will be blessed instead of being condemned.
 - d. There were other problems and misunderstandings among the Corinthians, which Paul promises to set in order when he returns.
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1 CORINTHIANS 12

A. 1 Corinthians 12:1-3: Introduction to Spiritual Gifts.

1. Verse 1: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."
 - a. The apostle is probably responding to questions they had asked regarding spiritual gifts. He is, of course, dealing with a problem that existed in Corinth.
 - b. Some of these brethren had a problem with pride (chapter 1) and with worldly-mindedness (chapter 3), which caused them to have the wrong attitudes toward the spiritual gifts with which they were blessed. A proud, worldly-minded person would be inclined to exult over others who had no spiritual gift or who had what he considered to be a lesser gift.
 - c. Paul states first that he does not want them to be ignorant.
 - 1) Even the most intelligent person can be ignorant; and even those intelligent people who have obtained collegiate degrees can still be ignorant. There are many people who are ignorant of the Bible. "I have learned that judges and lawyers, so far as the Bible is concerned, are the most ignorant class of people in the world—except Doctors of Divinity" (John Smith, *The Life of Elder John Smith*, p.397).
 - 2) These people were still ignorant regarding spiritual gifts. Paul will show them in chapters 12-14 that these supernatural gifts were not the end in themselves, but the means to the end. The purpose of spiritual gifts was to bring the first century saints to spiritual maturity: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11). The full revelation of the New Testament was delivered and confirmed by the miraculous gifts possessed by the apostles and prophets, and the completed revelation is able to bring people to spiritual maturity today, without the spiritual gifts.
 - 3) Many are still ignorant concerning spiritual gifts despite the information presented in 1 Corinthians 12-14, with the other material on the subject elsewhere in the New Testament.
2. Verse 2: "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led."
 - a. Paul here contrasts their present spiritual condition with their former state prior to their obeying the gospel. This is a common occurrence in the apostle's writings.
 - b. They formerly were led to serve dumb idols. A *dumb idol* cannot reveal truth. Some idols were made to "speak" by false teachers who used trickery to fool the unsuspecting. There is no trickery or deception in God's operations.
3. Verse 3: "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."
 - a. A person's loyalty to God is measured by his soundness in doctrine and practice.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 1:10: "For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:3: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."
 - 3) Titus 1:9: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."
 - 4) Titus 2:1: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - 6) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (ASV).
 - 7) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that

thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

- 8) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
- 9) Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
- b. No man who spoke by the Holy Spirit could call Jesus accursed; in fact, no man could speak any false doctrine while guided by the Spirit. If Paul or another apostle proved his claim to inspiration by producing a miraculous work, his message would be proved to be true. The Holy Spirit revealed only truth. Balaam could only speak blessings upon Israel, though he intended to pronounce curses (Num. 22-24).
- c. No man can believe on Jesus as the Son of God except he be taught that great truth by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) In that day, before the New Testament was written, the only source of that information was the Holy Spirit's inspired revelation. Only three pagan writers (of which I know) of the first century (whose writings are extant) referred to Jesus.
 - a) Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, wrote to Emperor Trajan about 112 A.D. asking for advice as to how he should deal with Christians who met on an appointed day to sing hymns "to Christ as if to God" (*Epist. X.96*).
 - b) Tacitus, a Roman historian, in *Annals* (115 A.D.) speaks of "Christus, who in the reign of Tiberas the emperor was condemned to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate" (XV.44).
 - c) Suetonius, another Roman writer, declared that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome as they "were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus" (*Vita Claudii XXV.4*). "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them" (Acts 18:2).
 - 2) Some Jewish writings speak of Christ:
 - a) Josephus (37-100 A.D.) refers to Jesus in his uninspired history of the Jews. In *Antiquities of the Jews* (18.3.3) he speaks of the "marvelous deeds" of Jesus and refers to the Lord's death and resurrection. He speaks also of the trial of James and identifies him as "the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ" (20.9.1).
 - b) Another Jewish document (the *Talmud*) which was put into written form during the 5th century A.D. but which was based on materials which originated in the 1st century, testifies of the historical life of Jesus. Its testimony is hostile which lends even greater credence to the New Testament record. It claims that Jesus was born out of wedlock after his mother was seduced by a Roman soldier named Pandera (it calls Jesus "Ben Pandera"). This document also speaks of Jesus' miracles, says he claimed to be God, and that he was executed on the eve of the Passover (*ibid.*).
 - 3) Separate from the Bible, our knowledge of Christ would be almost nonexistent if we had to rely only on ancient secular writers for our information.
 - 4) Today, the Holy Spirit's inspired message (the written New Testament) is the only source of information able to produce faith in Christ (Rom. 10:17; John 20:30-31). The Holy Spirit speaks through the law which he delivered (Rom. 8:1-7).
- d. The statement of this verse is the background for several verses to follow.

B. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7: The Spirit's Gifts Were for the Profit of All.

1. Verse 4: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."
 - a. Three antitheses are given in verses 4-6.
 - 1) There were various gifts but there was only one Spirit.
 - 2) There were different ministries, but the Lord was the same.
 - 3) There were various workings, but the same God was behind them.
 - b. There were many gifts, but only one source: the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit gave all these gifts named below (verses 8-10), enabling each member who received a different gift to fill a different need.
 - c. No gift should have been despised; one Christian should not feel inferior or superior to another because of the spiritual gift he had received. Each of the gifts worked in harmony with the others, with each contributing to the end result.
 2. Verse 5: "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord."
 - a. There were different administrations (ministries) being accomplished, but each had the same author—Christ. The Lord Jesus was the administrator of each of these activities.
 - b. There is no room for jealousy among servants of the Lord. There was no competition between lighthouses; each did its part to insure the safety of ships along the coast. Christians then who possessed spiritual gifts were not rivals; they were partners, with each contributing his part to the accomplishment of the common mission.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:7: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:12: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."
 3. Verse 6: "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."
 - a. There are different operations (workings), but the same God furnishes the authority and power of each. One gift operated differently from another, but each was empowered by God.
 - b. There was a difference between the gift of speaking in an unlearned tongue and the gift of interpreting that tongue. But the person speaking the inspired and important message was powerless to communicate to others who did not understand the language he used; the interpreter, however, was able to fill this need.
 4. Verse 7: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."
 - a. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the benefit of *all*" (*English Study Bible*).
 - b. Paul states here that the design of the gifts is for the purpose of profiting the whole. Individual Christians received different spiritual gifts, but the aim of these was for the mutual profit of the whole congregation.
 - c. The exercise of the gifts would convince the unbeliever that the speaker was presenting the truth; and the use of these gifts in the church instructed and edified the members.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 14:12: "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:22: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:8-12: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."
 - d. However, just because one had a spiritual gift did not mean his eternal salvation was certain. Both
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Paul and Peter had to maintain close control over themselves, or commit sin.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
- 2) Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"
- e. The purpose was for the benefit of all, not for personal use or advantage. Paul was often in need and often suffered, but he was not permitted to produce clothing, food, etc., miraculously to fill the need. Christ refused to turn stones into bread, for this would have been a misuse of miraculous power (Matt. 4:1-11).
- f. The spiritual gift was not the Holy Spirit himself, but a miraculous ability which the Holy Spirit gave. Oneness Pentecostal doctrine asserts that the Holy Spirit is a manifestation, a mere influence or power; but the Bible shows that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, not a glorified *thing*. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13).

C. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11: The Various Spiritual Gifts Made Available to the Saints.

1. Verses 8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." Nine supernatural gifts are named.
 - a. *Word of wisdom.*
 - 1) This being a miraculous gift, the wisdom was that which the Holy Spirit provided supernaturally. There is a natural wisdom which men are able to obtain through common means. Experience, personal study, observation, and instruction can provide wisdom that relates to this life. Preachers, elders, teachers, and other mature saints accumulate a store of wisdom, which they use in helping others to increase their knowledge and wisdom, and to meet the challenges of life.
 - 2) But there is a wisdom that could only be learned by supernatural means. The reference is to the revelation God made known through the Holy Spirit. "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:15-16). "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:12-13; cf. John 16:13; 14:26).
 - 3) This would likely include the insight the first inspired elders would need in conducting their work since they did not have the written word for a time. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23). The lapse of time between the conversion of these men and their appointment to the eldership was not long enough for them to have acquired naturally the information, the skill, and the wisdom to serve as elders; it would have been necessary to furnish them with supernatural help.
 - 4) Today, as we diligently study God's word, we obtain a degree of wisdom which is unobtainable from any other source (Eph. 3:1-11; 2 Tim. 3:15-17).
 - b. *Word of knowledge.*
 - 1) This refers to the information the Holy Spirit revealed; it is the truth which Christ promised to

- deliver to the apostles by the Spirit.
- a) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - b) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - c) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - d) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- 2) The knowledge was given by the Holy Spirit, hence could not have been obtained through natural means: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:9-14).
 - 3) As we study God's word, we obtain information which could only be learned from God. Cornelius was told to send for Peter, who would "tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14). The inspired message that the inspired apostles and prophets delivered orally, is preserved in written form in the Bible. We still have access to that "word of knowledge" in the scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15-17; Jas. 1:21-25).
- c. *Faith.*
- 1) This is miraculous faith; the faith that could only be obtained as a gift from the Holy Spirit. This is the kind of faith that was able to heal the crippled man of Acts three. The faith that produced the miracle that healed the crippled man was in Peter and John—not in the lame man. This gift was necessary in order for certain miracles to be done.
 - a) Acts 3:2-10: "And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him."
 - b) Matthew 14:31: "And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"
 - c) Matthew 17:19-20: "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."
 - d) Matthew 21:20-22: "And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the
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fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

- e) 1 Corinthians 13:2: "And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."
 - f) James 5:15: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."
- 2) This gift was from the same source: by (*in*—ASV) the Holy Spirit.
- d. *Gifts of healing.*
- 1) The healing was accomplished miraculously. "...They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18; cf. Jas. 5:15). This healing was instantly done, without any human or natural powers being needed. The only specific cases of miraculous healing given in the New Testament were done by Christ and the apostles, although James 5:15 (and our text) shows that others had the gift.
 - 2) There is a difference between miraculous healing and divine healing. Divine healing is done through or in accordance with the laws of nature. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). The margin gives *pray* as the alternate rendering of *wish*. John thus prayed that Gaius would be given good health, with nothing about a miraculous act being indicated.
- e. *Working of miracles.*
- 1) There were supernatural acts of mercy, performed when someone was healed of some disease. There were other miracles which brought judgment upon some sinful person. Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead (Acts 5:1-14). Elymas was blinded for a season when he opposed the work of Paul (Acts 13:4-12).
 - 2) Included in this miraculous gift would be such things as casting out demons, raising the dead, and suffering no ill effect from the bite of a poisonous snake (Acts 28:1-6).
 - 3) A "miracle" was such a demonstration of divine power that this word became the common term by which a supernatural action was identified.
- f. *Gift of prophecy.*
- 1) This was the supernatural gift of inspiration. A prophet was one who spoke for God; the subject might address the past, the present, or the future; its nature might be negative or positive; it might be instructional or corrective.
 - a) Acts 11:28-30: "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."
 - b) Acts 13:11: "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."
 - c) Acts 21:9-11: "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 14:3: "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort."
 - 2) The gift of prophecy was productive of more good than the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 14:1-4).
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Speaking in a tongue which the speaker had not learned by natural means was doubtless very impressive, and thus worldly-minded and proud individuals might think it was greater than prophecy, but Paul said that prophecy was of greater merit.

- 3) This gift, as with each of the nine, was a gift from the Holy Spirit; it could not be obtained through natural means or from earthly sources. There are many today who claim the gift of prophecy, but none of them can predict future events accurately, and none of them speak for God!

g. *Discerning of spirits.*

- 1) This miraculous gift gave the possessor the ability to discern whether a prophet or teacher was true or false. It is described in 1 John 2:20,26,27: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things....These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."
- 2) This gift enabled Paul and others to identify false apostles, deceitful workers, and ministers of darkness (2 Cor. 11:13-15; cf. 1 Cor. 14:29). Peter could know that Ananias and Sapphira lied (Acts 5:1ff).
- 3) First John 4:1-3 is the permanent method of making this discernment: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
 - a) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
 - b) 2 John 1:7-11: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

h. *Divers kinds of tongues.*

- 1) A "tongue" is a "language." On Pentecost Day, the apostles addressed the great audience in the various languages these groups knew (Acts 2:1-12). None of the apostles knew these languages before the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to use these tongues. They spoke a sensible message in these languages, one which could be understood by the hearers and which would profit them; they spoke an inspired message using words, not unintelligible noises.
 - a) Acts 2:11-12: "Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?"
 - b) Acts 10:46: "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter."
- 2) This gift was conferred by the apostles upon many of the saints in different places (Acts 19:1-6). This enabled these Christians to speak messages of inspired truth in languages they had never learned, and thus teach the gospel to others in their own languages. The exercise of the gift would offer confirmation of the message to those who knew the speaker had not naturally learned the language employed. "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe" (1 Cor. 14:22).

i. *Interpretation of tongues.*

- 1) In a congregation such as the one at Corinth, there were people from several different backgrounds and languages. They did not all speak or understand a common language.

- 2) When someone preached, he used one language; in order for the message to be beneficial to all present, it had to be translated into the tongues of those in the audience. But there were few present, if any, who had the natural knowledge of these various languages, hence there was the need for some to have the gift of interpretation.
 - 3) Paul gave some instructions regarding the use of interpreters in 1 Corinthians 14:13, 26-28: "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret....How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."
2. Verse 11: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."
- a. The Holy Spirit being the provider of all of these gifts, he dispensed them according to his infinite wisdom. The same Spirit gave the different gifts; no one person (except the apostles) received all nine of these gifts; one gift was usually given to a person, with different gifts being given to others. It was possible for one person to have more than one (cf. 1 Cor. 14:13). They were disbursed according to the will of heaven.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:11: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - b. Since the Spirit decided which gifts were to be given to which individuals, the Corinthians had no right to be dissatisfied with the disposition made; and no one had the right to exult because he thought his gift was more important than those others had received.

D. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27: The Unity of the One Body.

1. Verse 12: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."
 - a. The apostle begins here to describe the church of Christ in comparison to a human body. The subject under consideration is *spiritual gifts* (cf. 12:1-11). The inspired writer teaches the lesson that the exercise of spiritual gifts by the brethren must not be an occasion for schism in the body. He will show that all the various parts of the physical body are essential for the good of the whole body; no one part of the body is more important than another. Therefore, the saints who were given miraculous powers are not to exalt themselves above those saints who had no such gift; and those with the gift of tongues (for example) were not to think their gift was of greater importance than another gift, or that their gift exalted them above others with a different gift.
 - b. His first statement on this theme is to say that a human body is a united whole, but is comprised of many different parts. This is also true, he affirms, with the spiritual body of Christ (the Lord's church: Eph. 1:22-23). As the physical body is able to operate properly only when all the parts cooperate, so the Lord's body is able to fulfill its God-given functions completely only with the cooperation of all the members.
 - c. As the members of the physical body are given different abilities and responsibilities, and yet are united in their efforts, so the members of the Lord's spiritual body are to put forth a united effort, using the different gifts to accomplish their sundry obligations.
 - d. Perfect unity is possible or else the Lord would not have prayed for it (John 17:20-21) and would not have required it: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).
 2. Verse 13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether
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we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

- a. In keeping with the theme of the passage, Paul's places the emphasis upon the word *all*. We are all one because each individual has been baptized into the one body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) The Holy Spirit never made anyone a member of anything but the one true church, the one body of Christ. There is only one body (Eph. 4:4); that one body is the Lord's church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 20:28); and it is to this body that the Lord adds those who obey the gospel (Acts 2:36-47; Col. 1:13-14).
 - 2) The unity of the believers is being stressed in the text. The same Spirit who provided each of the spiritual gifts, was also responsible for their being in the one body.
- b. The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his family prior to their learning what they must do to be saved (Acts 11:13-15; 10:45-46). The purpose of the miraculous demonstration, which issued directly from heaven, was to convince Peter and the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles had a right to the gospel. This outpouring of the Spirit's gift on Cornelius and his household was not to save them from their sins; the gospel which Peter subsequently preached to them showed them how to be saved (Acts 10:47-48; 15:7-9).
 - 1) A penitent believer is saved at the point of baptism in water (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-18; 1 Pet. 3:21). Cornelius had not been baptized in water when the miraculous gift descended (Acts 10:5-48). He had not been saved and had not been added to the body of Christ.
 - 2) Even if the gift of the Holy Spirit he received had been the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he had not been saved and had not been added to the one body. Before he could be saved, he had to hear the words (the gospel) which Peter was directed to present to him (Acts 11:13-14). Peter had not yet spoken those words when the gift came; as he began to speak, the Holy Spirit's power appeared. Cornelius was still unsaved at that point; he had not entered into Christ where salvation is found (2 Tim. 2:10; Gal. 3:26-27).
 - 3) The miraculous gift did not put Cornelius into Christ; it proved to the Jewish saints that the Gentiles were proper subjects to hear the gospel.
- c. There is one baptism (Eph. 4:4-5). At the time the book of Ephesians was written in 62 A.D., only one baptism was in effect. Those who claim that Holy Spirit baptism is still available, also practice water baptism. That is one baptism too many! On Pentecost Day (Acts 2), there were two baptisms. The apostles received Holy Spirit baptism at the first of Acts two, and penitent believers were baptized in water after they heard the gospel preached by the apostles (Acts 2:36-41). Which of these two baptism remains in effect today? Some have argued that there is only one baptism, but more than one element (i.e., water, Spirit, fire); this is foolish reasoning. The apostles had been immersed in water, but were promised Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5). The apostles did not receive 50% of baptism when immersed by John, and the other 50% in Acts 2! There is one baptism now in effect—immersion in water.
- d. Christ baptized with the Holy Spirit (John 1:21-34); he is the only administrator of this baptism. But men are to administer baptism in water (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - 1) If Holy Spirit baptism puts us into the body of Christ where salvation is, why is it that all are not saved? Since Christ is the only administrator of Holy Spirit baptism, and there were no conditions one must meet to receive it (except to be chosen personally by Christ to acquire it), why does the Lord not send this power upon all sinners? This would make Christ (not the sinner) responsible for the sinner remaining lost.
 - 2) There is no place in the New Testament where anyone was told to ask for the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to be saved. Instead, the command is given to penitent believers, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).
 - 3) Holy Spirit baptism was never intended to save anyone; the baptism of the Great Commission is to save (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38). Christ was the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism (Matt. 3:11). Our text states that the Holy Spirit is the administrator of the baptism of the passage. He does not send himself upon aliens to save them! But the Holy Spirit did reveal the Gospel to mankind through the apostles and New Testament prophets (cf. Eph. 3:1-11); he reveal all the particulars of the Gospel, including the necessity of being immersed in water

- for the remission of sins. In this sense, penitent believers are baptized by the Spirit into Christ—by the instructions of the word of Christ.
- 4) Holy Spirit baptism was promised, but only to the apostles; it was never a command to them or to anyone else (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1-5,8). Only the apostles received it (Acts 1:26—2:4). A promise cannot be obeyed.
 - 5) Baptism applies to all accountable people during the Christian Age: Jews or Gentiles; bond or free. Everyone who is in the body of Christ is there by the process of being immersed in water into the one body by the Holy Spirit's instructions (given in the New Testament). To be baptized into Christ is accomplished by submitting to the Holy Spirit's command (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Rev. 2:7; Rom. 8:14-16).
- e. Which baptism is meant in Acts 18:8? “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). The kind that men do (1 Cor. 1:14-17).
- f. If 1 Corinthians 12:13 is Holy Spirit baptism, then every single soul in the body of Christ has it! If one has it today, he could do everything the apostles could do back in the first century!
- 1) 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”
 - 2) Acts 1:5, 8: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
 - 3) John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
 - 4) John 16:13-14: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”
 - 5) Acts 8:14-15: “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.”
 - 6) Acts 19:6: “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”
 - 7) Acts 2:1-4: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
 - 8) Mark 13:11: “But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.”
 - 9) 2 Corinthians 12:11-13: “...[F]or in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches....”
- g. What does it mean to be *in Christ*?
- 1) It means to be in Christ's body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27).
 - 2) The spiritual body is his church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18,24).
 - 3) The church is his kingdom (Matt. 16:16-18).
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- 4) To be in his body = being in his church = being in his kingdom = IN CHRIST!
- h. Ephesians 4:4-5: The one baptism puts us:
- 1) Into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4).
 - 2) Into his body (the church: 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47, 38, 41).
 - 3) Into his kingdom (John 3:5; Titus 3:5; Col. 1:13; 2:12).
- i. To *drink into one Spirit* is a figure of speech describing the reception of the blessings provided by the Spirit. When one is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27), he thus enters the sphere where all of God's spiritual blessings are found (Eph. 1:3), including:
- 1) Membership in God's kingdom (Col. 1:13).
 - 2) Redeemed (Col 1:14).
 - 3) Forgiven (Eph. 1:7).
 - 4) Alive (Eph. 2:1).
 - 5) Near to God (Eph. 2:13).
 - 6) Reconciled (Eph. 2:16).
 - 7) Sanctified (1 Cor. 1:2).
 - 8) New creature (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - 9) Have liberty (Gal. 2:4).
 - 10) Given hope (1 Pet. 1:3).
 - 11) Saved (2 Tim. 2:10).
3. Verses 14-17: "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"
- a. Verse 14 affirms that the one body has many members. As the human body has many members with each having a separate function which is fulfilled in concert with the work done by all the other parts, so also with the body of Christ. There are many separate members, but each operates in partnership with all the others.
 - b. The foot cannot be detached from the body without losing all the benefits that union with the body provides. It is ludicrous to think that the foot would desire to renounce any connection with the body because it is not the hand! There is no such feelings of inferiority within the human body, and there ought not to be such within the Lord's spiritual body. As none of the members of the physical body seeks to exalt itself above other members of that body, so there must be no such self-exaltation on the part of any member of the Lord's body.
 - c. Paul makes the same point in verse sixteen as in the preceding verse; in this case he uses the ear and the eye to illustrate the point. The ear will not renounce its connection with the body because it is not the eye. If such were to occur, that declaration would not remove the ear from the body. Only if the ear retains its full union with the body will it be able to enjoy the benefits of being part of the body; if it is cut off, it dies! If a member of the Lord's body is removed from his body, it dies!
 - 1) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
 - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the
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tradition which he received of us....And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."

- 4) Revelation 3:14-22: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
- d. In the physical body, there is no jealousy; and each part has its own role to fill. If every part was an eye, no sound would ever be heard, no food would be eaten, no breath would be drawn, and all would die! Some in Corinth sought to exalt their gifts above others', and thus to think of themselves as being more important than some of the other members. This is as foolish as the hand or the eye of the physical body viewing itself as more important than another part of the same body. We might as well think the human body could survive if it was comprised only of eyes, as to expect the body of Christ to function correctly if every member could only do the same thing.
4. Verses 18-21: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."
 - a. God designed and created the human body according to his own infinite wisdom and will; it was necessary that there be different parts in the body in order that the various functions might be performed which are essential to the life and well-being of the body. If the body consisted only of the skeleton, there could be no movement without muscles; and without the digestive system, no sustenance could be obtained. God used wisdom in designing the church as he did. Because one man meets the qualifications to become an elder, does not mean he has any reason to think he is more important and valuable than someone without those qualifications.
 - b. If every member of the body could only perform the same function, what would happen to the body? If every member of the church could only fulfill one function, what would happen to it? If everyone could only lead the singing, who would pray and preach? The need for diversity is shown in verse 20. Compare:
 - 1) Ephesians 4:4: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."
 - 2) Romans 12:4-8: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 4) 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 might have the preeminence."
 - c. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of thee." The head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you." That would be foolish. It is equally foolish for one member of the church to think he does

- not need another member. Each member has its proper place; one cannot do without the others.
5. Verses 22-23: "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness."
 - a. The function of the hand would be impaired without the little finger or the thumb. A person can live without a leg, arm, or hand, but not if the heart or lungs were removed. Think how difficult it would be to eat or tend to the needs of the body if we had no hands! We give little thought to the digestive system, but we would quickly die without it. How often do we think about our body's cooling mechanism? How long would we survive in hot weather without it doing its job?
 - b. If our heart begins to fail, we realize how important it is to us. But ordinarily, we give little thought to it as it ceaselessly, day and night, year after year, continues to perform its job.
 - c. The humble, hardly-noticed, members of the church are extremely valuable to the church. We take note of those who take the leading role in the local church, acknowledging their worth to the congregation, but those dedicated saints who work privately, speaking encouraging words, doing good deeds, tending to the common little jobs without which the church could not properly function, often are overlooked. The Lord knows their great worth; and those who are knowledgeable and observant will recognize their value.
 6. Verses 24-25: "For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."
 - a. Some parts of the physical body are more noticeable than others; but God has so-designed the body as to make each part depend on each other. Those parts whose functions may not be very pleasant to contemplate, still occupy very important roles.
 - b. Again, those lowly members of the Lord's body have valuable services to perform. While we esteem godly elders, dedicated deacons, and faithful preachers, we must not ignore the inestimable worth of those saints who work unceasingly behind the scenes, out of public view.
 - c. There must be no schism (division) in the Lord's church. When the function of a member of the physical body is impaired due to injury or illness, the entire body is adversely affected; if a division arises within the ranks of the Lord's body, an evil effect inevitably results.
 - d. We may not be able to prevent injury and disease from afflicting our physical body, but the members of the church (if all are what they must be) can and will prevent divisions from arising in their midst. This we will do if we have the same care for each other as is present within a healthy physical body.
 7. Verse 26: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."
 - a. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15). It is the Lord's will that the members of his body have mutual concern for each other. If one member suffers, the others share their pain or sorrow. If one is honored, the others rejoice at his success.
 - b. Implied in these verses is a problem present among the saints at Corinth. There was a degree of jealousy there. Instead of rejoicing over another's success, there was envy and resentment; instead of humbly serving Christ by using their spiritual gift unpretentiously, there was a measure of haughtiness.
 - c. The members of the physical body are so united in common purpose and concern, that if the toe is injured, the hand rushes aid to relieve the pain, while the mouth announces the tragedy to the world! This is the degree of unity and concern that Christians must have for each other.
 8. Verse 27: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."
 - a. The church is the body of Christ. There are many individual members. We are members of each other. Since all Christians make up the one body of Christ, in a significant way, we are members of each other.
 - 1) Romans 12:4-5: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all
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things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

- 3) 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 might have the preeminence."
 - 4) Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."
- b. Because we are members of the same body, and comprise that one body of Christ, there are certain obligations that obtain.
- 1) We are to show hospitality to each other (1 Pet. 4:9; Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:10; Heb. 13:2; cf. Abraham; the Shunamite woman; Martha).
 - 2) We are to pray for each other (1 Sam. 12:23; Col. 1:3, 9-11; Ex. 32:31-32; Heb. 13:17; 2 Th. 3:1; Jas 5:16).
 - 3) We are to confess our faults to each other (Jas. 5:16; 1 Jn. 1:8-10; Luke 17:3-4).
 - 4) We are to consider one another (Heb. 10:24; Ph. 2:3-4; Mt. 5:13-16; Rom. 14:15,21; 15:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:9-13).
 - 5) We are to serve one another (Gal. 5:13; cf. Matt. 20:25-28; 25:40).
 - 6) We are to exhort one another (Heb. 10:24-25; 2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 15:4; 1 Tim. 4:13; cf. Acts 4:36; 11:23).
 - 7) We are to love one another (1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:17-18).
- c. For the good of the whole body, individual members are to be willing to do whatever is necessary for another member's benefit. This wonderful arrangement is to carry over into heaven.
- 1) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:1: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God."
 - 5) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

E. 1 Corinthians 12:28-31: Offices in the One Body.

1. Verse 28: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."
 - a. God set certain offices in the church according to his own wisdom. Paul is not referring to individuals, but to functions.
 - b. God designed the office of the apostles to be first in point of rank—under Christ. The function of the apostles was essential. These men were specially selected and empowered:
 - 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - 2) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 3) John 15:26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."
 - 4) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."
 - 5) Luke 24:49: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

- 6) Acts 1:5, 8: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 7) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - 8) Acts 10:38-42: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."
 - 9) 2 Corinthians 12:11-13: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."
- c. The prophets were second. Their work was likewise important. These were miraculously empowered to receive and communicate revelations from God for the purpose of instructing. Speaking of the gospel, Paul stated in Ephesians 3:5 that the New Testament "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - d. Teachers were placed in the church in the third *rank*. This work was that of instructing people in material which had previously been revealed. There is always a need for teachers in the church.
 - e. There was the work of those empowered to perform miracles. This work had the special purpose of confirming the accuracy of the revelation presented. When an inspired apostle came into a certain place, preaching the gospel, his words would have gone unheard and unheeded without the confirmatory power of miracles. When Ananias and Sapphira were executed by the Lord (Acts 5), the people opened their minds to the gospel (Mk. 16:15ff; Heb. 2:3-4).
 - f. Another function which God provided for in the church was fulfilled in the gifts of healing. These supernatural works greatly assisted the inspired preachers to get their messages heard and believed. Peter and John healed the lame man at the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 3), which arrested the attention of the multitudes, giving the apostles the opportunity to present the truth.
 - g. The *helps* may refer to special strengths to show sympathy and generosity. "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. 12:8). This may have been a function of the seventh spiritual gift, *the discerning of spirits*.
 - h. The function of *governments* may refer to those supernatural abilities given to certain men to serve as elders in local congregations, empowered to fill needs before there had been time for these men to develop the wisdom and obtain the knowledge essential to that work through natural means. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every congregation they had established on the outward leg of their first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). They likely were able to perform their work aided also by the spiritual gifts of *wisdom* and *knowledge*.
 - i. The last function named in the verse is that which relates to *tongues*. This would include the ability to deliver the gospel in languages unlearned through natural means, as well as the ability to interpret into other languages.
2. Verses 29-30: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"
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- a. In designing and dispensing the various gifts, God did not make everyone an apostle. He did not make all the members to be prophets. He did not give only the power to teach to everybody in the church. The same is true also of the gifts of miracles, of healing, of speaking in tongues, and of interpretation of tongues.
 - b. If only one of these gifts was given, none of the other functions could have been filled. All of these gifts were different, and each was essential.
 - c. There was no reason for anyone having one of these gifts to exalt himself above anyone else, thinking his work was more important than another's. All jealousy and pride must be eliminated from their midst.
3. Verse 31: "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."
- a. The word *covet* is used in a good sense here. They were to "earnestly desire" to obtain the best gifts. In 1 Corinthians 14:1, Paul shows the great importance of the gift of prophecy, which he described to be greater than the gift of tongues. His statement here shows that the saints then could exercise an influence on God (through prayer and godliness) so as to obtain one of the nine spiritual gifts available.
 - b. As important as those gifts were to the church of the first century, prior to the time the New Testament had been fully revealed, confirmed, and recorded, there was another way that was *more excellent*. That way was the development and exercise of Christian love (1 Cor. 13:1-13; cf. Luke 10:17-20; John 14:12). This is the way God intends for Christians of every generation to follow.
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1 CORINTHIANS 13

A. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: The Essentiality of Love.

1. Verse 1: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."
 - a. The ASV gives this rendering: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal."
 - b. These instruments make no pleasant sound separate from the rest of the orchestra. Few if any would derive any pleasure from hearing one of these instruments being played solo.
 - c. "The comparison shows that speaking with tongues, even if it were exercised in an unexampled manner, is utter emptiness unless accompanied by love. The gift of tongues, even when it attained its highest conceivable development, is inferior to the language of angels; but even if one spoke with all the gifts of language *human* or *divine*, his word, if loveless, would be but a vainglorious noise, or sounds without soul or feeling; such as come from pounding on some brazen gong or basin, or from cymbals, which are the lowest, most monotonous, least expressive of all musical instruments" (McGarvey, p.128).
 - d. To tell people to love God and neighbor is not enough; we must tell them and show them how. Love for our fellow man is the willing of good toward them (Mark 12:31; Matt. 7:12; Rom. 13:10); love for God is expressed by doing his will (1 John 5:3; Mark 12:30). If we love God, we will gladly and sincerely do what he requires. Love for others will cause us to forego privileges and possessions in order to do good to them. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Paul gives a negative definition of love; to see the positive definition we only need to reverse the statement, thus love promotes good.
 - e. The apostle addresses the heart of their problem in this passage. They were active in religion, but their works emphasized outward, superficial displays. Pagans used cymbals and loud trumpets in their worship; perhaps the Corinthian Christians had not shed these former notions. They needed to learn the lesson on love, and see that external demonstrations, regardless of how important they might be, were meaningless without real love. The brethren would have been taught that instrumental music in Christian worship is not permitted.
2. Verse 2: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."
 - a. The possession and exercise of supernatural gifts is void of good if they are employed without love. There would be no profit to the individual.
 - b. Love is thus shown to be of greater merit than the use of the extraordinary gifts without love (2 Pet. 1:7).
 - 1) Colossians 3:12-14: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*. And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:8: "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."
 - c. The gift of prophecy was the supernatural gift from God that permitted the person to receive and deliver revelations from the almighty (Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 2:9-14; Eph. 3:1-11). The New Testament prophets and apostles were privileged to be given information that revealed to them the great plan which God had kept secret from the beginning of time, which neither angels nor Old Testament prophets were allowed to know.
 - 1) Matthew 13:14-17: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand

- with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”
- 2) 1 Peter 1:10-12: “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”
 - 3) Ephesians 3:3-5: “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”
- d. The gift of miraculous faith was given to certain New Testament saints, a faith that empowered them to perform momentous supernatural acts (Acts 3:1ff; Matt. 17:20; 21:21; Mark 11:23). However, if any of these tremendous gifts were exercised without love on the part of the individuals possessing them, there would be no profit for their souls.
- 1) James 5:14-15: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” [The faith indicated was possessed by the elder].
 - 2) Matthew 17:20: “And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”
 - 3) Matthew 21:21: “Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.”
 - 4) Mark 11:23: “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”
 - 5) Acts 3:2-8: “And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” [The faith was on the part of the apostles; the lame man knew nothing about the intended miracle until it was done].
3. Verse 3: "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."
- a. Moving beyond the exercise of miraculous gifts, Paul makes the same application to acts of Christian service. In these matters, love is just as necessary if any profit is to be gained.
 - b. It is possible for a Christian to give away all his goods in order to provide food for the needy, and do so without any profit to his soul. Why? How? The motive behind the generosity determines the benefit derived by the donor. If he did it to call attention to himself, he has acted in vain. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the attention of the brethren, but lied about the amount they received for the property they sold; their motives were misguided; they lost their lives and souls, and accrued no benefit from
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their loveless gift. Acts 5.

- c. The same is true with one who offers to die in another's place. If his motive is not love, his sacrifice will do his soul no good. It is imperative that we continually examine our hearts to identify the motives by which we operate.
- d. Love is like faith: it is an active principle (Gal. 5:6); it must be expressed to be real: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Their pride and worldly-minded disposition must be put aside, and the motivation of love must be diligently cultivated and exercised, in order for their religious activities to be beneficial to their souls and bring glory to God.

B. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: The Characteristics of Love.

1. Verse 4: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."
 - a. **Love moves a Christian to be patient (longsuffering).** Because we love God, love the church, and love our own souls, we patiently endure trials and persecutions without complaining against God. Because we love our brethren and our fellowman, we suffer long with them.
 - 1) One who is motivated by love is not quick to condemn or criticize others. A farmer does not plow up a crop two days after planting the seed, because the seed has not germinated yet. He knows he must be patient until the proper time has passed.
 - 2) One who is patient is like God, for our Heavenly Father is patient: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:8-9).
 - 3) Paul's statement here is not designed to rebuke the Corinthians, but to encourage them in their problems and afflictions. The passage is extremely important to all Christians of every generation.
 - b. **Love shows kindness; it is gentle and merciful.** Strong defines the word as "to show one's self useful, i.e., act benevolently." "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17).
 - 1) New Testament examples of kindness are abundant:
 - a) Matthew 15:21-28: "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."
 - b) Luke 7:11-18: "And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things."
 - c) Mark 2:1-12: "And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that

he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.”

- d) 2 Timothy 1:16-18: “The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.”
- 2) Kindness can be expressed by our words and by our actions. Before kindness can sincerely be expressed by our words or actions it must first be in our hearts.
- a) Proverbs 31:26: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness."
- b) Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
- c) Luke 6:34: "And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again."
- c. **Love does not move us to envy.** Envy is defined as "to look with ill will or be pained at the good fortune of another."
- 1) Envy is useless and wasteful; it has no profit and all of its fruit is evil. Envy caused Cain to murder his brother (Gen. 4); envy led to Haman's downfall (Esther 7); envy was directly involved in the Lord's death: "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him" (Matt. 27:18).
- 2) Love and envy are antagonistic: love does not envy; love is generous, it is never envious; love is happy for the good fortune of others. Love (not envy) led the Samaritan to help the unfortunate robbery victim (Lk. 10:30-37).
- d. **Love does not vaunt itself; it is not puffed up with pride.** To *vaunt* is "to boast, to brag, to puff up, to be proud."
- 1) This trait (which love does not have) will cause a person to push himself forward as being important; it creates a feeling of superiority, and is expressed in disregarding another, or in holding him in contempt. Love does not oppose self-confidence; it does resist over-confidence.
- 2) Love does not allow this attitude [of haughtiness], but rather demands its opposite—humility. If one is lacking in humility, he is lacking in love.
- a) Proverbs 3:34: "Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly."
- b) Proverbs 15:33: "The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and before honour *is* humility."
- c) Isaiah 66:2: "For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even* to *him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."
- d) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of

- thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
- e) Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - f) Acts 12:20-23: "And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's *country*. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, *saying*, *It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."
- 3) Humility admits its dependence on God; it grows out of gratitude.
- a) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - b) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
 - c) Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service."
2. Verse 5: "Doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."
- a. **Love does not behave itself unseemly.**
 - 1) Unseemliness describes improper or disgraceful conduct; it is to act in a manner that deserves rebuke. On the other hand, seemliness is to act properly, to be above reproach in behavior.
 - 2) The opposite of unseemliness is also courtesy (1 Pet. 3:8). Courtesy manifests itself especially in small matters. Love promotes seemly behavior, courtesy, and good manners. One who has developed Christian love will exhibit good behavior and courtesy at all times and in all places and in all activities. "Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous" (1 Pet. 3:8).
 - 3) To be courteous is to show consideration of others by respecting their feelings, being gentle in dealing with them, and by refusing to be hateful or spiteful.
 - 4) What a change every community would undergo if this element of love were to be fully practiced!
 - b. **Love does not seek her own.**
 - 1) This element of love is unselfishness. Love does not cause a person to seek his own advantage, but is unselfish (Phil. 2:3-5; Matt. 7:12). It does not search after, and require its own happiness first, to the injury or neglect of others. However, this does not require that we ignore our own happiness, health, or salvation.
 - 2) The first step in becoming a Christian is to see ourselves in the right perspective, using the word of God as the standard.
 - a) Matthew 16:24-26: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - b) Romans 12:10: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."
 - c) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 9:19-23: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under
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the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

- e) 1 Corinthians 10:24: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."
 - f) 2 Corinthians 8:9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."
- 3) Visualize the great change that would be effected in a community if this element were fully applied by all!
- c. **Love does not move us to be easily provoked.**
- 1) One who is under the influence of Christian love is not quick to be angry, but controls his temper. He is calm and collected, is not easily excited, and does not react hastily or rashly; he looks soberly at life and the circumstances of day-to-day living. "Flying off the handle" is not a proper picture of the Christian life.
 - 2) No one can live above an occasional relapse into sin. We live in a complex society, at a time when the great majority are departing from the moral standard of God's word. It is easy for us to lose control of our emotions, and give vent to wrath. It is easy to say or do things that are hurtful and sinful.
 - 3) The Bible requires self-control of those who would please God. If our emotions rule us, we are like a city of ancient times whose wall has been torn down: we are exposed to the enemy, and at his mercy.
 - a) Job 5:2: "For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one."
 - b) Proverbs 14:17: "*He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*"
 - c) Proverbs 16:32: "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*"
 - d) Proverbs 25:24: "*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.*"
 - e) Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - f) Colossians 3:8: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."
 - g) James 1:19-20: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."
 - 4) Controlling our temper is for our own good, and for the good of others, as well as the church.
- d. **Love thinks no evil.**
- 1) This does not mean we will never entertain an evil thought; this cannot be done. An ancient Chinese sage observed that we cannot keep the birds from flying above our heads, but we can keep them from building a nest in our hair. We can no more keep evil thoughts from popping into our mind than we can stop the rain, the sunshine, or night. But we can take shelter from the rain, we can get in the shade, we can turn on a light during the darkness—and we can evict evil thoughts from our minds.
 - 2) Thinking no evil means that we are not overly suspicious of the motives of our fellowman, that we will not always imagine others mean us harm, and will not impute the worst possible construction on the words, acts, or facial expressions and tones of voice others use toward us. The comic strip character *Ziggy* thought that the football team on the field was talking about him when they went into a *huddle*.
 - 3) There are certain childhood traits that are commendable in a Christian, one of which is the willingness to accept things at face value, and to be willing to give others the benefit of any doubt that may exist.
 - a) Matthew 19:13-14: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his*
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hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

- b) 1 Corinthians 14:20: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."
 - 4) Being too quick to suspect the worst can make us miserable! We are not to be naive, but think the best until we know otherwise. This principle is taught in Matthew 7:1-5, the familiar passage that forbids unjust and hypocritical judging.
3. Verse 6: "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."
- a. **Love will not lead one to rejoice over iniquity.**
 - 1) Love requires that we take no delight when another falls into sin or experiences trouble. If we possess real Christian love, we will take no pleasure in hearing an evil report about another, even if the report is true. When a brother falls into sin or error, refute the error and rebuke the sin, but do so with a broken heart. No right-thinking person could find any pleasure in the sin of another saint.
 - a) Ezekiel 18:32: "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye."
 - b) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - 2) Love requires that we stand against all sin and religious error, and that we stand for the truth. We rejoice when truth prevails; we rejoice when one obeys the gospel, or does some good thing for the Lord, or overcomes some temptation, or grows spiritually. There is no competition between faithful Christians or faithful congregations.
 - b. Paul rejoiced when the truth was preached; his soul depended on having this attitude: "And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:14-19).
4. Verse 7: "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."
- a. **Love bears all things.**
 - 1) Love teaches us to be strong and steadfast; to bear up under all circumstances. Earlier elements of love dealt with our attitudes toward other people and God; this attribute deals with our own spirit.
 - 2) Mothers endure many things during the course of their lives. They bear up under the stress and pain of pregnancy and delivery. Their children sometimes disregard their will, ignore their sacrifices, and think nothing of their many good works. How can the mother endure such? Their mother's love enables them. Because she loves her neglectful or rebellious child, she bears the burden.
 - 3) Jesus silently endured shame, agony, and hatred on the cross. How was he able to bear up under these? His heart was filled with genuine love for God and all mankind.
 - a) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
 - b) 1 Peter 2:22-23: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously."
 - 4) Paul suffered at the hands of the Jews, but his heart's desire for them was that they might be saved (Rom. 9:3; 10:1). He was not bitter and resentful toward them even when in prison on account
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of their false charges (2 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 5:3-4). Patience produces steadfastness, and experience (approvedness) furnishes us with hope. It is to our benefit that we bear up under all trying circumstances.

- 5) How can we bear up under the weight of our Christian struggles? By developing genuine love. How can we cultivate this love?
 - a) By studying the Bible (Acts 20:32).
 - b) By obeying the Bible (2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rom. 5:3-4).
 - c) By praying fervently and frequently (Jas. 5:16; Phil. 4:6-7).
 - d) By worshipping sincerely (John 4:24; 1 John 4:8).

b. Love believes all things.

- 1) Love causes us to maintain an open mind. If we love a fellow Christian, we will accept what he tells us unless a good reason arises to the contrary. It does not encourage gullibility or naivety.
- 2) This characteristic of love leads us to have the readiness to accept that which evidence supports after a fairminded examination. Some closed their minds to the Lord's words (Luke 15:1-2). An open mind is required in order for one to become a Christian and live the Christian life. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few" (Acts 17:11-12).
- 3) God's word is quick and powerful; his spoken word created the universe, keeps it going, and his written word can give life to the sin-slain soul. But it cannot reach a closed mind!
- 4) Some have closed their minds about the church, deluding themselves into believing that it is not important. But why did Jesus die for it (Acts 20:28)? Why does God use it to reconcile all believers to himself (Eph. 2:16; 1:22-23)? The Lord's church is important!
- 5) Many have closed their minds to the plan of salvation, to moral living, and to true worship.

c. Love hopes all things.

- 1) The characteristic of love emphasizes optimism or hope. The only ones with a right to be optimistic and full of hope are faithful Christians. Hope is comprised of desire and expectation. We cannot have hope for something we do not want to obtain; and we cannot hope for something that we have no reason to expect to receive. Concerning eternity, who can be optimistic except God's faithful?
- 2) Visualize what life would be like without hope (Rom. 8:24-25). If we do not believe things will be better in heaven, how could we face life? A person without hope (an optimistic attitude regarding eternity) is most miserable.
- 3) Abraham had hope (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:9-14; Rom. 4:17-21). Hope sustained him, and it can sustain us, and save us (Rom. 8:24). But hope grows out of faith, and is a characteristic of love.
 - a) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
 - b) Genesis 18:9-14: "And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."
 - c) Romans 4:17-21: "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him

whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”

- d) Romans 8:24-25: “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

d. **Love endures all things.**

- 1) "The word '*hupomenoo*,' translated 'endureth,' is a military term, and means to sustain an assault; hence it has reference to heavier afflictions than those sustained by the 'beareth' of verse 7. It refers to gross ill-treatment, violence and persecution, and such grievance as provoke resistance, strife, etc. (2 Tim. 2:10,24; Heb. 10:32; 12:2; Matt. 5:39; comp. John 18:22,23, with Acts 23:2-5). The enduring is not simply that dogged persistency which bears up despite adversity, it is an endurance which forgives offense (Luke 17:4). From love as it manifests itself in daily life Paul now rises to speak of love in its essence" (McGarvey, p.131).
- 2) "It suffers, endures, bears all evils, and is not driven from the true course by the wrongs and injuries of the wicked" (Lipscomb, p.199).

C. 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: Spiritual Gifts to End, But Faith, Hope and Love to Continue.

1. Verse 8: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." This verse shows that the gifts of prophecy, of tongues, and knowledge would cease.
 - a. **Prophecies shall fail:** This does not mean that prophetic utterance would not be fulfilled since that would reflect badly on God's power. Rather, it means that the prophetic office, the gift of prophecy (to teach, predict, etc., by the Holy Spirit) would not continue. This gift was a channel of revelation, and had to continue until God had fully revealed the New Testament. It would not be needed after its purpose had been accomplished. If a friend reveals a message to you over the telephone, you do not have to remain at the telephone with the receiver to your ear after the message has been delivered. The phone was merely the means by which the message was delivered; prophecy was the means by which God delivered his message to inspired men. He gave all truth to the apostles during their lifetime (John 16:13; Matt. 19:28; Eph. 3:5). When the message had been delivered, the means used in its delivery was no longer needed.
 - b. **Tongues shall cease:** The gift of tongues would not continue. Tongues were languages (Acts 2:1-14). Missionaries have to study foreign languages in order to speak those languages. Now there is ample time for men to prepare themselves to preach the gospel in foreign languages without supernatural aid, but during the first century this miraculous tool was necessary, since there were so many people in Jerusalem speaking different languages (Acts 2), and as the message was carried elsewhere, other languages had to be used. The schools where these tongues could be naturally learned were not available to the Christians. Time was of the essence if the church was to be firmly established and expand. But the miraculous gift of tongues would not be always necessary.
 - c. **Knowledge would vanish away:** This spiritual gift of miraculous knowledge (I Cor. 12:8) would not always be needed. This is not a reference to common knowledge; he does not say that we would all have blank minds. Not everyone had this gift (note: "to another..."—12:8). The time was coming when this and the other gifts would be taken away. There would be ample opportunity for Christians to study the revealed, written word in order to know the will of God without receiving that knowledge directly (miraculously) from God. Verse ten shows when these would be removed. That time is not in heaven for there supernatural knowledge will be vastly increased. No one today has received knowledge of God's will as Paul received it (Gal. 1:11-12). Those who claim to have this kind of knowledge have to study to learn the Bible, and what they teach often contradicts the Bible.
 - d. What Paul writes in regards to these three gifts of necessity applies also to all of the other gifts. They

all would cease to be practiced. It was unnecessary for Paul to go through the entire list of nine gifts, one by one, and say the same thing about each. Where is the proof that the other six gifts are still being received? What need would they serve?

- 1) No new truth could be revealed.
 - a) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - b) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - c) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
 - 2) Any new "revelation" could be set under one of three headings:
 - a) It is already in the Bible.
 - b) It is another "gospel" (Gal. 1:6-8).
 - c) Or it is discerned by human reason.
 2. Verse 9: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."
 - a. The gifts represent imperfection. The Christians having them had to depend on each other—one person did not have all the revelation. God's will was made known through inspired men *as the need arose*, part by part. In Acts 2, the gospel plan of salvation was presented; in Acts 5, the necessity of discipline in the church was shown; in Acts 6, the need for deacons was revealed; in chapter 10, the Gentiles were shown to be proper subjects of the gospel.
 - b. The New Testament was revealed part by part as the need arose and as they were able to grasp and use the new information, until finally the New Covenant had been completely revealed and recorded. It was only after the entirety of the New Testament had been revealed that anyone had unlimited access to the will of Christ.
 - c. That which is in part (vs. 9) is placed in contrast with that which is perfect (vs. 10). Thus, the gifts represent a time and condition of imperfection, and the time when the gifts were no longer needed represents a time and condition of perfection (completeness, maturity, full strength).
 3. Verse 10: "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."
 - a. Prophecies, tongues and knowledge would fail, cease, vanish away; that which is in part will be done away; that which is in part and the gifts of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are identical; thus, these will be done away, ended, caused to cease. But when? When that which is *perfect* is come.
 - 1) That which is perfect is placed in contrast with that which is in part. When we determine what is meant by "that which is in part" we shall have learned the meaning of "that which is perfect."
 - 2) Notice that Paul does not say "when HE WHO is perfect is come," but "when THAT WHICH is perfect is come." Therefore, he does not mean "When Christ has come" since he used the neuter gender pronoun ("that"). Also, the subject being discussed in the context is the use of spiritual gifts; Paul is not discussing Christ at all. A pronoun takes the place of a noun, and for a pronoun to be meaningful and make sense, it must have an antecedent (the noun it replaces). No reference is made to Christ in the context.
 - 3) The reference ("that which is perfect") is not love, since love is already here and was present at Corinth during the same time "that which is in part" was present. That which is in part and that which is perfect would not be present at the same time; the former would give way to the latter.
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- The only antecedent given for the pronoun "that" (in "that which is in part") is in verse 8 (the various spiritual gifts). But love is always to be present (13:8a; 13:13).
- 4) The reference ("that which is perfect") is not to heaven for the same reason: the subject of heaven is not even remotely mentioned in the context. To try to justify that assertion requires us to read into the passage a thought which was not included by the Holy Spirit. That which is perfect is in contrast to that which is in part, and transpires here on earth ("when that which is perfect *is come*").
- b. The word "perfect" contains the clue we need to understand the passage. It is translated from the Greek *teleios* which means "completeness." The phrase in the Greek text is *to teleion* which literally means "the complete thing" (Jackson, *Christian Courier*, Jan., 1982, p.37). The "complete thing" stands in opposition to that which is in part" (incomplete).
 - 1) Perfect:
 - a) Teleios NT:5049 signifies "having reached its end" (telos), "finished, complete perfect." It is used (I) of persons, (a) primarily of physical development, then, with ethical import, "fully grown, mature," 1 Cor 2:6; 14:20 ("men"; marg., "of full age"); Eph 4:13; Phil 3:15; Col 1:28; 4:12; in Heb 5:14, RV, "fullgrown" (marg., "perfect"), KJV, "of full age" (marg., "perfect"); (b) "complete," conveying the idea of goodness without necessary reference to maturity or what is expressed under (a) Matt 5:48; 19:21; James 1:4 (2 nd part); 3:2. It is used thus of God in Matt 5:48; (II), of "things, complete, perfect," Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 13:10 (referring to the complete revelation of God's will and ways... [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - b) Perfect (teleios): "Brought to completion, complete, entire, as opposed to what is partial or limited" (Bagster).
 - c) "Having attained the end of purpose" (Arndt & Gingrich).
 - 2) Notice some passages where this word is found:
 - a) Matthew 5:48: "be perfect, even as your Father...."
 - b) Matthew 19:21: "if thou wilt be perfect...."
 - c) Romans 12:2: "good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."
 - d) Ephesians 4:13: "till we come...unto perfect man."
 - e) Philippians. 3:15: "let us therefore, as many as be perfect."
 - f) Colossians 1:28: "present every man perfect..."
 - g) Colossians 4:12: "that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will...."
 - h) Hebrews 9:11: "perfect tabernacle."
 - i) James 1:4: "patience have her perfect...."
 - j) James 1:17: "every perfect gift from above"
 - k) James 1:25: "perfect law of liberty."
 - l) James 3:2: "perfect man.." if not offend.
 - m) 1 John 4:18: "perfect love...."
 - n) 1 Corinthians 2:6: "speak wisdom among them that are perfect."
 - o) 1 Corinthians 13:10: "when that which is perfect...."
 - c. At the time Paul wrote this passage, only a part of the revelation of the New Testament had been given; prior to the close of the first century, the New Testament had been fully revealed. This was done during the lifetime of the apostles since the Lord promised they would receive "all truth" (John 16:13).
 - 1) The finished revelation is called "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25), and "the perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). In this completed revelation is found "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3), and everything necessary for "...doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is called "the faith which was once [once for all time] delivered to
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- the saints" (Jude 3; cf. Heb. 9:27-28).
- 2) Therefore, "that which is perfect" is simply the completed revelation of the New Testament, the New Covenant which God had promised (Jer. 31:31-34)
- d. In the context we are studying, Paul shows that the full revelation of God's will was being made known, part by part, through the use of the spiritual gifts. Each of the three gifts which are named in the context (verse 8) was a supernatural gift directly related to the revealing of God's will to man. When one prophesied, or spoke in a tongue, or interpreted a tongue, or exercised the gift of knowledge, he was making known God's will. The other gifts (12:8-10) were primarily to confirm that the message presented was truly from God, and was not the invention of human wisdom.
4. Verse 11: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."
 - a. When Paul was a child, he spoke with a child's language and vocabulary, he thought as a child thinks, he occupied himself with things which children do. But when he grew to manhood, he ceased to speak an immature language, he stopped thinking as a child thinks, and he laid aside his toys.
 - b. The statement of this verse is an illustration which contrasts the infancy of the church with the mature state of the church. When it becomes full-grown (received the completed New Testament), it puts away its childhood things (the spiritual gifts).
 - c. Is the church still a child? The things which were in part belonged to its childhood state. Paul is not talking about the earthly state of the church in contrast to the heavenly state. He is showing those who possessed the spiritual gifts that there is a more excellent way. This more excellent way is the way of love, with faith and hope, which are present on earth.
 - 1) In heaven faith will be lost in sight, and hope in fulfillment. The full-grown state of the church would be when the full revelation had been given and the spiritual gifts were no longer needed and had vanished away.
 - 2) As more and more of the truth was revealed and accepted and applied by the saints, the church grew in knowledge of Christ until the faith was once for all delivered unto the saints in all its perfection (completeness).
 - 3) It was then that they attained unto the unity of the faith, and the need for the spiritual gifts ceased: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13).
 5. Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."
 - a. Here Paul used another illustration to help us see the truth. The old mirrors were called glasses. They were not very efficient in giving a good reflection; they were often made of polished metal. Hence, the image reflected was only dimly and imperfectly seen.
 - 1) Still having the same two contrasting times and conditions in mind, he says that presently they saw only dimly, but in the latter case they would be able to see face to face.
 - 2) The illustration aptly describes the situation during the miraculous age. But now we have the entire revelation and can study for ourselves and can know all that God wants us to know on a given subject. We can see ourselves as God sees us; we can see the kind of persons God wants us to become.
 - b. The word "now" refers to the period of childhood (of the previous verse). He says "now I know in part" which corresponds to the statement of verse 9, "we know in part." The time of that which is perfect in verse 10 is the time of verse 12 when Paul says we would no longer know in part but know fully. The context shows conclusively that the reference ("face to face," etc.) is not to heaven. This Greek word [*know*] is in:
 - 1) Matthew 7:16: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"
 - 2) Luke 1:3-4: "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the

- certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."
- 3) Romans 1:32: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 4:3: "Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
- c. It is significant that James uses the same illustration in connection with his statement about "the perfect law of liberty." "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:21-25).
6. Verse 13: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
 - a. Faith, hope, and love will exist until the end of time. Faith will be then lost in sight in heaven (we will continue to have trust in God); hope will be lost there in fulfillment; but love will continue on into heaven and eternity (although perhaps greatly increased). Neither of these three is miraculous. They were present during the age of miracles, but would outlast that time of miracles.
 - b. "In view of the fact that miracles were necessary to reveal and confirm the word, and all that has been accomplished, miracles to that end have ceased" (Roy J. Hearn, Bulletin Article, Knight Arnold Church of Christ, Vol. 13, No. 13, March 31, 1987).
 7. A parallel passage to the one under consideration is Ephesians 4:8, 11-14: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he let captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men....And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
 - a. Before the New Testament was revealed and recorded, the miraculous gifts were needed for the disciples to preach the gospel and build up the church. Each of the offices mentioned in verse 11 was occupied by Christians possessing spiritual gifts. Those offices which continue today are occupied by uninspired saints, but who are guided by the Holy Scriptures.
 - b. The offices of apostle and prophet were in the church only for a certain time: "till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (verse 13). Notice how *till* is used in Acts 23:12: "And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul."
 - 1) The church needed these miraculous aids until the full revelation was given and recorded. After that, men could learn how to be saved and what their obligations were before God by studying the Scriptures.
 - 2) The church needed these miraculous aids until such a time that it could be sufficiently built up numerically and spiritually to be able to continue its work: preaching the gospel to the lost, helping the needy, and building itself up in the faith (see verse 12).
 - 3) The church needed these miraculous aids until such a time that the books of the New Testament were recorded and collected into one volume. This written record would then be the means by which the church could be sustained.
 - c. Three things were to be accomplished by the spiritual gifts: "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, ASV).
 - 1) To perfect the saints (furnish them what was needed to grow into spiritual maturity).
 - 2) For the work of ministering (teach them the details they needed in order to serve God properly, especially in works of benevolence).
 - 3) To guide and assist the church in carrying the gospel to the lost, thus building up the church
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- numerically.
- d. The word *till* limits the spiritual gifts to a certain period of time: until they came unto (*eis*) the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. There is only one faith (Eph. 4:5); it is the gospel system (Gal. 1:23).
 - 1) This one faith was *once* (literally, once for all time—Heb. 9:27-28) delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Paul uses the word (for "once") in Hebrews 9 to emphasize the fact that Christ died only once.
 - 2) The gifts were to last until the time when the faith was completed, and after that time they would be taken away. When the faith was completely revealed, and those possessing the gifts died, the miraculous gifts ceased to be exercised.
 - e. Proponents of modern miracles are forced to conclude with reference to this passage that the unity of the faith comes only in the next life, not on earth.
 - 1) But if that is correct, then those who go to heaven will be able to withstand the winds of false doctrine that assail them. Thus, there will be false doctrine in heaven (if their view is correct on the passage here). The winds of false doctrine must be present in order for there to be a threat.
 - 2) Further, they will be able to grow up. Hence, there will be immaturity in heaven. And men will practice craftiness and deceit in heaven, for the text says that those who come into the unity of the faith will be able to overcome such. These are some of the logical conclusions which follow if the interpretation forced upon Ephesians 4 is allowed.
 - 3) But, "If the unity of the faith does not occur until the next life, it will never be, because faith will end in sight, in heaven, and there will never be unity of faith" (Guy N. Woods, *Woods-Franklin Debate*, pp.126f).
 - f. Renowned Bible scholar, James Macknight, gives the following interpretation of Ephesians 4:11-13: "Wherefore, when Paul tells the Ephesians, that God appointed in the church, some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, for the sake of fitting the saints for the work of the ministry, and for the building of the body of Christ, his meaning is, that the different orders of inspired teachers which he mentions were appointed, and supernaturally endowed by God, for the purpose of giving the believing Jews and Gentiles such a complete knowledge of the gospel, as would qualify them for preaching it to unbelievers, and for building the body of Christ, by converting them. Accordingly, after the apostles and other inspired teachers were dead, their disciples spread the knowledge of the gospel everywhere....All in every age and country who have devoted themselves to that work, have been fitted for it by them, in as much as from their writings alone they derive their knowledge of the gospel by the preaching of which they build the body of Christ" (*Macknight on the Epistles*, Vol. III-Iv, pp.318f).
8. I Corinthians 13:8-13 and Ephesians 4:8-16 address the same subject.
- a. Notice the parallels that exist between 1 Corinthians and Ephesians 4:
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A Comparison Between 1 Corinthians 13 and Ephesians 4

1 CORINTHIANS 13	EPHESIANS 4
When (10)	Till (13)
That which is perfect (10)	Unity of the faith (13)
Then shall I know (12)	Knowledge of the Son (13)
Put away childish things (11)	Be no more children (14)
Became a man (11)	Perfect man (13)
Gifts (8)	Gifts (7,8,11)
To be done away (10)	Done away—perfect (13)
When perfect comes (10)	Perfect man; unity of faith
Child before perfection (11)	Child before (14)
Completed knowledge (10-12)	Not child (14)
Church as a child (11)	Church a child (13)
Mature when gifts ceased (11)	Mature when gifts cease (13)

- b. Ephesians 4:8-14 refers to the same gifts as 1 Corinthians 12 and 13; they were only to last TILL that which is perfect (the unity of THE faith) comes. *The faith* refers to the whole New Testament, therefore, when that was completed, gifts were no more. The adverbs (then, when, till) limit the time factor of the gifts.
- c. Micah 7:15: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things." Guy N. Woods used this passage in the Woods-Franklin debate to show that miracles were in the church about 40 years. "It doesn't say, 'I will perform the same type of miracles as were then performed.' It says, 'according to the days of thy coming out.' This is not with reference to the substance of miracles but to the time element involved. Now, how long was it? It was the period of the children of Israel coming out of the land of Egypt. Well, how long was that? It was 40 years. We've already seen that these miraculous events began on the day of Pentecost which was in A.D. 33. Now add 40 years to that and you've come up to a period roughly that when Jerusalem was destroyed. That was in A.D. 70. This, if you please, marked the end of the Jewish system of affairs. Therefore, these miracles were to last no longer than that period; and I affirm that they have ceased" (*Woods-Franklin Debate*, pp.6f).
9. How can we account for those events which are claimed to be miracles today? The following is an excerpt from an excellent article by Wayne Jackson which appeared in "Christian Courier," October, 1989: "In the first place, we are really not under obligation to explain or defend, as divine, a modern event simply because it may have elements which are difficult to explain. The antics of witch-doctors, fire-walkers, psychics, etc., may be characterized by certain features that we find difficult to understand; certainly, though, they are not associated with true spirituality. That aside, there are several bases for so-called modern miracles.
- a. "First, some instance of 'faith healing' are pure fakery. Consider the case of Peter Popoff, who claimed the supernatural ability to give revealed information about people in his audiences (in conjunction with healing them) was receiving such information through a tiny hearing aid, messages being transmitted by his wife from backstage. Prominent magician, James Randi, exposed the entire

affair on national TV. Randi also demonstrated that Popoff was providing rented wheelchairs for people who could actually walk, then, at his services, he was pronouncing them 'healed.'

- b. "Second, some 'miracle cures' are claimed by people who honestly believe that God has healed them. The fact is, however, they had nothing really wrong with them organically. Their ailment was *psychosomatic*. That means that though some bodily feature was actually affected, the real root of the problem was mental or emotional, hence, by *suggestion* a cure might be effected. It has been estimated that more than half of all the people applying for medical treatment in the U.S. suffer from psychosomatic illnesses. Taking advantage of this type of situation, the 'faith healer,' in an atmosphere of hysteria and feverish emotionalism, produces some phenomenal 'cures.' A Canadian physician who investigated thirty cases in which Oral Roberts claimed miraculous healing was involved, found not a single instance that could not be attributed to psychological shock or hysteria. Dr. William Sadler affirmed that after twenty-five years of sympathetic research into 'faith-healing,' he had not observed a single case of an organic disease being healed. It is commonly known that an African witch-doctor can literally command a believer in voodooism to die, and within a prescribed time, the victim will expire. Surely no rational person believes the witch-doctor has the Spirit of God!
 - c. "Third, another possible explanation for some remarkable recovery is a phenomenon known as *spontaneous remission*. Spontaneous remission is an unexpected withdrawal of disease symptoms and an inexplicable disappearance of the ailment. It occurs in about one out of every 80,000 cancer patients. A while back newspapers carried the account of a bartender in Washington. When the gentlemen had exploratory surgery, it was discovered that he was consumed with cancer. His physicians expected him to live only a few months. As time sped by, his disease utterly vanished. There was nothing supernatural about it. No claim of faith, prayer, or miraculous healing was involved. Wouldn't some faith-healer have revelled in taking credit for that cure?
 - d. "Fourth, it must be admitted that since physicians are human, they can and do make mistakes. Sometimes they mis-diagnose a case. They may judge an illness to be fatal when in fact it is not. Some of these situations are seized upon by modern 'miracle-workers' and a supernatural aura is attributed to them.
 - e. "Finally, here is a point worthy of consideration that needs to be pressed with great vigor. There is no alleged 'miracle' being performed today by those of a 'Christian' persuasion (Pentecostals, Mormons, Christian Scientist, Catholics, etc.) that cannot be duplicated by the various 'non-Christian' sects. Those who practice Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, Psychic Healing, Scientology, New Age Crystal Healing, etc., claim the same type of 'signs' as these others. In fact, more than twenty million Americans—of every conceivable religious persuasion—annually report mystic experiences (including healing) in their lives. Now, since the Scriptures clearly teach that the purpose of miracles, as evidenced in biblical days, was to *confirm the authenticity of the system* (cf. Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:4), does the alleged examples of modern 'miracle healings' indicate that the Lord has authenticated all of these woefully contradictory systems? Think of the implications in that—especially in light of Paul's affirmation that God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). There is ample evidence that there were genuine miracles performed by divinely appointed men in the first century. The New Testament abounds with documented cases. But there is nothing comparable to those wonders being duplicated in the modern age."
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1 CORINTHIANS 14

A. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5: The Gift of Prophecy was Superior to the Gift of Tongues.

1. Verse 1: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."
 - a. Paul returns to the thought he left in 1 Corinthians 12:31, having digressed from the main thought to discuss the essentiality of love and its characteristics, and to show that the spiritual gifts were only a temporary part of God's plan. In 12:31 he encouraged the Corinthians to seek the best gifts; in 14:1 he states that the gift of prophecy is the most important of them all. Reasons are given for this superiority in the next three verses.
 - b. The miraculous gifts were temporary, but while they remained they were to be sought. Some gifts were more edifying than others. The gift of prophecy was to be the one most desired. Verses three and four give the reason for the exalted nature of the gift of prophecy: the prophet received a revelation of God's will and was able to present that inspired message to others for their edification.
 - c. However, Paul emphasizes the necessity of following the way of love in the whole process. Love has to be the motivating power behind a Christian's life. If one operates on some other basis than that of genuinely desiring the best for others, his efforts will be in vain (1 Cor. 13:1-3).
 - d. The statement of the verse shows that the individual Christian could exert influence on heaven in order to obtain one or another of the spiritual gifts; the Holy Spirit would provide him a gift if such was deemed proper by divine wisdom, and the gift itself would be of the Spirit's choice. But prayers from a good and honest heart can produce great things. We must remember, also, that a gift was conferred only through the hands of an apostle.
2. Verse 2: "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."
 - a. Beginning here, the apostle gives some reasons why the gift of prophecy was to be sought more than the gift of tongues. One who used the miraculous gift of tongues communicated a gospel message, but only to those who understood the language being employed by the speaker.
 - b. Without an interpreter, those who did not understand the language, understood nothing that was said, and would obtain no edification from the message, regardless of how important and valuable it was. Without an interpreter, only God would understand the information.
 - c. The gift of tongues was limited in whom it could edify to those who understood the language; an interpreter could translate the message into another language, and thus extend the edifying message to a second group.
 - 1) In a congregation comprised of people who spoke several different languages, for all of the groups to be edified by a particular message, the language used by the speaker would have to be translated into the various tongues which were represented by the different groups; more than the original gift was needed. Since interpreters could not be provided by natural means, miraculous gifts were needed.
 - 2) The benefit of the speaker's gift was confined to those who could understand the language he used. The particular tongue given to the individual was intended to help only those who naturally understood that language. The tongue was useless except to those who knew it.
 - 3) Although the speaker was presenting a message explaining great mysteries, no one was benefitted unless they understood the language used, or had it translated into their own tongue, which required an additional spiritual gift.
3. Verse 3: "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."
 - a. In contrast to the limitation of the gift of tongues, the prophet's gift could provide edification, exhortation, and comfort. Instead of being limited to a select group, it was intended to help everyone. There was no inherent limitation to the prophet's revelation.
 - b. Prophecy included:
 - 1) Accurate predictions of future events. Compare:

- a) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
- b) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
- c) Acts 21:10-13: "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."
- 2) Inspired information about the past: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.....To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 9,15).
- 3) Authoritative revelations concerning present obligations:
- a) 1 Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
- b) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
- c. **Edification** (*oikodome*) "denotes (a) the act of building (*oikos*, a home, and *demo*, to build); this is used only figuratively in the N.T., in the sense of edification, the promotion of spiritual growth (lit., the things of building up), Rom. 14:19; 15:2; I Cor. 14:3,5,12,26, e.g.; (b) a building, edifice, whether material, Matt. 24:1, e.g., or figurative, of the future body of the believer, 2 Cor. 5:1, or of a local church, I Cor. 3:9, or the whole Church, 'the body of Christ,' Eph. 2:21" (Vine, Volume 2, pp.18f).
- d. **Exhortation** is from *paraklesin*, and means "an appeal or entreaty; encouragement" (2 Cor. 8:4; Rom. 12:8). (See Vine, *ibid.*, p.60).
- e. **Comfort** is from *paramuthian* (*para*, near; and *muthos*, speech). It means "to speak closely to another; consolation" (cf. Vine, Volume 2, p.207).
- f. The word **unknown** in the KJV text is italicized, meaning it has no corresponding counterpart in the original text; it was supplied by the translators in an attempt to clarify the English translation. The tongue (language) was unknown only because the speaker had not studied and learned the language by the natural process; the ability to use the language was a miraculous ability provided by the Holy Spirit. There is a great deal of difference between an unknown language and an unknowable language.
4. Verse 4: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church."
- a. No one was edified if the speaker used a tongue which no one present but himself was able to understand; but the whole church could be edified by the message given through the man using the spiritual gift of prophecy. A Christian having the gift to preach the gospel in the language of Lycaonia

(cf. Acts 14:11) could instruct only those who understood that tongue.

- b. But the man who had the gift of prophecy, possessed the power by which the entire church could be instructed; the inspired message given through him was intended for everyone, and was not intended only for those who spoke a particular tongue. The message the prophet delivered had to be communicated in words [oral or written] to the audience [or readers]. The message was a new revelation to the audience. The message communicated through the use of the spiritual gift of tongues might be a presentation of information already revealed; the miracle involved was in the infallible presentation of the information in a language the speaker had not learned in the ordinary way. The miracle was in the translation; it would not necessarily be a new revelation.
 - c. The speaker could understand the language he used and possibly (cf. verse 13) could interpret it into another tongue. Without a translation, he would edify only himself. On the other hand, prophecy would build up the whole church. [The prophetic utterance would have to be translated for the benefit of those not at home with the prophet's language].
 - d. The church at Corinth was comprised of people from different cultures who spoke an assortment of tongues. Paul is teaching against the man who speaks with the gift of a tongue which no one present understands. The gift was without merit if there was no edification gained by its use.
5. Verse 5: "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."
- a. The apostle states that he wished that they all had the gift of tongues. This implies that not all of them had that gift. But something more important than the gift of tongues was the gift of prophecy, for the reasons already stated. The use of the gift of tongues was beneficial only if the speaker (or someone else) interpreted to those who did not know the language being used. The benefit was had only if edification was the result; the edification (the building up) of the church (and individuals) was brought about by the message given.
 - b. A modern case for this situation would be (if the spiritual gifts were still in operation) the following: Suppose a group of Christians came together in Miami, comprised of Americans, Cubans, and Haitians, with each group speaking only their native tongue. Suppose further that one, who spoke only German, came into their assembly, and had the miraculous gift of speaking the Spanish tongue. If that Christian delivered a discourse of truth to that congregation in Spanish, only the Cubans would be edified; the others would understand nothing and get no benefit from his speech. But suppose that he (or someone else present) was able to translate the message into the languages of the Americans and Haitians. All would thus be edified for they would understand. The apostle's point is that the one having the gift of a tongue which was not understood was to keep quiet unless his message was interpreted.
 - c. The gift of tongues was provided to be used as a tool in preaching the gospel to every creature. The Corinthians had placed too much emphasis on the gift itself, to the neglect of the message the gift presented. Suppose we received a very important communication from a loved one via a telephone call. Which would be more important to us, the message or the telephone system by which the message was communicated?
 - d. Spiritual gifts were given to the early church for the profit of precious souls (1 Cor. 12:7); the great emphasis on the use of the gifts is edification: of the individual Christian and the whole church.

B. 1 Corinthians 14:6-11: A Voice That is Not Understood is Fruitless.

1. Verse 6: "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"
 - a. The apostle states here that if he spoke to them with tongues they could not understand, he would bring them no profit. Only if he spoke by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by doctrine could they be benefitted. If he did not teach them something, he did them no good! How much profit is done when some ignorant, misguided person stands before an audience and spouts off an excited stream of gibberish and jabber? How much less when a large portion of the audience begins to shout more gibberish and jabber!
 - b. The Corinthians would not even have been Christians had Paul spoken the gospel to them in a
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- language unknown to them. The basic reason for these gifts was to make known God's will (not necessarily for the first time).
- c. The four terms Paul named (revelation, knowledge, prophesying, and doctrine) all denote the process of making known God's will to people.
 - 1) *Revelation* has reference to the uncovering of information that could not otherwise be learned (Rom. 16:25-26).
 - 2) *Knowledge* is the revealing of God's divine knowledge to the understanding of mortals (Eph. 3:1-11).
 - 3) *Prophesying* denotes the ability and authority to speak for God, announcing the will of God to mankind.
 - 4) *Doctrine* means teaching; when the information had been provided and comprehended by the saints, they could impart that knowledge to others by the process of instruction. The prophet who announced God's word on a matter instructed his audience thereby.
 - d. The mere exercise of a miraculous tongue was devoid of edification to the hearers unless an intelligible, meaningful message of truth was presented to the minds of the hearers.
2. Verses 7-8: "And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"
 - a. Even instruments which produce sounds must give a distinctive sound, or else they are of no profit. Lifeless instruments must speak in the language of music to be of use in affecting the feelings and providing enjoyment to those who hear them; they must give a distinction in sounds. They must be subject to the laws of tone and rhythm, to the interval of scale and measure (Lipscomb, p.206).
 - b. When used to signal the attack, retreat, etc., the sound made by the military trumpet must be plain and understandable in order for the command to be comprehended and followed. This example is given to illustrate the apostle's point about the use of the gift of tongues.
 3. Verse 9: "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air."
 - a. This is Paul's application of the illustration given in the previous two verses. It is an extremely important verse for it discredits modern "tongue-speaking!" He emphasizes the worthlessness of tongues that are not understood; no one is edified.
 - b. Modern Pentecostal groups make mockery of God's word. They use their so-called "tongue-speaking" to stir up emotions, knowing that a man can be led anywhere once they have control of his feelings. They teach and practice a multitude of false doctrines, and their claims to speak in tongues is of itself a false doctrine!
 - c. The Corinthians had the real gift of tongues, and could use them as they chose (verse 32), but they chose to use their gifts for the wrong purpose (verses 26, 33, 40). When they used the gift to speak what could not be understood by the audience, they were merely speaking into the air! Only their own selfish egos would be gratified.
 4. Verse 10: "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification."
 - a. There are many different kinds of voices (*phoson*) in the world, and each of these has significance. This Greek word ("voice") is also used in:
 - 1) Matthew 24:31: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."
 - 2) John 3:8: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."
 - 3) Acts 2:6: "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."
 - 4) Revelation 1:15: "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters."
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- 5) Revelation 9:9: "And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle."
- 6) Revelation 18:22: "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;"
- b. Paul's illustration shows that to speak in a tongue is to speak a sensible language. Words are used to communicate ideas and information. All languages have the same purpose—communication.
5. Verse 11: "Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me."
 - a. To speak in a voice that is not understood is to make a profitless sound. If one does not know the language the speaker is using, the hearer and speaker are as foreigners to each other.
 - b. The problem is not in the language but in the hearer's inability to understand it. All the languages in the world are for a practical purpose, and none is for the sake of mere display. So should it be for those in the church who had the gift of tongues.
- C. 1 Corinthians 14:12-19: The Gift of Tongues is Useful Only if it is Understood.
 1. Verse 12: "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."
 - a. The purpose of spiritual gifts, for the church, was that it might receive edification. The tongue-speaker should have this as his chief aim. Paul is showing them that they should be primarily concerned about building up the church, and therefore they should have no desire at all about being praised for their ability to exercise this gift of tongues.
 - b. The object was not the exaltation of the speaker, but the edification of the church. It seems strange to us that someone who received a gift from God enabling him to do certain supernatural acts, could become puffed up over this power, thinking that the accomplishments were done by his own strength.
 - 1) The individual did not originate the power, did not deserve or earn the gift, and did not perform the miraculous feats by his own strength; it was a gift! He had no right to be prideful.
 - 2) The same conclusion can be reached in regards to natural talents; some who are well-blessed with natural abilities look down on others who are less-favored, as if they originated, deserved, and generated these talents by their own power.
 - 3) The same can be said about those who are more greatly favored with natural beauty, strength, or health. Such natural gifts often become a source of pride.
 - 4) The same may be said about those who are blessed with superior intellect. A highly intelligent individual might look down with disdain on those less well-favored in intelligence. But does the mind of each soul have the same level of intelligence? Is our intelligence only limited by our brain? Is the soul's intellect of one who has limited brain capacity just as bright as the soul's intellect of one who has great brain capacity? The part of each human that is made in God's image is our soul [the spirit, the inner man]. The physical part of us is derived from our biological parents—in accordance with natural law; our spirit comes directly from our Creator (Zech. 12:1).
 2. Verse 13: "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret."
 - a. In view of the foregoing information, they were to pray for the ability to interpret, knowing that the message was the important matter, not the manner by which the message came. The tongues could deliver soul-saving, faith-building, and church-edifying truths—but it was the message that gave the profit, not the mechanical method of the delivery!
 - b. But to do any good, it must be understood. Thus, the one who had the gift of speaking in a language he had not learned naturally, should pray that he might also be able to translate the meaning of the information he gave, to those who did not understand the language he used.
 - c. The means by which any of them could also obtain the gift of interpretation was in the same way any of the gifts was distributed: through the laying on of the hands of an apostle (Acts 8:15-18; 19:6; Rom. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:6). There is no record of anyone in the church receiving a miraculous gift except by the imposition of the hands of an apostle. [In the case of Cornelius, he was given his spiritual gift as a sign

- to Peter and the Jewish saints as proof to them that the Gentiles had a right to the gospel (Acts 10-11)].
- 1) Acts 8:18: "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money."
 - 2) Acts 19:6: "And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."
 - 3) Romans 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
3. Verse 14: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."
 - a. If Paul (or anyone else) should pray in a tongue which he did not understand, he would not be profited by his own prayer since he did not comprehend what he said. If one were to pray in a tongue he could not comprehend, he had no way of knowing what he is praying; and if the others could not understand it, wherein was the profit?
 - b. Prayer, and all other acts of worship, must be comprehensible to be beneficial; uttering mere noises into the air edifies no one, and can bring no glory to the Almighty.
 - c. "The reference to prayer here, and to singing in ver. 15, is designed to illustrate the propriety of the general sentiment which he is defending, that public worship should be conducted in a language that would be intelligible to the people. However well meant it might be, or however the heart might be engaged in it, yet unless it was intelligible, and the understanding could join in it, it would be vain and profitless" (Barnes, p.265).
 4. Verse 15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
 - a. Therefore, he was determined to pray and sing in such a way that he could be profited thereby—using words which he could comprehend, and he would put his spirit (heart) into it (he would be sincere in praying and singing).
 - b. For us to be profited by our worship, we must participate in it sincerely, with meaning, and understand what we are praying and singing.
 - c. This verse indicates the conclusion that was to be reached with the foregoing information in mind. Whether one prays or sings, it must be done in such a way (and in such a language) that the congregation can understand and be edified.
 - d. Does *spirit* refer to the attitude with which we pray, or to the *Holy Spirit*? In other words, is Paul showing the kind of disposition we must have in prayer, or is he speaking about inspired prayers?
 - 1) If the reference is to inspired prayers and songs, his point is: "I will sing as the Spirit directs or inspires, and I will sing in a language that those who hear can understand....I will pray and sing by the inspiration of the Spirit, and in a language that they will understand to their profit" (Lipscomb, p.208). This view *seems* to fit the context of the chapter in which Paul emphasizes the need for using the spiritual gifts to edify the church. However, this view does not fit the immediate context.
 - 2) If the reference is to the disposition of heart with which we pray and sing, Paul is teaching the much-needed lesson that our prayers and songs must be understandable and offered with sincerity and meaning. This appears to be the meaning of the verse; it is *truly* in harmony with the immediate context. In verse fourteen, the apostle specifically emphasizes *his spirit* (his heart, soul, mind). Having stated (in verse 14) that he is not profited if he prays in a strange language, he states here (verse 15) that he will pray and sing with his spirit (sincerely) and with his understanding (being aware of what he is praying and singing). John 4:24 uses *spirit* in this same sense; also Philippians 2:5.
 - a) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b) Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
 - e. The passage shows that early Christians (under apostolic authority) used singing in their worship, and that their singing was intended to be so-done as to be intelligible and edifying to all the worshippers.
 - 1) If it was not intelligible, it offered no edification; if it did not edify, it might as well be done in a foreign tongue which no one present could understand.
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- 2) Some sectarians who try to maintain a semblance of scriptural authority for their practices, have argued in recent years that there is no New Testament authority for congregational singing; this passage denies their affirmation! (cf. Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 2:12). The purpose behind their argument is to justify the use of instrumental music in worship; they admit that there is no authority for instrumental music; they assert that there is no authority for congregational singing in worship; but both of these activities are still all right! With such specious reasoning, it is no wonder that there is so much confusion in modern religion.
 - a) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - b) Colossians 3:16-17: "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. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - c) Hebrews 2:12: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."
5. Verses 16-17: "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say men at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified."
 - a. He broadens the scope of his statement to include others who are present. If one who does not understand your speech is in the audience, he cannot say "amen" to your prayers. Although you offer a wonderful prayer, it profits him not one whit unless he can understand what you have said.
 - b. "To bless" means to "give thanks" (Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19). One approves a prayer and makes it his own by saying "amen" (either silently or audibly). But one cannot give assent to what he does not understand; it does not matter how well-worded the prayer was, it is profitless to you if it is not understood.
 - 1) Matthew 26:26: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body."
 - 2) Luke 22:19: "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."
6. Verses 18-19: "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."
 - a. With no boast intended, Paul affirms that he was able to speak in more languages than all the Corinthians. But he had rather speak five words which he could understand than ten thousand words which he did not understand.
 - b. The occasion he has in mind was in the assemblies of the saints. If it were possible for him to utter only five understandable words in the assembly, and by those words to offer edification to those present, he had rather do that than to offer ten thousand words which no one could comprehend. Meaningless sounds can offer no edification.

D. 1 Corinthians 14:20-25: Comparison of the Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues.

1. Verse 20: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."
 - a. The Corinthians had been acting like children, somehow. Paul orders them to grow up. In malice they were to be as children, who do not hold grudges. But in their understanding, he admonishes them to be mature.
 - b. Obviously, they had been misusing their gift of tongues; since they were prone to being puffed up with pride in some other things (4:6, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4), it is likely that they also gloried in their ability to speak with tongues. This is probably the reason Paul stated that prophesying was greater than tongue-speaking (verse 5).
 - c. Speaking in tongues would be a more "showy" gift than prophesying, for the latter "merely" gave forth
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- the word of God (which is not highly esteemed by worldly-minded people), but speaking in tongues demonstrates a special ability.
- d. As there was no room for competition between those saints who possessed spiritual gifts, so there must be none among those who rely on natural ability and strengths in setting forth the Lord's work. We ought not exalt one preacher, elder, teacher, song leader, or deacon above others; as long as each is doing the best he can do in serving God, his efforts are acceptable to God.
2. Verse 21: "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord."
 - a. The quotation is from Isaiah 28:11-12 (cf. Deut. 28:46-49). Isaiah was telling the drunken priests who mocked him that God would speak to them in a very different way: by the Assyrians, who spoke a language the Jews did not understand. Since the Jews refused to heed what the prophets spoke to them of God's will, God said punishment would be brought on them by those who spoke a tongue they did not know (strange tongues, lips of strangers). Being spoken to by this strange tongue was a mark of God's displeasure and punishment.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 28:46-48: "And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."
 - 2) Isaiah 28:11-12: "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear."
 - b. From this quotation Paul was seeking to show them that it was not a mark of divine favor for them to have masters (or teachers) whose language they could not understand. They were turning a blessing (the gift of tongues which was intended to edify them) into a curse. By misusing the gift they were not inviting God's favor or accruing any profit to themselves. When properly used, the gift of tongues was a blessing: it could teach, bring about a better understanding of God's will, and thus edify them. But to use it as a mere display was to misuse the gift and to invite God's displeasure.
 3. Verse 22: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."
 - a. The use of the gift of tongues (cf. Acts 2:1ff) was a sign to the unbeliever that the speaker spoke by the power of God. While the use of tongues could instruct the believer, it showed the unbeliever that God was with the one exercising this gift. This was the only conclusion the unbeliever could reach, since it is thus implied that he knew that the speaker had not learned the tongue through any natural means.
 - b. When the unbeliever heard someone speak by prophecy, discussing such things as the Christian Graces (2 Pet. 1:5-7), he might not be much impressed. He would see no reason to hear and heed the information thus presented. But if he saw and heard one speak the unbeliever's native language, a tongue the speaker had not learned naturally, the unbeliever would have great reason to be impressed. Thus, tongues were a sign [a miraculous proof that the speaker was uttering God's word] to one group, and prophesying was profitable for the other.
 4. Verse 23: "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"
 - a. In the church's assembly, when they all had come together, and an unbeliever was present, he would think that they were all mad if all of them were speaking in languages which few, if any, present understood. The assembly would be mass confusion; he could make no sense of it.
 - b. The argument here is one growing out of common sense. Simple logic would therefore show that they ought to speak so as to be understood, and be orderly in conducting the worship services.
 - c. Here, as in 1 Corinthians 11:20, a gathering is called for in which the whole congregation is to come together in one place. When a congregation divides the worship assembly into two or more groups (i.e., "Children Worship," "Junior Church," "Children's Bible Hour"), a violation of God's word takes
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place! Not only do they reject the example of having the whole church gather together in one place, they usually have women teaching and praying in the presence of men in these secondary groups, a plain repudiation of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 14:34: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:8-15: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."
5. Verses 24-25: "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."
- a. If prophesying is exercised, the unbelievers present in the assembly could be taught what they needed to know, and those convicted could be led to become Christians. The "unlearned" man is one who does not know the truth. Thus, through the setting forth of the truth by means of the prophets, with the message properly confirmed by the appropriate signs, he could be taught his true condition and brought to salvation. Preaching lays bare the sinner's heart; it is seldom a painless experience.
 - 1) Acts 2:36-37: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"
 - 2) Acts 24:25: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 4) James 1:23-24: "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."
 - b. This passage does not clash with verse 22. The difference is the subject being taught. "There [verse 22] the apostle is speaking of a sign to attract the attention of the unbeliever; here his attention is already attracted. He has come to the assembly of the church, and is listening to the words spoken there in the name of Jesus Christ. And as faith comes by hearing, there will be no need of signs to induce him to become a believer" (Lipscomb, p.213).
 - c. Gibberish and jabbering have no instructional power; they have no ability to strip away a sinner's shell and lay his heart bare; there is no strength in such foolishness to convict and convert anyone. But a plain, straight-forward presentation of the word of God can do this! "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:18,21).
- E. 1 Corinthians 14:26-40: Regulation of Spiritual Gifts in Worship.
1. Verse 26: "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."
 - a. Paul gives some inspired counsel regulating their conduct in worship. He begins this section by rebuking them for the confusion they had caused in these assemblies by the misuse of their tongue-speaking gifts. Everyone has a psalm, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation.

- b. They were all trying to exercise these things at the same time (verse 27). The result was confusion, with little or no edifying being accomplished. And the visitors would go away thinking they were mad (verse 23). Little that was good and much that was evil was being accomplished. This absurd condition must be changed for the good of precious souls! "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (verse 33).
 2. Verses 27-28: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."
 - a. If there are those who have the gift of tongues, and they wish to speak, these are to be limited to two or three; and even then, they are to take turns ("by course"). This would eliminate the confusion and disorder that existed. This command repudiates the usual Pentecostal pattern which thrives on disorder and hysteria.
 - b. These tongues are to be interpreted for those who do not know the languages being used. If no interpreter is present, then the tongue-speaker is to keep silence. He can worship privately, to himself.
 - c. If a Frenchman comes into our assembly, and understands no English, he can do the best he can by worshipping privately, communing with God in his own heart, as the services progress. The tune of some of the songs will bring to his mind at least part of the words; he can follow along in his own language. He can likely make out some of the biblical references, and thus follow as much of that as he can in his Bible. And certainly he can eat the Lord's Supper with as much meaning as anyone present, and give of his means as we do. While we pray together, he can silently offer his own prayer to the God of heaven!
 - d. In this same way, the man of this passage could "speak to himself and to God."
 3. Verses 29-31: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."
 - a. The prophets who are minded to present some message from God are to be limited to two or three. If all the prophets spoke at once, or if too many of them tried to participate, confusion would reign. More than three was forbidden at one service; and following the pattern of verse 31, they were to take turns, with the other inspired men judging (discerning) whether the thing spoken was so.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:10: "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
 - 2) 1 John 2:26-27: "These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."
 - 3) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - b. The service was to be edifying to the church; to accomplish this end, truth was to be presented; and for the truth to be effective, the proceedings must be orderly and free of confusion.
 - c. If a message is suddenly given by God to a prophet waiting his turn, the first is to hold his peace while this prophet delivers the message. Confusion is to be avoided. Speaking the truth, which was being "checked" by the other prophets, would provide learning and comfort to the hearers.
 - d. It is imperative that the truth be delivered, otherwise there is no profit to the hearers and God is not glorified. What, then, about all those preachers who speak about everything except God's word when they address worship audiences?
 4. Verses 32-33: "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."
 - a. The statement in verse 31 shows that those who were endowed with the spiritual gifts had control over their use. The plain statement here, plus the whole tenor of the passage, shows that they could determine when or if the gift was to be exercised. The influence was not such as to destroy self-control.
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- b. If they could not restrain themselves then God was the author of confusion. The one speaking could stop when he pleased; the other could wait until the proper time. By following the instructions given here by Paul, their services would be orderly, confusion would be eliminated, and God would be glorified.
- c. God cannot be charged with causing the mass confusion with which their assemblies had been characterized; nor can God be accused of being the author of the confusion and error that prevail in the assemblies of sectarian churches.
- d. In all the assemblies of the saints, the orderliness Paul outlined here is to prevail. There is a pattern for worship! Inspiration did not give a set format or order in which worship was to be done, but it did give the items to be done.
 - 1) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 2) Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
 - 3) Acts 20:7: "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 11:20-30: "When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
 - 6) 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."
5. Verses 34-35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."
 - a. Paul is not speaking of physical buildings. When assembled, all together, in one group (verse 23), this prohibition was to be enforced.
 - 1) No instruction in the New Testament is more positive and clear and universal. However plausible may be the reasons which men may offer for disregarding this injunction, and for allowing women to take an active part in conducting public worship, the authority of God still forbids it.
 - 2) They are to keep silent; they are not permitted to speak—this is what God has said! From the first, the woman was placed in subjection to the man.
 - a) Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."
 - b) 1 Peter 3:5-6: "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid

with any amazement."

- 3) It is further taught with greater detail in 1 Timothy 2:8-15: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." Women are not permitted to usurp the authority God gave to men.
- 4) This forbids them to present a public discourse, or to offer a public prayer, in the presence of men. Women have no right to speak in the assembly and interrupt the proceedings with questions or comments. It is not their role in life to take a leading part in the services. If she has a question about something, she is to ask her husband at home (or someone else privately).
 - b. This was not merely dealing with a local situation in Corinth for the letter was also addressed to "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2).
 - c. It is shameful for women to speak in the assembly. Shame or shameful: "of that which is opposed to modesty or purity, is translated as a noun in 1 Cor. 11:6; 14:35, A.V. (R.V. 'shameful'); Eph. 5:12; in Tit. 1:11, 'filthy (lucre)', lit. 'shameful (gain)'" [Vine, p.16].
 - d. Women had spiritual gifts (Acts 2:17; 21:8-9); they are told to teach younger women (Tit. 2:3-5); their spiritual gifts could be used in that setting and privately. Women are forbidden to give a "teaching discourse" (1 Tim. 2:12), but this does not prohibit them from making a comment or asking a question in a Bible class or private situation since that is not a case where the whole church has come together in one place (1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:20: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:23: "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"
6. Verse 36: "What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?"
 - a. The Corinthians had been in violation of the foregoing principles. They had acted as if the word of God had originated with them or was meant only for them. It was not given initially at Corinth and then spread from there, but went forth from the Jewish city of Jerusalem and was brought by Paul to the Corinthians a few years later.
 - b. Apparently their pride caused them to think they were the only, or most important, congregation. One of the most fundamental principles of Christianity is selflessness.
7. Verses 37-38: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."
 - a. Paul lays down the rule by which all claims to prophetic or spiritual powers were to be tested. Some in Corinth claimed to be inspired.
 - 1) If they denied what Paul said, they were opposing the Lord, because Paul wrote by the inspiration of God. If they were truly inspired they would not and could not contradict what Paul wrote. Anyone with spiritual gifts could know the things Paul wrote were inspired; and no one speaking by spiritual gift could deny what Paul said (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3). God does not direct one man to deny what he has directed another man to affirm.
 - 2) The principle stated here is true of all his books. The Spirit would not reveal one thing to one and a contradictory thing to someone else. "To accept and obey the commandments of God as revealed in the Scriptures is the rule for all at this day by which to test their claims to spirituality" (Lipscomb, p.218).
 - a) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is*

- because *there is* no light in them."
- b) Acts 17:11-12: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."
 - c) Ephesians 3:2-5: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - d) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
- b. There are those who willfully are ignorant. These cannot be helped for they have rejected God's truth. Jesus warned against casting pearls before swine; they would only turn on you and attack (Matt. 7:6).
- 1) "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos. 4:17).
 - 2) "But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:13-14).
 - 3) "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear" (Matt. 13:15-16).
8. Verse 39: "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."
- a. Paul sets forth the superiority of prophecy. While the gifts were being given and exercised, they were to be sought and used. Prophecy was greater than tongues, but both had their proper functions.
 - b. *Covet* is used in a good sense here. The basic idea in the word is "desire." Paul is simply saying that they ought to desire to receive the gift which would enable them to prophesy (to speak God's word).
9. Verse 40: "Let all things be done decently and in order."
- a. They had abused spiritual gifts. They needed to be orderly and decent in the worship. Worship should be offered with the proper motives, not haphazardly.
 - b. This verse summarizes all that he has said. Paul applied the principle to their use of spiritual gifts, but the principle applies to our worship. In an atmosphere of confusion or discord, it is not possible for God to be glorified or for the saints to be edified, or for sinners to be instructed.
 - c. Worship that is edifying to the worshipers and glorifying to God must be orderly and decently done. "Let all things be done in an 'appropriate' and 'becoming' manner; 'decorously,' as becomes the worship of God. Let all be done in 'order, regularly;' without confusion, discord, tumult. The word used here *kata* (NT:2596) *taxin* (NT:5010) is properly a military term, and denotes the order and regularity with which an army is drawn up. This is a general rule, which was to guide them. It was simple, and easily applied....Their good sense would tell them what became the worship of God; and their pious feelings would restrain them from excesses and disorders. This rule is still applicable, and is safe in guiding us in many things in regard to the worship of God. There are many things which cannot be subjected to 'rule,' or exactly prescribed; there are many things which may and must be left to pious feeling, to good sense, and to the views of Christians themselves, about what will promote their edification and the conversion of sinners. The rule in such questions is plain. Let all be done 'decorously,' as becomes the worship of the great and holy God; let all be without confusion, noise, and disorder" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - d. As a youngster, this scribe attended the services of Pentecostal groups. When the preachers got some in the audience "stirred-up," bedlam was the result. Perhaps half the audience would begin to shout and pray and to weep and wail. Confusion and disorder prevailed—but God demands order and decency in worship. Acceptable worship comes from orderly, faith-filled hearts, and is sincerely offered with deep reverence. Each worship act must also be in accordance with the truth.
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- e. We must operate decently in all of our affairs of life.
- 1) To do something decently is to act in a **seemly manner**, to act **appropriately**, to act **honestly**. Decency applies with equal force to our words, thoughts, and motives, as well as to our deeds.
 - 2) DECENTLY: “Only once is this word found in our English Bible (1 Cor 14:40). It is in the last verse of that remarkable chapter on the proper use of spiritual gifts in the church and the proper conduct of public worship. It does not refer here to absence of impurity or obscenity. It rather refers to good order in the conduct of public worship. All things that are done and said in public worship are to be in harmony with that becoming and reverent spirit and tone that befit the true worshippers of God” [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft].
 - 3) Since we are to conduct ourselves during the worship services in an orderly fashion as determined by God’s word, so we must conduct ourselves decently as determined by God’s word. Anything that is out of harmony with the direct commands and instructions of the Bible are to be avoided; anything that is out of harmony with the principles of the Bible is to be avoided; anything that is out of harmony with the examples given in the Bible is to be avoided.
 - 4) If decency is absent from the various segments of society, our society itself will be indecent.
 - 5) Decency [seemliness, appropriateness, honesty] is necessary in civil affairs, but is often missing today.
 - 6) Decency [seemliness, appropriateness, honesty] is necessary in social affairs, but we often see the opposite.
 - 7) Decency [seemliness, appropriateness, honesty] is necessary in the family, but is not always present.
 - 8) Decency is necessary in the school, at work, and in business, but are frequently missing.
 - 9) Decency is essential in all church functions, and especially so in worship activities. How can a congregation deem itself as pleasing to God when indecency is apparent in the way its members dress, talk, and conduct themselves in the services?
- f. We must always be orderly and decent in our worship of the Almighty.
- 1) In the acts of worship we offer to him:
 - a) Praying—not to impress men, but to address God.
 - Acts 2:42: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
 - 1 Timothy 2:8: “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”
 - b) Singing—not to entertain others with our vocal expertise, but to glorify God and edify others.
 - Ephesians 5:18-19: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - Colossians 3:16-17: “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. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - c) Studying his word—not to show our knowledge, but to obtain more information.
 - Acts 2:42: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
 - Acts 20:7: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”
 - d) Giving of our means—not to be praised for our generosity, but develop greater spirituality.
 - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order
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to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

- 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”
- e) Eating the Lord’s Supper—not to make it the prime act of worship, but to express love for Christ.
- Acts 2:42: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
 - Acts 20:7: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”

F. Were the Instructions and Restrictions of 1 Corinthians 14 Limited to the First Century?

1. Some prominent and well-respected brethren have suggested that we have no parallel assembly to that which is discussed in this chapter. These good brethren say that we are not to use 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 to teach that women are to keep silence in our modern worship services, arguing that the meeting Paul discusses has no modern-day counterpart.
2. Without seeking to engage in controversy on this matter, there are some items that enter into the discussion, showing a parallel to our worship today:

1 Corinthians 14	Our Worship Today
Singing—verse 15	Singing—Col. 3:16
Praying—verse 15	Praying—1 Tim. 2:8
Teaching—verse 5	Teaching—Acts 20:7
Unbelievers Present—verse 22	Unbelievers Often Present
Instruction Using Spiritual Gifts	Instruction Using Revealed Word
Inspired Prophesying	Scriptural Teaching Using Natural Talents
Lord’s Supper—verse 23; 11:20	Lord’s Supper—Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-30

The Miraculous Gift of Tongues

A. Due to the current confusion over this issue, we need to be informed on the subject.

1. There are many different "brands" of Pentecostal-Holiness groups which claim to be able to speak in tongues.
2. The Neo-Pentecostal movement has crossed denominational lines, and many Protestant and Catholic groups claim to have received this ability.
3. In the past few decades, a goodly number in the Lord's church have also made this claim. The most noted of this group is Pat Boone. There was even a debate between a former gospel preacher (Benjamin Franklin) and Guy Woods on the issue of whether the miraculous gifts of the first century were intended for our time.
4. The ones claiming the "gift of tongues" today are very aggressive in pressing their claims; they can make some arguments which are transparent only to those who know the truth; they are very prideful and look down on anyone who does not claim to have received it.
5. Our aim is to study the subject as presented in the Bible; our honest intention is to learn what God has said about the subject; we do not intend to read into the sacred text what any man teaches, but to study to see what the Bible contains. To do any less than this is to be dishonest! And to teach or practice error will condemn the soul.
 - a. Galatians 1:8: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - c. 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

B. The phenomenon of tongue-speaking is strictly a New Testament practice.

1. It was unknown during the Old Testament dispensations (ages). The closest thing to it in the Old Testament was the occasion when God caused Balaam's donkey to speak with man's voice. It was an intelligent statement, spoken in an understandable language, and addressed a definite need (Num. 22:22-35). Balaam was attempting to vilify God's people, thus the exchange was required.
 2. There was no need for the gift of tongues from Adam until the tower of Babel: everyone spoke the same language. When Noah tried to get the people of his generation to repent and amend their ways, he could address them in their native language since only one language was current.
 3. From the time of the tower of Babel to the giving of the Law of Moses there was no need for the miraculous tongue-speaking ability. God dealt with man through the head of the family, and the family all spoke the same language. There was no written word from God during this time and no commandment had been given about spreading God's word to all mankind. God did that as he spoke with the various patriarchs; and those who were perverse were left alone.
 4. There was no need for the miraculous tongue-speaking ability during the Mosaic Age. God gave a written law to Israel but he did not compel them to spread this word among the Gentile nations. His people were to live in complete obedience to God's will, and thus by the influence of their godly lives and by virtue of the obvious blessings and protection God would give them, other people would be drawn to Israel's God.
 5. There was no need for this miraculous tongue-speaking during the Lord's personal ministry for he came only to the Jews, a people (in Palestine) who spoke the language Jesus spoke. "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24).
 6. There was no need for miraculous tongue-speaking when the disciples carried out the limited commission.
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They were commanded to go only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," the Jews in Palestine, who all spoke the same language: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:5-7).

7. But when the gospel was given, God ordained that its message was to be carried to every person in every nation. By this time there were thousands of languages and dialects being spoken among the human family. There was no time for the Lord's first followers to learn these many languages so as to be able to properly instruct them in the will of Christ. Therefore, in his wisdom and by his power, God supplied each of the apostles and many of their converts with the ability to preach the gospel in the various languages of the day.

C. The truth of this conclusion is very obvious when the New Testament is consulted.

1. The prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 began to be fulfilled on the Pentecost day of Acts 2. Acts 2:16-17 shows that God intended to give miraculous gifts to "all flesh." This excluded all animals, but included Jews and Gentiles: These are the "all flesh" of the context. Miraculous gifts were given to some of the Jews (the 12 apostles) on Pentecost day; other Jews later received the gifts, as did some Samaritans (Acts 8); gifts were given to Gentiles beginning in Acts 10. These were the only two classes of people on earth, according to the Old Testament arrangement.
 - a. Women were included in the reception of miraculous gifts: "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8-9).
 - b. Only the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but those on whom they laid hands could receive one of the nine spiritual gifts identified in I Corinthians 12:8-10. It was only by this means that they could receive them.
 - 1) Acts 8:15-18: "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money."
 - 2) Acts 19:6: "And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."
 - 3) Romans 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 1:6: "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."
 - c. Nearly always there have been counterfeit miracles present. Paul calls them "lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9). The Witch of Endor claimed to do such things (1 Sam. 28). Before his conversion, Simon the Sorcerer used sorcery to bewitch the people, causing them to think that he was the "great power of God" (Acts 8:9-10). There is a great deal of the same kind of hocus-pocus being passed off on ignorant and unsuspecting people today, but these are all lying wonders; and the so-called tongues held up as proof of Holy Spirit baptism and as evidence God is with the advocates are nothing more than counterfeit miracles! This we shall demonstrate.
2. Mark 16:14-20: "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

- a. Five signs were given the apostles to enable them to successfully preach and confirm the spoken word. The gift of tongues served two functions: it gave them the ability to communicate the gospel to others who were of a different language, and the fact that they could speak that foreign language without having learned it by the usual means would of itself be a sign to those who were thereby instructed.
 - b. The primary promise of these miraculous gifts was given to the apostles; but it later is shown that the apostles were able to lay hands on their converts and bestow one or another of these gifts on them. Thus, we read of Philip performing certain miracles in Samaria after having the apostles lay hands on him (Acts 6:5-8; 8:5-13). But Philip was unable to confer the gifts to anyone else. It was only when the apostles Peter and John came that miraculous gifts were given to the Samaritans: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-19). Peter pointed out to Simon that this authority was not intended for him; it was a power reserved only to the apostles of Christ.
 - c. If one claims to have the ability to speak in tongues, consistency demands that also either he, or others of his tribe, be able to drink deadly poison or take up deadly snakes without any harm to himself, to cast out demons, and heal the sick of any kind and without a failure. But in virtually every instance the only thing they claim is the ability to "speak with tongues!" Mind you, what they have in mind by speaking in tongues is a kind of gibberish and jabber, meaningless sounds which they assert is an "ecstatic utterance" or "language of angels." In some cases they even claim to have those who can "interpret" their sounds. But when they send out "missionaries" to a foreign nationality, those who are sent will have to study to learn that unknown tongue just as everyone else must do! When an angel spoke, it was always in the understandable language of mankind.
3. Acts 2:1-13: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine."
 - a. The pronoun "they" of verse 1 has as its antecedent the noun "apostles" of chapter 1:26. Therefore, only the apostles were included in the miraculous gifts of 2:1-4. This is further shown by the fact that only men of Galilee were speaking with the tongues (verse 7), and all the apostles were Galileans. (cf. Acts 1:11). The ones speaking in the tongues were *men* (Acts 2:13); therefore, none of the women of 1:14 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit! Only men received it; only men of Galilee received it; only the apostles received it; the 120 did not receive it. In Acts 2:14, Peter stood up with the *eleven* (not with the 120; not with the multitude).
 - b. They were speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (vs. 4). The source of the tongues and the intelligent message spoken thereby was the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The tongues are called "languages" (vs. 6); each group having a different language heard the apostles speak in their own tongue "wherein we were born" (vs. 8). The apostles spoke to these people in the native languages of the people present.
 - d. There were as many as thirteen or fourteen different groups of Jews and proselytes, although the same
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- language may have been shared by one or more groups. It is likely that only twelve separate languages were being spoken, one by each of the twelve apostles.
- e. The sounds that were being uttered were intelligent and intelligible words which expressed an important and understandable message. Those in the great audience heard the apostles as they spake concerning "the wonderful works of God" (vs. 11). If they had not understood the apostles' speech they could not have known what was being said: they could have thought God's name was being blasphemed! But they fully understood what the apostles were saying for they spoke in the people's languages.
 - f. The effect this tongue-speaking phenomenon had on the multitude was predictable: "They were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" (vs. 12). The two-fold effect of this miraculous tongue-speaking is easily seen: The apostles were able to communicate the information God required, and the use of these foreign languages by those lowly and uneducated men of Galilee proved that they were operating under the supernatural power of God!
 - g. Furthermore, since the Spirit provided the ability and the words, their message was inspired, infallible, and authoritative—the word of God!
4. But someone might object: "The tongues of Acts 2 are languages; but we are speaking of the tongues of 1 Corinthians 12-14." However, the same Greek word (*glossa*) is used in Mark 16:17, Acts 2, and in 1 Corinthians.
 - a. The only times in these passages where a different Greek word is used are in (1) Acts 2:8: "And how hear we every man in our own *tongue* (*dialektos*), wherein we were born?" And (2) in 1 Corinthians 14:21 where a quotation is given from Deuteronomy 28:46-49: "In the law it is written, With men of *other tongues* (*eteroglossois*) and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord." In the former case, a *dialect* (a language) is meant, and in the latter it is still a language that is indicated. In neither case does the Bible have reference to an "ecstatic utterance" or "language of angels."
 - b. The term "unknown tongue" found often in 1 Corinthians does not contain the word *unknown* in the original—the translators added that word for the purpose of giving clarity to the statement; however, many have misconstrued the term to mean a language that is unknown to anyone but God. The languages spoken by the Holy Spirit-powered men were languages that they had never studied; languages which many people ordinarily spoke.
 - 1) The *new* tongues of Mark 16:17 are the *other* tongues of Acts 2:4. The *new* (*kainias*) tongues with which they would speak (Mark 16:17) "denotes new, or that which is unaccustomed or unused, not new in time, recent, but new as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old.... These languages, however, were 'new' and 'different,' not in the sense that they had never been heard before, or that they were new to the hearers, for it is plain {from Acts 2:8} that this is not the case; they were new languages to the speakers, different from those in which they were accustomed to speak" (Vine's *Expository Dictionary*, p.109).
 - 2) When God spoke to men and women in the old times, he used the language that they understood (cf. Ps. 119:105). Thus, when he wanted to instruct people or edify the church he inspired men to use languages which could be understood by the recipients of the message given. There is no instruction or edification in the jabbering of modern "tongue-speakings!"
 5. The Great Commission required the saints to carry the gospel into all the world and present it to men of every nation (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:8; Col. 1:5-6, 24; Rom. 10:13-18). They were able to have the great success they had only because they were able to address the message of the gospel to people in the native languages of the various nations they taught. The Lord always provides what is necessary to accomplish the job he assigns his people to do; in this case, he gave them the miraculous ability to communicate the gospel in languages which they did not have the time or the means to learn through the natural process. Remember, that in those days nearly everyone was illiterate; there were few schools; the average person did not have access to education. And since the need for the gospel was so great and the time was so short, this miraculous aid was required. With the aid God gave them, they were able to accomplish in a few short years, even though they did not have the means of transportation and communication we have, and even without the great advantage of printing we have,
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or any of our other modern conveniences and inventions, things which we have not been able to do with all these things. Why?

- a. We have restored the pure doctrine of the New Testament. The Bible is available in nearly every major language. In thousands of congregations around the world there are uncounted thousands of saints who know the truth and who have the ability to help others to learn it.
- b. What is lacking in our day is willingness to apply the gospel to ourselves. We need the zeal, the love, the dedication, the joy, the sacrificial spirit which characterized our brethren in the first century. They possessed the knowledge of the truth of God's word; they had the zeal and the other spiritual qualities to serve the Lord properly. The Lord gave them the tongues to enable them to do the work. They needed the tongues (and the other spiritual gifts) to be successful. We do not need the tongues, but we do need the degree of zeal, etc., which were common qualities in the early church.
- c. We have a major problem on our hands: the problem of an ignorant church! Most of the brotherhood today does not know the Bible. Many do not know why we cannot speak in tongues today; there is a multitude of other significant things about which there is much general ignorance on the part of many of our members.

D. How may we account for the modern phenomenon known as "tongue-speaking?"

1. The following paragraph is from Jimmy Jividen, who has written a book on the subject of tongue speaking [*glossolalia*]. The quotation given here is from an article which appeared in "The Spiritual Sword," October, 1972, p.23: "Tongue speaking is the contemporary psychological phenomenon of ecstatic utterances which is interpreted by its advocates as being a miraculous gift from God. It is common in all world religions, both ancient and modern. It is found in pagan religions, spiritualism and throughout the broad spectrum of Catholicism and Protestantism. Oftentimes it is found completely outside the religious context. One can learn so-called 'tongue speaking' through practice. It may also be induced through hypnotic suggestion. There is nothing divine or miraculous about it. It is purely a human phenomenon. There is nothing wrong with the phenomenon itself. It is the interpretation of it being a gift from God that is erroneous. The present phenomenon of so-called 'tongue speaking', like drugs, hypnosis and shock treatments, perhaps could be used under controlled situations by professionals to release anxiety and overcome inhibitions. It becomes error, however, when it is interpreted as being a special gift from God."
2. The following information is gleaned from an article written by Eugene Clevenger, "The Spiritual Sword," April, 1974, pp.27-29: "The claims of modern-day religionists to speak in tongues are without any scriptural basis whatsoever, and they prove absolutely nothing as far as the speaker's relationship with God is concerned. The history of glossolalia furnishes clear and abundant evidence that tongue-speaking has not been confined to worshippers of God and servants of Christ, but pagans, unbelievers, and all kinds of people in religious error have made the same claim and demonstrated it to their own satisfaction."
 - a. "Pagan Tongue Speaking. J. Behm states that in Greek religion ecstatic glossolalia was practiced among the cult of the Thracian Dionysus as well as the Delphic Phrygia, the Bacides, the Sybils, etc. Even the pagan Greeks, to whom Jehovah was the unknown God, could lay claim to speaking in tongues as well as to all that was kin to it— divination, demonic prophecy, the use of unintelligible lists of magical names and letters to invoke and conjure their gods and spirits. E.R. Dodds describes the Apollo oracle at Delphi and the Dionysus mystery cult, and it can be said that the similarities of purpose, manifestation, and result between these pagan mystery cults and today's glossolalia are strikingly obvious. It is all pure gibberish that serves no useful purpose!
 - b. "Non-Religious Tongue-Speaking. George B. Cutten cites two thoroughly investigated cases of tongue-speaking that were not associated with Christianity or any other form of religion. A cursory look at each example is enlightening. The first was that of Mlle. Helene Smith (a pseudonym) who was born in 1864 in Geneva. Her father was a linguist of great ability, speaking six languages, and her mother was 'somewhat mediumistic and had visions.' At 28 she became acquainted with spiritualists, and soon was the principal medium of a group. She claimed to be under the guidance of a spirit named Leopold. In a trance in February, 1896, she journeyed to the planet Mars and returned speaking a few words of the Martian [language] fluently and translating it. A professor of psychology at the University of Geneva, Th. Flournoy, observed and studied the case in depth, and he concluded the language was a prefabrication ingeniously done by Mlle. Smith. The process seemingly consisted

in taking certain French sentences or phrases and replacing each word in them with some other word chosen at random. Thus, it was simply French with the sounds changed.

- c. "Religious Tongue-Speaking. Montanus (c. 156 A.D.) was said to have been caught up by the Holy Spirit and placed in a state of rapture and ecstasy, and began to speak in a strange language. The uneducated St. Hildegard (1098- 1179 A.D.) claimed to have seen a fiery light which went through her brain, breast, and heart; she understood and interpreted the Scriptures without having a grammatical knowledge of the Latin language. She also pretended to speak in an unknown tongue, which, upon examination, presents 'an amusing jumble of words, German, Latin, and misunderstood Hebrew.' French Huguenots (1685-1700s) claimed to speak in tongues. They claimed supernatural guidance in fleeing from persecution, and predicted an imminent return of Christ to establish an earthly kingdom. The Shakers claimed the ability to speak in tongues. Article 7 of the Mormon Articles of Faith still claims the gift of tongues for Mormons. Neo-Pentecostal adherents in many sectarians bodies claim this ability."
3. Jividen gives the following information in his book, *Glossolalia*:
 - a. Glossolalia has long been studied as a psychological phenomenon brought on through severe stress, hypnotism, auto-hypnotism and mental illness. Other causes can be given for the phenomenon, but unresolved spiritual tension must be considered a major contributing factor in a majority of the cases. When a person's life style runs contrary to his ideals, severe personality conflicts are produced. Tensions build up in the subconscious to a great degree of intensity. Sometimes these tensions are released through drugs, sex and violence. The cathartic experience of highly emotional religious excitement such as glossolalia may be used to release the tensions. In both situations tensions are released, but the solution is inadequate and temporary. The problem is a spiritual one and must be resolved through spiritual means dictated in the Scriptures. There must be repentance—genuine and from the heart. There must be confession—open and without excuse. Forgiveness must be sought of God through the means he has set in the Scriptures—whether baptism or prayer. One can not solve spiritual tensions through physical means. One must not seek cheap grace through psychologically induced religious ecstasy. It is easier to get caught up in religious excitement than to repent. It is less humbling to seek and find a new way of divine grace and call the old way inadequate, than it is to admit error before the people one has wronged. No doubt one of the reasons for the popularity of glossolalia is that it promises a way to "instant salvation," "cheap grace," and "immediate spirituality." Spiritual tensions are resolved temporarily without having to do it God's way. The ego is not hurt so much this way. (p.153).
 - b. A number of recent studies have been made on the speech of glossolalia. Pattison brings a number of these together in his excellent article in the *Journal of American Scientific Affiliation*. From these studies four things can be shown: (pp.162ff)
 - 1) The speech is not foreign language. Sounds similar to foreign phrases are sometimes uttered either by accident or from the memory storehouse of the subconscious mind. When the mind is under the influence of some powerful external force, when the unconscious self is roused to activity, when the powers of memory are subjected to an abnormal stimulus, foreign languages, the words of which have fallen on the ears of the subject without any conscious attention on his part, and have again without any consciousness of it on his part been impressed on his memory, may be clearly uttered. The same phenomenon can be observed in subjects under hypnosis or under anesthetic. The subconscious mind is such that it can recall things which the conscious mind has totally forgotten.
 - 2) The speech is learned and perfected by practice. Many glossolalists like to practice their vocabulary and add new sounds to their speech. Several linguistic studies suggest that glossolalists develop their glossolalic speech from ill-formed structure to "practiced" and "polished" glossolalic speech. Thus the linguistic qualities of the glossolalist depends to some extent on the stage of development of glossolalia.
 - 3) It can be imitated in the laboratory without being detected by those accustomed to hearing glossolalia. One does not have to be a glossolalist to produce glossolalic speech. Al Carlson at the University of California recorded the speech of glossolalists during their spiritual exercise.

Later he recorded the speech of non-glossolalist volunteers whom he asked to speak spontaneously in an unknown language. Glossolalists were asked to rate the different recordings. They were unable to distinguish them. A similar test was made by Werner Cohn of the University of British Columbia with identical results.

- 4) The speech has certain characteristics of children's speech. (p. 162). It has long been observed that glossolalia is similar to the speech of children in many ways. Some have suggested that glossolalia is a "regression to an early mode of speech in which vocalization is used for purposes other than just the communication of rational thought." It appears that children utter their gibberish for the sheer joy of uttering sound. True of the glossolalist?
 - c. "Glossolalia has specific linguistic structure based on the language tongue of the speaker, that the linguistic organization is limited, and that the capacity to speak in this type of semi-organized language can be replicated under experimental conditions. Thus glossolalia does not appear to be a 'strange language.' but rather the aborted formation of familiar language." (p. 164).
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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

A. The Bible gives women certain privileges and options in life.

1. They may pursue a career if they choose.
 - a. Acts 16:14-15: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us."
 - b. Acts 18:2-3: "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers."
2. Christian women have the privilege of teaching other women and children.
 - a. Acts 21:9: "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."
 - b. Titus 2:3-5: "The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."
3. Christian women may privately be involved in teaching men: "And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26).
4. They may marry and raise a family: the highest and noblest calling she can fulfill in her native sphere.
5. They can obey the gospel and grow in the Christian graces, serving the Lord in countless ways, doing things for which they are preeminently qualified and suited.
6. They have the challenge of bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, preparing them not only for life, but also for eternity.

B. The Bible gives women a subordinate role to men.

1. This is not due to any insufficiency on their part; it is the way God ordered it.
 - a. Genesis 1:26-27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
 - b. Genesis 2:18: "And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 11:3: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God."
 - d. 1 Corinthians 11:8-9: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. *9* Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."
 - e. Men and women are equal in value and in the blessings they are given in Christ: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29).
2. God never intended for women to be mere property; he gave them safeguards in the Old Testament.
 - a. Deuteronomy 21:15-17: "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, *both* the beloved and the hated; and *if* the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit *that* which he hath, *that* he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, *which is indeed* the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated *for* the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he *is* the

beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn *is* his."

- b. Deuteronomy 24:1-4: "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him 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 giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance."
- c. Matthew 19:3-9: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

3. The New Testament requires that the wife be in subjection to her own husband; and the husband is required to love his wife as he loves himself: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it....For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh....Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband" (Eph. 5:22-25, 31, 33).

4. A woman is out of order when she tries to change God's plan; so is the man.

C. 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

1. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (1 Tim. 2:1-7). In verses 1-2, Paul exhorts that prayers are to be made for all men. Verses 3-7 deal with reasons why we are to pray for all men.
2. Verse 8 then states: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
 - a. "I will therefore..." An authoritative injunction. What he names is not a mere suggestion, but a binding decree (1 Cor. 14:37). With this verse Paul returns to the thought introduced in verse 1. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).
 - b. "I will therefore that men pray..." *Men* is from the Greek word *aner* which is used "with reference to sex, and so to distinguish a man from a woman" (Thayer, p.45). Vine says *aner* "is never used of the female sex" (p.34). In Acts 8:3,12 this word is also used to make the same distinction.
 - 1) Acts 8:3: "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison."
 - 2) Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
 - c. The context of 1 Timothy 2:8 shows that a contrast is being drawn between the obligations of men and

- women. What is said in verse 8 applies to the man, not the woman. The Greek has the article *the*, thus the injunction is issued literally to *the men*, and further emphasizes the restriction given. The restriction does not forbid women to pray at all, for the Bible gives examples where women did pray (1 Sam. 2:1; Luke 2:36-37). But there is no example in Scripture where a woman prayed audibly when men were present. We conclude that when both men and women are worshipping together, the men are to lead in praying.
- d. "I will therefore that men pray every where [in every place—ASV]..." Where ever and whenever Christian men and women are gathered, this restriction applies. This includes public and private gatherings. Men are to lead the prayers.
 - e. "...Lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
 - 1) The bodily position is not being bound here for the Bible gives examples of prayers being offered where the hands were not lifted up (Luke 18:13). Lifting up the hands during prayer was a Jewish custom.
 - 2) Prayers are to be free from anger and doubting (disputing—ASV). Men are not to offer angry prayers and pray *at* one another.
3. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Tim. 2:9-10).
 - a. Modest apparel is clothing that is appropriate, decent and becoming. It is between the extremes of gaudiness on the one hand and indecency on the other. Christian ladies are to dress modestly on all occasions.
 - b. Shamefacedness is a sense of shame that precedes and prevents any shameful acts (Thayer). It implies self-restraint that a woman imposes on herself to avoid anything that is low and unbecoming of a woman professing godliness. Sobriety is the result of this self-restraint (Lipscomb).
 - c. "...Not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but...with good works." This is a warning against extravagance in dress and appearance. The emphasis a woman is to make is in doing good works, not outward adorning.
 4. "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 Tim. 2:11-12).
 - a. "Let the woman learn in silence..."
 - 1) In 1 Corinthians 14:34 the word *silence* is from a Greek word (*sigao*) meaning "absolute silence" [with reference to public speaking; it is a stronger word than that used in 1 Tim. 2:11]. The word *speak* in 1 Corinthians 14:35 is from a word meaning "to utter a sound, to emit a voice, make one's self heard" (Thayer).
 - 2) But the restriction is to making a public address. [If 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 requires a complete silence on the part of women in the public worship assembly (1 Cor. 14:23), it is to be understood that making the good confession and singing are exceptions to the rule].
 - b. But the word *silence* in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is from a different word (*hesuchia*) which means "quietness; tranquillity; causing no disturbance to others." Busybodies in 2 Thessalonians 3:12 were told to work with *quietness*; and the same word is translated *peaceable* in 1 Timothy 2:2. Hence, Paul is not in this verse demanding that women be absolutely silent, but to be quiet, or tranquil, and cause no disturbance. The use of the present word gives women the right to ask and answer questions, read scriptures, and make comments in a class situation, or in private gatherings, when men are present. But in the worship assemblies the women are not given this right.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 forbids a woman to speak (with the exceptions of confessing Christ and singing: Rom. 10:10; Eph. 5:19) in the worship assemblies. But here this passage does not demand absolute silence, it gives women the right to ask and answer questions, read scriptures, and make comments in a class situation, or in private gatherings, when men are present. But in the worship assemblies the women are required to be silent.
 5. "...But I suffer not a woman to teach..." This is not a blanket restriction applying to every situation for Titus 2:2-5 demands that older women teach the younger women.
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- a. Acts 18:26 reports that Priscilla had some part in privately, with her husband, expounding (*setting forth, declaring*) the way of God more perfectly unto Apollos.
 - b. But the word *teach* in 1 Timothy 2:12 is from *didasko* which means "to hold a discourse with others in order to instruct them; deliver a didactic discourse" (Thayer).
 - c. Women may be "teachers of good things" to other women (Tit. 2:3-4), but are not allowed to preach a sermon or deliver a discourse in the presence of men.
6. "...Nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence" (*quietness—ASV*)." The word *nor* is from the Greek *oude* which "places side by side things that are equal...it always makes reference to something preceding" (Thayer). Thayer also says it serves to continue a negation (p.461).
- a. This means that for a woman to teach would be to usurp man's authority. Since women are told to teach other women, this passage does not forbid teaching as such, but forbids her exercising the authority God has given to men.
 - b. For a woman to teach over men, or do any other duties assigned to men, such as lead prayers, is to usurp man's authority.
 - c. When none but women are present, women can preach, teach, lead prayers, etc., since there is no usurpation of man's authority.
7. The reason why women are given the subordinate role is because God created Adam first. Further, Adam was not deceived by Satan; Eve was first deceived, and was the first to transgress God's law. However, if she fulfills her God-given duties (which are symbolized by her childbearing role), she will be saved. Her sins are washed away by the same process as are the man's; but man has a different set of duties in life and in the church from the woman; she is to perform hers and the man is to perform his.
- a. Women are not permitted to usurp the authority God gave to men. This forbids them from presenting a public discourse, or offer a public prayer, in the presence of men.
 - b. Women have no right to speak in the assembly and interrupt the proceedings with questions or comments. It is not their role in life to take a leading part in the services. If she has a question about something, she is to ask her husband at home (or someone else, privately).
 - c. This was not merely dealing with a local situation in Corinth for the letter was also addressed to "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1:2).
 - d. It is shameful for women to speak in the assembly. Shame or shameful: "of that which is opposed to modesty or purity, is translated as a noun in I Cor. 11:6; 14:35, A.V. (R.V. 'shameful'); Eph. 5:12; in Tit. 1:11, 'filthy (lucre)', lit. 'shameful (gain)'" [Vine, p.16].
 - e. Women had spiritual gifts (Acts 2:17; 21:8-9); they are told to teach younger women (Tit. 2:3-5); their spiritual gifts could be used in that setting and privately. Women are forbidden to give a "teaching discourse" (I Tim. 2:12), but this does not prohibit them from making a comment or asking a question in a Bible class situation since it is not a case where the whole church has come together in one place (1 Cor. 11:20; 14:34-35).
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1 CORINTHIANS 15

A. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11: The Certainty of Christ's Resurrection.

1. Verses 1-2: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."
 - a. In verses 1-4, the apostle identifies the fundamental facts of the gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. If either of these is rejected, the power of the gospel to save is removed, making the gospel system a religion without merit, just another religious system to confuse and delude lost humanity. The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16-17), but only if all of its facts and truths are believed, and all of its requirements are met.
 - b. The gospel which Paul preached to the Corinthians (the same gospel he preached everywhere he went), they had received and stood in it. He presents here a discussion of the great value of the gospel, giving them reason to continue to stand in it.
 - c. They are saved by the gospel if they keep in memory those things Paul revealed to them. The gospel is God's power to save fallen man (Romans 1:16-17).
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 2) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 3) Some of the Corinthians saints had repudiated belief in the resurrection of the dead (verse 12). If they rejected the Lord's resurrection, they also rejected the chief proof of Christ's divine Sonship, and forfeited the only reason for hope. It is essential that we keep in memory the truths of the gospel, believing them completely. To forget them is to turn from the facts and requirements of God's word.
 - 4) Christ's Sonship to God turns on the fact of his resurrection from the dead; our own resurrection and hope turn on the truthfulness of this same proposition.
 - a) Romans 1:4: "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
 - b) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - c) 1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."
 - d. We are admonished to remember God's word:
 - 1) Deuteronomy 8:11: "Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day."
 - 2) Judges 8:34: "And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side."
 - 3) Psalm 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
 - 4) Psalm 119:16: "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."
 - 5) James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - e. To believe but fail to obey is vain faith; to obey for a while and return to the old way of sin is to have

believed in vain. Paul urges the Corinthians to continue to act on the faith they obtained through his preaching.

2. Verse 3: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."
 - a. The apostle states here and in the next verse the basic elements of the gospel—the basic facts on which the gospel is built. These are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. If these elements were to be excised from the gospel, Christianity would be an empty shell, with no more power to save than any of the manmade religious systems. Satan understands this, and has directed many assaults against them down through the centuries.
 - b. Paul did not preach a message of his own design; he preached the information which was revealed to him by inspiration. "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:10-12).
 - c. Christ died for our sins. We would find little to rejoice over in the death of Christ if it was an ordinary demise. But since he died for our sins, there is reason for sinful man to be joyful; his death means we can be saved from our sins!
 - 1) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 2) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 3) Titus 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 6:20: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
 - 6) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - d. That Christ died for our sins is in keeping with the predictions of the Old Testament Scriptures (Isa. 53).
 - 1) Luke 24:26-27: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."
 - 2) Acts 26:22-23: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."
 - 3) Psalm 22:16: "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."
 - 4) Zechariah 12:10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (cf. John 19:33-36).
 - 5) Acts 17:2-3: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."
 - e. The Death of Christ was anticipated by Old Testament prophecies:

- 1) He would be a vicarious sacrifice for sin: Isaiah 53; Acts 8:32.
 - a) His betrayal was predicted:
 - He would be betrayed by a friend:
 - Psalms 41:9: “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”
 - John 13:18: “I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”
 - He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver:
 - Zechariah 11:12: “And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.”
 - Matthew 27:3: “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.”
 - This silver would be used to purchase a potter's field (Zech. 11:13; Matt.27:3).
 - b) He would be reviled, insulted, and spat upon:
 - Isaiah 50:6: “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”
 - Matthew 26:67: “Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands.”
 - c) He would be crucified with the wicked:
 - Isaiah 53:9: “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”
 - Luke 23:32-33: “And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.”
 - 2) He would be taunted and jeered:
 - a) Psalms 22:7-8: “All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”
 - b) Matthew 27:39-43: “And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”
 - 3) He would be forsaken in his death:
 - a) Psalms 22:1: “To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.>> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?”
 - b) Matthew 27:46: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
 - 4) He would be given gall and vinegar:
 - a) Psalms 69:21: “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
 - b) Matthew 27:34: “They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.”
 - c) John 19:39: “And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.”
 - 5) They would cast lots for his clothes:
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- a) Psalms 22:18: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."
 - b) Matthew 27:35: "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."
- 6) No bones would be broken in his body:
- a) Psalms 34:20: "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."
 - b) John 19:31-36: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."
- 7) His side would be pierced:
- a) Zechariah 12:10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."
 - b) John 19:34-37: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."
- 8) The Resurrection of Christ:
- a) Psalms 16:8-10: "I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
 - b) Acts 2:24-29: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day."
 - c) Acts 13:32-37: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption."
- 9) The Ascension of Christ.
- a) He would ascend to heaven:
 - Psalms 68:18: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them."
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- Ephesians 4:8-10: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)."
 - b) He would pass through the heavenly gates:
 - Psalms 24:7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."
 - Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - c) The complete picture of his ascension is given:
 - Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - Psalms 24:7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."
 - Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
 - f. Facts relating to the crucifixion of Christ:
 - 1) It was unanimously considered the most horrible form of death, even worse than burning. Aside from the physical agony, it denoted an awful shame: to the Gentiles, crucifixion was reserved for slaves and criminals; the Jews had a revulsion for it since the Law placed a curse on one who was thus executed.
 - a) Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."
 - b) Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."
 - 2) Crucifixion usually began with scourging, a terrible ordeal of itself. Jesus underwent this dreaded punishment (John 19:1-5; Isaiah 52:14). Pilate's intent in the scourging inflicted upon Jesus was an attempt to evoke sympathy in his accusers toward him so that they might agree to his release. (Cf. Luke 23:22).
 - 3) The victim was usually forced to carry his cross, and sometimes even goaded and beaten on the way. The execution site was in some public place, often along a prominent road, or on a hill where the victim could be easily seen. The victim was stripped naked, with perhaps a loin cloth being allowed.
 - 4) The cross was in the usual shape we envision, or formed as a "T", or in the form of an "X." The victim was laid upon the cross and nails were driven through his hands and feet. Sometimes
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- thongs were also used to prevent the body slipping from the cross if the flesh should tear. The cross was erected so that the feet of the subject was only a foot or two above the ground.
- 5) A large nail was driven through each hand, and another through each foot or one nail through both feet (Psalm 22:16; Luke 24:39; John 20:24-28). A wooden rod was inserted between the legs as support for the sagging body to prevent the nails from tearing from the hands and feet.
 - 6) One of the very few acts of mercy attendant to crucifixion was the practice of giving the subject a drink of medication, wine mingled with myrrh and gall, which would induce grogginess, and deaden the pain. Christ refused to accept this drink so that he might fully taste death (Mark 15:23; Matt. 27:23; Heb. 2:9). He later was offered a drink of vinegar in a sponge, which he accepted: (John 19:28-30). This was a mixture of sour wine and water which was used by the soldiers.
 - 7) The wounds of crucifixion did not result in a great loss of blood, and were not directly fatal. The cause of death is given as follows:
 - a) The unnatural position and violent tension of the body caused great pain from even a small movement.
 - b) The nails were driven through the hands and feet where a great number of nerves are located, hence great pain.
 - c) The exposure of the many wounds and lacerations, including those from the scourging, brings on inflammation which tends to cause gangrene; the pain thus increases moment by moment.
 - d) "In the distended parts of the body more blood flows through the arteries than can be carried back into the veins: hence too much blood finds its way from the aorta into the head and stomach, and the blood vessels of the head become pressed and swollen. The general obstruction of circulation which ensues causes an internal excitement, exertion, and anxiety, more intolerable than death itself" (*Smith's Dictionary of The Bible*, p.514).
 - e) The gradually increasing and lingering agony, and unbearable thirst, and the difficulty in breathing, eventually brought about death. Depending on the constitution and condition of the subject, death might be several days in coming. McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia reports the case of a young Turkish slave named Mameluke who lasted from Friday to Sunday during his crucifixion, and he was noted for being an exceptionally rugged individual.
 - f) Guy N. Woods described the process of crucifixion with these words: "As unspeakably inhuman as this mode of execution was, it stopped just short of producing merciful death and delivery from its agony and those thus executed often lingered for days on the cross unable to live, unable to die. The wretched position made every movement one of agony; the pierced hands and feet soon became inflamed and then infected, arteries were distended and blocked, fever shot upward, intolerable headaches often drove those thus being put to death into insanity. It was to such a death that our Lord was condemned, and this by men who affected to be the guardians of the truth and the favored of Jehovah!" (*Commentary on John*, p.402).
 - 8) The Romans often left the body hanging on the cross until it decomposed or was devoured by birds. The Jews besought Pilate that the legs of Jesus and the two robbers might be broken to hasten death so that their bodies might be removed before the Sabbath day (John 19:31; cf. Deut. 21:23; Josh. 8:29). The breaking of the legs would hasten death, according to some scholars, because it would make it impossible for the victim to push himself upward in order to breathe. The legs were broken by a strong blow with a hammer or mallet.
 - 9) The soldiers found Jesus already dead; this quick death amazed Pilate (Mark 15:43-45). What caused the relatively early death of Jesus?
 - a) Some have suggested that Jesus willed his own death, basing the theory on the supposition that this is the meaning of the statement, "He bowed his head and gave up the ghost [*dismissed his spirit*]" (John 19:30). But the same statement is made of other men (Gen. 25:8).
 - b) Finding Jesus already dead, the soldier pierced his side with a spear; from this wound flowed blood and water, an unlikely occurrence. The word "pierced" translates a Greek work meaning "to gash, to stab." It was a violent thrust which itself would have caused death if he was still alive.
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3. Verse 4: "And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
 - a. The body of Jesus was buried. John 19:31-37 gives important background information preparatory to his burial.
 - 1) The Jews were in a hurry to get the bodies off the crosses (John 19:31). The Romans customarily left the victims on the cross until the bodies were eaten by birds or disintegrated by decay. The Old Testament forbade leaving the bodies unburied over night (Deut. 21:23). They requested that Pilate order the legs of Jesus and the two thieves be broken to hasten death, and thus enabling their bodies to be removed and buried. The reason for this request: they did not want the bodies to remain on the crosses during the Sabbath. The "Preparation" was on Friday, the day prior to the Sabbath; this Sabbath was the first day of the week of unleavened bread, an important Jewish feast. This Sabbath was a "high day" because of its double significance: the Sabbath plus the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 - 2) These Jewish religious leaders were not above lying and conniving in order to kill an innocent man, but the rituals and rites must be carefully observed! Compare: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matt. 23:23-24).
 - 3) They were positive that Jesus was dead (John 19:32-37). To break a crucifixion victim's legs would hasten death: some say it would make it impossible to breathe since they had to push and pull themselves up against the nails to inhale and exhale; and the shock of having two major bones harshly broken, especially in addition to the horrible agony the victim had already endured, would certainly hasten death. They found Jesus already dead, and did not break his legs; this fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy (Psa. 34:20; John 19:35-36). Jesus fulfilled all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament which pertained to him. He was typified by the Passover Lamb which was not to have any of his bones broken (Ex. 12:46; cf I Cor. 5:7; John 1:29). The soldier pierced the side of Jesus with his spear. This wound would have killed him had he not already been dead. The fact that blood and water came out shows that he was dead. This piercing of his side also fulfilled prophecy (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37). The soldiers were competent witnesses of death; since they affirmed that Jesus was dead, we may know that he truly was dead (Mark 15:44-45).
 - 4) Certain preparations for the Lord's burial were made.
 - a) The body of Jesus was requested by Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50-52; John 19:38). He was a rich man; a good man; just and honorable; a counsellor; he waited for the kingdom; he had not consented to the death of Jesus; he was a secret disciple of the Lord (John 19:38). Arimathea was a city of the Jews (Luke 23:51), but its location is unknown. This man went boldly (Mark 15:44) before Pilate to beg (crave) the body of Jesus for burial. The apostles had forsaken the Lord in Gethsemane and fled; Joseph had not openly revealed his faith before, but now his faith shines brilliantly! It appears that he alone removed the Lord's body from the cross in Luke 23:53, but John 19:38-43 shows that Nicodemus helped. By his action he kept Jesus from being buried in some unknown location; it also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9 ("With the rich in his death").
 - b) Nicodemus came with a hundred-pound weight of myrrh and aloes to use in the Lord's burial (John 19:39). He had approached Jesus by night (John 3:1ff), and is mentioned as defending the Lord in John 7:50-52. This great amount of material was used in the embalming process then practiced; it was placed next to the body and wrapped with a linen cloth; possible a layer of the spices was also put under the body, on the resting place.
 - c) The faithful women attended the burial (Luke 23:53-56). Because of the nearness of the beginning of the Sabbath, these women returned home to prepare additional spices and ointments for the completion of the burial process. These faithful friends still loved the Lord, still believed him to be a great one, but their hope had turned into despair.
 - 5) The place of his burial is important (John 19:41-42; 20:5). It was hewn out of rock; the opening was low; a great stone was rolled into place at the entrance as a means of securing the tomb. It was

- conveniently located near the crucifixion site, in a garden (John 19:41). It was a NEW tomb (John 19:41). No one had been buried in it before the Lord. It was new in the sense that it had never been used (Greek "kainon"), not necessarily that it had only recently been hewn. Also, lest anyone think that the body of Jesus had come into contact with some great one's body, and raised by its power, as was the case in 2 Kings 13:21, the tomb had to be an unused one.
- 6) There were certain precautions taken in his burial.
 - a) Matthew 27:62-66. The chief priests and Pharisees were still concerned about Jesus. They likely broke their own Sabbath day rules by going to Pilate, for it was the Sabbath, the day after the crucifixion that they approached the governor. They feared the resurrection, but by their actions here they made belief in the resurrection even more believable.
 - b) They requested and received a band of Roman soldiers to guard the tomb, ostensibly to keep the disciples from stealing the body. The Roman military code is said to have been very severe: one sleeping on guard duty could be executed! The Roman soldiers are said to have been greatly feared.
 - c) The Roman seal was placed on the tomb. This seal was of wax with the imprint of the Roman Seal impressed into it. To break this seal without proper authority was a capital offense.
 - d) The fact that the sepulchre was guarded by Roman soldiers, and had the Roman seal attached, provided the perfect situation for positive proof of the resurrection!
 - 7) It is important that we see the purpose of the burial.
 - a) He could have arisen without being buried, as were the daughter of Jarius and the son of the widow of Nain, but that would have made it more difficult to prove his resurrection.
 - b) That he was buried, and secured in the tomb for three days, also proves that he was indeed dead, and not in some kind of coma. Many today foolishly deny that he was dead, claiming he had merely swooned, and later slipped from the tomb after he had revived. The fact that he was in the grave three days, after undergoing all the terrible things during his last day, precludes the notion that he was not dead!
 - c) It was necessary that he be buried in order to fulfill prophecy: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth" (Isa. 53:9). It was highly unlikely that he would have been buried in a rich man's unused tomb had not the power of God guided the affairs as they developed. God can always find the people and things which are necessary to carry out his purposes.
 - d) There is another value which reveals another purpose for the burial, and this has great meaning to us. Jesus conquered the grave; this gives us assurance (John 5:28-29; 1Cor. 15:55). His rising from the grave gives us great comfort when we bury our righteous dead in the earth (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
 - e) The burial of Jesus also gives meaning to the gospel command for baptism. Baptism is in the likeness of Christ's burial (Rom 6:3-4, 16-18; Col. 2:12). Baptism is a fundamental part of the gospel plan of salvation, just as the burial of our Lord's body is a fundamental part of the gospel story (Rom. 6:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).
 - 8) The story of the burial of Jesus is important. But the story of Jesus does not end with him in the grave. We serve a risen Lord! It was not possible that death should hold him! "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:22-24).
- b. The resurrection of Christ is the crowning miracle of his great life.
 - 1) It is the most significant miracle to us for without it he would remain a dead man, powerless to do anything for mankind. His birth, life, miracles, messages, and death would all be without meaning. But his resurrection from the dead proves his divine Sonship (Rom. 1:4). It became the centerpiece of the gospel (Acts 2:36; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). It is the basis of our hope beyond this life (1 Cor. 15:17-
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- 20).
- 2) There are certain facts about Christ believed by his friends, and admitted by his foes (Roy J. Hearn, bulletin article).
 - a) That a man named Jesus lived, was prominent in ancient society, and was popular with the common people.
 - b) That he was crucified on a Roman cross, was thought to be dead, was buried in a tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathaea, that the tomb was closed with a stone, sealed by the Roman seal and guarded by Roman soldiers, a band numbering between 15 and 60.
 - c) That his body was missing on the third day of his burial.
 - d) That his disciples had an unshakable conviction that he had been raised from the dead, and were willing to undergo any amount or kind of suffering in defense of this firm belief, even to the point of dying.
 - 3) The facts of the resurrection story are related by the gospel writers.
 - a) Several faithful women came to the tomb early on the first day of the week. This company included Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James the Less; Salome, the mother of James and John; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; and others who are not named (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1-4; Luke 23:49,55-56; 24:1-3,10; 8:3; John 20:1). These came to further anoint the body of Jesus; they did not have time to do so following the Lord's death, and could not do so on the Sabbath (Luke 23:55-56). They left home while it was still dark (John 20:1) and arrived at the tomb as the sun arose on Sunday, the first day of the week (Mark 16:2). As they made their way toward the tomb, they wondered how they would be able to move the great stone to gain access to the tomb. Obviously, they did not know about the band of soldiers guarding the tomb or the Roman seal with which the tomb had been secured (Mark 16:3). On their arrival, they discovered much to their dismay that the stone had been moved already. An angel had been dispatched from heaven to remove the stone; and after doing so, he sat on it, causing great fear among the soldiers (Matt. 27:1-4).
 - b) The body of the Lord was not in the tomb! The women naturally supposed that the Lord's enemies had removed the body and hidden it elsewhere (John 20:2). Mary ran back into the city to give this report to Peter; the other women entered the tomb in Mary's absence. Mary Magdalene may have reached the tomb ahead of these other women, and seeing the empty tomb, and supposing the body had been stolen, she ran to tell Peter. In the meantime, the other women arrive and meet the angels. Peter and John ran to the garden, with John reaching it first but allowing Peter to enter first. (John 20:3-10). On seeing that the tomb was indeed empty, they returned to Jerusalem. Peter left "wondering" (Luke 24:12), while John "saw and believed" (John 20:8). Mary came back to the tomb after Peter and John, and her conversation with the angel takes place (John 20:1-13).
 - c) The angels announced to the women the resurrection of Christ. Matthew and Mark mention only one angel; Luke and John speak of two. The former simply describe the spokesman, which does not contradict the fact that two angels were present. These angels are clothed in long white, shining garments (Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; John 20:12). The women are asked: "Why seek ye the living among the dead" (Luke 24:5); and are told, "I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified" (Matt. 28:5); and still further, "He is not here: for he is risen....Come see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:6). The angels also reminded them that Jesus had told them before the crucifixion that he was to be crucified but that he would rise again on the third day (Luke 24:6-8), which the women now remembered.
 - d) The women are told to go quickly and report the Lord's resurrection to his disciples, and that he would meet them in Galilee (Matt. 28:7-8; Mark 16:7-8). These women hastened to obey. While these women were gone on this mission, Mary, who had already gone back to tell Peter about the Lord's empty tomb, preceded by Peter and John, returned to the tomb. These two apostles saw the empty grave, and went back to the city. Mary stood outside the sepulchre weeping before looking into the tomb. It seems that she had not paused long enough to look into it when she first came (John 20:1-2). She encounters the two angels; one was standing at
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the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus had lain (John 20:11-13).

- e) The women brought word to the apostles (Luke 24:9-10). These men did not believe the story at first (Luke 24:11). Luke seems to say that the report to the apostles was given by the whole group of women at the same time, but from the additional information given by John it appears more likely that Mary Magdalene brought the initial report, and the rest of the women gave another report soon afterwards. This view fits the overall facts better.
- 4) Essential to the resurrection is the fact that Jesus actually was dead. Before there can be a resurrection from the dead, the individual involved must truly be dead. Many modernists deny that Jesus died on the cross; this do they for the purpose of explaining away his resurrection.
- a) The Bible, God's word, says he was dead. Old Testament prophecies predicted that he would be dead (Isa. 53:9,12). New Testament statements declare he was dead.
 - Matthew 27:50: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."
 - Luke 23:46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
 - Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - b) The Roman soldiers knew that he was dead (Matt. 27:54 ["was"]; Mark 15:44-45; John 19:32-34). These were men who were acquainted with death; they could know whether a man was dead or not.
 - c) Pilate was satisfied that he was dead: "And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph" (Mark 15:44-45).
 - d) The Jewish leaders who had brought about the Lord's condemnation were satisfied that he was dead: "And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch" (Matt. 27:61-66).
 - e) Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus knew he was dead (John 19:38-42). Great tributes of praise are given by the scriptures about Joseph [good, just, honorable]. "And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand" (John 19:38-42).
 - f) The godly women who watched the Lord's crucifixion and followed those who buried him knew he was dead; they prepared expensive spices and ointments for the purpose of anointing his body after the Sabbath was past: "And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed
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him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things....And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:49,55-56).

- g) The apostles who saw his empty tomb and his resurrected body knew he was dead.
 - h) The angels of God stated plainly that he was dead but had been raised to life again.
 - i) Jesus predicted his death by crucifixion and stated afterward that he had actually been dead (Matt. 20:17-19; Rev. 1:18). If we cannot believe the Savior's words on this subject, he cannot be believed in anything he said!
 - Matthew 20:17-19: "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again."
 - Revelation 1:18: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
- 5) Many unbelievers have tried to explain away the empty tomb.
- a) These include the rank infidels, the modernist religious unbelievers, and the many compromisers of spiritual truth. Quite simply, one who rejects the resurrection of Jesus does not believe the Bible; and one who believes the Bible will fully accept the fact of his resurrection!
 - b) Some who reject his resurrection claim that the gardener removed the Lord's body. This was Mary Magdalene's thought for a time (John 20:15). But this could not be, for the tomb was sealed and guarded; and his grave clothes were left in the tomb (Matt. 27:62-66; John 19:39-40; 20:6-7).
 - c) Some thought his body was removed by his enemies. But his enemies did not want his body removed, hence they asked Pilate to supply a guard. They had no motive for taking the body away. After the apostles began preaching the resurrected Lord, why did not the enemies produce his body in response to their announcement, if they had stolen it? In fact, they had not removed his body!
 - d) Many have claimed that his body was taken away by his friends. This was alleged by his enemies (Matt. 28:11-15). The soldiers were never punished for sleeping—the punishment for such was very severe under the Roman military code (cf. Acts 12:19). If they were asleep, how could they know the disciples had stolen the body? Stealing his body required breaking the Roman seal; why were not the disciples charged by the Roman authorities for that crime? The Romans knew the disciples had not done so. The disciples had neither reason, motive nor desire to steal the body of Jesus. They did not believe he would rise from the dead for they were amazed when they heard the first reports (Luke 24:11). They had scattered, Peter went back to fishing, and the women went to anoint the body. It was impossible for them to remove the body since the guard was posted at the tomb, a band numbering from fifteen to sixty trained soldiers. Some authorities say the guard may have numbered from sixty to one hundred and twenty men. There was a great change which came over the apostles following the resurrection: they were no longer cowardly; they began to boldly proclaim the resurrected Lord! If they had stolen the body, how can this great change be accounted for? Eleven of the twelve died for their faith in the resurrection. If they had stolen the body and concealed it, why were they willing to die for what they knew was falsehood? People do not endure persecution and death for what they know is a lie.
 - e) Others claim he was not really dead, but had "swooned" while on the cross, and later revived after resting in the tomb, and rolled the stone away from the entrance enough to slip out, escaping the notice of the soldiers. Another variation of this theory has the Roman soldiers who crucified him in on a plot. This theory says that the drink Jesus accepted at the last was
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- a strong narcotic which made it appear that he was dead. [It also claims that the plot succeeded, up to the time another soldier thrust his spear into the Lord's side, which resulted in his death later, after he had been removed from the cross and taken to a secret place by his disciples].
- f) The "swoon" theory could not be correct for the Lord had undergone some horrible experiences in the hours preceding his death. He had not slept or eaten for many hours; there was the emotional drain of the trials; the scourging was enough to result in death for many who underwent it; the beatings he received from various people; the crucifixion itself; the pierced side. One who was thus treated could not, under any circumstances, have endured them, and still have the strength to roll aside the great stone sealing the tomb. Four or more women knew that they did not have the strength to move it; it is certain that Jesus could not have done so, especially from the inside of the tomb!
 - g) Schonfield's "Passover Plot" theory fails because it is totally lacking in any supporting evidence. That Jesus was dead is evident from earlier material presented in this study; that his body was interred in the tomb, sealed and guarded, is also evident from the facts of the case already given. The dead body of Jesus was placed in the tomb, and the tomb was found empty on the third day. The missing body is not explained by this unbeliever's theory!
 - h) Others have asserted that the witnesses were hallucinating when they thought they had seen the risen Jesus. But this theory does not explain the empty tomb! What happened to the body? The ones who saw him were not neurotics, but fishermen, *etc.* When they first saw the risen Lord, they did not think it was the Lord: objective proof had to be given. Thomas declared that he would not believe unless he could put his finger in the nail prints in his hands and put his hand into his side; the Lord called this to his attention when he met Thomas, with the effect that he was firmly and fully convinced (John 20:24-29). The "hallucination" theory does not account for the fact that more than 500 saw him on the same occasion (1 Cor. 15:6). It does not account for the fact that Saul of Tarsus, who hated Jesus, was convinced of the truth (Acts 9:1ff). It does not account for the various individuals who saw him, at different times and in other places (1 Cor. 15:1-8). These were all competent and reliable men and women, whose testimony would be accepted by any impartial court.
- 6) Other compelling evidence that Christ was actually raised from the dead.
- a) The wounds of his crucifixion were plainly evident. Thomas doubted the reality of the resurrection reports until he saw these wounds (John 20:19,24-29; Luke 24:36-40).
 - b) The fact that Jesus was still using the physical body in which he had died shows he had been raised, a body which still could eat (Luke 24:39-43).
 - c) The great stone with which the tomb was closed offers testimony of his resurrection. The Greek text describes this stone with the words *lithon megan* (Matt. 27:60) which is the source of our English word "megalith" (a huge stone). Several women knew they could not move it, thus no beaten, crucified man who had been severely wounded in the side by a spear, could do so. The stones used to close ancient tombs usually were set in a sloping groove, a runway, with the lowest point being in front of the tomb entrance. It would require far more strength to remove the stone than to roll it into place. The stone was round with the front and back being flat, like a great stone wheel. When it was moved, it was not merely pushed a little to the side so that Jesus could squeeze through, but was moved completely away from the tomb opening (John 20:1). The angel of God removed this stone, and sat upon it; it is no wonder why the pagan soldiers shook in fear and became as dead men (Matt. 28:4). The tomb was not opened to let Jesus get out, but to let the witnesses get in.
 - d) The tomb itself offers evidence. There are no back doors or escape hatches in our modern caskets or in those ancient tombs, which were carved from solid rock (Mt. 27:60). It was a new tomb (John 19:41), so there was no possibility of 2 Kings 13:21 being repeated: "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet." It was closed with the great stone, sealed by the Roman seal, and guarded by soldiers. This tomb did not contain the body of Jesus after the
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dawning of Sunday. That the tomb was empty is shown by several reliable facts: It was seen to be empty by at least six of the disciples (Matt. 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:10; John 20:2-8). It was seen to be empty by at least some of the Roman guards (Matt. 28:2,11-15). The Jews did not deny the fact that it was empty; they merely tried to explain why it was empty. The fact of the empty tomb was publicly proclaimed on Pentecost day in the very presence of many who would know the truth about it, and nothing was said in rebuttal.

- e) Evidence of his resurrection is seen in the grave clothes left in the tomb (John 20:4-7). Greek scholars report that the text says that the linen cloth was lying in folds, that they were in a cocoon shape as if Jesus had simply passed through them without disturbing their arrangement. When Lazarus was raised, he had to have assistance to be loosed from the tightly wound grave clothes (Jn. 11:44). Jesus was bound the same way, hence could not unwrap the clothes or travel any distance in that binding. The spices used in the burial customs of the Jews were sticky. These were placed on the body and the linen cloth was wrapped around the body, from neck to foot. "Who unwrapped Jesus, in unhurried manner rolled up the face napkin, then painstakingly, and with the skill of an artist, re-wrapped those sticky grave cloths back into their original shape so perfectly that they appeared as if they had not been tampered with!" (Ed. Wharton, "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Historical...Or Mythological?"). The evident conclusion seems to be therefore that Jesus passed through these grave cloths in the same way he passed through the walls of the tomb and also into the room where the disciples waited behind locked doors (John 20:19,26).
 - f) Again, there is the report of many eyewitnesses. As we have seen, these were honest, competent, and sufficient in number. They had nothing in this world to gain by their report if that testimony were false. They knowingly faced terrible persecution on account of their report. Even these eyewitnesses were very skeptical at first, and only after positive proof was given did they accept the truth that Jesus had in truth been raised.
 - g) The great impact of the story of Jesus on the ancient world, even before the gospel narratives were written, offers evidence for the resurrection of Christ. When the story of the resurrection was told, great numbers believed the whole story; only later was the account set forth in written form for succeeding generations.
 - h) The New Testament itself, being inspired of God, gives final proof of the resurrection of our Lord. It presents all the details, including fulfilled prophecies which related to the subject, and concludes that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead.
 - John 20:30-31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - Acts 2:29-32: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."
 - Acts 2:36-37: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
- 7) There is great significance in the resurrection of Christ.
- a) It shows that the promises of God can be relied upon (Acts 2:22-24,27-35).
 - b) It offers proof positive that he is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4; Acts 2:36).
 - c) It means that he is alive and well, and sits on David's spiritual throne at the right hand of the Almighty in heaven (Heb. 12:2; Eph. 4:8; Acts 15:14-17; 1 Pet. 3:22; Dan. 7:13-14; Phil. 2:10-11; Acts 2:32-33).
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- d) The entire gospel system depends on it (1 Cor. 15:14,17,18-19).
 - e) His resurrection is the basis of our own salvation and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12ff; Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - f) It is the basis for observing the Lord's Supper every first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:26, 29; 16:1-2).
 - g) Our hope of heaven depends on it. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you..." (1 Pet. 1:3-5). "Life and immortality" have been made possible for us through the gospel which includes the resurrection of Christ (2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:4; John 14:19).
4. Verses 5-6: "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."
- a. The Lord's resurrection took place on the first day of the week.
 - 1) Luke 24:1: "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."
 - 2) Luke 24:13: "And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs."
 - 3) Luke 24:21: "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done."
 - 4) Luke 24:46: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."
 - 5) Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."
 - b. Peter saw the resurrected Christ. The implication is that he was alone at the time. The whole group of apostles also saw him. Even after the death of Judas, the apostles are still referred to as "the twelve."
 - c. He was also seen by more than five hundred brethren on one occasion, most of whom were still alive at the time Paul penned this epistle. These could still bear their testimony of having seen the Lord.
 - d. There were at least eleven appearances of the Lord prior to his ascension. With so great a host of witnesses, the resurrection should not be questioned.
 - e. The eyewitnesses of the Lord included the following:
 - 1) Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Lord (Mark 16:9; John 20:14-18). She was the lady from whom the Lord had cast seven demons.
 - 2) The other women saw the Lord (Matt. 28:9-10). These had been with the Lord for quite some time, assisting in his ministry (Luke 23:49,55-56; 24:1ff).
 - 3) Peter saw the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:34). Certainly, this apostle would know whether it was Jesus.
 - 4) The two disciples traveling to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32; Mark 16:12).
 - 5) The twelve, including Matthias (1 Cor. 15:5; Acts 1:21-26; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-41; John 20:19-29).
 - 6) More than 500 brethren at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). At the time that Paul wrote the First Corinthian letter, the greater part of these were still alive.
 - 7) He was seen by James, then by all of the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7).
 - 8) Lastly, he was seen by Saul of Tarsus, hardly an impartial witness since he had dedicated his life to opposing the cause of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:1ff; 26:9ff).
 - f. The Lord picked the apostles to be his special witnesses (Acts 10:38-42), but all of these men and women [mentioned above] were proper witnesses of the fact that he had been raised. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and
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healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10:38-42).

5. Verses 7-8: "After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."
 - a. This James could have been the Lord's half-brother [some think] (cf. Gal. 1:19; 2:9). The Lord's brothers were not believers at first (John 7:5; Acts 1:14).
 - b. Lastly, he was seen by Paul. The apostle speaks with humility, not boastfully (Acts 9:1-5; 22:14-16; 26:16-28). Paul did not have the benefit of the three years of instruction from the Lord which the others had; he saw the Lord subsequent to the establishment of the church, thus a long while after the Lord had ascended to heaven. The lateness of this appearance is described by the apostle as untimely ("as of one born out of due time"). This denotes the unnatural manner in which Paul was chosen to be an eyewitness and apostle. He was an unbeliever at the time of the appearance, which lends great credence to his testimony.
 - c. The qualifications of witnesses includes three basic matters:
 - 1) **Honesty.** A man will be a false witness for three reasons: out of fear, through greed, or because of ambition. These witnesses had no reason to fear if they said nothing about the Lord's resurrection (if he had not been raised); and there was no means of obtaining material wealth or advantage by saying he arose (in fact, they lost out materially by preaching the resurrection); and there was no earthly ambition to be gratified by proclaiming his resurrection.
 - 2) **Competent.** The competency of a witness is determined by his mental capacity to observe and remember facts, and repeat the details correctly. Several of the apostles were seamen, Matthew was a tax collector, Paul was a scholar. There is every reason to believe them all to be competent, and no reason to think otherwise.
 - 3) **Sufficient in number.** The number of individuals who saw the risen Savior is more than enough to establish the truth of their testimony.
 - d. The honesty, the competency, and the number of witnesses meet every requirement of a fair and honest court. Their testimony may be safely trusted.
6. Verse 9: "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."
 - a. Paul keenly felt his guilt of persecuting the church, and often bewailed this sin. He shows also his humility here by calling himself the least of the apostles and unfit to be an apostle. He felt unworthy because he had persecuted the church.
 - 1) Acts 7:57: "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord."
 - 2) Acts 8:1-3: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."
 - 3) Acts 9:1: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest."
 - 4) Ephesians 3:8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 1:12-15: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and

worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

- b. But Paul was not inferior to any of the apostles.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:5: "For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:12-13: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."
 7. Verse 10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
 - a. Paul was a beneficiary of God's grace. He knew he was what he was as a result of the mercy of God, and not because of his own worth.
 - b. God did not bestow his grace on Paul in vain, for the apostle proved himself to be a worthy soldier on countless battlefields. By God's grace he labored more abundantly than the other apostles, yet he does not boast about it; rather he gives God the credit. He knew the strength was not his own.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:10: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
 - 3) Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
 - 4) Philippians 1:12: "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."
 - c. Several things could be included in this grace: being named as an apostle; receiving heavenly authority; having supernatural powers; having God's guidance; spiritual blessings; and the necessary sustenance, protection, and shelter.
 8. Verse 11: "Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."
 - a. All the apostles preached the same message.
 - 1) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - 2) Galatians 2:9-10: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."
 - b. The important matter was that the gospel was preached to the saving of precious souls; the identity of the preacher was unimportant.
 - 1) Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
 - 2) Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 3:6-7: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."
- B. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19: Christ's Resurrection is Important to the General Resurrection.
1. Verse 12: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"
 - a. It is absurd to believe in the resurrection of Christ and reject the general resurrection of the dead. Paul reasons from the established fact of the resurrection of Jesus, showing the error of those who said there is no resurrection.
 - b. From his initial visit to Corinth, when he preached the gospel to the Corinthians, he had always affirmed the resurrection of Christ. He had displayed his credential as an apostle of Christ for all to behold. "... For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For
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- what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches..." (2 Cor. 12:11-13).
- c. In the verses that follow, the inspired writer points out certain unpalatable consequences that would obtain if there is no resurrection of the dead. Some in the Corinthian church were denying the resurrection, and obviously had not considered the adverse effects of the position. By denying it, they were also repudiating the reality of the supernatural and the inspiration of the scriptures.
2. Verse 13: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen."
 - a. This is **the first of several consequences** which would follow if there is no resurrection: If there is no resurrection from the dead, then Christ himself did not arise. The general resurrection of all the dead at the end of time and the resurrection of Christ on the third day after his crucifixion stand or fall together; it is not possible for one to be true and the other false.
 - b. If there is no resurrection, Jesus is a dead Master; he would not be the glorified Christ. His resurrection lies at the heart of the gospel (verses 1-4).
 - c. This is a case of an inspired apostle using implication to disprove a false doctrine. We commonly use implication as a means of communicating information. Suppose someone should say, "Bob and three other soldiers went fishing yesterday." If the statement is true, it follows that Bob is also a soldier. If A is older than B, and B is older than C, it is implied that A is also older than C. The Bible uses implicit statements (implications) as a means of communicating information.
 3. Verse 14: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."
 - a. **The second and third consequences** are stated here: If Christ did not rise from the dead, our preaching is vain and your faith is vain.
 - b. These two consequences are implied by the proposition. If Christ was not raised, he is still dead; a dead Savior cannot save; he would have no power if he was still in the tomb. How many meals could a dead chef prepare? How many fires could a dead fireman extinguish? How many lost souls could a dead Savior save?
 - c. The preaching of the apostles would have no merit since it is based on the fact that Jesus was resurrected; and if their preaching was empty, the faith of the Corinthians was also empty.
 - 1) Acts 15:7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."
 - 2) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - d. Moreover, if the Lord was not raised, our preaching on baptism, the Second Coming of Christ, the general resurrection at the Lord's return, and on the hope of heaven would also be empty.
 4. Verse 15: "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."
 - a. **The fourth consequence:** *If Christ was not raised, we apostles who bear witness of his resurrection are false witnesses; we have affirmed a falsehood when we claimed that God had raised Christ up from the dead.*
 - b. God had worked with the apostles, confirming their word by means of miracles (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4; 2 Cor. 12:12). How could this be accounted for if Christ was not raised and the apostles had been preaching falsehoods? God would not and could not have confirmed a lie!
 - 1) Hebrews 6:18: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."
 - 2) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 3) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 5) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape,
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- if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
- c. If there had been some earthly reward or advantage to be earned, one might suspect the apostles concocted Christ's resurrection for that benefit, but they had everything to lose and nothing to gain by such a fabrication. In fact, they suffered immensely, even death in the case of all of them except John [according to uninspired records], because they preached the resurrection.
5. Verse 16: "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised."
- a. Here the apostle repeats the thought of verse thirteen. A truth repeated emphasizes its importance. The two great verities of the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection of all of humanity are joined.
 - b. If the dead do not rise in the last day as reported in the gospel, then Christ did not rise. Since it is the case that Christ did rise, it is also the case that the dead will be raised. Because the Lord arose, we shall arise.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
6. Verse 17: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."
- a. **The fifth consequence** is given here: "If Christ did not rise, your faith is vain and you are still guilty of sin." Faith and forgiveness are inseparable; forgiveness is impossible without faith. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24; cf. Heb. 11:6).
 - b. Without the resurrection of Christ, the faith of the Corinthians was meaningless, and they were still in sin. Were they ready to accept this consequence? If they rejected the general resurrection of the dead, they were forced to admit that the Lord was not raised, and if the Lord was not raised, they were still living in sin! Every false doctrine carries with it some evil consequence.
7. Verse 18: "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."
- a. **The sixth consequence:** *If Christ did not arise, those who obeyed the gospel and later died, have perished.* Without the resurrection of the dead, Christ was not raised, and no one has any hope who has died!
 - b. To reject the resurrection is to accept a materialistic view of life: a man lives, he dies, and he ceases to exist. Materialism would rob us of all hope beyond this life; it teaches that one must enjoy this life to the fullest without regard to the effect on others; that happiness and fulfillment here is all that counts. It makes a man no different from, and no better than, the lowliest of creatures.
 - c. To give up belief in the resurrection is to believe there is no existence after death. This would make the apostles false witness concerning the dead, and even those apostles who had suffered martyrdom would have perished instead of falling asleep in Jesus. There would be no world to come if Christ was not raised; all we would have to look forward to is whatever reward we can gain for ourselves here. Think of the effect this would have if everyone believed this falsehood!
8. Verse 19: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."
- a. **The seventh consequence:** *Those who had given up comfortable circumstances in order to follow Christ would have done so in vain—if Christ was not raised.* There would be no hope beyond this
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life; there would be no hope after death.

- b. All the sufferings, trials, persecutions, and privations would have been endured in vain. Paul was willing to endure many hardships, having given up an easy life, because he knew that the reward in heaven was worth far more than anything earth has to offer!

1) 2 Corinthians 11:24-28: "Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

2) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

3) Philippians 1:23: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

9. The idea of there being no resurrection is totally unappealing when one looks at the consequences. There is much evidence to prove that Christ did arise, and much proof that we will be raised. We gladly, and with great reason, accept the Bible doctrine of the resurrection.

C. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28: Results of Christ's Resurrection.

1. Verse 20: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."
 - a. Paul declares the verity of the resurrection of Christ, and that he became the firstfruits of those who die. The firstfruits were a pledge of the full harvest to come (Lev. 23:10-16). Under the Mosaic Law, the offering of the firstfruits was waved on the morning after the sabbath.
 - b. Christ is the firstfruit of the resurrection; his resurrection is the promise of the full harvest (the general resurrection) to come at the end of time.
 - c. As the firstfruits were waved on the morning after the sabbath, so Christ was raised from the dead on the morning after the sabbath. He fully met all the types and shadows given in the Old Testament of him and his work and word.
2. Verse 21: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."
 - a. This statement relates to verse twenty. The resurrection of Christ secures the resurrection of us all. As there was (and is) a relationship between Adam's sin and the death that first sin introduced into the family of men, so there is a relationship between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of all men.
 - b. The results are different, however. Adam introduced death; Christ made the resurrection possible. Physical death followed Adam's sin; eternal life follows the obedience of Christ (which made his resurrection possible).
 - c. The man by whom death came is not identified by name in this verse, but there is no doubt of his identity. Genesis three shows the means by which sin entered into the human race: by means of Adam (and Eve). This man is plainly identified by name in the next verse.
3. Verse 22: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
 - a. We all die because of our connection with Adam; we all shall be raised from the dead because of our connection with Christ. Both parts of this verse are universal.
 - b. If spiritual death is meant in the passage, and means that all inherit the sin of Adam, then salvation would also be universal, and would mean that everyone would be saved. The Bible teaches that many will die lost—universal salvation is contrary to the Bible (Matt. 7:13-14). The Bible teaches that we are entirely pure and free from the contamination of sin when we enter this life:
 - 1) Genesis 8:21: "And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 7:29: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have

- sought out many inventions."
- 3) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
 - 4) Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
 - 5) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
- c. This verse does not teach that only those who are faithful Christians will be raised up from the dead. *In Christ* here identifies mankind's relationship to God's Son. Adam and Christ are placed on parallel planes: Adam is listed as the one through whom death was introduced into our race; Christ is listed as the one through whom resurrection was introduced. One is just as widespread (universal) as the other. The consequence of Adam's sin is that each of his descendants must die; the consequence of Christ's perfect obedience and resurrection is that each descendant of Adam will be resurrected.
- 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) Acts 24:15: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."
- d. The passage does not teach that all will be saved in heaven, for other passages show that the great majority will be lost: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).
4. Verse 23: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
- a. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul discusses the resurrection of the righteous; his point does not require consideration of the resurrection of the wicked. His statement is not to be taken to mean that the righteous will be raised at one time and the wicked on some other occasion. John 5:28-29 and Acts 24:15 show conclusively and irrefutably that all the dead will be resurrected at the same hour. Paul is simply giving assurance that the righteous dead have not ceased to exist; they have not forfeited their hope because they died prior to the return of Christ.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) Acts 24:15: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."
 - b. There will be just one resurrection; it will encompass all the dead, both the righteous and the unrighteous; it will be followed by the Judgment (John 5:28-29).
 - c. In our text, Paul shows that Christ's resurrection is the foundation and assurance of our own resurrection. The context (specifically verse 22) identifies those who pertain to the Lord as all men, from Adam to the end of time. The entire world is spoken of as his kingdom. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13:41).
5. Verse 24: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."
- a. There is no thousand years of time between the second coming of Christ in verse 23 and *the end* of verse 24. The coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the end of the universe and time will be virtually simultaneous. The text states that at the coming of Christ to raise the dead, "then cometh the end."
 - 1) He ascended to heaven to receive his kingdom. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all
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- people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).
- 2) The kingdom was set up on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
 - a) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - b) Mark 9:1: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."
 - c) Luke 24:47-49: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - d) Acts 1:5,8: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - e) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - f) Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - g) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - h) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - i) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 3) At the coming of Christ, he will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. When he returns, therefore, it will not be to establish the kingdom, but to conclude its earthly phase. At his coming, he will put down all earthly rule and authority being exercised by men; the earth will disintegrate in flaming fire; every material thing will dissolve; time will end; all men will be brought into the Judgment; each person will enter into his or her eternal destiny.
 - 4) This verse also shows that there is more than one person in the Godhead: Christ cannot deliver the kingdom unto himself!
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - c. 2 Peter 3:10-12: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what
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- manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"
- d. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - e. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - f. Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."
 - g. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - h. Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
6. Verse 25: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."
- a. The end of Christ's reign over his kingdom (the church) will be when his enemies are brought under his feet, in a state of complete subjection to his dominion. Even now he has authority over all men and nations, although very few acknowledge it. He does not coerce anyone to obey.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:6-9: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - 4) 1 Peter 3:22: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."
 - b. When will he exercise actual dominion over all his enemies? At the Judgment.
 - 1) Philippians. 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things] in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: "... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 3) Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations:
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- and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats."
7. Verse 26: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."
- a. In this world, the Lord has many enemies. The arch-enemy is Satan; every false teacher is his enemy; every false doctrine and practice opposes Christ; every person who lives in sin is his opponent.
 - b. Even some who sincerely consider themselves to be his friends, are enemies.
 - 1) Philippians 3:16-21: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - 2) All of these enemies will be defeated when he returns; and as each of the individuals involved passes from this life prior to his return, each one falls into humiliating ruin.
 - c. The final enemy to be overcome is death. He won the victory over death when he came forth from its clutches in his resurrection. His resurrection assures that every human being will be raised (1 Cor. 15:1-23). But until he returns, men will continue to die (Heb. 9:27; Jas. 4:13-14). However, at the second coming (Heb. 9:27-28), everyone will be resurrected; death will be destroyed, for in heaven there will be no more death (Rev. 21:4). The wicked will be committed to hell, which is styled *the second death* (eternal separation from God).
 - d. The gates of hades could not retain the spirit of the Lord when the time for his resurrection came; he broke the bars and gained the victory, thus assuring the ultimate resurrection of man (John 5:28-29).
 - 1) Acts 2:22-24: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (ASV).
 - 2) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
8. Verse 27: "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him."
- a. The Bible affirms that God has placed all things under his authority (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:19-23), but there is one exception: God himself!
 - b. John 13:16: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." The distinction between God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is found in the area of authority. Since God sent Christ, God has greater authority than Christ; since Christ sent the Holy Spirit, Christ has greater authority than the Holy Spirit.
 - c. God the Father is supreme. Paul states that it is obvious that God did not place himself under the authority of the Son. Compare: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:6-9).
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- 9. Verse 28: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - a. God is the Supreme Ruler in eternity. Christ came to earth to do God's will (Heb. 10:7; John 12:49-50; 17:8). The work he did was designed by the Father, as was the message the Savior delivered. The authority that the Son exercises today is delegated authority.
 - b. At the Judgment, Christ will deliver the kingdom to the Father. The unrighteous will have been dispatched to Gehenna; the righteous will have been invited into heaven; Christ and all the redeemed will be subject to God the Father in the unending ages of eternity.
 - c. God will be "all in all." There will be one source of authority; there will be one response to that authority; there will be one focal point of all activities. In the absolute sense, there will be "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6).

D. 1 Corinthians 15:29-34: Further Evidence of the Resurrection.

- 1. Verse 29: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" [Guy Woods described this verse as being (in his view) the second most difficult verse in the Bible, with 1 Peter 4:6 being the most difficult].
 - a. New Testament baptism has several requirements, which when compared to Mormon baptism for the dead doctrine, shows the latter to be religious error [Bales, *Christian Contend For Thy Cause*, pp.137f].

NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM	BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD
Repentance: Acts 2:38; 17:30	No Repentance
Washing: Eph. 5:26-27; Heb. 10:22	Body of Recipient Not Washed
Baptism in Own Behalf: Acts 2:38; 22:16	Baptized in Another's Behalf
Living Person: Mk. 16:15-16	Dead Person Not Baptized
Faith: Mk. 16:15-16; Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6	No Faith Required
One-time Act (No info. to the contrary)	Living person baptized more than once

- b. The above chart shows that the practice of baptizing for the dead is so different from New Testament baptism that it requires another baptism altogether. But Ephesians 4:4-5 affirms that there is only one extant baptism. Thus, baptism for the dead is without scriptural authority, and is wrong.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 2) 2 John 9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (ASV).
- c. What is the *baptism for the dead* named in the verse? We know that a dead unbeliever cannot believe, and thus baptism cannot help his soul; we know that once a person dies, his eternal destiny is forevermore sealed (Rev. 22:11-12); we know that baptism by proxy is no more profitable than faith or repentance by proxy.
- d. What is the meaning of Paul's statement? Several solutions have been suggested. [See Woods, *Questions and Answers*, pp.115-118]:
 - 1) Some have thought that *the dead* refers to Christ; that baptism is done in behalf of Christ. This view has the verse saying: "Why were you baptized for Christ, if Christ did not rise from the dead?" Woods points out, however, that the Greek text uses the plural form of *dead*, literally "the dead ones."

- 2) Another view understands baptism to be a figure of speech, used in reference to the sufferings the first century saints underwent (cf. Matt. 20:22-23). This view would have Paul's argument to be: If there is no resurrection from the dead, why is it that we are required to suffer and die in service to Christ? "This view violates the rule of exegesis that words ought to be given their usual and ordinary sense, unless the passage and the context in which they occur require a figurative interpretation, which is certainly not the case here, since there is no statement indicating that the element of the baptism was suffering" (Woods, p.117). Also, the next verse uses this argument as an additional reason to believe in the resurrection; Paul would not have repeated the argument.
 - 3) Another view suggests that there were some ignorant members of the church in Corinth who actually practiced baptism in behalf of certain individuals who had died in unbelief, and that Paul alludes to the practice here in an attempt to get them to accept the doctrine of the resurrection. This position is based entirely on an assumption; there is no evidence of any such group or any such practice in that ancient day. It would be strange (as well as misleading) for Paul to use such an argument without refuting the error it encompassed.
 - 4) Others think that the verse means: If there is no resurrection from the dead, why are we baptized to keep up the ranks of the believers (replace those saints who have died)? But this would have been a weak argument, one that assumes the prime reason for baptism is simply to keep the church supplied with members. The purpose of baptism is to save souls from the guilt of past sins so that they can be prepared for heaven.
 - 5) Brother Woods gives an interpretation that has the ring of truth: "To prove the resurrection of the body, Paul alluded to their baptism. Baptism is a picture of a burial *and a resurrection*; some of them were now denying a resurrection of the body; what then, of their baptism? It portrayed that which they now questioned! Why were they baptized for (*huper*), with reference to, the state from which they would come forth by resurrection, if there be no resurrection? Their view actually nullified their baptism!" (p.116). The passage, therefore, ties the doctrines of baptism and resurrection together with an unbreakable knot.
 - e. Brother Woods states: "It should be noted that the passage appears in a context where the subject under consideration is the resurrection of the body. Whatever I Cor. 15:29 teaches, it is with reference to the resurrection of the body—not baptism! It thus adds to our knowledge of the resurrection—not baptism" (p.116).
2. Verses 30-31: "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."
 - a. The apostles lived in daily jeopardy. Why were they required to endure such persecutions and threats of persecution if there was nothing to be gained from it?
 - b. The apostles and others who bravely endured persecution understood that this life is not all the life there is; it was on account of their supreme faith in eternal life in heaven that they were motivated to faithfulness. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18; cf. 2 Cor. 4:16—5:11; 11:23-28). In Paul's case, he faced daily danger of dying for the cause of Christ.
 - c. Despite their shortcomings, Paul held the Corinthian saints in the highest esteem; they were very precious to him. "I protest by that glorifying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31, ASV).
 - d. The sacrificial life of faithful saints, such as Paul and the apostles, demanded the resurrection, or else their privations and anguish were senseless.
 3. Verse 32: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."
 - a. This statement is an application of the argument of the previous passage. If the dead rise not, his painful encounters at Ephesus were without profit; not only would it be foolish to suffer if there was no resurrection, a life of eating and drinking would be the better way to live. Paul implies by the argument that the life of a Christian was one which was free from gluttony and drunkenness.
 - b. A review of his experiences in Ephesus shows that the beasts were of the two-legged variety. Paul
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had been in a terrible conflict with evil men there (Acts 19). The unruly mob in the arena behaved more like wild animals than men: "But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:34). There would have been no benefit to his maintaining his fidelity to Christ in the face of such hatred if there is no resurrection from the dead. "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead" (2 Cor. 1:8-9).

4. Verse 33: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (ASV).
 - a. The apostle hastens to correct any possible misunderstanding of the last statement in the foregoing verse. He denies the rightness of living by the code of sinners (i.e., the eat, drink, and be merry philosophy).
 - b. One who lived by that standard was grossly deceived. To associate with companions that live by that worldly philosophy would be corruptive to the saint's moral state. *Manners* is a reference to one's ethical conduct. *Communications* (companionships—ASV) refers to "an association of people, those who are of the same company" (Vine, Vol. 1, p.216). It is used in this verse with reference to an *evil* company.
 - c. The hope of a Christian is directly tied to the way we live. Associating with evil people can destroy our standing with God, and cause us to lose our reward.
5. Verse 34: "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."
 - a. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to become earnest about their salvation. Warning them of the dangers of having evil people as their companions, he calls on them to direct their lives so as to be free from sinful conduct.
 - b. This exhortation was necessary because some of them did not have a proper knowledge of God's will. It was to their shame that such an admonition was required. If one has had the opportunity and ability to learn the truth, and remains in ignorance, he can blame only himself.
 - 1) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 3) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

E. 1 Corinthians 15:35-49: The Nature of the Resurrected Body.

1. Verse 35: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"
 - a. Those who rejected the resurrection of the dead would have certain questions to raise: How is the resurrection accomplished and what kind of body do those raised up have? These are questions that even the most sincere believer in the resurrection might have.
 - b. Having addressed several basic matters that relate to the resurrection, he now turns to some practical aspects of the subject; he introduces the two questions of the verse, and proceeds to provide answers.
2. Verses 36-38: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."
 - a. Other versions:

- 1) "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (ASV).
 - 2) "But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?' Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain — perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body" (NKJV).
 - b. Paul begins to answer the first question: How are the dead raised up? Critics of the resurrection raise certain objections. They argue:
 - 1) Our bodies disintegrate naturally after death; many bodies are utterly destroyed by fire; in atomic explosions bodies have evaporated in a flash; some bodies have been devoured by beasts.
 - 2) The elements that were part of our bodies are made part of plants, are often combined with other substances, and in other ways are scattered over the earth far removed from the place of burial.
 - 3) These things being true, how can the dead be resurrected?
 - c. It is foolish to limit or question the infinite power of God.
 - 1) We cannot see or completely explain electricity, but we believe in it; we have the testimony of firsthand experience. We have not seen a case of resurrection, but we have the inerrant testimony of God's word to verify its reality. It is logically impossible to explain the existence of the universe apart from an Infinite Power (God). The Bible gives the most logical explanation of the origin of the universe and earthly life. Internal evidence shows it must be from God, thus true and accurate in all its pronouncements.
 - 2) During our earthly life, we grow, develop, change, and age; the cells of our body are constantly being replaced. Yet through all this change, we still retain the same identity and remain the same person. We know who we are, and our family and friends continue to know who we are.
 - 3) If we in our finite ways are able to retain this knowledge, surely the infinite God can remember what we were like, where our bodies were buried, and is fully able to bring our bodies back from the dust of the earth.
 - d. A grain of corn must *die* before it gives life to the plant it is able to produce. The grain dies in the sense that it ceases to be a kernel of corn. The same life that was inherent in the grain is in the plant; from the shell of the kernel of corn, a plant grows. The form of its body has changed, but it is still the same life. How is the grain of corn able to do this?
 - e. If you sow grains of wheat, what comes forth from the planting is not other kernels of wheat, but stalks of wheat. These stalks are able to produce grains of wheat in the head, but what issues from the planted kernel is a plant, not a seed. A seed of corn produces a corn stalk; a wheat seed produces a stalk of wheat.
 - f. The stalk of corn looks much different from a stalk of wheat; a tomato plant is vastly different from a head of cabbage. And each seed is much different from the plant it produces. God saw fit to order these natural life-forms according to his own will. Neither the seeds themselves, nor any man, can change this natural order. The same power that brought about this arrangement in nature, will bring mankind forth from the grave at the last day!
3. Verse 39-41: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory."
 - a. Critics of the Bible used to accuse Paul of being wrong and unscientific in stating that there was a difference between the flesh of men, beasts, fish, and birds. Current theory saw no difference between these various kinds of flesh: each of these animals has flesh and blood, needs food and rest, and grows old and dies.
 - 1) There are plain differences between men, beasts, fish, and birds. Some live in the sea, others on land; some live in the mountains, others in the deserts, and others in swamps; some walk, others crawl, and others fly or swim. God had the power to make different varieties of earthly beings.
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- 2) Paul was perfectly scientific; each creature is made up of a cell structure that is different from all others. Each cell is a universe all its own, consisting of nucleus, cytoplasm, chromosomes, and genes. Each contains sufficient information and power to reproduce itself exactly—a veritable library of information.
 - 3) By counting the number of chromosomes in a sample, the identity of the animal from which the specimen was taken can be determined with precision. By laboratory examination, the identity of an individual person can be determined by a sample of blood or tissue. This is a new development which promises to be a great assistance to criminal investigators.
 - 4) Since God could create all these varieties of life with their wondrous intricacies, including all these distinctions, he can raise the dead and give us new bodies!
- b. Further, Paul states that there are celestial (heavenly) bodies and there are terrestrial (earthly) bodies. Is he speaking of spiritual (angelic or glorified) bodies in his reference to celestial bodies? Or does he refer to such heavenly bodies as the stars, sun, and moon? Verse 41 shows that it is the material bodies of space that he means: moon and stars.
- 1) There are differences between a star and the moon; one appears brighter than the other; the nature of the light given off by each is different (a star produces light; the moon merely reflects the light produced by the sun).
 - 2) There are differences between the various kinds of terrestrial bodies. A dog is different from a deer; a fish is different from a feline; a man is different from a whale; and there are differences between two men.
 - 3) Since God could make these different varieties of things and beings, he has the power to bring us forth from the dust of the ground, causing us to retain our same identities, and giving us spiritual bodies.
4. Verses 42-44: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."
- a. Before the corn stalk can spring from the ground, the kernel of corn must be planted in the earth. When placed in fertile soil, with proper moisture and warmth, the kernel germinates and grows; it appears, not as another grain, but first as a blade, then a plant which puts out great fronds, a tassel, shoots, silk, and finally full ears with hundreds of other kernels identical to the one originally planted. The seed planted was tiny, but the full-grown stalk is perhaps 12-14 feet tall.
 - b. Paul draws a comparison between this example from nature and the resurrection. The human body is planted in the earth; it is dead when planted, and soon disintegrates, and its elements return to the earth again. But in the resurrection, it comes forth as an immortal body, not subject to death and decay; it is utterly different in its nature from the body that was planted. "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36).
 - c. The human body is interred in dishonor. Sin has brought about its death (cf. Gen. 2:16-17). There is a certain repulsiveness that pertains to a dead human body. Abraham alluded to this when he sought a place in the land of the Canaanites to "bury my dead out of my sight" (Gen. 23:1-8). It will be raised from the grave in glory.
 - 1) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - 2) 1 John 3:1-2: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."
 - d. Our bodies are buried because of weakness; they were not designed to live forever; their demise results from sin. It is buried in weakness, but it is raised in power.
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- 1) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
- e. Our body is buried because it is a natural body, belonging to this natural world; it was not designed to live in heaven (1 Cor. 15:50; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-2; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:52-53). The resurrected body is a spiritual body, designed to inhabit eternity.
- 1) There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body; these bodies have the same identity, although they are different in nature. The natural body is adapted to live in the natural world; the spiritual body is adapted to reside in the spirit world of eternity.
 - 2) A caterpillar gorges itself on green leaves, growing fatter and uglier; it covers itself with a cocoon; after a period of time has passed, it emerges from the cocoon as a beautiful butterfly. The same life that animated the caterpillar, now animates the butterfly. As a caterpillar, it was adapted to live in one environment; as a butterfly, its environment has changed.

The Physical Body	The Spiritual Body
Sown in Corruption	Raised in Incorruption
Sown in Dishonor	Raised in Glory
Sown in Weakness	Raised in Power
Sown a Natural Body	Raised a Spiritual Body

5. Verse 45: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."
 - a. The truth presented here is according to the scriptures: "The first man Adam was made a living soul." "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). The first Adam was a physical being, (although he possessed a spirit as do all of God's offspring (Zech. 12:1). The passage speaks of Adam's physical being.
 - b. The second Adam (Christ) is a quickening spirit. Christ, being a member of the Godhead, is a spirit being; he occupied a mortal body during his earthly mission, but resumed his eternal status following his ascension.
 - 1) Psalms 24:7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory.."
 - 2) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And

- there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
- 3) Matthew 17:1-5: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - 4) Luke 9:28-32: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him."
 - 5) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 6) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 7) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - 8) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 9) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
- c. He is able to give us spiritual life when we obey his gospel, and he will raise us up from the dead, giving us the ability to enjoy heaven.
6. Verses 46-47: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."
 - a. Adam lived upon the earth prior to Christ's coming to earth on his earthly mission. Although Christ is as eternal as the Father (Micah 5:2: *his goings forth have been from everlasting*), he entered the human family by the virgin birth thousands of years after Adam.
 - b. The natural (mortal) body exists before the spiritual body. Before we can enter heaven, we must be born into the human family, and after we commit sin (Ezek. 28:15; Rom. 3:23), we must be born again (obey the gospel: 1 Pet. 1:22-23) to be eligible for heaven. We had no being at all before we were conceived (cf. Zech. 12:1). Our mortal body dies, and at the resurrection, it is raised to be an immortal body.
 - c. The first man (Adam) and his descendants are of the earth; Adam was created from the elements of the earth, and our bodies are fashioned also from natural elements. The second man (Christ) came from heaven. Our physical bodies came from Adam, thus from the earth; our spiritual bodies will come from Christ, thus they will be spiritual in nature. Adam was merely a man, but Christ is the Lord from heaven.
 7. Verses 48-49: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."
 - a. Stating the proposition plainly, Paul affirms that we are earthly (have mortal bodies) because of our relationship to Adam; and inasmuch as we partake of the spiritual (we belong to Christ), so we are to
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have spiritual bodies (cf. 2 Pet. 1:1-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).

- b. Because we are descendants of Adam, we inherit the penalty of physical death; but because of our (Christians) relationship to Christ, we shall bear his image (when we receive our immortal bodies in the resurrection). Verse 49 describes Christians. Every human will be resurrected in the last day; every human has a spirit (soul); but only the faithful of humanity are Christ-like (2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 1:1-11) and will enter heaven.

F. 1 Corinthians 15:50-58: The Great Resurrection Day.

1. Verse 50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."
 - a. Continuing to show the essentiality of the resurrection, Paul states that physical bodies are not compatible with heaven; they cannot survive there. Heaven is the home of the soul, not the home of the mortal body. It has none of the material necessities for the body to exist: no literal air, food, or water.
 - b. If we want to go to heaven, we must obtain a different kind of body, one that is adapted to exist there. Each form of earthly life is adapted to live in its own environment. A tiger could not survive underwater; an eagle could not live underground. A tiny fish does very well in the sea, and a worm can have a good life under tons of earth. Our mortal bodies are wonderfully adapted to live in this world, but could not subsist in God's heaven.
 - c. The natural body of man must undergo a great change in order to live in eternity. Those who are dead, will be resurrected and have a spiritual, immortal body; those who are alive on earth when Christ returns will have their bodies instantly changed into immortal bodies.
 2. Verse 51: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."
 - a. At the time of the Lord's second coming, not everyone will have died: some will be alive on earth when that great day arrives. He will show in the next three verses that those on earth at that time will be changed directly into their immortal bodies without experiencing death in the common mode.
 - b. His point in this section is to answer the obvious question: "To be resurrected, one must first die; what happens to those who are alive when the Lord returns?" Paul affirms that the living will be instantly changed at the end, immediately after the dead are raised.
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - 2) Job 14:14: "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."
 - c. Death is described in this verse (and elsewhere) as *sleep*. That descriptive term is not used to depict the death of Christ; it is used in reference to God's people who die. It pictures the peaceful repose of the body after death. Ordinarily, people die quietly at home or in the hospital; lying in the casket, the body appears to be merely asleep. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of *soul-sleeping*. The soul in hades is awake, alert, conscious, and has feeling after death. Lazarus was comforted in the paradise of the hades realm, while the evil rich man was tormented; each was fully conscious and possessed their full faculties.
 3. Verse 52: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
 - a. Here the apostle gives the direct answer to the question: What happens to those who are alive on earth at the Lord's coming?
 - b. Instantaneously, as quickly as an eye can twinkle, the dead will be raised and the living will be changed. It will be done so rapidly, there will scarcely be time enough to comprehend the event! "In the twinkling of an eye; as soon as a man can wink; which expressions show that this mighty work is to be done by the almighty power of God, as he does all his works: He calls, and it is done. The resurrection of all the dead, from the foundation of the world to that time, and the change of all the living then upon earth, shall be the work of a single moment" [Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic
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- c. The Lord's trumpet will be sounded, heralding the end of time; at that instant of time will the resurrection take place, and the living will be changed (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 3:10-14).
 - d. The result of the resurrection and of the changing will be identical: each individual will be given an immortal body. The method by which this is accomplished will be different, but the effect will be the same.
 - 1) A body that is immortal is a body that cannot experience physical death; it transcends the material; it is not physical, with the inherent limitations of a corporeal entity.
 - 2) Both saint and sinner will be given immortal bodies. The saint receives his so that he can inhabit heaven, and enjoy all the pleasures and joys of that land of glory. The sinner will have an immortal body so as to endure the horrors of hell, without having his being consumed in the flames.
 - 3) The same Greek word is used to describe the unending nature of the sinner's punishment as is used to define the unending nature of the saint's reward: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46).
 4. Verse 53: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."
 - a. The corruptible body must be changed into an incorruptible body in order to exist in heaven or hell. Note the word **must**.
 - b. This is a corollary of verse fifty. Because a fleshly body cannot inhabit heaven, it must be changed into an incorruptible and immortal body. In heaven, we will have bodies similar to the body our Savior has: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).
 - c. The wicked will be given immortal bodies which cannot be consumed by the fires of hell, but which can feel the full torment of eternal punishment.
 5. Verse 54: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."
 - a. When God's people have been changed into their incorruptible and immortal bodies, they will fulfill the prophetic utterance, by proclaiming: "Death is swallowed up in victory."
 - b. The prophecy is recorded in Isaiah 25:8: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it."
 - c. When will God wipe away all the tears of his people? In heaven! "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).
 6. Verses 55-56: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."
 - a. The thought of such a victory brings forth the statement of this passage. Think of how wonderful the state will be where death will have been ended. *Death* and *grave* are used as parallels in the text. Death causes us to be buried.
 - b. Death is the ultimate sting of this life. It rules over mankind; it separates loved ones; the death of the husband and father can bring economic tragedy on the bereft family. There is such a cold finality in death that even the thought of it can bring a cold, clinging fear to the human heart.
 - c. Although Christ conquered him who held death, yet death has not ended. The victory of Christ over death will not be realized in practical terms until the second coming. In the meantime, we must face the harsh reality of death, but with the exultant hope of ultimate victory! In the view of a mature child of God, death is but a portal into glory and triumph.
 - d. The sting of sin is death. It was because of sin that death was brought upon humanity (Gen. 2:16-17). Its sting is terribly sharp and painful, but for the redeemed, its sting is minimized to the best degree
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- possible.
- e. The strength of sin is the law. There would be no sin if God had no law (Rom. 4:15; 5:13), for sin is the violation of God's law (1 John 3:4; 5:17).
 - 1) Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."
 - 2) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
 - 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 4) 1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."
 - f. The Mosaic Law identified sin (Rom. 7:7-13).
 - 1) A Jew who lived under that Old Testament law, could receive no forgiveness of sin by that law, once he violated it (Heb. 10:1-4; 9:12-13). As long as the Law of Moses was in effect, one who broke its precepts was guilty, and under the best of circumstances, could only have his guilt moved forward from one day of atonement to the next, with no hope of pardon by the Law, while the Mosaic Law remained.
 - a) Hebrews 8:12-13: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."
 - b) Hebrews 10:17-18: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."
 - c) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - d) Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
 - e) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 2) For such a Jew, to commit a sin was to bring the condemnation of the law upon his soul. Sin drew strength from the law in the manner indicated. Paul discussed this issue in Romans 7, where he uttered a groan of despair, from the viewpoint of an Old Testament Jew (7:24). But in Romans 7:25—8:4, he makes a proclamation of victory: There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ! The guilt of their sins has been washed away in the blood of the Lamb! (Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:3,7; Col. 1:13-14).
 - 3) The benefits of the blood of Christ extended backward in time, to cleanse those who served God faithfully in the Old Testament eras (Rom. 3:23-25; Heb. 9:15-17). Its benefits are offered to all who live on this side of Calvary (Rom. 5:8-9).
 7. Verse 57: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - a. Christ having died on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice for sin, we now can obey his gospel (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 10:18), and receive full pardon for our sins of the past!
 - b. Paul raised a most significant question in Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" To this question, the inspired answer is given in the next verse: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord..." (7:25). Jesus Christ our Lord is the one who is able to deliver us from the body of this death!
 - c. Commonly, we hear and see many thoughtless people treat the death of Christ as a matter of utter indifference. There is little or no gratitude in their hearts for what the Lord has done. One must be sincere and understanding in order to have proper thankfulness for the Lord's death.
 8. Verse 58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work
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of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

- a. In view of the fact that we shall be raised from the dead, we are to be steadfast, unmoveable, and ever abound in the Lord's work.
 - 1) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
 - 3) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - b. Even though death overtakes us, our labor will not have been done in vain, if we were faithful. All work done out of the Lord is in vain.
 - 1) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 3) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - 4) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
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1 CORINTHIANS 16

A. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4: Instructions Concerning the Collection for the Saints.

1. Verse 1: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye."
 - a. The church at Jerusalem had members who needed the financial support of their brethren, which the church there could not fill by itself.
 - 1) When the church began in Jerusalem in 33 A.D., certain Jews were present for the feasts of Passover and Pentecost who lived outside Palestine. Remaining there to learn more of Christianity, some of them became in need of daily support (Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-37; 5:1-11).
 - 2) When Stephen was martyred in Acts 7, a great persecution arose against the church at Jerusalem, causing the saints to be scattered (Acts 8:1,4). This caused at least some of them to become impoverished; some doubtless lost their property and possessions in the persecution.
 - 3) In Acts 11:27-30, a prophecy was given that a great famine was to strike the earth, with Judea suffering a more direct effect than other places. The church of Christ at Antioch sent funds to the church of Christ at Jerusalem to help supply the needs of the poor.
 - 4) Now, the churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia were putting together a collection to send to the suffering saints in Judea. That only part of the Jerusalem church was in dire need is seen in Paul's statement in Romans 15:26: "For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem" (ASV).
 - b. Paul had been working for about a year, encouraging the Gentile congregations to make up the contribution to help the poor saints in Judea.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 9:1-2: "For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: For know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. "
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 9:13: "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 8:4, 10: "Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints....And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago."
 - c. The apostle introduces the subject here, and calls on the Corinthians to contribute to this worthy cause. He had given order: speaking as an apostle of Christ, Paul issued directions that the brethren make the contribution. The Greek term *diatasso* (given order) is also used in Matthew 11:1, Acts 18:2, 1 Corinthians 11:34, Galatians 3:19, and Titus 1:5. "In issuing this apostolic order Paul is clearly *commanding an arrangement*—a definite plan for financing God's work. According to the lexicons the word means: command, charge, ordain, prescribe, arrange, make a precise arrangement" (Deaver, ADL, p.266).
 - 1) The gift was to be offered freely and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6-7), but it was by the authority of the Lord that the money was to be given (cf. 1 Cor. 14:37; Gal. 1:12-13).
 - 2) The order had previously been given to the churches in Galatia; it was now extended to include the church at Corinth. Inasmuch as the epistle to the Corinthians applied to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1:1-2), and contained the information which Paul taught "every where in every church" (4:17), it follows that the instructions given here were to be applied by all.
 - 3) The orderly arrangement given by the inspired apostle in this passage by which the church was to fulfill its obligations is to be followed by the Lord's people in every place and time. Each local congregation has continuing financial responsibilities; the plan Paul gave here is to be adhered to in raising the funds for regular and special needs.
 - d. Several benefits were derived by the contributions being collected for the needy saints at Jerusalem.

- 1) First and primarily, the needs of the brethren would be supplied. The present distress was not an acute emergency, for the relief was not intended to be filled for more than a year after its inception. However, there was a definite problem.
 - 2) Both the individuals who gave and the congregations which took the collections became more spiritually mature by giving.
 - a) Acts 20:35: "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 8:1-5: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."
 - c) 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: "But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work."
 - 3) The gift from the Gentile saints to the needy Jewish saints would tend to weld the two groups together with a stronger bond, and prove to those in Jerusalem that the Gentile Christians were true followers of Christ.
 - 4) It would encourage other such worthy efforts in the future.
 - e. Although the collection was for the needy among the saints in Jerusalem (cf. Rom. 15:26, ASV), it was not for the saints only. Some sincerely believe that a congregation has no authority to give from its funds to any one who is not a Christian; it is maintained that only individuals may help non-Christians. However, the New Testament teaches that a congregation may financially assist a non-Christian in need.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 9:13: "Seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all" (ASV). Notice that the contribution was given to them and unto all; a distinction is made between them (the saints) and all (those not saints). Similar statements are also made elsewhere:
 - a) 1 Thessalonians 3:12: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you." Love is not a mere emotion; it is a willingness to help, expressed in overt actions (Eph. 5:6; 1 John 3:17-18).
 - b) 1 Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."
 - 2) Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Doing good includes feeding and clothing the needy; such is to be done for the saints in particular, but is also to be done for those who are not part of the household of faith, as we have opportunity.
 - 3) Acts 24:17: "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings." Paul brought the collection to Jerusalem, and declared that it was for his nation (not only for the members of the church).
 - 4) "We contend that 'nation' included *more* than the poor among the *saints*. We contend that 'nation' in Acts 24:17 and 'all' in II Corinthians 9:13 prove: (1) that the collection now being considered was *not* for 'saints only,' and (2) that the 'saints only' doctrine is not taught in the New Testament" (Deaver, ADL., p.265).
2. Verse 2: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered

him, that there be no gatherings when I come." "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come" (ASV).

- a. The funds being collected by the saints were to be taken up on the first day of the week. Why then? Why not on some other day? Did this require that the contributions be done only on the first day of the week? Was the contribution to be given on each first day of the week, or was it a one-time action?
 - 1) The law of exclusion shows that the contributions were to be made only on the first day of the week. It is not necessary that the Lord specifically state that Monday, Tuesday, etc., were improper days for the gathering; by specifying the day on which it was to be given, he automatically eliminated every other day. When we address a letter to a friend in another state, we are not required to write on the envelope every state, city, and person to which the letter is not to be sent; we simply identify the person, his address, and the city and state; that automatically excludes every other person, address, city, and state.
 - 2) The original language says that the contribution is to be made every first day of the week. "Particular attention must be directed to the Greek *kata*. This is the *distributive* use of *kata*. For example, in Luke 2:41 *kata* is used with the word 'year,' and the meaning is: *every year*. The Lord's parents went to Jerusalem 'every year.' Likewise, *kata mian sabbatou* means: every first day of the week" (Deaver, ADL., p.266).
- b. Several highly significant events occurred on the first day of the week, making Sunday special in Christianity.
 - 1) The Lord arose from the dead on Sunday.
 - a) Mark 16:1: "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him."
 - b) Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."
 - 2) His resurrection was publicly proclaimed for the first time on the first day of the week. Pentecost Day always fell on the first day of the week.
 - a) Leviticus 23:15-16: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD."
 - b) Luke 24:1,3-4: "Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them....And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments."
 - c) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - 3) The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles on the first day of the week (Luke 24:49; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4; Lev. 23:15-16).
 - 4) The kingdom was established on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1-4; 2:47; Matt. 16:16-19; Col. 1:13-14; Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; cf. Isa. 2:1-4). The kingdom was to come with power; the power was to come when the Holy Spirit was given; the Holy Spirit was given in Acts 2; the power was given at that time; hence the kingdom came on that same occasion, which was the first day of the week.
 - 5) The New Law was announced for the first time on the first day of the week (Acts 2; Isa. 2:1-4; Jer. 31:31-33; Luke 24:47-49).
 - 6) First converts added to the church on the first day of the week (Acts 2:36-41,47).
 - 7) First public announcement of the resurrection and coronation of Christ was made on the first day of the week (Acts 2; Lev. 23:15-16).

- 8) Remission of sins in the name of Christ was first preached openly on the first day of the week (Acts 2:38).
 - 9) The apostles of Christ were commissioned and empowered to do their special work on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1-4; John 20:21-23; John 14-16; Acts 1:5,8).
 - c. The example of the first century church shows that they met on the first day of the week to eat the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; cf. Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42).
 - 1) An assembly on the Lord's Day is required by the text (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - 2) One purpose for the Lord's Day assembly was to eat the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20; Acts 20:7).
 - 3) Another purpose for the Lord's Day assembly was to "lay by in store" according to their prosperity.
 - d. Each Christian was required by the command of the verse to give. Every saint has an obligation to support the Lord's work in every way he can, including financial backing. The amount of his financial support is determined by his fiscal prosperity. One who has little means, has little obligation; one with great wealth has the duty to give more than those with limited means; one who has no means, has no obligation to give (one cannot give what he does not have). The rich are not required to give all they have and neither are the poor.
 - 1) Luke 12:48: "...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - 2) Luke 16:10: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."
 - e. Each is to "lay by him in store." On the first day of the week, each Christian is to separate (or lay by itself) some amount, putting it into the Lord's treasury.
 - 1) The verse does not mean that they were to store it at home, keeping it until Paul came; that would have defeated the purpose. He wanted the funds available and ready for his arrival, *that there be no gathering when I come*.
 - 2) Deaver says that the imperative mood of the Greek term here stresses the obligatory nature of the action. He further states, "The *present tense* stresses the continuity of the action prescribed" (ADL, p.267).
 - f. The word *God* is italicized in the verse, denoting that there is no comparable word in the Greek text. Since God is the source of our prosperity, we properly attribute our abundance to him.
 - 1) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - 2) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 3. Verse 3: "And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."
 - a. When Paul arrived in Corinth, en route to Jerusalem, the brethren in the Corinthian congregation were to pick one or more of their members to deliver the funds to Judea.
 - b. These individuals were to have letters which would introduce and endorse them for this mission. Paul wanted everything done openly and above board, with no possibility of there being any opportunity for an enemy to level a charge of wrongdoing against him.
 - c. A list of names appears in Acts 20:4: "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus."
 4. Verse 4: "And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me."
 - a. Paul mapped out his plans, but recognized that they were subject to change, because of circumstances, or by being overridden by divine guidance as in Acts 16:6-10: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he
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had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."

- b. It worked out that Paul was in the company that brought the gift to Jerusalem. "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings" (Acts 24:17).

B. 1 Corinthians 16:5-9: Paul's Plans to Visit Corinth.

1. Verses 5-6: "Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go."
 - a. He planned to pass through Macedonia, and spend the winter at Corinth. "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia" (Acts 20:1-3).
 - b. His three-month stay in Corinth evidently coincided with his plan to winter there. While he was in Greece, he planned to sail from there to Syria, as on the second journey (Acts 18:18-22), but he learned of another plot against him. Apparently, it was no longer feasible to take a ship from Corinth, thus he began his return to Antioch by way of Macedonia, the route he had taken in entering Greece (Acts 20:1 ff).
2. Verses 7-8: "For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost."
 - a. He intended to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, after which he would take his journey to Corinth. The reason for staying in Ephesus until then was to take advantage of the opportunities open to him there (verse 9).
 - b. Paul was never arrogant and self-willed. He well understood that the Lord's will must be done, and that without it, he could do nothing. He was happy to allow the Lord to have his way. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-15).
3. Verse 9: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."
 - a. Paul describes his opportunities as "a great door and effectual." We often see problems very clearly, but fail to perceive the opportunities. We often lack the wisdom to see opportunity, or the courage to seize an opportunity, or do not have the knowledge, zeal, faith, or skill to use our opportunities properly.
 - b. The Bible speaks strongly about opportunities:
 - 1) Acts 14:27: "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."
 - 2) Colossians 4:2-3: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you."
 - 4) Revelation 3:7: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 2:12-13: "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."
 - c. Each opportunity seems also to be accompanied with difficulties or dangers. At Ephesus, Paul was given a great and effectual door of opportunity, but there were many enemies.

- 1) A reading of Acts 19:8-41 will give a picture of the dangers the apostle saw. So grievous were those difficulties that he described the trouble as fighting with beasts (1 Cor. 15:32).
- 2) However, there was great success! "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:17-20).

C. 1 Corinthians 16:10-12: Timothy and Apollos.

1. Verses 10-11: "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of he Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren."
 - a. During his stay in Ephesus, Paul wrote the present epistle to the Corinthians. He sent Timothy and Erastus from Ephesus to Macedonia. "So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season" (Acts 19:22).
 - b. Our text shows that their instructions were to carry them on to Corinth after visiting Macedonia. Here, Paul advises the Corinthians to receive Timothy, for he served the Lord's cause as Paul did. Erastus is not mentioned in this reference; possibly he remained in Macedonia.
 - c. He requested that Timothy be aided. Paul had many strong enemies in Corinth, and since Timothy was close to Paul, he would inherit the hatred of the apostle's foes.
 - d. Timothy was not to be despised (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12). One who despised or opposed Timothy was despising and opposing the Lord, for that young man did the work of Christ. "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Luke 10:16).
 - e. Timothy was a young preacher, but had endeared himself to Paul and others.
 - 1) Acts 16:1-3: "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:17: "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."
 - 3) Philippians 2:19-20: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state."
2. Verse 12: "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time."
 - a. Acts 18:24-28 gives the background of Apollos. He had initially preached the baptism of John, believing it to be God's current will. Aquila and Priscilla privately taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly, and doubtless he became a mighty servant of Christ.
 - b. Paul felt a close affinity to Apollos, and trusted him completely. He had requested Apollos to go to Corinth, but his circumstances were such that such a trip was not feasible at the time; perhaps he was not disposed to make the journey. Paul stated that they could expect Apollos as soon as he had a convenient time.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 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" (NKJ).

D. 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: General Exhortations.

1. Verses 13-14: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done
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with charity."

- a. Five powerful statements are given in these short verses. Each is filled with significance; each has practical applications; each is essential to living the Christian life.
- b. These are not mere suggestions, but the imperative demands of an inspired apostle of Christ. These admonitions were intended to move the saints at Corinth to a higher motivation in their service to the Lord and to a deeper commitment to the truth of the gospel.

2. Watch ye.

- a. This is a military term, describing the heavy responsibility of one on guard duty; if the watchman slept, the enemy could infiltrate the camp or overrun it entirely.
- b. To watch is to keep awake, be vigilant, to be prepared. The very statement itself shows that there is a danger, and that if that danger is identified in time, then a proper defense can be effected. If a child of God cannot sin and be lost, why is this charge given? And if any belief or practice is acceptable, provided one is sincere about it, why did Paul issue this warning?
- c. We are to watch primarily to detect the enemy. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet. 5:8-9).
 - 1) The adversary is after our souls; we must be on guard lest he succeed: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Cor. 10:12-13).
 - 2) The foe is out to hinder or destroy the gospel; we must be alert to guard against it (2 Cor. 11:3,13-15; cf. Acts 13:44-46; 20:17-32).
- d. We are also to be alert for opportunities to help others and to further the cause of Christ. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).
- e. God has always appointed watchmen to guard his earthly affairs.
 - 1) His prophets served as watchmen in the Old Testament: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 3:17-19).
 - 2) Elders are watchmen over the flock (the local congregation):
 - a) Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - b) Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you."
 - 3) Preachers are watchmen in the work of God:
 - a) 1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."
 - b) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - c) 2 Timothy 4:5: "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist,

make full proof of thy ministry."

- 4) Each Christian is to watch for the Lord's coming (Matt. 25:13; 1 Thess. 5:2,6), for temptations (Matt. 26:41; 1 Pet. 5:8), and for wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15-20; 1 John 4:1).

3. Stand fast in the faith.

- a. The statement is not "stand fast in faith," but "stand fast in the faith." We are to stand fast in the gospel, that great body of truth which comprises the faith.
 - 1) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - 2) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - 3) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 4) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - 5) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- b. The faith is all-sufficient.
 - 1) It incorporates the full authority of God (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 10:16; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Heb. 4:12).
 - 2) It is complete, without any essential detail or feature omitted (2 Peter 1:5; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - 3) It is unique; there is nothing else like it (Jude 3; Eph. 4:4-5; 2 John 9).
 - 4) It is infallible; it has no defects and will create no defects in us; it is always right on every subject it addresses (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:9-13; Eph. 3:1-11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 17:17; cf. Heb. 6:18).
- c. We must stand fast in the faith.
 - 1) The requirement of the passage shows that the faith can be deserted.
 - a) 1 Timothy 1:19-20 (Hymenaeus and Alexander made shipwreck of the faith).
 - b) 1 Timothy 4:1 (some were predicted to depart from the faith).
 - 2) We can desert the faith.
 - a) In attitude (Rev. 2:4; 3:16-17).
 - b) In doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1-3; Col. 2:8).
 - c) And in conduct (2 Tim. 4:10; Phil. 3:16-19).
 - 3) We stand fast in the faith by being faithful to its teachings. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).
 - 4) We stand fast in the faith by contending for it against those who would pervert it or try to destroy it (Jude 3; Phil. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 4:6-7; Gal. 2:4-5).
 - 5) We must live up to the requirements it places on us to preach it (Mark 16:15) and to live as it teaches (Titus 2:11-14; Phil. 1:27; 3:16; 1 Cor. 9:24-27).

4. Quit you like men.

- a. The word *quit* has an archaic meaning of *to conduct oneself* in a particular way. As used here, the meaning is to "act like men, be manly, be mature in our conduct." Acquit: "to conduct (oneself) usually satisfactorily especially under stress 'the recruits acquitted themselves like veterans'" (Merriam-Webster).
- b. Christianity does not make cowards out of men; it makes courageous men and women out of sinful men and women. The gospel demands that we have courage (*virtue*); in an evil society which has

repudiated the gospel, one who serves Christ must have courage or he will not last long.

- 1) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:5: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge" [Virtue here means courage].
- c. There are many characteristics of children that are becoming of Christians, but there are also other attributes children have which are forbidden of God's people.
- 1) Romans 16:19: "For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:20: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."
- d. We are not to be alarmed at the enemy.
- 1) Joshua 1:7-8: "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."
 - 2) 1 Kings 2:2-3: "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself."
 - 3) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - 4) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
- e. We can know we have courage if:
- 1) We have a willingness to take a stand for the truth and righteousness, regardless of the effect our stand will have on those around us (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-5; Jude 3).
 - 2) We are willing to be obedient, despite the hardships our faithfulness may incur (Rom. 8:18; Matt. 5:10-12).
 - 3) We are willing to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7; Prov. 3:5; Jer. 9:23-24; Rom. 10:17).
5. **Be strong.**
- a. Our physical strength can be increased during our younger and more productive years, but in time it will naturally deteriorate as we grow older. It is not physical strength of which Paul speaks.
 - b. Spiritual strength can be increased throughout our lives, as long as we have our mental faculties and do not lose our faith. Our last day on earth may be the weakest our body has ever been, but our inner man can be at its zenith of strength.
 - c. Spiritual strength and physical strength are developed along parallel lines. Each requires food, exercise, and time.
 - d. We obey this injunction by studying God's word, by worshipping God regularly with sincerity and in truth, by serving the Lord daily, by praying often, and by having fellowship with those of like precious faith.
 - e. Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."
 - f. 2 Corinthians 12:10: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
6. **Let all your things be done with love.**
- a. The kind of love that can be commanded is that disposition of earnestly desiring the best for others,

the willing of good for them, and which will not permit us to do harm or evil to anyone, even an enemy.

- 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
 - 3) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."
- b. Unless our religious activities are activated by love, they are without value to our soul.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."
 - 2) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
- c. Paul lists several characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."
- d. Love must be sincere and active to be genuine: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

E. 1 Corinthians 16:15-18: Some Special Requests.

1. Verse 15: "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints)." "Now I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints)" (ASV).
 - a. He calls attention to the family of Stephanas, who were the firstfruits of Achaia (1 Cor. 1:16). These were the first ones to obey the gospel in that province of Greece where Corinth was situated.
 - b. Paul points out that the members of this family had *addicted themselves* [had set themselves] to the ministry of other saints. They had dedicated themselves to the work of assisting other Christians.
 - c. The Lord's work is divided into three categories: "...the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: (Eph. 4:12, ASV). Building up the body of Christ is the work of evangelizing; the perfecting of the saints is the work of edifying members of the church; the work of ministering is helping the needy.
 - d. This last function is the work which the family of Stephanas had set themselves to accomplish. Their skills and means were such that this work received their special attention.
2. Verse 16: "That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth."
 - a. The plea the apostle began to make in the previous verse is stated here: "I beseech you, brethren...that ye submit yourselves unto such" (as the house of Stephanas had done).
 - b. He directs all the brethren at Corinth to follow the example of the house of Stephanas. As they showed great interest in filling the needs of others, so all of them should have the same concern. As they dedicated themselves to helping the needy, so should the rest of the congregation follow their lead.

- c. Humble, quiet service to others is not to be deprecated; and those who furnish such service to others are not to be despised. "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:26-28).
 - d. Those who support the work of preaching the gospel, and who labor in the work itself, are to be commended and imitated. Paul names three men who came to him at Ephesus, giving him such support as he needed in order to continue in that fruitful field of labor.
3. Verses 17-18: "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such."
- a. While Paul labored at Ephesus (16:8), Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus came to him, furnishing him with support which the Corinthian church had not supplied.
 - 1) This is not necessarily an indictment of the Corinthians as a whole for the omission, for there may not have been the opportunity for them to give anything to his support.
 - 2) Philippians 4:15: "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only."
 - b. The help Paul received from Stephanas, Achaicus and Fortunatus was the same kind as indicated in verses fifteen and sixteen: help of a material nature. If the apostle had to devote himself to a secular work in order to support himself financially, there would be little time and strength remaining to do the great work which he was called to do (Acts 26:16-18).
 - c. These three men had refreshed Paul's spirit by their presence and help. The information they brought to him concerning the state of the church in Corinth would have lifted his spirits; and when they returned home, the news they brought from Paul and his labors would have encouraged the saints at Corinth.
 - d. The final clause in verse eighteen connects with the plea of verses fifteen and sixteen: that the saints are to imitate those who devote themselves to ministering to those in need. Stephanas, Achaicus and Fortunatus had supplied certain needs Paul had when they came to him. Such individuals are to be honored, not despised; their work is to be duplicated, not discouraged.
- F. 1 Corinthians 16:19-24: Concluding Salutations.
1. Verse 19: "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."
 - a. The various congregations located in the province of Asia sent their greetings to the brethren at Corinth. "The Roman province of Asia embraced Mysia, Lydia, Phrygia, and Caria, with Ephesus as its capital. In the New Testament, Asia always denotes the Roman province" (Lipscomb, p.258). Paul did not identify these congregations by name.
 - b. Aquila and Priscilla were in Ephesus, and a congregation met in their house. This courageous couple sent greetings to their Corinthian brethren, as also did the church which congregated in their house. The local congregations of the first century did not own meetinghouses; they met in whatever public building that was available, or in someone's home. While there is nothing wrong with a congregation owning a meetinghouse, such a building is not required in order for a local church to exist, provided they have some place to meet.
 2. Verse 20: "All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."
 - a. "Some regard this as ordaining a manner of salutation that was to be perpetual and universal among the disciples; but no ordinance of God was so treated. All the commands and ordinances were commanded by Jesus Christ, repeated by the apostles, and recorded in his life and teachings as part of his work; not left simply to the salutations and greetings at the close of the epistles to the church. Take baptism: it was introduced by John, approved by Jesus during his personal ministry, commanded in the commission (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16), and in the first sermon by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, is constantly presented in Acts of Apostles, then through the epistles to the churches. Or, take the
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Lord's Supper: it was solemnly instituted by Jesus, with the command to the disciples to do it in remembrance of him. Then the Holy Spirit presents it (Acts 2:42); it is observed by the disciples, with apostolic approval (Acts 20:7); then it was commanded, in the main body of the epistles, to be observed by the disciples. On the other hand, Jesus did not practice or command kissing, so far as recorded. We have no example of the apostles practicing it. It is mentioned only when the apostles were sending salutations to others, being thereby reminded of their method of salutation. If it was intended as an ordinance of God, I do not see why it was treated so differently from his other ordinances and commands" (Lipscomb, pp.259f).

- b. The customary greeting of those ancient times was a kiss to the cheek; this custom still prevails in some cultures today. The command of the verse is: Greet one another with an holy kiss; the kiss was to be given because it was the common greeting of the time; the kiss must not be sensuous, but holy.
3. Verse 21: "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand."
 - a. The closing salutation of the letter was written by Paul. The apostle, for some unidentified reason, used others to do the actual writing of his epistles. "I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord" (Rom. 16:22). The Holy Spirit revealed the message to be inscribed; Paul related the message to the penman, who placed the message on paper.
 - b. Some have thought that the apostle had a pronounced problem with seeing, which limited his writing ability. However, if he could pen the salutation, he could write a longer section. When the Lord restored his eyesight in Damascus, we may be sure that it was completely and perfectly restored, for the Lord does not take half-way measures.
 4. Verse 22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
 - a. The apostle said as he drew the epistle to its conclusion, that if a person did not love the Lord Jesus, he was anathema. *Anathema* is very strong word. It evokes condemnation on the individual. Some of the places where it appears in the Greek New Testament follow:
 - 1) Romans 9:3: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:3: "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed...."
 - 3) Galatians 1:8: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Also, verse nine.
 - 4) Acts 23:12: "And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul."
 - 5) Mark 14:71: "But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak."
 - b. "The word anathema solemnly pronounces that which the Lord at his coming will confirm and ratify. This sentence is a stern epitome of the whole epistle: If any one by profligacy, by contentiousness, by covetousness, by idolatry, by arrogance, by heresy, evinces an utter lack of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, he must abide the consequences of his moral status—there is no outlook in the future for such a man..." (Lipscomb, p.260).
 - c. The way we express love for Christ (and God) is by obedience to his will.
 - 1) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - 2) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - 3) John 15:14 "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
 - d. One who does not obey the gospel, does not love the Lord; if one does not love the Lord, he will surely be lost in eternity.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

- 2) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - e. Language scholars report that the term maran-atha is the Greek spelling of two Aramaic words (cf. Vine, Vol. 3, p.41). The first part of the expression (*maran*) means "Lord." The second part means "comes," or "has come," or "come." The term carries a warning which reinforces the preceding thought in the verse. It is not clear as to why the warning (*maran-atha*) is given by means of an Aramaic expression instead of in Greek. Similar expressions are given in the following passages:
 - 1) James 5:8: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."
 - 2) Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."
 - 3) Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
 - 4) Revelation 22:20: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
 - f. The statement means: Christ has (or will) come; it furnishes a warning to those who do not love and obey the Lord.
 - g. There is a break in the thought in verse twenty-two of the text, between *anathema* and *maran-atha*.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha" (ASV).
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Lord, come!" (English Study Bible).
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!" (NKJ).
5. Verse 23: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."
- a. "Paul calmly passes to the closing prayer that the grace of Christ should abide with them. The risen Christ is the source of all spiritual blessings. (2 Cor. 12:9.) The prayer is for the ever-abiding intercourse, which is the strongest possible contrast to the utter rejection implied in the anathema, and the anticipation by faith of the coming of the Lord. It is the grace of Jesus Christ, inasmuch as the love of God becomes an actual gift to man through Christ" (Lipscomb, p.261).
 - b. This was not a meaningless expression of empty words. It was the presentation of Paul's heartfelt desire for their continued spiritual well-being.
6. Verse 24: "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."
- a. Although Paul has strongly denounced their pride, their ignorance, their divisions, and the religious error they held, his censure was in their best interest. His rebukes and reproofs were intended to show them the way of truth more perfectly, with the desire that they would receive this correction for their own good.
 - b. In closing the epistle, he reminds them of his love for all of them. Rebuke does not exclude love; it can be an excellent expression of love. Parents who love their children will correct them orally, and when necessary, will enforce those lessons with corporal punishment; in doing so, they show their love.
 - c. Hebrews 12:5-11: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons, My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him; For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed for a few days
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chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (ASV).

A STUDY OF NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The New Testament offered to first century saints many warnings about an impending apostasy.
1. The roots of the apostasy were sown during the middle years of that century, and began to come to fruition during the latter decades of the century.
 - a. Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way."
 - c. 1 Timothy 4:1-2: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
 - d. 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 2. Despite the warnings, the brethren fell into apostasy, a rebellion that deepened and broadened with the passing of the next couple of hundred years.
- B. The apostasy involved many grave departures from the Word of God.
1. The first departure was in the realm of church leadership—one elder was exalted over the other elders, and given the title of "bishop."
 2. With the passing of time, changes were also made to worship.
 3. It was inevitable that changes to the gospel plan of salvation were made.
- C. With the development of the false doctrine of Original Sin came unauthorized changes.
1. The Old and New Testaments both teach that we enter the world completely free from any taint of sin:
 - a. 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."
 - b. Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
 - c. Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
 - d. Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
 - e. Ecclesiastes 7:29: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."
 - f. Tertullian (160-220 A.D.) was the first to formulate the doctrine of original sin. He taught that the soul shares in Adam's guilt, and that every person is under the condemnation of sin, even though infants have never committed sin.
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- g. The world has been cursed with this devil's doctrine ever since! Virtually every religious group today teaches this error. Obviously, an infant does not obtain the guilt of sin from God, and God said sin is not obtained from parents; the fact is, no infant or little child has any guilt of sin!
2. Infant baptism resulted from this false doctrine.
- a. The New Testament teaches that baptism is for those who are mature enough to be taught, to have faith, to repent, and to confess their faith.
- 1) Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 5) Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
- b. Once the doctrine of original sin was generally believed, the next natural step was infant baptism. If babies are guilty of sin, it was reasoned, they then need to be baptized. At first, infants were immersed. The brethren still understood correctly that baptism is essential for salvation.
- c. The water of baptism took on magical powers to these people, in cases of infants or adults. Elaborate ceremonies accompanied "baptismal" services. People would gather around the ones to be baptized, waving their arms and shouting to drive evil out of the candidate (see Mattox, p.119).
- d. Infant baptism was developed in the 3rd century. There is not a single example of it in the New Testament.
3. Sprinkling or pouring for baptism soon came.
- a. In the New Testament, baptism was by one action: immersion. The Greek word means "to dip, plunge, or immerse." The descriptions given of baptism by the inspired writers always indicates immersion (John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 1:12; Acts 8:36-39).
- b. The first recorded case of anyone being *baptized* by having water poured on him was in 251 A.D. A man named Novatian was seriously ill, so sick that it was decided he could not be immersed. Since he had not been baptized, the officials poured water on him, hoping that in this exceptional case it would be acceptable to God. This became known as *clinic baptism*, and was practiced only in very special cases.
- c. The common *mode* of baptism for many centuries was immersion, except in the instances of "clinical baptisms." In 1311, a council was held in Ravenna, Italy in which the decision was made to accept sprinkling or pouring (affusion) water on the candidate as equally valid with immersion.
- D. In this study of New Testament baptism, we shall notice several necessary items.
1. There are six different baptisms spoken of in the Bible.
 2. The action of baptism.
 3. The proper subjects of baptism.
 4. The purpose of baptism.
 5. What baptism will not do.
 6. What baptism will do.
 7. Objections to baptism for the remission of sins.

II. THERE ARE SIX DIFFERENT BAPTISMS SPOKEN OF IN THE BIBLE.

- A. Surprises many to be told there are six baptism listed in New Testament.

1. Two of these are baptisms only in a figure of speech.
 2. Two others have ceased to be practiced in God's arrangement.
 3. One is still in effect.
 4. One is still future.
- B. The two figurative baptisms are:
1. The Baptism of Suffering:
 - a. Matthew 20:20-23: "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father."
 - b. Jesus and his apostles would be subjected to severe treatment—which he called “baptism.” James and John had asked for special honors in the kingdom. These two and the rest of the apostles suffered greatly for Lord's Cause—thus endured the “baptism” of suffering. The first of the apostles to die was James, who was martyred (Acts 12); the last was John, who died a natural death (according to secular sources).
 - c. The Administrators of the baptism of suffering were evil men—with Lord's permission; the Subjects were James and John; the Element was persecution; the Purpose was to strengthen the individual and the church.
 2. The Baptism unto Moses
 - a. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."
 - b. To baptize is to dip, plunge, immerse, submerge, or overwhelm. The Israelites were covered on both sides and the top as they passed through the Red Sea—they were figuratively baptized.
 - c. The Administrator was God; the Subjects were the Israelites; the Element was the water and the cloud; the Purpose was to mark the point of deliverance from Egyptian bondage.
- C. John's baptism:
1. Acts 19:3-5: "And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."
 2. The Administrator was John, the son of Zacharius and Elizabeth.
 3. The Subjects were believing Jews.
 - a. Matthew 3:6: "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."
 - b. Mark 1:5: "And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."
 - c. Luke 7:29-30: "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."
 - d. John 1:11-12: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:"
 4. The Element was water.
 - a. Matthew 3:6: "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."
 - b. John 1:33: "And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which
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- baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."
- c. John 3:23: "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."
5. The Purpose:
- a. The remission of sins: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:4-5).
 - b. To prepare a people for Christ:
 - 1) Luke 1:76-77: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins."
 - 2) Acts 19:4: "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."
 - c. To reveal Christ: "And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water" (John 1:31).
6. John's baptism ended when Christ's law took effect: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:1-6).

A Comparison of the Baptism of John and the Baptism of the Great Commission

The Baptism of John	The Baptism of the Great Commission
Not Into Any Name	Into Name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Matt. 28:18-20
Believe On Him Who Was To Come: Acts 19:4	Believe On Him Who Has Come: Rom. 10:9; Mark 16:16
Repentance Required: Mark 1:4; Matt. 3:7-12	Repentance Required: Acts 2:38; 17:30
Prior to Baptism, Subject Confessed Their Sins: Matt. 3:6	Penitent Believers Confess Their Faith in Christ: Rom. 10:9-10
Baptism Was "Unto the Remission of Sins" (Mark 1:4)	Penitent Believers Baptized in Order to be Saved Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21
To Refuse Was Rebellion Against God Luke 7:29-30	To Refuse is Rebellion Against God Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 6:1-18
Ended at the Cross: Acts 19:3-5	To Last to End of Time: Matt. 28:18-20

D. Holy Spirit baptism.

- 1. The Administrator was Christ.
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) John 1:33: "And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) John 16:7: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go

- not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."
- 3) John 16:12-15: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
- b. This baptism was never commanded of anyone; it was promised only to select ones (the apostles).
 - c. It was never administered by any man.
2. The Subjects—only intended for the apostles of Christ [the Twelve plus Paul].
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) Matthew 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire." [Later passages identify the ones to whom this promise was intended].
 - 2) Luke 24:33,44: "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them....And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 3) Acts 1:1-8:"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 4) Acts 1:26: "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."
 - 5) Acts 2:1-4:"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - b. What Cornelius received was not identical to that of apostles.
 3. The Element: Holy Spirit [The Holy Spirit overwhelmed them, clothing them with power].
 4. The word "baptism" is used here in the sense of "to overwhelm."
 - a. Luke 24:49:"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - b. Acts 1:8:"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - c. Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

- d. The Holy Spirit is a person; one cannot literally be immersed into a person.
 - e. The Holy Spirit overwhelmed them, inspiring and empowering them, equipping these apostles for the great work Christ intended them to accomplish..
5. The Purpose.
- a. To qualify them as apostles.
 - 1) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Acts 1:5-8: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - b. Clothe them with authority.
 - 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - 2) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - c. Make them ambassadors.
 - 1) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
 - d. Make them witnesses.
 - 1) John 15:27: "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
 - 2) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 3) Acts 10:39-43: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."
 - e. Guide them into all truth.
 - 1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - f. Show them things to come.
 - 1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for
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he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

- 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
- g. Cause them to remember what Jesus taught them: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).
- h. Teach them all things.
 - 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:11-13: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
- i. To confirm the message they presented.
 - 1) Mark 16:17,20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues....And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:22: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:3: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."
- j. To give the apostles full and complete inspiration, thus: "But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And *which* entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed *them* through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual *words*. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (1 Cor. 2:9-14, ASV).

6. Note: Did Cornelius or anyone else besides the apostles have all these powers? No!

E. Baptism of the Great Commission:

1. Passages:

- a. Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
- b. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- c. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

2. The Administrator—the disciples:
 - a. Acts 8:4-5: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."
 - b. Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
3. Subjects— penitent believers.
 - a. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b. Acts 3:19: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."
 - c. Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
 - d. Acts 8:36-38: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."
4. The Element—water.
 - a. Acts 8:36-38: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."
 - b. Acts 10:47-48: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - c. Ephesians 5:26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - d. Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
5. The Purpose:
 - a. Remission of sins.
 - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. Salvation.
 - 1) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - c. To put the individual into Christ: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27, ASV).
 - d. To give new life.
 - 1) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are

passed away; behold, all things are become new."

F. The Baptism of fire:

1. Matthew 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with fire*."
2. The Administrator—Christ.
 - a. Acts 17:31: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
3. The Subjects—the wicked.
 - a. Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
 - b. Matthew 13:41-42: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."
 - c. Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - d. Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
4. The Element—fire.
 - a. Matthew 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with fire*."
 - b. Mark 9:43-48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - c. Hebrews 6:8: "But that which beareth thorns and briars *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned."
 - d. Jude 7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."
5. The Purpose—divine punishment.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - b. Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

SIX BAPTISMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

NAME	ADMINISTRATOR	SUBJECTS	ELEMENT	PURPOSE
Moses	God	Israelites	Water, Cloud	Deliverance
Suffering	Evil Men	James & John	Persecution	Faithfulness
John's	John & His Disciples	Jews, Proselytes	Water	Remission
Holy Spirit	Christ	Apostles	Holy Spirit	Apostolic Authority
Great Commission	Christians	Obedient	Water	Salvation
Fire	Godhead	Disobedient	Eternal Fire	Divine Punishment

G. What is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5?

1. Not the baptism of suffering, for that is figurative.
2. Not the baptism unto Moses, for that was figurative and occurred only in the ancient past.
3. Not John's baptism, for that is past.
4. Not the baptism of fire, for that is still future.
5. Not Holy Spirit baptism, for that does not pertain to anyone today.
6. The only baptism it could be is that of Great Commission:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - c. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - d. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

III. THE ACTION OF NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM.

A. The action of New Testament baptism is determined from the definition and use of the word.

1. The Greek word used for "baptism" (*baptidzo*) means "to immerse." Water is the element into which baptism (the immersion) takes place. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord..." (Acts 10:47-48).
2. The descriptions given in the New Testament of baptism present a picture of immersing the subject in water, not of sprinkling or pouring water on him.
 - a. Romans 6:1-7: Baptism follows the pattern of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We die to the practice of sin when we repent; we are buried in the grave of water in being immersed; we are raised up from the water to live a new and holy life.
 - b. Acts 8:35-39: When Philip and the man from Ethiopia came to a certain body of water, the latter requested baptism. They came *to* the water; they *both went down into the water*; the man was baptized; they *both came up out of the water*. There would have been no need for them to go into the water to sprinkle him.
 - c. Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Baptism is described as a burial, not

as a sprinkling or pouring.

- d. John baptized people at a certain location, "because there was *much* water there" (John 3:23). This shows that "much water" was essential for baptism. How much is *much*? Enough to immerse the subject!

IMMERSION REQUIRES	SPRINKLING REQUIRES
Water	Water
Going to the Water	Bringing Water to Subject
Much Water	Little Water
Going Down into the Water	Bringing The Water Up
A Burial	No Form of Burial
A Planting	No Form of Planting
The Body Washed	The Body is Not Washed
A Birth of Water	No Birth of Water
A Resurrection	No Resurrection
Coming Up Out of the Water	No Coming Up Out of the Water

BAPTISM REQUIRES	PASSAGES
Water	Acts 10:47; 8:36; John 3:23
Going to the Water	Matt. 3:5; Mark 1:5-9; Acts 8:36-37
Much Water	John 3:23
Going Down Into the Water	Acts 8:38
A Burial	Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12
A Form of Planting	Rom. 6:5
The Body Washed	Heb. 10:22; cf. 1 Pet. 3:21
A Birth of Water	John 3:5
A Resurrection	Rom. 6:5; Col. 3:1
Coming Up Out of the Water	Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Acts 8:39

B. There is no record, direct or indirect, in the New Testament of any little one being baptized.

- 1. If the household of Lydia, the Jailer, or Cornelius had any infants that were baptized, what were their names? How old were they? How many were there? If one "baptizes" an infant, he does so without the authority of the Bible.
 - a. Ephesians 4:4,5: "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your*

- calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
- b. 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - c. Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
2. The practice of applying water to an individual and calling it baptism did not occur until long after the New Testament had been revealed; it was introduced by uninspired men, without the approval of God.
 - a. The first historical case of sprinkling or pouring water on the subject and calling that action baptism, took place in 251 A.D. on a man who was thought to be too ill to be immersed. When he later recovered, he was immersed. The affusion of water (misnamed "baptism") was called "clinical baptism," and was used only in special cases for many years; it gained acceptance by the apostate church, and enjoys wide sanction by the majority today. It is entirely without scriptural authority (cf. 2 John 1:9-11).
 - b. Is there anyone who would want to immerse a little infant in water? Even if an infant were a proper subject for baptism, it would have to be by immersion, and that would be hazardous to the baby's life and of no benefit to its soul.
- C. What some religious leaders and scholars have said about the action of baptism.
1. John Calvin (Presbyterian): The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church.
 2. Martin Luther (Lutheran): "Baptism is a Greek word and may be translated immerse. I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped."
 3. John Wesley (Methodist): "Buried with him in baptism—alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."
 4. Mr. Wall (Episcopalian): "Immersion was in all probability the way in which our blessed Savior, and for certain the way by which the ancient Christians received their baptism."
 5. Mr. MacKnight (Presbyterian): "In baptism the baptized person is buried under the water. Christ submitted to be baptized, that is, to be buried under water."
 6. Mr. Whitfield (Methodist): "It is certain that the word of our text, Romans 6:4, alludes to the manner of baptizing by immersion."
 7. These men are cited, not for authority, but to show that these leaders in religious groups which practice sprinkling, when true to their scholarship, admitted the truth regarding the action of baptism.

IV. THE PROPER SUBJECTS FOR NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM.

- A. The proper subjects of New Testament baptism are identified in the Bible.
1. These are people who are mature enough for certain things far beyond the capability of infants.
 2. Faith must precede baptism (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:35-37; Hebrews 11:6).
 - a. Faith is obtained by learning God's word (Romans 10:17; John 8:30; Acts 15:7).
 - b. Babies and little children do not have the ability to learn and believe such profound subjects as those which pertain to salvation.
 3. Repentance must precede baptism (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30,31).
 - a. Godly sorrow is the only thing that can produce repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).
 - b. This godly sorrow can be produced only if the individual firmly believes what the Bible says about sin (1 John 3:4; Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1-2).
 - c. Repentance is the profound decision one makes when he commits himself to serving the Lord; this decision is produced by deep sorrow for his sins; repentance is genuine only if the life one lives in the future shows a real change for the better.
 - d. Infants have no need to repent for they have done nothing of which they must have godly sorrow;

the have no capacity to believe and no ability to commit themselves to God; they cannot change their lives: they will be babies and act like babies until they reach an age of responsibility.

4. Confession of faith in Christ must precede baptism, an action which babies and little children cannot do and which they do not need to do.
 - a. Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
 - b. Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - c. Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

B. The practice of infant baptism is based on the false doctrine of "Original Sin."

1. This tenet asserts that Adam and Eve committed the first sin and that each of their offspring came into the world guilty of the parents' sins; and that every descendant of Adam and Eve enters this life guilty of their original sins, plus any they commit personally.
2. There are only two possible sources of the inheritance of this guilt: from the parents or from Almighty God.
 - a. It is obvious that God is not the source of guilt. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).
 - b. And the Bible teaches that we do not inherit the guilt of our parents! "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" (Ezek. 18:20).
3. Since we did not inherit guilt from God, and since we cannot inherit it from our parents, it follows that no guilt is inherited at all! The verse cited shows that the individual who sins is the only one who bears that guilt, just as the one who does righteousness is the only one who has that righteousness. The guilt of sin is acquired by individuals only when they personally violate God's word (I John 3:4; James 1:13-15; James 4:17). Sin occurs when one acts contrary to some precept of God's word or when he fails to do his God-given duty. Eventually, every responsible person commits sin:
 - a. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - b. James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 - c. James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - d. Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - e. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
4. In the Judgment (Hebrews 9:27; Acts 17:30,31), each responsible individual will give account only for his own activities:
 - a. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."

C. The Bible teaches that babies enter the world pure from any contamination of sin.

1. "...The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth..." (Gen. 8:21). Notice, evil (sin) is with man

from his youth onward, not from his infancy.

2. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29). God made us upright (honest, just, righteous). It was only later that we went astray.
3. "Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15). Thus, sinless at the first; guilty later.
4. "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:2,3).
 - a. This rebuke was given to the 12 disciples who were discussing who would be the greatest in the kingdom. Christ stated that unless they became as little children, they would not even be part of the coming kingdom. The particular trait of children they needed to cultivate was humility (verse 4). The "one such little child" of verse five is identical to the "whosoever shall humble himself as this little child" of verse four. Verse six describes the same individual as "one of these little ones which believe in me." The child of verses 2, 3, and 4 is a literal child; the *little child* and *little ones* of verses 5 and 6 are those who are mature enough to be followers of Christ.
 - b. The Lord held up little children in their innocency and humility as proper examples of what all in the kingdom must be and have. To enter the kingdom, one must acquire the pure condition which is characteristic of little children. This means that a little child is pure, therefore does not enter the world guilty of sin.
 - 1) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 3) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
5. "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). Little children were brought to the Lord that he might pray for them; the disciples rebuked the parents. The Lord's response is given in verse 14.
 - a. The "coming to Jesus" under consideration is not the "coming to him" for salvation, but for the purpose plainly stated in verse 13. The pure nature of their spiritual condition erases any need for them to come to the Lord for salvation. The Lord plainly declares that the kingdom of heaven is comprised of such as these little children (those who are pure and innocent).
 - b. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom would be comprised, not of actual little children, but of those responsible individuals who would become as pure and innocent as little children are.
6. From these verses, it is obvious that babies come into the world utterly free from any contamination of sin. Therefore, the doctrine of "original sin" is a false doctrine, invented by men. Compare Matthew 15:9: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
7. The nature of New Testament baptism shows that it is not intended for babies.

V. THE PURPOSE OF NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM.

A. The purpose of New Testament baptism is clearly set forth in the New Testament.

1. Baptism is for the remission of sins: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). As we have shown, infants do not have the guilt of sin.
2. Baptism is for salvation: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). But babies have no need for being saved since they have never been lost. Those who die in the innocence of youth are safe, and are assured of heaven: "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).

3. Baptism results in the washing away of the guilt of sins (by Christ's blood).
 - a. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. Ephesians 5:26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - c. Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - d. Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - B. The baptism of the Great Commission is bound on all alien sinners.
 1. Baptism will do an alien sinner no good unless he believes on the Savior, has repented of his sins, and makes the good confession of his faith in Christ.
 - a. John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - b. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - c. Acts 8:36-37: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - d. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 2. Baptism is not intended for a wayward child of God; that sinner needs to repent of his sin, confess it to God (and to his brethren if the sin has been known to them), and ask God's forgiveness.
 - a. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
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WHERE BAPTISM STANDS IN THE CONVERSION PROCESS

PASSAGE	CONDITION	BENEFIT
Mark 16:16	Baptism	Salvation
John 3:5	Birth of Water [Baptism]	Entrance into Kingdom
Acts 2:38	Baptism	Remission of Sins
Acts 22:16	Baptism	Washing Away of Sins
Romans 6:3-4	Baptism	Benefits of Christ's Death
Romans 6:3	Baptism	Entering Into Christ
Romans 6:4	Baptism	Newness of Life
1 Corinthians 6:9-11	Baptism	Washed [Cleansed of Sins]
Galatians 3:27	Baptism	Being Clothed With Christ
1 Corinthians 12:13	Baptism	Entering Into Body of Christ
Ephesians 5:26	Washing of Water [Baptism]	Sanctification and Cleansing
Colossians 2:12	Baptism	Spiritual Resurrection
Titus 3:5	Washing of Regeneration [Baptism]	Salvation
1 Peter 3:21	Baptism	Salvation

C. From what we have learned, the following deductions are undeniable.

1. Babies enter this world utterly free from any guilt of sin.
2. The very nature of their spiritual purity erases any need for them to come to the Lord for salvation.
3. The innocence of babies separates them from the need for baptism.
4. Babies have no ability to believe, repent and confess Christ, therefore, they are not proper subjects for baptism.

D. The practice of infant baptism is sinful.

1. It is without any scriptural authority:
 - a. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - b. 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
2. Those who teach, promote, and practice it commit sin by violating God's word.
3. Parents who subject their babies to it commit sin by promoting an unscriptural act.
4. The infants themselves are made to think that they are in the proper relationship with God because of their "baptism," thus live out their lives believing they are bound for heaven.
 - a. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed

from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

- c. Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

VI. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT BAPTISM DOES NOT OR CANNOT DO.

A. According to the Bible, there are some things baptism designed to do:

1. It will put penitent believers into Christ.
 - a. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b. Romans 6:3: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"
 - c. Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
2. It will put penitent believers into the Lord's church.
 - a. Acts 2:41 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - b. Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
 - d. Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
3. It provides remission of sins for penitent believers.
 - a. Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - b. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
4. It constitutes the new birth.
 - a. John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 - b. John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - c. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - d. Acts 10:47-48: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - e. 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
5. It saves penitent believers since it is the final step in the gospel plan of salvation.
 - a. Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

B. But According to the Bible, there are some things baptism is not designed to do.

1. God never intended for baptism to work miracles—it cannot do the impossible.

2. He set it in force to do certain things, but not all things.

C. Baptism does not remove the fact that we are saved by the grace of God.

1. Grace and baptism cannot be separated.

a. Romans 6:1-6: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

b. Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

2. Baptism is the dividing line between those who have and those who do not have his grace.

D. Baptism does not remove the power to save from Christ's blood.

1. The power to cleanse Naaman of his leprosy was not in the waters of Jordan—cf. baptistry.

2. The blood of Christ cleanses, but it must be contacted.

a. A bar of soap left in the wrapper cannot cleanse the hands.

b. Medicine left in the bottle will not heal.

c. The blood of Christ *un-contacted* cannot save our souls.

d. There must be the right application of the blood. If the Roman soldier who pierced the Lord's side with a spear had been covered by the Lord's blood, would that literal application of the blood have benefited his soul? Certainly not!

3. Salvation is attributed to several things in the New Testament.

a. We are saved by Christ's blood: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

b. We are saved by the truth: (Jn 8:32).

c. We are saved by obedience:

1) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

2) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

3) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

4) 1 Peter 1:22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently."

d. We are saved by his blood when we obey truth—the final step is baptism!

E. Baptism will not make a baby or little child a Christian.

1. Baptism must be preceded by faith, which is impossible for little ones. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

2. Baptism removes the guilt of sin, but little ones have no guilt.

a. Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

F. Baptism will not allow one to keep what was illegally taken before baptism.

1. To be saved, we must repent before baptism: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of

the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

2. One cannot keep another's cow, car, or spouse: "For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matt. 14:4).

G. Baptism will not sanctify an unscriptural marriage.

1. Matthew 5:31-32: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."
2. Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
3. Homosexual marriages remain sinful even after baptism.
4. **Whosoever:** applies to aliens and Christians alike.

H. Baptism will not free one from legal penalties.

1. Baptism will bring God's forgiveness if it is sincerely sought.
2. But even penitent believers who are baptized must still answer to civil law, if they are guilty of some crime—even for capital crime.

I. Baptizing many people will not make a false teacher right before God.

1. Numeric "success" does not mean God is pleased. The Islam has more than a billion adherents; if numbers make right, then the Moslems are right! But numbers do not make right.
 - a. Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest *judgment*."
 - b. Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
2. Although a person or congregation may boast of many baptisms, that will not cause God to overlook their false teachings.

J. Many baptisms will not legitimize a false movement within the body of Christ.

1. Causing strife will condemn the soul.
 - a. John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
 - b. Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
2. The Boston-Crossroads movement is sinful even though they report 100s of baptisms.
3. Liberal congregations with many "baptisms" are not made legitimate thereby.
4. The progress of false teachers and religious errorists is made at the expense of lost souls!

K. Baptism will not guarantee eternal salvation.

1. Passages:
 - a. Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - b. Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - c. Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - d. Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast

- some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
2. Baptism relates to past sins; it puts one on the road toward heaven—it does not guarantee heaven of itself, apart from a faithful Christian life.
 3. If one begins to live in sin again—he is once again lost! "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet 2:20-22).
 4. If one turns to religious error after his baptism—he is once again lost!
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - b. 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 5. A faithful Christian life is required to go to heaven.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 4:2: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - c. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - d. 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

VII. THE BAPTISM OF JOHN AND THE BAPTISM OF THE GREAT COMMISSION.

A. What he preached concerning the kingdom was preparatory.

1. He preached that the kingdom was at hand, not that it was already present (Matt. 3:2). During his personal ministry, Christ preached the same fact (Matt. 4:17), and directed the Twelve and the Seventy to preach the same fact (Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:9) prior to the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
2. John was never a citizen of the kingdom of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 11:11: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."
 - b. If John had been a citizen of the kingdom, it could not be said that he is beneath the least citizen. That would be a practical impossibility. Paul's statement that he was the least of all saints (Eph. 3:11) is clearly hyperbolic, but there is no evidence that the Lord's statement about John (in Matt. 11:11) is figurative.
 - c. John died before the kingdom (the church) was established, thus was never a member of the Lord's church or a citizen of his kingdom. The report of John's death is given in Matthew 14, and the Lord's promise to establish his church (kingdom) is found two chapters later.
 - d. Notice the following syllogism:

- 1) The kingdom, the power, and the Holy Spirit were to come at the same time.
 - (a) Mark 9:1: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."
 - (b) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 2) The Holy Spirit came on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - 3) The kingdom of God and the power came on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
- B. John preached other great truths that relate to salvation.
1. He preached that Jesus is the Christ, the real bridegroom.
 - a. Christ is the bridegroom and the church is his bride (Eph. 5:22-23; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7:4)
 - b. The church wears the name of the bridegroom (Christ); it does not wear the name of John (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16; Rom. 16:16).
 2. He preached faith in Christ.
 - a. Acts 19:4: "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."
 - b. During the ministry of John, Christ had not completed his mission, had not established his church, and not died on the cross. He taught people to believe on the coming Christ.
 3. He preached repentance.
 - a. Matthew 3:2: "And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - b. Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - c. Luke 3:8-14: "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages."
 4. He preached baptism for the remission of sins.
 - a. His baptism was an immersion in water (Mark 1:9-10; John 3:23). Immersion (to dip or plunge) is the meaning of the Greek word from which comes the word "baptize."
 - b. It provided remission of sins: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). The pardon offered was based on the forthcoming sacrifice Jesus was to accomplish on the cross. The basis of the pardon granted to all Old Testament people who are acceptable to God was based on the future death of Christ. His death has now been accomplished; our pardon is based on this historical fact.
 - c. The baptism John did was required of the Jews of his time; to refuse his baptism was to reject God's will: "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30).
 - d. John's baptism ended at the cross.
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- 1) Those who received John's baptism before the cross were not required to be re-immersed after the cross. Where is the example to the contrary?
- 2) Those who received his baptism after the cross were required to be re-immersed (Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7). Apollos knew only the baptism of John; those he baptized at Ephesus were baptized with John's baptism; this took place after the cross, thus after John's baptism ended; hence, these people needed to be baptized with the baptism of the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16).

C. John's baptism and the baptism of the Great Commission.

1. Consider the case of Apollos and the twelve men at Ephesus.
 - a. Acts 18:24-28: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."
 - b. Acts 19:1-5: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."
 2. Absolutely nothing is said about Apollos being immersed again; there was no need. This implies that he had been baptized while John's baptism was still in effect. However, these twelve men at Ephesus had received John's baptism after that baptism had ceased to be in effect; they had not been baptized at all. There is nothing in the Bible about *re-baptism*—one has been baptized or he has not been baptized; one or the other. If he has been baptized (for the right purposes, in the right way, and is qualified to be baptized), he will never need to receive baptism again.
 3. There is only one baptism in effect today (Eph. 4:4-5).
 4. Question and answer regarding baptism:
 - a. Question: "Were those who had received John's baptism prior to the death of Christ, required to be baptized by the baptism of the Great Commission?"
 - b. Answer: No. These individuals had been baptized "for the remission of sins." They received forgiveness in promise (cf. Heb. 9:15), based on the fact that the Lord would die on the cross in keeping with God's eternal plan. Had they been baptized or had they not been baptized? Were they provided with pardon, or were they yet unpardoned from their past sins? Since they had been forgiven when they were baptized, there was no need for another baptism. There is no biblical evidence that indicates that any of the twelve apostles, who had been baptized by John's baptism, were immersed again after the cross.
 5. Those who received John's baptism while it was in effect, were not baptized into the church, since the church was not then in existence. The faithful converts of John and of Jesus, including the twelve apostles and the one hundred and twenty disciples (Acts 1:12-15), along with the three thousand (Acts 2:41), formed the material from which the church was "constructed" [established].
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A Comparison of the Baptism of John and the Baptism of the Great Commission

The Baptism of John	The Baptism of the Great Commission
Not Into Any Name	Into Name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Matt. 28:18-20
Believe On Him Who Was To Come: Acts 19:4	Believe On Him Who Has Come: Rom. 10:9; Mark 16:16
Repentance Required: Mark 1:4; Matt. 3:7-12	Repentance Required: Acts 2:38; 17:30
Prior to Baptism, Individuals Confessed Their Sins Matt. 3:6	Penitent Believers Confess Their Faith in Christ Rom. 10:9-10
Baptism Was "Unto the Remission of Sins" Mark 1:4	Penitent Believers Baptized in Order to be Saved Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21
To Refuse Was Rebellion Against God Luke 7:29-30	To Refuse is Rebellion Against God Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 6:1-18
Ended at the Cross: Acts 19:3-5	To Last to End of Time: Matt. 28:18-20

VIII. OBJECTIONS TO BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS CAN BE ANSWERED.

A. The requirement for salvation is the new birth, not baptism

1. But what is the new birth? John 3:5 specifies water as a significant part. The new birth requires the word of God and baptism.
 - a. John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - b. Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - c. James 1:18,21: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - d. 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - e. Ephesians 5:26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - f. When we receive the Spirit's word, and obey that word in baptism, we are born again.
2. Just as the physical birth puts us in our earthly family, the New Birth puts us into the family of God; this is its purpose.
 - a. But baptism puts us into God's family: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27, ASV).
 - b. The Lord's kinsmen are the obedient: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:50).
 - c. Baptism is the act of obedience that puts us into Christ, into Christ's body—into God's family.
3. Further argument is made on 1 John 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." That we are not saved by faith alone is demonstrated in the following:

- a. Luke 4:41: "And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking *them* suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ." James 2:19: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."
 - b. James 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Here are demons who believed, but no ones thinks they are saved.
 - c. John 12:42-43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Here are unsaved believers.
- B. Baptism is a token of our appreciation for being saved.
1. But there is no biblical text that says so! Indeed, many passages say the opposite:
 - a. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 2. Why did Naaman dip in Jordan? To be cleansed of his leprosy, not to express appreciation for the cleansing; the cleansing did not take place until he met the condition (2 Kings 5:1-14).
- C. If baptism is essential to salvation, then the water and the immerser become the savior.
1. But did the water of Jordan heal Naaman's leprosy? Did the water of Siloam give sight to the blind man (John 9)?
 - a. Water was the element involved in both the above cases; the command for Naaman to dip in Jordan and for the blind man to wash in Siloam were the conditions required in order for the benefit to be given.
 - b. If Naaman had not obeyed, he would not have been cleansed; if the blind man had not complied with the required washing, he would have remained blind; if there had been no obedience, there would have been no blessing; if aliens today do obey the Lord's requirement of baptism, there will be no salvation for them.
 2. If the argument is true, then to make faith essential to salvation would make the preacher or teacher the savior, for faith comes through hearing: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?....So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God....But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Rom. 10:14,17,16).
- D. The thief on the cross was not baptized.
1. Where is the proof that the thief had not been baptized earlier? It is like evolution—it is not subject to proof! There were thousands of Jews who went out to John to be baptized in Jordan; no one could establish that the thief was not in the crowd.
 2. Enoch, Abraham, and Elijah were never baptized. Why not?
 - a. For the same reason that Abraham Lincoln never obtained a driver's license—no requirement had been given at the time they lived.
 - b. The law of baptism never applied to anyone living during the Old Testament days. Baptism is part of the New Testament, not of the Mosaic Law: "For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:16-17). The Last Will and Testament of Christ took place at his death; it was not in effect when the thief received pardon.
 3. It does not matter whether the thief had been baptized or had not been baptized. The baptism of the Great Commission was not given during that man's lifetime; it was given after the Lord's death and resurrection (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:9-16).
- E. Simon was baptized but remained guilty of sin (Acts 8:21-22).
1. The argument is alleging that Simon was not forgiven although he had been baptized; therefore, they say, baptism did not save Simon.
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2. If the argument is true, to be consistent, we must conclude that none of the Samaritans were saved: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done" (Acts 8:12-13).
 - a. The conversion of the Samaritans (including Simon) is given in the same statement; if one was saved, they all were saved).
 - b. The Samaritans and Simon believed and obeyed the gospel—they were all saved.
 3. The sin of Acts 8:21-22 was a new sin, a transgression committed by Simon after his baptism: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:21-22). He was told to repent of **this** sin; all of his former sins had been remitted.
- F. *We are saved by the blood of Christ, not by the waters of baptism.*
1. That is true, but we are saved when we contact the blood. When and where is the blood contacted? Obviously, we cannot apply the literal blood of Christ to our physical body. If the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Christ's body had been covered by the Lord's blood, it is manifest that the literal application of his blood would have done the soldier's soul no good.
 2. When and where do we contact his blood?
 - a. He shed his blood after he died: "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:33-34).
 - b. Baptism puts us into his death: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).
 - c. We contact his blood in baptism: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16-18). The *form of doctrine* (the *pattern of teaching*) of the text is baptism; when we are baptized (immersed in water), we emulate the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4).
 3. Medicine cannot do its good work unless it is properly applied.
 - a. Micitin cannot cure athlete's foot unless it is applied to the affected area.
 - b. Powdered aspirin dusted on the head will not cure a headache.
 - c. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). The blood of Christ can save our souls only when we contact it.
- G. *We are saved by grace, not by works such as baptism.*
1. The Bible teaches that we cannot be saved by works of our own design or by the works of the Law of Moses.
 - a. Romans 3:20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin."
 - b. Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
 2. But a work which God requires is not such a work.
 - a. If it is, then Ephesians 2:8-9 contradicts James 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
 - b. God set up baptism as a requirement for salvation: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" (Acts 10:47-48).

- The Bible does not call baptism a “work.”
- c. God also set up faith as a requirement for salvation; he called faith a “work.”
 - 1) John 6:29: "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."
 - 2) 1 John 3:23: "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."
 - d. If they set aside baptism because we consider it a work, then they must also set aside faith for it is specifically called a work!
3. Baptism is not a work of human merit; it is an act of obedience essential unto salvation:
- a. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - c. Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
- H. He that believeth not is condemned, not he that is not baptized.
1. The passage alluded to (Mark 16:16) discusses two subjects: salvation and condemnation.
 - a. To be saved, one must believe and be baptized (this is the plain declaration of the statement).
 - b. To be condemned, only must only disbelieve.
 2. God is wiser than men.
 - a. If the passage had said, “he that believes not and is not baptized shall be condemned,” then both conditions would be required before one could be condemned.
 - b. Therefore, one could be immersed without faith and still not be lost. But that conclusion is at odds with John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - c. The fact is, one cannot be baptized without faith. Without faith one cannot be pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6); without faith in Christ one cannot be saved.
 3. Mark 16:16 is parallel to this statement: “He that eateth and digesteth shall live; he that eateth not shall die.”
 - a. We must eat and digest in order to life; both eating and digesting are required in order to live.
 - b. If we do not eat, we cannot digest—therefore we will die. If we eat but are not able to digest the food, we will still die; both are required in order to live.

IX. CONCLUSION.

- A. Baptism is a vital part of God's system.
1. It beautifully typifies Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
 2. It is the appointed time, place, and means wherein his blood cleanses.
 3. But baptism will do only what the Lord appointed it to do.
 4. If we should find a verse that allows 21st century men to be saved without baptism, we will have found a contradiction in the New Testament.
 - a. If a witness in court is found in one lie, his entire testimony is impeached and is to be rejected.
 - b. But the New Testament is completely harmonious, reliable, and true.
 - 1) John 8:32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- B. Have you been scripturally baptized?
1. An action that is called “baptism” that is not by immersion is not New Testament baptism.
 2. An action that is called “baptism” that is done to one who does not believe is not New Testament

baptism.

3. An action that is called “baptism” that is done to one who has not repented is not New Testament baptism.
4. An action that is called “baptism” that is done for some other purpose than for salvation is not New Testament baptism.
5. An action that is called “baptism” that is done to give membership in a sectarian church is not New Testament baptism. When one is scripturally baptized, the Lord adds that person to his church (Acts 2:7; cf. Col. 1:13-14).
6. You can answer the above question in the affirmative only if you believed that Jesus is the Son of God, repented of your past sins, confessed your faith in Christ, and been immersed in water for the purpose of obtaining the remission of your sins.
7. What is an alien sinner’s condition without baptism?
 - a. When we are baptized:
 - 1) We put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).
 - 2) Our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5).
 - 3) We obtain remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 - 4) We are made free from sin (Rom. 6:1-18).
 - 5) We obtain the benefits of Christ’s death (Rom. 6:3-4).
 - 6) We enter into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).
 - b. What is the condition of the alien sinner? "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

C. Did your obedience stop with baptism?

1. Baptism marks the beginning of the Christian life.
 - a. It is not enough for one to begin to run a race; he must complete the race, abiding by the rules that have been established for that contest. We must finish our course (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7).
 - b. It is not enough to have begun a job of work; for any benefit to be derived, one must complete the job at hand.
 2. Faithfulness to the end of life is essential—one cannot give up and still expect the crown of life.
 - a. Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - c. Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
 - d. Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 3. If your obedience stopped some time after your baptism, you need to take the actions required of you by the gospel: Repent of your sins; Confess your sins; Pray for forgiveness.
 - a. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
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