

## Introduction

- The city of Corinth was situated on the isthmus (narrow strip of land bordered on both sides by water) that formed the highway of commerce between Asia and Italy. In Paul's day, it was the most prominent Greek metropolis in all the Roman Empire, and was called 'the eye of Greece'. It was destroyed by the Romans some one hundred and fifty years before Christ, but had been rebuilt by Julius Caesar.
- The sinfulness of the city was notorious. Impurity was indulged as a religious service as seen in the worship of a hundred priestesses in the temple of the goddess Aphrodite. It's been said that the Corinthians were: 'Intellectually arrogant, materially affluent, and morally corrupt'. In essence, it was the 'Sin City' of its day.
- According to Luke's record of events (outlined in **Acts 18**) Paul founded the church in Corinth while on his 'second missionary trip'. For a time, he ministered to the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue. But when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul, having been opposed by the Jews, determined to take the gospel message to the Gentiles. And we're told that he continued in Corinth a year and six months. Too, while there, Paul wrote letters to the Thessalonians, which were his first epistles.
- On his 'third missionary journey', Paul came to Ephesus, founded a church, and remained there for more than two years. It was during this time that he received reports concerning the moral and spiritual state of affairs in the Corinthian church.
- Note: The factions and divisions in the church were not due to false teachings, etc., but to 'carnality' amongst the believers. So, Paul writes this letter: (1) To reprove and correct the problems in the church, which had been reported to him, and, (2) To provide counsel and instruction. Questions had been raised concerning 'Marriage', 'the use of Christian Liberty', 'Public Worship', 'the Resurrection', 'Collection for the Saints', etc.
- **Chapters 1-6**: The problems, of which Paul had been informed, are discussed.
- **Chapters 7-16:9**: Paul gives answers to the questions received.

## Chapter 1

**Vs.1-9. Salutation & Thanksgiving**

- Christ is mentioned nine times in the first nine verses. Note: Much of the confusion that had made its way into the church was there because some converts failed to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord. Therefore, Paul mentions Jesus Christ as 'Lord' five times in these nine verses.
- **Vs.1-3.** 'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God'. An 'apostle' (Gr. Apostolos) is a delegate; one sent with the power of attorney to act in the place of another. The 'sender' remained behind to back up the one sent. Note: For Christians, it means that God sends men to do what He would do if He went. Some had questioned Paul's 'apostleship', so he answers them at the very outset.
- 'Sosthenes'. According to **(Acts 18:17)**, a 'Chief Ruler of the Synagogue in Corinth'.
- Here, Paul addresses his remarks to Corinthian believers that were 'sanctified' (purged; set apart), 'called to be saints', etc. He was assuring them that although there were problems in the church, they were still God's children.
- 'Grace be unto you, and peace'. Amen! Thank God for His bountiful grace, which is not only 'sufficient', but 'amazing'! Too, Paul is thankful for 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding' **(Phil.4:7)**. Note: Paul uses this part of the salutation in all of his epistles except those to Timothy and Titus.

**Vs.4-6.** Paul wanted them to know that he 'thanks God' for their existence as a church, and, that they had not only heard and received the gospel, but had accepted it in salvation.

- Even with their immaturity and many faults, Paul was thankful for the great change that had taken place in their lives.

**V.7.** The 'full gospel message' had been proclaimed, and God had confirmed Paul's preaching by bestowing upon them specific spiritual gifts.

- 'waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Wherever Paul ministered he always emphasized the promise of the Lord's return (the second coming). And because of that, the early Christians lived in expectation of that wonderful event. In fact, it's believed that those of the early church greeted one another with the word 'Maranatha' (our Lord cometh).
- Note: As believers, we too believe this 'truth' of the Lord's 'imminent' return. (It could take place at any moment.)
- The songwriter said it just right:  
'Just any day now, our Lord is coming; He'll be returning for you and me.  
For I've been watching, and I've been waiting; Just any day now, His face I'll see'.
- Several years later, when writing to Titus, Paul was still expecting and watching for the Lord's return. He wrote: 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ' **(Titus 2:13)**. Amen! Even after all these centuries, I'm convinced His coming is imminent - perhaps today.

**V.8.** If obedient, God will see to it that you cross the finish line with victory - 'that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ' (be without blame when Christ comes to receive the saints unto Himself). In **I Thes.5:23** Paul said, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

- Note: Some believe the 'day of Christ' relates fully to the 'reward' and 'blessing' of the saints at Jesus' coming, while the 'day of the Lord' is connected with 'judgment'. (Sounds reasonable, but I'm not sure.)
- Two statements to remember: (1) It is impossible to be 'blameless' in the sight of God while at the same time continuing in sin. (2) The safest way to be blameless in the day of our Lord's return is to live blamelessly every day.

**V.9.** 'God is faithful'. This was a favorite expression among Jews of that day - having to do with the 'integrity' of God. Note: One thing of which you can be assured: 'God is faithful'. He never fails. 'For all the promises of God in him (in Jesus Christ) are yea, and in him Amen' (**II Cor.1:20**).

- Solomon, the wise son of King David, said, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths' (**Prov.3:5,6**). 'Trust God, no matter what'. 'He is faithful'.

#### **Vs.10-17. Divisions (contentions) in the Church.**

- Oftentimes the early church (with its many healings, miracles, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit) is pictured as a 'perfect example' for the church of our day. Yes, God blessed abundantly; and we say, Amen! Yet, in many respects, that church wasn't the best example at all.

**V.10.** Paul appeals for 'unity' (harmony), which is not only important, but necessary, if believers are to be effective in fulfilling the 'Great Commission' (**Matt.28:19,20**). Surely, a 'divided church' (one with divisions and contentions), is not a good witness for Christ.

- Paul exhorts them to 'speak the same thing'. (Agree in what you profess. Have a unified testimony. Make Christ the Lord of your lives so that you might hold to the same 'Bible truths' and have the same 'Bible-based values'.)
- Harmony is beautiful, whether in families, churches, friendships, wherever. Yet, it does not require everyone to believe just like the next person. There is a vast difference between having opposing viewpoints and being divisive. Petty differences should never divide Christians.
- In Jesus' outstanding 'prayer of intercession', He prayed, 'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me' (**Jn.17:21**).

**Vs.11-13.** Word had come to Paul of the contentions in the church 'by them which are of the house of Chloe'. Note: The contentions and divisions were not in the church because the believers were new converts, but because of carnality and immaturity.

- It was not that there was a difference in that which Paul, Apollos, or Cephas had preached, but each man had his own personality. And because of that, some believers became more attached to one than to another. Too, there were those who renounced all others, and claimed only Christ; more attached to the minister of the gospel than to the gospel itself.
- Paul was not pleased with that which was taking place. Therefore, he condemns such attitudes, and reminds them that neither he nor any other man was crucified for them - only Christ.
- The tragedy is: Even after all these centuries, there are still church folks who have 'preacher religion'.

**Vs.14-17.** When Paul said, 'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel', he was not making light of 'water baptism'. Such was commanded by Jesus himself (**Matt.28:19**), and was practiced by the early church (**Acts 2:41**). Instead, Paul emphasized that he delegated the performing of baptism to his associates, as did Christ (**Jn.4:1,2**) and Peter (**Acts 10:47,48**). Paul was pointing out that the person doing the baptizing was not the important part, but preaching the gospel and getting people ready for heaven was his most important calling.

- 'Not with wisdom of words (not with an orator's cleverness or eloquent wisdom), lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect'. To preach or teach in such a manner could possibly cause the cross to be viewed as nothing more than an empty institution. Paul wanted his hearers to be impressed with his message, not just his style. Since the power is in the story, and not in the storyteller, a person need not be a great speaker with a large vocabulary to share the gospel effectively.

**Vs.18-25.** 'Human wisdom' and the 'Preaching of the Cross' are opposites.

- The Corinthians were proud of their cultural background; proud that they were deep thinkers (always searching out something new); and proud of their philosophers and wise men. But Paul says all of that is nothing more than foolishness when compared to the wisdom of God.

**V.18.** To those who refuse to believe, the thought of a mortal man dying for the sins of others sounds foolish. But to those who have accepted and believed the gospel, it has changed their lives completely - bringing salvation. The 'foolish' (those who simply accept Christ's offer of redemption) are actually the wisest of all, because they alone will live eternally with God. Note: The language here reminds us of the Lord's words in **Matt.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'.

**V.19.** Paul gives a summary of **Isa.29:14**, which concerned Judah and Israel, and had been prophesied some 775 years earlier. Isaiah had said, 'for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid', emphasizing that God's way is not like that of the world. God offers 'eternal life', but the world fails to offer anything whatsoever of true spiritual benefit.

**V.20.** The 'wisdom of the world' is a wisdom that excludes God, emphasizes human self-sufficiency, makes man the highest authority, and, refuses to recognize Jesus Christ as God's Son (Secular Humanism). It's this so-called wisdom that God calls 'foolishness'.

**V.21.** The word, here, translated 'preaching', is better translated 'what is preached'. It is not preaching (method) that is considered foolish, but the 'message' preached (that of the Lordship of the crucified and resurrected Christ) which brings salvation.

**V.22.** 'The Jews require a sign'. 'Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas' (Matt.12:38,39). Note: Signs were asked for on six different occasions in the Gospels. And in each instance, signs were given.

- 'And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?' (Matt.24:3). Note: Dake gives a list of 24 signs given by Jesus on this occasion.
- 'and the Greeks seek after wisdom'. After arriving in Macedonia (Greece), while on his second missionary trip, Paul ministered in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. And upon his coming to Athens, he preached the sermon on Mars' Hill. 'For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing' (Acts 17:21). Note: With that being true, they were interested in hearing what 'new thing' Paul might have to offer. So, he preached about Jesus, the Christ of Glory ('The Unknown God').

**V.23.** The preaching of a crucified Christ (Messiah) was a 'stumbling block' to the Jews, inasmuch as they expected the promised Messiah to come as a mighty conqueror, to overthrow the powers of Rome, to set up His reign in Jerusalem from the throne of David, and, to bring peace.

- 'and unto the Greeks foolishness'. We can easily understand why they felt that way. Their thinking was: How could a Jew accused of blasphemy and put to death as a common criminal years earlier in Jerusalem, be of any help to them? He couldn't save himself, therefore, how could he possibly save others?
- Note: The sad part is: The 'good news' of Jesus Christ still sounds nothing more than foolishness to a majority of the peoples of the world.

**Vs.24,25.** But God has opened the eyes of those called to salvation - to see that Christ is the mighty power of God to save. This so-called 'foolish plan of God' is far wiser than the most elaborate plan the man of this world could ever devise.

**Vs.26-28.** Paul reveals that God's standards and values are different from those accepted by the world. And a day is coming when the false standards and wisdom of this world will be overthrown.

- God selects the 'foolish' to shame the wise; the 'weak' to shame the strong; and, the 'nobodies' to shame the somebodies.
  
- Note: Have there been times when you felt as if you were unable, or maybe even incapable of making a 'mark' for the Lord and His Kingdom in this world? If so, notice again those whom God uses: Things that are foolish, weak, base, despised, and even things that are not (invisible). Think about it: If God could use such as these, surely, He can use you and me. All He asks is that we give ourselves willingly and totally to Him and His cause.
- Truth is going to prevail!
- Truth is going to win out!
- There is coming a day when God will bring 'humanism' and all the other world systems to an end. Amen! What a day of rejoicing that will be!

**Vs.29-31.** There is nothing about us that merits glory. Anything we might possibly accomplish for good in this world is because of Him. Therefore, it is through Him that the believer receives Godly 'wisdom', and experiences 'righteousness', 'sanctification', and 'redemption'. Without Him, not only is it true that we can 'do nothing' (**Jn.15:7**), but, we 'are nothing'.

## Chapter 2

**Christian Revelation is not through human wisdom.**

**V.1,2.** Paul is referring to his first visit to Corinth (a time while on his second missionary journey, when he founded the church there - **Acts18:1**).

- He didn't come to the people of Corinth as an 'eloquent orator', although he was a brilliant scholar and could have overwhelmed his listeners with intellectual arguments and great swelling words. Instead, he placed emphasis on the 'central truth of the gospel', which is: 'Redemption through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ'.
- 'I determined not to know anything among you' - but Jesus Christ. No doubt, he had given lots of thought as to how he would approach the matter of presenting the gospel of Christ to this people. And he concluded that he would not depend on his ability, but on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Note: An evangelist need not know the various problems of a church. His call is to preach the truth of the gospel, and leave the results to God.

**V.3.** 'with you in weakness'. Note: Questions are raised: Did Paul consider himself to be weak? If so, in what way? Suggested answers: (1) As a result of his stoning, beatings, imprisonments, etc., he, surely, was 'physically weakened'. (2) He could have been born physically impaired. (3) This could be an expression of his utter dependence upon God.

- Later, recorded in **II Cor.12:10**, he said, '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'. Note: It's times such as this that we better understand our utter dependence upon God.
- 'in fear, and in much trembling'. Ask: What would the great Apostle Paul have to fear? Think about it: When writing to Timothy (**II Tim.1:7**), he said, 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind'. Note: Likely, when writing, here, Paul was speaking of his 'state of mind'; dreading, lest he should grieve the Spirit of God and bring reproach upon the gospel.

**V.4.** Paul's confidence was not in his intellect or speaking ability, but in knowing that the Holy Spirit would give help and guidance in reaching the lost for Christ. Note: The simple message of the cross was accompanied by 'demonstration of the Spirit and of power'. Amen!

- Such preaching brought about: (1) Conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment - through the working of the Holy Spirit; (2) It transformed lives; and, (3) It effected holiness in lives of believers.

**V.5.** Your 'faith' is not based on a 'theory' of man, nor on an 'experience' of man. **Ex.** Joseph Smith (Mormonism), Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah's Witnesses), etc.

- True faith is founded upon the Word of God, and stands in the power of God.

**V.6.** 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect'. Notice: Paul doesn't say, among them that 'shall be perfect' (when receive their glorified bodies), but to those 'now perfect'.

- Those who have committed all to Christ, having died out to self.
- Those who love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Those sanctified by the blood of Jesus.
- Those who have obeyed the command of the Lord, when He said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (**Matt.5:48**).

- Note: The Bible teaches Two kinds of perfection for the believer:

- 'Eternal perfection' (**Phil.3:12-14**) - when we receive our glorified bodies, like that which our Lord now has.
- 'Christian perfection' (**Phil.3:15**) - sanctified wholly, loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. No longer 'my will', but 'Thine be done'.

**V.7.** 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery'. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a 'truth' that was once hidden, but is now revealed. It was once secret, but has now been made manifest.

- Note: God's 'wise plan' was His offer of salvation to all people. Originally unknown to mankind, God's plan became crystal clear when Jesus came forth from the tomb. His resurrection proved that he had power over sin and death, and could now offer us this power as well.

**V.7b.** God intended, before time began, that his hidden wisdom be for our glory. He determined to bring about his plan for the good of all who would believe.

- In **Matt.22:25** Jesus 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'.

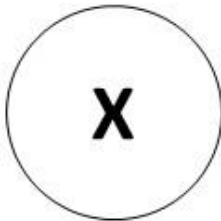
**V.8.** Jesus was misunderstood and rejected by the 'princes of this world', those considered wise and great. He was put to death by the leaders of his day - the High Priest, King Herod, Pilate, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees.

**Vs.9,10.** Paul is referring to the words of the Prophet Isaiah (**Isa.64:4**). Note: People often quote the words outlined here in **v.9** as if believers are left in the dark when it comes to the things God has prepared for his children. Yet, Paul doesn't stop there. He goes on to say, 'But God hath revealed them unto us (those who love and serve Him) by his Spirit'.

- It's impossible for us to fathom all that God has prepared for the redeemed, yet, it is no longer a mystery. It's no longer secret. God has unveiled them to us by his Spirit.
- It's true that we haven't, as yet, beheld the beauty and splendor of heaven with the natural eye; but by his Spirit we've been 'made to set together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus' (**Eph.2:6**). Amen!
- One thing for sure: When it comes to that which God has prepared for the redeemed, I've heard enough, read enough, and seen enough (through the power of the Holy Spirit) that I want to go there! How about you?



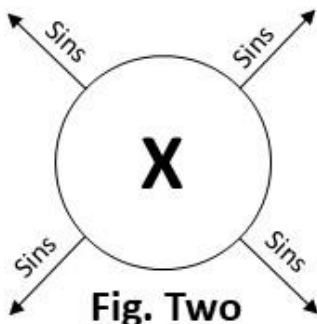
# The Heart of Man



**Fig. One**

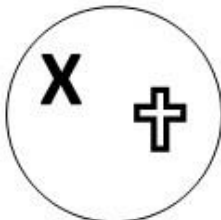
“X” represents the ‘Sin Nature’, with which we were born.

(Ps. 51:5, Rom 5:12)



**Fig. Two**

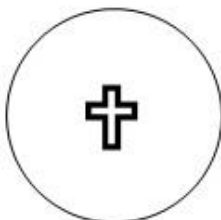
Natural Man (1 Cor 2:6) - unsaved  
‘Sin Nature’ has begun to bear fruit (sins).  
Now a sinner (Rom 3:23)



**Fig. Three**

“✝” represents the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Christ). Sins forgiven, saved, a ‘Babe in Christ’, yet carnal (1 Cor 3:1)

A warfare within (Rom 6:7)



**Fig. Four**

Spiritual Man Sanctified. Perfect in Christ.  
(1 Cor 2:6, 15; Jn 11:17; 1 Thes 4:3)

**V.11.** 'For who among men knoweth the things (or thoughts) of a man, except his own inner spirit?'

- Too, no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Note: Someone once said: 'It is not possible to measure the arm of God with the finger of man'. So true.

**V.12.** As Christians, we have received the Spirit, which comes from God, that we might better understand the gifts he has bestowed upon us.

- In **Rom.8:11**, Paul said, 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you'. Thank God for the blessed Holy Spirit!

**V.13.** We read in **II Tim.3:16** that 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness'. The 'word' is God-inspired.

- Too, we read in **II Pet.1:20,21**, 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost'. Amen! What a mighty God we serve! Yet, we must be careful. Some Bible translations, footnotes, etc., are not inspired.
- An abundance of man's wisdom can be found in the multitude of religious writings (translations, commentaries, notes, etc.).

**V.14.** Paul divides men into three classes:

- (1) Natural man (Unsaved). **(v.14)**
- (2) Carnal man; Babe in Christ (Born-again believer in Christ). **(3:1)**
- (3) Spiritual man (Perfect; sanctified wholly; loves God with all his heart). **(2:2,15)**

**V.15.** 'The spiritual man, through Christlike living, convinces and reproves the unsaved man of his evil ways. Yet, no one is able to fault the godly man. He may be judged, condemned, slandered, etc., but such will not alter his manner of holy living' (Dake).

- Note: Pilate could find no fault in Jesus. And I pray that God will help us, as Christians, to be more and more like Jesus.

**V.16.** We read in **Isa.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'.

- Therefore, to have the 'mind of Christ' is to know his will as it relates to his Plan of Redemption and Salvation. Too, it's seeing things as God sees them, valuing things as he values them, loving that which he loves, and, hating sin as he hates sin.

## Chapter 3

**V.1.** 'Carnal, even as unto babes in Christ'. Some of the Corinthian believers were 'babes in Christ'; called that because they were not yet spiritually mature. A proof of this, is: they continued to quarrel like children (**c.f. vs.3,4**). Note: Their sins had been forgiven. They were saved. Paul called them 'brethren'. Yet, the 'sin nature' (**the 'X' of circle #3, p. 9**; the 'pull', or 'propensity' to sin) remained in their hearts. They had a desire to experience and enjoy the wonderful manifestations and blessings of God, but refused to separate themselves from the evil ways of the world.

- It seems they were satisfied (at least for the time being) to continue in **circle #3**, but would love to enjoy the victory that comes with living in **circle #4, p.9**. Note: This still holds true today. Multitudes of professing Christians are unwilling to 'surrender all' to Christ, unwilling to make him Lord of their lives, but, instead, desire to do as they choose, to have their will.

**V.2.** 'fed you with milk, and not with meat'. This is a figurative statement. In essence, Paul is saying, 'I have taught you the basic principles of Christianity, the simple truths of the Scripture; but did not find it wise to teach the 'deeper things of God'. You were not ready, spiritually, to receive them. 'Neither yet now are ye able'. How sad.

- **Heb.5:13.** 'For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe'. Note: It's great to be saved! Too, it's not wrong to be a 'babe in Christ'. But it's surely not good to remain a babe. It's God's will that we all go on to holiness, to spiritual maturity.

**Vs.3,4.** It is impossible for the 'sin nature' (**Circle #3**) to be 'cleaned up' or 'made good'. By faith, it must be reckoned dead (**Rom.6:6,11**). It must be 'put to death' through the blood of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit (**Heb.13:12**).

- Undoubtedly, some Corinthian believers were yielding to the sinful nature within rather than resisting its inclinations. In so doing, they were compromising with the world, yet, wanting to remain a part of the people of God. **\*\*Read I Cor.10:21**.
- It was carnality in the hearts and lives of these 'babes in Christ' that led to envy, strife, and divisions within the church.
- **Vs.5-7.** Paul's work was to plant the seed of the gospel into the hearts of the people. He was a missionary pioneer, one who brought the message of salvation. Apollos' role was to water to help the new converts grow stronger in the faith which Paul had helped them to discover. Remember: The two of them were not in competition one with the other, but laborers together with God (**I Cor.3:9**).
- 'But God gave the increase'. Note: Our part is to witness and share the good news of the gospel, and to live a holy separated life; and then, pray that the 'Word' will be received and bring forth fruit.
- Note: The farmer is a good example. He prepares the soil, plants the seed, fertilizes, waters, and prays for necessary rain - but only God can give the increase.

- Paul doesn't say that his planting, or the watering of Apollos, were unimportant. But he is saying, 'Without the Lord, we can do nothing'. **Ps.127:1** says, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'. Jesus said (**Jn.15:5**), 'Without me ye can do nothing'.
- Too, it's been said, 'Regardless of our talents and labors, they will not be fruitful unless God gives the increase by His blessing' (Dake).

**V.8.** Paul refutes the notion that he and Cephas and Apollos were rivals - but 'one'. They preached the same doctrine, possessed the same Spirit, had the same goals, and were helping to build the one church. Note: That was Jesus' prayer when praying that great 'Intercessory Prayer' recorded in **Jn.17** - 'That they all may be one'.

- It's what took place with the believers in the upper room before the Holy Ghost came on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1**).
- It's what Paul desired of the Corinthian believers (**I Cor.1:10**).
- And it's God's will for all Christians - today, and always (**circle #4, p.9**).

**V.8b.** The question is raised: When will man receive his reward for his labors?

- We read in **II Cor.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'.
- Too, it's said in **Matt.16:27**, 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works'.
- Note: God offers 'salvation' to those in sin. But for the faithful service of the redeemed, He offers 'rewards'.
- 'Salvation' is a 'gift', while 'rewards' are earned by works (**Matt.10:42**).
- 'Rewards' are not given according to success of labor, but according to motive and faithfulness in service.

**V.9.** Notice the words 'we' and 'ye'. 'We are laborers together with God'. 'We': Ministers, teachers, prayer-warriors, those who witness, soul-winners, workers, etc., are fellow laborers with God.

- 'Ye' are his husbandry, his field to be tilled, his building to be built.
- Note: There are no 'superstars' in fulfilling this task, only team members performing their own special roles. And, remember: The 'praise' that comes from people is comparatively worthless; yet, God's approval is valuable beyond estimation. It's priceless!

**Vs.10.** The 'foundation' to which Paul refers, as it relates to preaching and teaching, is none other than the 'basic principles of the gospel of Christ' - just as was mentioned in **v.6**. It's important that all those who labor in God's vineyard understand the absolute necessity of preaching and teaching the 'truths' of the Bible' (the full-gospel message) as outlined in Scripture.

**V.11.** The 'gospel of Jesus Christ' (his virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection) is the only foundation upon which the church can be built. If men try to build it upon Paul or Apollos or Peter or anyone else - it will come to naught.

- Note: Some ministries have been built on individuals, or on a particular personality. And oftentimes, when the minister is gone - the ministry is gone.

**Vs.12-15.** The Bible states that all the redeemed are free from God's judgment of condemnation. Yet, there is a future judgment awaiting believers as to the degree of their faithfulness to God and the grace given them during their lives on earth. In that day, there is the possibility of a believer, although receiving salvation, may experience great loss.

- Paul mentions the various materials used in building the Kingdom of God (gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble) - all representative of 'works'.
- A Christian's works, both good and bad, will be tried by 'fire'. Note: The 'doctrine of purgatory' (an intermediate state after death for expiatory purification - Catholicism) is partially based on this verse.
- Some materials (such as gold) become more pure in the fire, while others are completely consumed. Those 'works' which abide the fire (gold, silver, precious stones) will be rewarded. But in the event that a man's works (wood, hay, stubble) are burned up, the believer, himself, will be saved 'as by fire' (barely saved). He will receive no rewards for his works. How sad.
- **\*\*Read I Pet.4:17,18.**
- Knowing this, it is important that we make a complete dedication to Christ, be faithful, and each one give himself as a 'living sacrifice' in service to the Lord.
- The question is asked: 'What are you doing for Christ?'

**V.16.** 'Ye (believers in Christ) are the temple of God'.

- The emphasis here is on the entire congregation of believers as the temple of God and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.
- God does not dwell in cathedrals, or churches, or tabernacles made of brick and mortar. He dwells in the hearts of born-again believers. They are the ones who make up the 'church', the 'body of Christ'. Therefore, the temple must be holy because God is holy.
- Think about it: The Spirit of God took up residence in your heart the moment you repented (when you confessed your sins in salvation). **\*\* Read Rom.10:9; I Jn.1:9.**
- Too, it was at that very moment that you became a part of the 'church of the living God' (**circle #3, p.9**). Amen!
- **V.17.** If anyone defiles or corrupts God's temple (local congregation of believers) God Himself will destroy that individual. Note: People corrupt and destroy the church (temple of God) by: (1) Engaging in immoral and sinful activity; (2) Promoting false doctrine; (3) Accepting sin and worldliness within the membership of the congregation; and, (4) Attempting to build the church by worldly wisdom or a distorted gospel.
- Too, this is a solemn warning to each one, personally.

**V.17b.** 'The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are'. This is why believers, throughout the Bible, are called to holiness and holy living.

**Vs.18-20.** Paul is not telling the Corinthian believers to neglect the pursuit of knowledge, but if one has to choose between earthly knowledge and heavenly wisdom choose heavenly wisdom, even though it might seem foolish to the world. Always remember: If a wisdom hinders you from serving God as you ought, it is not true wisdom at all.

- In reality, Paul is warning against conceit and self-confidence.

**V.19b.** 'He taketh the wise in their own craftiness'. ('He traps the wise in their own cunning' - New English Bible).

- The wisdom of the world is a 'craft', or 'scheme', which a man carries on with others to benefit himself. It's likely that Paul is referring to someone in the Corinthian church who wished to have the pre-eminence.

**V.21.** No Christian is to take up the cause or join forces with those who divide the body of Christ. All believers share equally in God's provisions and glories. Therefore, human boasting is ludicrous as well as sinful.

**Vs.22,23.** If you serve God with all your heart (**circle #4, p.9**), He will cause all things to work together for your good (whether the world system, life, death, provisions, or any other thing - **Rom.8:28**). They are all yours because you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

## Chapter 4

**Vs.1-8. Judgment of Christ's Servants is Not Committed to Men.**

- V.1. 'Ministers of Christ'.** A 'minister' is not to be considered a 'supernatural teacher' or an 'infallible messenger' - but an 'Ambassador of Christ'.
- 'Stewards of the mysteries of God' (administrators of Gospel truths; trustees to handle the sacred secrets of God; watchmen; guardians).
  - 'Mysteries'. Truths once hidden, but now revealed. **Examples:** (1) How a person's believing on someone, who lived 2000 years ago and was put to death as a common criminal, can bring salvation today. (2) How a person can be forgiven of all his sins in a moment's time (no matter how evil they might have been), and at the same time be given a 'new life'.
  - **Note:** Jesus said to his disciples (**Lu.8:10**), 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God'.
- V.2.** Paul urged the Corinthian believers to think of him, Peter and Apollos, not as leaders of various religious parties, but as 'servants of Christ'.
- The Christian community has a right to expect the minister (steward) to be honest and diligent. **Note:** It's sad, but far too many have made shipwreck of their lives by failing to be honest.
  - **Lu.12:42,43.** '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'.
  - Undoubtedly, the servants mentioned by Jesus in his 'Olivet discourse' (**Matt.25**) were pleased to hear him say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant'. And the wonderful part is: We too, one day, can hear those words. But we must remember: The Lord will not say 'well done', nor will he call us 'faithful', unless we have done well and been faithful.
  - **Note:** Faithfulness is an important 'fruit of the Spirit'; more so than many seem to realize.
- V.3.** Because a man's judgment is imperfect, neither he nor his contemporaries can form any final estimate of him, or of his position. **Note:** History often reverses the decision of contemporaries.
- Man will judge angels (**1 Cor.6:3**), but man has not been appointed to judge man.
  - Paul says, 'For my part, if I am called to account by you, or by any human court of judgment, it does not matter to me in the least. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point'.
- V.4. 'I know nothing by myself'.** ('I know nothing against myself'.) Paul is saying that his conscience is clear. He knows nothing of his being intentional unfaithful. Yet, this does not prove that I am innocent. God is the judge, and He sees things with much clearer eyes than I see of myself.

**V.5.** Only God knows a person's heart, and He is the only One with the right to judge.

- We are to help those who might be faltering, but we must not judge who is a better servant for Christ. Note: It's been said that when we, as Christians, judge another, we automatically consider ourselves better - and this is 'pride'.

**Vs.6-8.** In speaking against divisions in the church, Paul says 'I have used myself and Apollos as an illustration, so that you might learn not to go beyond what the Scriptures permit. Too, you should not speak boastfully of one teacher to the disparagement of another'.

- We have nothing within ourselves of which to boast, or glory. In fact, everything we have of any real value, and everything we are, or might become, has been given us from God.
- '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' (Ja.1:17).
- Some of those yet carnal at Corinth boasted of their wisdom, superior knowledge, and spiritual gifts. They had their heart's desire. But Paul shows them that the true life of a faithful believer is the way of the cross, and that suffering must precede glory (**Rom.8:17**).
- Listen to what Jesus said about church-goers of Laodicea (**Rev.3:17**), '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'.

#### **Vs.9-17. Apostolic Example of Humility and Patience.**

**V.9.** 'God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death'. God has ordained it so, that we, the apostles, be put on display to be stared at by men and angels alike.

- On another occasion Paul said, 'And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. I die daily' (I Cor.15:30,31). Note: Paul wasn't speaking here of 'dying out to sin' on a daily basis. That had been taken care of years earlier when he had surrendered his all to Christ (**circle #4, p.9**). This has to do with him putting his life on the line for the sake of Christ and the gospel, daily.

**V.10.** The apostles were considered fools because they preached nothing but Christ. On the other hand, the Corinthians considered their Christianity as another philosophy to extend their reputation as being wise and enlightened people. Note: Even today, after all these many centuries, the 'world' considers anyone who suffers ridicule and humiliation for Christ's sake to be 'foolish'.

- Yet, when writing to believers in Rome, Paul said, '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).
- Again, Paul said, 'If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer (with him), we shall also reign with him' (II Tim.2:11,12).

**Vs.11-13.** At the time of writing, Paul was ministering in Ephesus. And while there, he lacked many of life's necessities (food, drink, proper clothing, etc.). He was treated harshly. Too, as an itinerant preacher, he had no place to call home.



- Not only was he endeavoring to win the lost and pioneer a new church, but in order to keep his head above water, he had to spend much of his time laboring with his hands (likely as a tent maker). It was not an easy life.
- Committed to Christ; yet despised, treated harshly, reviled, persecuted, slandered, and considered the scum of the earth.
- Think about it: To carry the gospel message to those without Christ, Paul and the others had to put up with a lot of opposition, yet, time and time again Paul speaks of serving the Lord as being the greatest life a man can have this side of heaven. Amen! It's true! He wouldn't trade it for the world. Nor would I.

**Vs.14-16.** Paul wasn't writing to shame the Corinthians but to warn (admonish) them as his beloved children.

- Some in the Corinthian church desired to be teachers, and to have the preeminence. But it was Paul who had first given them the truth of the gospel - bringing them into union with Christ. In that sense, he considered himself their 'father', and they his 'children'.
- 'Be ye followers of me'. Follow in my footsteps as your father. Be imitators of me. Follow me as I follow the Lord. Note: Christ was his example, therefore, his life could be an example to others.

**V.17.** As your spiritual father, I naturally have a deep interest in your well-being - so I have sent Timothy. He will remind you of my principles of behavior in Christ Jesus (how to live), and is best able to explain my plans and wishes in the organization of the churches.

**Vs.18-20.** Some people talk a lot about faith, but that's all it is - talk. They know the right words to say, but their lives are not examples of Christian living. Paul says the Kingdom of God is to be lived, not just a topic of conversation. And for those who live it, it is power (the anointing) to convince others of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

## Chapter 5

**Vs.1-6,8. Immorality rebuked; Discipline enjoined**

**V.1.** Paul had received word that there were 'divisions' and 'contentions' among believers at Corinth. Therefore, he wrote concerning such in chapter 1. Now he mentions another bit of information he had received.

- 'reported commonly' (well known, even outside the church).
- 'fornication among you'. The word 'fornication' includes 'sexual sins' of many descriptions, including all kinds of impurity, perversion, and immorality. The particular type of fornication mentioned here was so evil that even the 'pagans' (those who knew nothing of Christ) condemned it.
- 'that one should have his father's wife (his stepmother)'. In reality, for a man to 'have' a woman means to marry her, to take her as his wife. On this occasion, the son was having an affair (co-habiting) with his father's wife.

**Examples** concerning the word 'have':

- (1) In **Matt.14:4**, we read, 'For John (Baptist) said unto him (Herod), it is not lawful for thee to have her (Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip).
  - (2) Sadducees questioned Jesus (**Matt.22:28**) saying, 'Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her'.
  - (3) In **I Cor.7:2**, Paul says, 'Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband'.
- It's believed that this man was not only involved sexually with his father's wife, but was actually living with her (married).

**V.2.** 'And ye are puffed up'. The different factions in the church were boasting as to whom they considered their spiritual leader - Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ. Too, they might have been lifted up within themselves over the manner in which God had used them. But the tragedy is: they had all failed to deal with the sin in the church.

- Paul was utterly dismayed that the church would tolerate such immorality in its midst, and do nothing about it.
- Note: God tells us not to judge others, but he also tells us not to tolerate flagrant sin that is contrary to his holiness and has such a dangerous influence on the lives of other believers.
- Instead of the church (leaders and members) being overwhelmed with grief and shame, they were proud of their spirituality, gifts, etc.; so, they did nothing to correct the situation.
- Paul says, The man who has done this evil deed should have been 'taken away from among you' (expelled from fellowship).
- Again, a question is raised: How would they go about doing this? Note: Some answers, having to do with 'discipline involving church matters', are outlined in **Matt.18:15-18** and **Gal.6:1**.

- On this occasion, I would suggest a meeting of the church membership, an Apostle presiding, if available (if unavailable, the pastor to preside), and the accused present. After the evidence has been heard, the accused to have his say. Then, after a time of prayer, the judgment (decision) to be pronounced by the one in leadership.

**Vs.3-5.** Though absent in person, Paul not only pictures himself present, but presiding in spirit. And he leaves no doubt as to the verdict which should be pronounced.

**V.5.** 'To deliver such a one unto Satan'. The church is to remove the immoral person from its fellowship and return him to the domain of Satan - not that he might be lost forever, but that he might realize the foolishness of his actions, and repent. Note: Putting someone out of the church should be a last resort in disciplinary action.

- 'for the destruction of the flesh'. Two thoughts: (1) Permitting Satan to afflict his physical body in hopes it will cause him to repent and come back to God. (2) Destruction of the 'immoral physical appetites', which were the reason for his ungodly evil deed. Note: He needed to put to death the 'Adam nature' (**the 'X' in circle #3, page 9**), to reckon the 'old man' dead (crucified). And the only way this is made possible is through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ (**Heb.13:12**).
- Important to understand: Paul doesn't want the man put to death (as was required under the law of Moses), nor does he want him to be lost (eternally separated from God). His desire was that the man would be 'restored to the faith', and, that he would once again be able to enjoy fellowship with the believers.

**Vs.6-8.** Paul directs his words to those of the church who wanted to ignore the problem. It seems they failed to understand the awful effect their allowing this evil to continue was having upon the 'body of Christ' (church).

- So, Paul asks, 'Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump'?
- Note: In the Bible, 'leaven' (yeast which produces fermentation) is a type of 'sin', a symbol of that which spreads throughout. If not quickly removed, it will corrupt truth, righteousness, and the spiritual life.
- The church that fails to take radical action against sexual immorality among its members will find the evil influence spreading throughout the fellowship, and infecting many.

Three reasons why a church should discipline an offending member:

- (1) For the 'good of the offender'. Hopefully, if disfellowshipped, the disciplinary action will cause him to wake up to the awfulness of his sin and cause him to realize his need for forgiveness and restoration.
- (2) For the sake of 'church purity'. Tolerating evil within a church will gradually lower the standard of all. God does not overlook sin.
- (3) For a 'testimony to the world'. A church cannot be effective in winning the lost to Christ if the church is like the world.

Discipline is a Divine necessity. It's a 'must': (1) In the 'church', as just discussed; (2) In the 'home'; and, (3) In the life of an 'individual'.

- Note: I believe we are now living in the very last stage of the Church Age, as mentioned in **Rev.3**. For many congregations it's a time of 'lukewarmness' and 'indifference', where fornication of all descriptions is tolerated among their members. And, without doubt, on many occasions sin is tolerated for the sake of 'numbers' (attendance) and 'finances'.
- -Too, some fail to discipline, claiming that they are obeying the Scriptures, not wanting to be 'judgmental'. How sad!

**Vs.9.10.** 'I wrote unto you'. It's believed that Paul had written to those of Corinth some time earlier, and the letter was never sent; or, possibly, had been lost. We don't know. But the letter he now writes is undoubtedly a continuation of what he had begun earlier.

- 'not to company with fornicators' (sexually immoral people). Paul does not forbid Christians eating or conversing with the fornicators of this world, or the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, etc. Some know no better. Many profess no better.
- Paul makes a clear distinction between outright sinners of the world and those in the church who fall into sin. Christians are in the world, and must do business with those of the world (sinners). But we are not to eat (fellowship) with one of the church who is now a fornicator, etc. Note: If we, as Christians, refuse to converse with unbelievers such as these, we will never be able to share with them the gospel. Remember: We have been commissioned to 'go everywhere' and share the 'good news' with 'everyone' (**Mk.16:15**).
- Therefore, if Corinthians refuse to have conversation with such as these, they must 'needs go out of the world'.

**Vs.12,13.** The church has no part in judging those 'without' (unsaved), but an obligation to judge and discipline those within its membership. Note: Those of the church are bound by the laws and rules of Christianity. Not only are they liable to the judgment of God, but to the discipline of those who are set over them, along with the fellow-members of the same body.

## Chapter 6

- In the previous chapter Paul discussed what was to be done with brazen sinners in the congregation. Here, he outlines how the congregation should handle lesser problems between believers.
- V.1.** 'Dare any of you'. Paul, seemingly, implies that to act in such a manner (a believer sues a fellow believer in court) is an insult to God and the church.
- When trivial matters occur between Christians, they should be settled within the church, and not in courts of law.
  - 'go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints'. Paul is not implying that the Roman courts were unjust, but simply saying that those cases which arise among the people of God should be kept there.
  - The church should make the judgment of the right or wrong involved, give its verdict, and even mete out discipline, if such is needed (**Matt.18:15-18**). Note: Paul is speaking of minor disputes where the 'wrong' could be accepted and tolerated. Yet, this does not mean a believer should not use the courts in serious cases with non-believers.
- V.2.** 'Saints shall judge the world'. 'Saints', here, speaks of all Christians, not a special class of judges or rulers
- A paraphrase: 'Since you are going to judge the world, are you not competent to try these smaller cases within the church?'
- V.3.** 'Do you not know that we shall judge angels?' There are various opinions concerning the meaning of 'saints judging the world and angels'. (1) Believers are to 'manage' angels (Moffatt). (2) Saints are presently judging the world by their faith and practice, and casting out evil angels (demons) by miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. (3) This judging to be when the empire (that of Rome) should become Christian. (4) Saints are not partners in the Lord's commission of judging, but they have the honor to sit by and see his proceeding against the wicked world - and give their approval. (5) My view is: Saints to judge the 'world' and 'angels' likely refers to the participation of the people of God in the great judgment-day. The saints will not do the judging, nor will they assign punishment, but will sit as witnesses with the sovereign Judge as He passes judgment on sinful man and evil angels.
- Vs.4-6.** Surely, even the least regarded, or, the least esteemed member of the church can make a wise judgment between fellow Christians.
- 'I speak to your shame'. Note: It is a shame that petty quarrels, or disagreements, should become so divisive among Christians that the church feels they have no one capable to pass judgment.
  - Three reasons why it's not good for a Christian to take a brother in Christ to court before unbelievers: (1) Members of the court are unlikely to understand, or care, for Christian values. (2) Oftentimes, the basis for going to court is 'revenge'; and this should never be the motive of a Christian. (3) Lawsuits are never a 'plus' for the church. They cause unbelievers to focus on a church's problems rather than on its purpose and mission of taking the gospel into all the world.

**V.7. 'Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded (robbed)?'**

- **Scenario:** A Christian (we'll call him 'Bob') owns 'Bob's Carpet Store'. A member of the church where Bob attends, has asked him to measure her house for new carpet. A particular carpet is selected, and the price is agreed upon. When the carpet arrives at her home (ready to be installed) she isn't happy with the color (that which she had selected). So, she contacts Bob and has him order a different carpet altogether. Bob re-orders, but has already cut the original carpet from the roll, and will lose money if it cannot be sold. When the job is completed, Bob adds to the cost that which he lost on the first piece of carpet. The church member is upset, and feels she doesn't owe the billed amount. So, she decided to take Bob to court.
- **Facts:** (1) The two individuals are Christians, and are part of the same church. (2) Bob lost a substantial amount of money on the first piece of carpet, since he was unable to sell it for its full value. (3) The church member has notified Bob that she is taking him to court.
- **Questions:** (1) What is Bob to do? (a) Contact the Pastor? (b) Absorb the loss without further ado? (3) Try to come to a mutual agreement with the church member who ordered the carpet? (4) Go to court with her? (5) Have the church make a judgment?
- **Note:** There are times in a church when the solution to a situation might not be as easy as we might think. But it's always best for one to suffer loss (if at all possible), and with it, have peace of mind and retain unity in the church. This is so much better than winning a so-called 'victory' by going to court.

**Vs.9,10.** Evidently, some in the Corinthian church had been deceived into believing that if they no longer lived holy separated lives, denied Christ, and lived in immorality and injustice to others, their salvation and place in the kingdom of God were still intact. In essence, they believed in what is known as 'eternal security' (if having ever been saved, regardless of how you are now living, you are still secure in Christ).

- Yet, Paul makes it very plain. Those who continue in sin (believer or non-believer) **'shall not inherit the kingdom of God'**.
- **Note:** Ten classes are mentioned as not being ready for heaven:
  - (1) **Fornicators** (Sexual immorality)
  - (2) **Idolaters** (A worshipper of false gods)
  - (3) **Adulterers** (Unfaithfulness in marriage)
  - (4) **Effeminate** (Catamite: A male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness; one having qualities attributed to women, i.e. weakness, delicacy, etc.)
  - (5) **Abusers of themselves with mankind** (Homosexuals, Sodomites, and Lesbians)
  - (6) **Thieves**
  - (7) **Covetous** (Lustful)
  - (8) **Drunkards**
  - (9) **Revilers** (Abusers of others)
  - (10) **Extortioners** (Those who obtain by violence or threats.)
- **Remember:** All unrighteousness is sin; and every sin committed deliberately, and not repented of, shuts a person out of the kingdom of heaven.

**V.11.** 'And such were some of you'. Paul reminds them of the wonderful change the 'gospel' and God's 'grace' has made in their lives. Amen! No longer living the old life of sin, evil, and debauchery; but have become 'new creatures' in Christ Jesus.

(1) Washed - in the blood of the Lamb; forgiven; born-again; saved.

(2) Sanctified - set apart for Christian service.

(3) Justified - now having a right standing before God. (As if never sinned.)

- Note: Salvation without the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit has no place in Paul's theology.

**V.12.** 'All things are lawful (are permitted) unto me, but all things are not expedient'. Some believe Paul is quoting a theological position of his opponents. While others think he is saying, 'I can do anything if Christ has not said no'. Yet, it is evident that he is not speaking in an absolute sense, but of things which the Scriptures are not specific. Note: That's one of the reasons why the church met together in a 'general conference' (**Acts 15**), that they might seek guidance from God as to what He required concerning 'meats', 'fornication', etc.

- Note: 'Freedom' is a mark of Christianity - freedom from sin and guilt, as well as freedom to use and enjoy anything that comes from God.
- Another rendition (translation) of these opening words of **v.12**, is, 'All things are in my power, but I will not be brought under the power of any'. Note: A character quality of the believer is 'self-control', 'discipline'.
- One thing of which we can all be assured: Anything we do that hurts others rather than helps them is not right. We have no right to do even that which is innocent or legal - if it is disadvantageous to our highest and best interest, or, to the interest of others.

### **Vs.13-20. Body is Temple of the Lord.**

**V.13.** Paul mentions the foolishness of making a 'god' of the belly. Though all meats were supposed lawful, he would not become a 'glutton'. The 'present bodily constitution' of meats and the belly are only temporary, and God has no permanent purpose for either.

- 'The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord'. Fornication is not a natural necessity, but a consuming evil. Note: This is the first argument Paul uses against this sin, for which the heathen inhabitants of Corinth were infamous. Yet, many of the Corinthian converts continued to have too favorable an opinion of it. The body was not formed for any such purpose, but for the Lord (for the service and honor of God).
- Christ is to be Lord of the body, to dwell within it and have dominion over it. In **Rom.12:1**, Paul said, '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'.

**V.14.** Just as God raised His Son, Jesus, from the grave, He will also raise mortal men (you and me) by that same power.

**Vs.15.** Note: The teaching about sexual sin and prostitution was especially important to the Corinthian church, since the temple of the goddess Aphrodite was located in their city. The temple employed more than a thousand prostitutes, and 'sex' was a part of the worship ritual.

- In 'sexual immorality', a person literally removes himself from union with Christ by making his body a member of an immoral and ungodly person.
- Shall a person in close fellowship and union with Christ (in one spirit with him) be so united to a harlot as to become one flesh with her? Paul states clearly that Christians are to have no part in such a lifestyle, even if it was acceptable and popular in their culture.

**V.16,17.** Don't you know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her?

- But the man who is in union with the Lord is spiritually 'one with him'.

**V.18.** 'Flee fornication'. Run from sexual immorality; avoid it like the plague. And since the word 'flee' is in the present tense, we are to 'flee' and 'keep on fleeing'. Note: The story of Joseph, outlined in **Gen.39**, is a wonderful example.

**Vs.19,20.** All sins destroy; but the person who commits fornication sins against his entire being (constitution, body, soul, and spirit).

- Since the Holy Ghost dwells within the believer, and he belongs to God, his body must never be defiled by impurity or evil, whether by immoral desires, deeds, films, books, or whatever.
- A great price was paid to ransom mankind; therefore, we are to live in such a manner that we might glorify and please God in our bodies.



## Chapter 7

- Christians in Corinth were surrounded by sexual temptation. The city had a reputation, even among pagans, for sexual immorality and religious prostitution. And it was to this kind of society that Paul gives instructions on sex and marriage. Corinthian believers in Christ needed such special guidelines because of their culture's immoral standards. Note: Paul's instructions are given in light of what he says in **v.26**. It was a time of severe persecution for Christians, and in such times the marriage relationship would be difficult. **Ex**. Many men were imprisoned for their faith, leaving their wives and children behind to fend for themselves. No welfare, food stamps, or shelters for the homeless.

**V.1.** In this chapter, Paul gives his response to questions asked by the Corinthian believers concerning 'Christian marriage'. And he begins by saying, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman'. Note: There are differences of opinion as to what Paul meant by the words 'not to touch'. (1) Not to have sexual relations, or, (2) Not to marry (remain single).

- Undoubtedly, Paul was referring to the latter.

**Vs.2,3.** 'Nevertheless, to avoid fornication'. Because of the danger (temptation) of immorality, it would be better to marry than to sin and lose your soul; to marry and confine yourself to your own mate.

- Let each render the other due benevolence. Husband and wife are to respect each other regarding sexual needs, mutually satisfying each other. Note: Such desires within marriage are natural and God-given. And in failing to do this, one may be partially responsible for the infidelity of the other.

**Vs.4,5.** The commitment to marriage means that each partner relinquishes the exclusive right to his or her own body.

- Marriage is meant, in part, to satisfy these natural sexual desires and to strengthen the partners against temptation. Therefore, husbands and wives should not withhold themselves from one another, but should fulfill each other's needs and desires.
- 'except it be with consent for a time' (unless it is only temporary, and by mutual consent).

**V.6.** 'I speak this by permission'. (I say this by way of concession; I am not imposing a rule that you must follow.) In essence, Paul is saying, 'I leave the details of your lives, whether celibate or married, to your individual consciences. You must decide whether it's best for you to marry, or not'.

**Vs.7-9.** Paul had said, 'let every man have his own wife' (**v.2**), but that wasn't a command. He wasn't saying that every man was to marry without exception. No law of God commands such. Yet, Paul says, 'For I would that all men were even as I myself'. Note: It's a mark of true goodness to wish all men to be as happy as ourselves. Yet, Paul, here, is speaking of remaining 'single', of having the ability to exercise continence (refraining from sexual intercourse).

- When Paul said he wished men could get along without marrying, he was expressing his desire that more would devote themselves completely to the ministry without the added concerns of spouse and family, as he had done. Note: He was not criticizing marriage, because He knew the institution of marriage was ordained of God, and was God's way of providing companionship, and, in populating the earth.
- Sexual pressure is not the best motive for getting married, but 'It is better to marry than to burn' (better to marry the right person than to burn with lust). Note: Some think Paul is saying, it's better to marry than for passions to be out of control, commit fornication, and end up in a burning hell.

#### **Vs.10-40. Advice and Regulations Concerning Married Christians.**

**Vs.10,11.** In general, Paul says that marriage, by the command of Christ, is for life. Therefore, those who are married must not think of separation.

- 'Let not the wife depart from her husband'. But if she leaves, let her remain as she is (in a state of separation), or be reconciled to her husband.
- Paul, here, is speaking of separation without divorce. He acknowledges that there are times when a marriage relationship is in such shambles that separation is necessary (abuse, mistreatment of spouse or children, etc.). Too, he is not speaking of divorce that is permitted by God because of adultery (**Matt.19:9**), or the abandonment of a marriage partner. Instead, he is speaking of separation without divorce.
- 'and let not the husband put away his wife'. A Christian husband is not, in similar circumstances, to divorce his wife.

**Vs.12,13.** When Paul says, 'But to the rest speak I, not the Lord', he is not saying that what he is about to write is not God-inspired. It was, at the time, that he did not have the teachings of Jesus to confirm what he was preparing to write. Note: It's believed by some that the instructions given by Jesus on this matter (**Matt.5:31,32; 19:5-9**) were given primarily to Jews.

- Note: The conditions of the day called for someone with authority to give clarification - and only the inspired word of an Apostle could give such.
- If a Christian husband has an unbelieving wife, and she is willing to live with him, he is not to put her away (divorce her). Too, the Christian wife with an unbelieving husband is not to leave him.

**V.14.** The unbelieving spouse is 'made acceptable to God' by virtue of being one flesh with the Christian companion. God does not consider their relationship to be unlawful. Both the marriage, itself, and the children are legitimate before God.

- Perhaps, the unbelieving spouse may become a Christian through the godly influence of the believing spouse.
- 'else were your children unclean'. Otherwise, if the family separates, the children might never come to know the Lord. But by the parents staying together, it might possibly result in the children's salvation. Note: The 'godliness' of the one does more to 'sanctify' the marriage than the 'ungodliness' of the other to make it unclean.

**Vs.15,16.** Paul's statements were given to encourage the Christian spouse to try to get along with the unbeliever and make the marriage work. If, however, the unbeliever is determined to separate, let him go.

- Note from 'Full Life Study Bible': 'In the event that an unbelieving partner abandons a believer, the marriage relation is dissolved, and the believer is freed from his or her former marital obligation. The phrase 'not under bondage' means that the believer is released from the marriage contract and free to remarry, provided he/she marries a Christian'.

**V.17.** Becoming a Christian does not change one's position in life. Note: Paul is not speaking of vocation, but of the marital status of an individual when converted to Christianity. And he taught such in all the churches.

**V.18.** He begins to elaborate on what he had said in **v.17**.

- Before Christ came, circumcision was commanded by God for all who claimed to follow him (**Gen.17:9-14**). But after Christ's death, circumcision was no longer necessary (**Acts 15**). Now, there's something much more important than rituals and ceremonies: it's pleasing and obeying God.
- Paul, in essence, is saying, 'the converted Jew continues to be a circumcised Jew, and the converted Gentile continues to be an uncircumcised Gentile.'

**V.19.** Circumcision of the flesh (Abrahamic Covenant) has nothing to do with salvation. The 'keeping of the commandments' is that which is important.

**Vs.20-22.** Oftentimes we are so concerned about what we could accomplish for God if somewhere else that we miss opportunities where we are.

- In that day, it was common for many to be in the state of slavery (bought and sold for money), and therefore property of those who purchased them.
- So, Paul asks: Were you a slave when you became a Christian? If so, don't let it annoy you. Love and serve the Lord.
- And if you gain your freedom, use it for the glory of God.
- Note: When a 'servant' gets saved, he becomes a 'freeman' (spiritually) in Christ. And when a person that is a 'freeman' becomes a Christian, he becomes a 'love-slave' of the Lord.

**V.23.** 'Ye are bought with a price'. Some Christians in the Corinthian church were slaves. They had been purchased. A price had been paid for them. And although they were now saved (free from the power of sin in their lives), they still belonged to their master.

- Yet, he who is a slave can be a Christian freeman; and he who is a freeman can be Christ's servant (love-slave). And since the converted slave was bought with such a high price (the blood of the crucified Redeemer), he must not be such an obedient servant to man (his master) that he disobeys the commands of his 'Master' (the Lord Jesus Christ).

**V.24.** My brothers, let everyone continue to live his life with God in the state (bond or free) in which he was when called out of sin.

**Vs.25-28. Virgins and Unmarried Men.**

- Due to the 'present distress' (persecution of believers by Roman government) it is good to remain unmarried.
- If you are married, don't seek to be single; and if single, don't seek a wife. 'Are you tied to a wife? Don't try to untie the knot' (Moffatt). Note: Many think that marriage will solve all their problems. But that's not true. Marriage, alone, does not hold two people together, but commitment does - commitment to Christ and to each other, in spite of conflicts and problems.
- 'But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned'. And it's the same with virgins.
- 'Yet I believe that those who take this step are bound to find the married state an extra burden in these critical days, and I should like you to be as unencumbered as possible' (N. T. in Modern English).

**Vs.29-31. Advice to Married Christians.**

- 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short'. Thoughts: (1) The Lord is soon to come. (Paul not only believed the return of Christ was imminent, he preached it in the churches.) (2) Life, at best, is exceedingly brief. (3) Paul could foresee the awful persecution of Christians, which the Emperor Nero was preparing at that very time. (It's possible that Paul had all of these in mind when he mentioned time being short.)

**Because of the impending persecution:**

- (1) Let the married live as though not married. (Stay as free as possible for the Lord.)
  - (2) Let those who weep act as though they wept not. (There is no time to indulge in sorrow.)
  - (3) Let those who rejoice act as though they did not rejoice. (Paul admonishes them to be moderate in their mirth. 'This is not your 'rest', nor are these things your 'portion'. Instead, set your affections on things above' (Matthew Henry).
  - (4) Let those who buy live as though they did not possess. (Those who buy have no time to enjoy their possessions.)
  - (5) Let those who use this world make proper use of it (Don't abuse it, for the very fashion of it will soon pass away). Note: When used for some other cause, rather than to honor God and do good to others - possessions become our master rather than being useful in the service of the Lord.
- Note: Relationships in this life are only transient (here for a short time). All too soon, for all: marrying, weeping, rejoicing, buying, and every other earthly activity will be over - and it will be as though they never occurred.
  - Paul is not asking believers to 'give up' anything. Always good to remember: Our God is not a 'taker', but a 'Giver'.

**Vs.32-35. A Contrast Between Responsibilities of Married and Unmarried.**

- An unmarried person (man or woman) can attend to the things of the Lord without being distracted; but those married have other obligations and responsibilities. Their devotion is divided.
- Paul's one real desire was for the promotion of faithful, undistracted devotion to the Lord.

**Vs.36-38. Advice to Parents Concerning Virgins of Marriageable Age.****V.36. Various schools of thought:**

- (1) The man in the scripture is the 'father' - thinking that he might possibly be treating his virgin daughter in an unseemly manner. (Remember: In ancient times the father had control over the marriage of his daughter.)
  - (2) The man and woman are a 'betrothed couple' having doubts about carrying out their planned marriage. The woman is a virgin. Therefore, to renounce marriage may seem to be a fine and spiritual thing to do, but in some circumstances, it may be unfair to the woman, as well as being impossible to the man.
  - (3) The man has a partner in celibacy. They have entered upon a 'spiritual marriage' (living together, but without physical relations). And, now, he feels as if he is not behaving properly towards her.
  - (4) It was a common 'matter of reproach' among Jews and civilized heathens for a man to remain single beyond a certain age. So, Paul says, it is no sin to marry if the man feels a necessity upon him; whether to avoid 'reproach' or to avoid the 'passion of lust'.
- Note: I believe scenario number two best explains the text.

**V.37.** 'On the other hand, the man will do well who stands firm in his own mind (heart), and is under no necessity, but has authority over his own will, and has made up his own mind to this decision; namely, to keep his virgin (to remain celibate)'. - C. K. Barrett.

**V.38.** Some believe that this verse proves that **vs.36,37** are surely speaking of the 'father'.

- Paul concludes that: (1) He that gives his daughter in marriage is doing right; and he who does not give his virgin daughter in marriage does even better. (2) He that marries his betrothed does well; and he who refrains from marriage doeth better. Note: My choice, once again, is that of number two.

**Vs.39,40. Advice to Christian Widows**

- The wife is a part of her husband (one flesh) as long as he lives. But if her husband be dead ('falls asleep' - a term Paul used almost always for the death of a Christian). Therefore, this implies that the deceased husband was a Christian. The wife is free to marry anyone she so chooses, provided the marriage is within the Lord's fellowship.
- Yet, Paul says, in my opinion, she would be happier to remain as she is, unmarried. Note: In **I Tim.5:14** younger widows are urged to marry.

## Chapter 8

- Paul now comes to another question asked by the Corinthians - having to do with meats sacrificed to idols. Inasmuch as there were many pagan temple 'rituals' and 'festivals', in which the people were obligated to participate, this was very important.
- Generally, in the Corinthian society, a portion of an animal was offered (burned) at the sacrifice, and the remainder of the animal was prepared for the feast that followed. At times, portions were taken home and eaten there. After the feast, the meat that remained (belonging to the priests) oftentimes found its way into the market place and butcher shops.
- Note: Earlier, at the General Council Meeting in Jerusalem (**Acts 15:29**), it had been determined that Gentile believers in Christ were to 'abstain from meat offered to idols'.

**Vs.1-3.** The believers had wondered (questioned) that if they ate such meat, were they somehow participating in the worship of pagan idols.

- In Paul's response, he says, knowledge is good. Every one of us has some knowledge concerning this matter. But knowledge, alone, is insufficient when it comes to Christian liberty. In fact, it can be that which inflates a person's ego, causing him to think more highly of himself than he ought. It may make a man look big, or wise, but only love can make him grow to his full stature.
- The man who thinks he has all the answers (superior knowledge), in reality, has a lot to learn.
- If, in his lifetime, his greatest goal is to accumulate knowledge, he will miss out on the real purpose of living.
- Paul reveals an important principle by which Christians of all ages should live: Love is more important than knowledge. It doesn't focus on self, but goes beyond, seeking the well-being of others. Note: The man who has knowledge of God, which causes him to fall in love with the Lord and commit his life in salvation, is surely 'known (approved) of God'.

**Vs.4-6.** Paul comes now to the main subject: 'Eating that which has been offered to idols'.

- When Paul said, 'we know that an idol is nothing in the world', he was not saying that idols did not exist, but that an idol is capable of doing nothing in the world. Note: The meaning, in general, is: heathen idols have no divinity in them, and therefore, in the Old Testament they are commonly called 'lies' and 'vanities' (imaginary gods, or beings).
- But to us 'there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him'. We well know 'there is but one God, the fountain of being, the author of all things, maker, preserver, and governor of the whole world, of whom and for whom are all things' (M. Henry). Our God made all, and therefore has power over all.
- Notice: (1) 'Of whom'. All things are of the Father. (He 'willed it' all.) (2) 'By whom'. All things are by the Lord Jesus Christ. (All owe their coming into being to Him, the 'Word'. He 'spoke it' into existence.)
- **Jn.1:3.** 'All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made'.

- To us there is but one Lord, one mediator between God and men. It is 'the man Christ Jesus' (**I Tim.2:5**). Not many mediators, as the heathen imagined, but one only, by whom all things were created and do consist.
- V.7.** Howbeit, this knowledge we have of God is not shared by all believers in Corinth. There are some believers, even though it may seem hard to believe, who still think of heathen gods as real beings. And when they eat that which has been offered to an idol, their conscience, being weak, is defiled.
- V.8.** God's approval of us is not based on the food we eat. We lose nothing by not eating, and gain nothing if we eat. It matters little what we eat. What goes into the man of this sort neither purifies nor defiles. 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of his mouth, this defileth a man' (**Matt.15:11**).
- Vs.9,10.** Paul warns that a believer could wrongfully use his liberty in Christ and it could be hurtful, even detrimental, to another. Christian freedom does not mean 'anything goes'. It means our salvation is not determined by 'legalism' (good deeds, rules, etc.), but by the free gift of God (**Eph.2:8,9**). Therefore, Christian freedom is tied to Christian responsibility.
- Paul says, 'You must be careful that your freedom to eat meat does not in any way hinder the person whose faith is not as strong as yours'. Note: Since that is true, we must be careful not to offend a sensitive or younger Christian, or, by our example cause another to sin.
  - This is where the principle of 'love' comes in. When we love others, as directed in God's word, our freedom to do certain things will no longer be as important to us as our strengthening the faith of fellow believers.
- V.11.** Some writers, those who teach 'once saved, always saved' (eternal security), say that the word 'perish', here, does not mean that the weak brother will lose out with God. But I believe that is exactly what Paul is saying. Note: The dictionary definition is: to become destroyed; to die; to be detrimental. Too, the word 'perish', here in this verse, is the same as that used in **Jn.3:16**.
- Paul is saying, 'Surely, you would not want your superior knowledge concerning this matter of eating meats offered to idols to bring spiritual disaster to a weaker brother in Christ'.
- V.12.** Those strong in the faith, who misuse their Christian liberty, and, by so doing, lead a brother into sin - not only sin against that person but against Christ Himself. Note: In **Matt.25:40**, Jesus said, 'inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me'.
- By causing a brother to be lost, a believer can defeat the purpose of the Lord's sacrificial death on the cross.
  - **V.13.** In conclusion, it's not 'knowledge' that is the all-important ingredient of Christianity; it's 'love'. 'So, if eating meat offered to idols is going to make my brother sin, I will never eat meat again'.

## Chapter 9

- Since Paul had not been one of the twelve disciples, or a follower of Jesus during the Lord's ministry, some of the opposition within the church were questioning his apostleship and authority.

**Vs.1,2.** Paul defends his apostleship.

- 'Is there any doubt that I am a genuine messenger'? 'Am I not free?' (Paul was 'free' from all secular and religious bondage, which allowed him to be completely devoted to Christ and his calling as an apostle.)
- 'Have I not the same commission, and charge, and powers, with the other apostles?'
- 'Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?' Note: To be a witness of the Lord's resurrection was considered a requirement in order for one to be considered an apostle. Yet, in essence, Paul is saying he had seen the resurrected Christ. It's important to note that He did not see the Lord immediately after His resurrection (as did Peter, James, John, and the other disciples), but he had seen Jesus sometime after Jesus ascended and returned to His Father.
- When writing to the Galatians (**Ch.1:11,12**), Paul said, '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'. Then, in **Vs.15-17** he says, 'But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus'. Note: Without doubt, it was during this time in Arabia that Paul received divine revelations and instructions from the risen Savior. Afterwards, he returned to Damascus, where he had first begun his ministry. It was not until three years after his conversion that he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter.
- 'Are not ye my work in the Lord?' The very existence of the Corinthian church, and the conversion of many from heathenism through Paul's ministry, proved his apostleship. They were the 'seal' of his authority. Note: Whether or not others considered Paul an apostle was unimportant at this time - the Corinthians had no reason to doubt it. The fact that they were saved, and had become an assembly of believers, was validation of Paul's commission.
- 'For the 'seal' (proof) of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord'.

**Vs.3-6.** Paul claims the right to live a normal life like the others.

- 'Have we not power (the right) to eat and drink' at the expense of the church we have founded? If others receive your support, don't we have the same right?
- 'Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife?' Don't we have the right to marry: as Peter, the Lord's brethren, and the other apostles? Note: The phrase, 'to lead about a sister, a wife, implies that they (ministers) had power over them (their wives), and could require they go with them - with the church meeting their financial needs.



- Note: Before sending the seventy out to minister, Jesus said (**Lu.10:7**), 'And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire'.

**V.6.** Are Barnabas and I the only apostles that have no right to be supported by the church? Must we, alone, continue working for our living while you supply the needs of others?

- Four things of note: (Dake)
  - (1) Barnabas adopted Paul's method of supporting himself.
  - (2) Apostles, in general, were supported by the churches, not by secular labor.
  - (3) Paul and Barnabas had a trade by which they could support themselves.
  - (4) They chose to support themselves in certain places so as not to hinder the founding of a church.

**Vs.7-18. They who preach the gospel are to live by the gospel.**

**V.7.** Paul proceeds by giving arguments to prove his claim.

- A 'soldier' doesn't pay his own wages to go to war for his country.
- Likewise, the owner of a vineyard, or the shepherd of a flock of sheep: they expect to get a livelihood out of their labors.
- It is very natural, and very reasonable, for ministers to expect a livelihood out of their labors.

**Vs.8,9.** Paul argues his case out of the Jewish law, and quotes **Deut.25:4**. 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn'. (Even the 'ox' has the right to expect to be fed for his work.)

- The same thought is mentioned again in **v.10b**. Note: If this principle is to apply to a brute beast, surely it should apply to mankind. Everyone should be privileged to partake of his own labors.

**V.11.** If we have sown 'seeds of spiritual good', is it too much to expect from you material benefits?

**Vs.12-14.** Paul argues from the support (maintenance) they had given to others. 'You allow others this maintenance, and confess their claim just; but who has so just a claim as I from the church of Corinth? Who has given greater evidence of the apostolic mission? Who has labored so much for your good, or done like service among you' (M. Henry)?

- Not only is Paul's position supported by 'natural law' and by 'Scripture', but is also supported by the 'Temple law'.
- The Bible teaches (in both O.T. and N.T.) that those who receive spiritual blessings through the preaching of the 'word' should support those engaged in proclaiming it. (**Rom.10:13-15a**)

**V.15,16.** But I have never taken advantage of these rights, nor am I writing to claim such in this letter; for I had rather 'die than that any man should make my glorying void'. **Note:** There was nothing in Paul's glorying that implied boasting, or self-conceit, or a desire for applause - but a high degree of satisfaction and comfort. He was saying, 'I had rather die than that any man should make my glorying void' (to have it justly said that I preferred wages to my work).

- It was a pleasure and delight for Paul to preach the gospel - without making it burdensome. In reality, he valued the privilege of preaching the gospel above his 'rights'; even above his very 'life'.
- 'Proclaiming the gospel gives me no ground for boasting; I am compelled to do so by order of my Master'. **Note:** Anyone called of God to preach, but refuses to do so, is living dangerously. Paul said, 'Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel'.

**Vs.17,18.** If it was optional for me to preach the gospel, then, possibly, I would deserve remuneration. But I was given a stewardship to preach. That was enough - pay or no pay. **Note:** Doing that which we have been called to do, 'willingly' (heartedly; cheerfully), will, without doubt, bring blessings and recompence from the Lord.

**V.19.** Paul's foremost interest was to preach the gospel and win souls to Christ. Whatever it might take in terms of personal freedom, he was prepared to pay the price.

**Vs.20-23. Important:** This does not mean that Paul was willing to compromise his convictions, or, that he sought to please others for their esteem (praise). He was prepared to conform to the social customs of those he was trying to help, provided it did not violate his Christian principles. **Ex.** It is said of Hudson Taylor (outstanding missionary to China), that he chose to dress in the garb of the Chinese peasants so that he might better identify with them. He felt that if he continued to dress as one from the west (foreigner), his influence for Christ would be less effective. (Christ Jesus died for the sins of the 'world', not just for those of the west.)

- Paul knew that if he offended the Corinthians by disregarding the convictions of their consciences, his ministry to them, for the sake of Christ, could be seriously hindered.
- **Note:** The following scriptures help us to better understand the meaning of Paul's statements: (1) In speaking of Timotheus, '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' (Acts 16:3). (2) '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' (Acts 21:26).

**Vs.24-27.** The Corinthians were very familiar with the 'Isthmian games'. Here, Paul says, 'All run at your games, but only one wins the crown. But it is quite otherwise in the Christian race. You may all run so as to obtain. There is opportunity for all to get the 'prize'. Too, you cannot fail if you run well'.

- Note: Dake lists four things one must do in order to have eternal life:
  - (1) Be as earnest to make heaven as men are to win a race.
  - (2) Be temperate in all things.
  - (3) Fight with absolute confidence in victory.
  - (4) Keep the body under subjection at all times.
  
- The 'prize' ('incorruptible crown') refers to the victory of gaining 'eternal salvation', the 'goal' of the Christian life. In **Phil.3:14**, Paul says, 'I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling food in Christ Jesus'. The 'prize', here, as in **I Cor.9:24**, speaks of being ready at the time of the 'rapture' (high calling; upward calling) of the church. Amen! Note: The wonderful Bible truth is: Provision has been made for all the world. All can be ready!
  
- Note: By using the word 'castaway' (**v.27**), Paul initiated what has become a 'doctrinal debate' among religious leaders - that has continued for centuries. It concerns 'eternal salvation': whether it is 'conditional' or 'unconditional'.
  
- \*\* Some teachings of those who believe in 'unconditional salvation', or 'eternal security':
  - (1) Paul is writing of service, not of salvation. He is not expressing fear that he may fail of salvation but of his crown.
  - (2) Such a person will be 'put on the shelf', but not lost.
  - (3) Is no longer useful to the kingdom of God, but saved.
  - (4) Does not lose his salvation; but could lose his privilege to tell others about Christ.
  - (5) After a person is saved, it is God's responsibility to see to it that the person makes it to heaven. Note: The list seems endless.
  
- \*\* Teachings of those who believe in 'conditional salvation':
  - (1) Dictionary definition: To be a 'castaway' is to be 'thrown out'; 'thrown away'; 'rejected'; 'disapproved'.
  - (2) Lest I should fail shamefully of the prize, and be disqualified. (RSV)
  - (3) Lest I, who have preached to others, should fail to receive the prize, and be rejected by the sovereign Judge. (M. Henry)
  - (4) Lest I fail the test, and am utterly rejected. (Full Life Study Bible)
  - (5) The most successful preaching may be followed by ultimate ruin - a 'castaway'. Hell after preaching. (Pulpit Commentary)
  - (6) Lest I fall from grace, become rejected, and miss heaven. (Bennett's Commentary) Note: Once again the list seems endless.
  
- Note: The Corinthian believers could receive the 'prize' if they continued in the 'faith'. And it's the same with today's believers as it was in Christ's day.
- Neither Paul's conversion, his baptism, his call to apostleship, nor his service in preaching the gospel guaranteed his eternal salvation. That's one of the major reasons for his writing this letter. There were those in the Corinthian church that were on the verge of losing out altogether.

## Chapter 10

- In the final verses of chapter 9, Paul mentions the need for Christians to have self-discipline; saying that Israel failed in that regard. They had no self-control. Therefore, they became a 'castaway'. They perished in the desert.
- Too, in chapter 9, Paul uses himself as an example of a 'mature Christian' who disciplines himself in order to better serve God. Now, in **Verses 1-10** of this chapter, he uses Israel as an example of 'spiritual immaturity', by their being overconfident and having a lack of self-discipline. Note: What happened to Israel in the wilderness should be a 'warning' to today's Christians.
- In these verses we find that the very people, who had enjoyed great privileges and blessings from God, had now fallen into serious apostasy.

**V.1.** The 'ignorance' to which Paul refers is not ignorance of the 'facts', but of the 'meaning of the facts'. He not only wants them to know the 'truth', but to embrace it and live it.

- 'All our fathers'. He repeats the 'all' five times. Therefore, notice the 'five privileges' that were extended by God to those in the wilderness:
  - (1) 'Under the cloud' (pillar of cloud). This speaks of 'Divine Guidance' and 'Protection' (**Exo.14:19,20**). When the cloud moved forward, the people followed; when it stopped, they stopped and set up camp. Note: Some have suggested that the cloud was God's way of providing mobile air-conditioning while they were in the wilderness.
  - (2) 'Passed through the sea' - on dry ground. 'Divine Deliverance'.
  - (3) 'And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea'. Dake mentions that this is a type (or shadow) of 'water baptism', as well as a type of the 'Baptism of the Holy Ghost'.
- The people followed the cloud and went into the sea on Moses' authority, believing he had direction from God. This speaks of 'Divine leadership' (**Exo.14:31**). Note: They were baptized 'unto Moses' - means they were brought under obligation to Moses' law and covenant.
  - (4) 'And did all eat the same spiritual meat': 'Divine Provisions'. Note: Paul is not implying that the manna was not literal food. It was spiritual in the sense that it was supernaturally provided by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.
  - (5) 'And did all drink the same spiritual drink'. The water that came forth from the rock (**Exo.17:6**) was real water. It was spiritual in the sense that it was given through God's 'Divine Intervention'. Note: This 'spiritual drink' is a type of Christ. Too, the ultimate supply was not the rock, but Christ. He was with them throughout the wilderness wanderings.
- Note: Some believe the 'spiritual meat' and 'spiritual drink' are symbolic of the elements in 'bread and wine' employed in the Lord's Supper.

**V.5.** 'Many . . . were overthrown in the wilderness'. Think about it: These are Hebrews (the seed of Abraham; God's chosen people) that had been delivered from Egyptian bondage by the high hand of Almighty God; had witnessed the destruction of Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea; had been given guidance and protection; and, had enjoyed divine provisions during their wanderings. Yet, after all God had done for them, they failed to obey Him. And the tragedy is: they never reached the land of promise, but were destroyed by God, Himself.

- This shows that a person may be redeemed, be a partaker of God's divine grace, enjoy God's bountiful blessings, and, yet, be rejected by God because of disobedience and unbelief. Too, 'since all these things happened unto them for ensamples', it's a 'warning' to each of us. There is no 'unconditional eternal security'.

**Vs.6-10.** After mentioning Israel's many privileges, Paul gives an account of their faults, sins, and punishments. He warns that we must not do as they did, lest we suffer as they suffered.

- Five Major Sins of Israel in the Wilderness.
  - (1) They lusted after evil things. God gave them 'manna' from heaven, but they desired meat instead. Too, they longed for (lusted after) the fleshpots of Egypt (cucumbers, melons, onions, etc.).
  - (2) Idolatry. They substituted a graven image (golden calf) for the Holy God. First, they sacrificed to it, then, they feasted on the sacrifices. Afterwards, they danced before it.
  - (3) Fornication. A sin to which many Corinthians were addicted. Note: They had a temple dedicated to Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, which had one thousand priestesses (common prostitutes) belonging to it. Spiritual defection always leads to moral defection.
  - (4) Tempted the Lord. God was grieved and provoked by them. They spoke against him and Moses, saying, 'Wherefore have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? And because of that, God sent fiery serpents among them (Num.21:5,6).
  - (5) Murmured. They quarreled with God, and murmured against Moses his minister. Note: At this time, the Corinthians were murmuring against Paul, their teacher and apostle.

**V.11.** The history of how God judged His people in the Old Testament was included in Scripture to provide 'warnings' to those of us in New Testament times. Note: It seems God had the Corinthian believers in mind when he had Moses record all the wilderness experiences of the Children of Israel.

- 'unto whom the ends of the world (ages) are come'. We have been living in the 'last days' since Christ's ascension. He could return at any moment. Therefore, we are admonished to 'get ready' (have sins forgiven) and 'stay ready'. Undoubtedly, Paul believed the same thing.

**V.12.** This concludes the 'warning' to the Corinthian believers against going back on God and following the example of the Israelites. At this time, some in the church were following after, and committing, the same sins as had the Israelites all those centuries earlier.

- 'he that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall'. The Israelites thought that since they were of the 'seed of Abraham' God would surely not cast them aside. As God's elect, equipped with rituals, ceremonies, and sacraments, they felt themselves secure. But they were not. They fell into sin, condemnation, and destruction.
- Too, some Corinthians felt themselves secure, inasmuch they had accepted Christ as Savior; were now a part of God's family; and, were equipped with the Christian sacraments. But Paul warns them, letting them know that what happened to the Israelites, after being delivered from Egyptian bondage, could be their fate, as well.

- Note: Those who believe they can live in carnal gratification, and yet be ready for heaven, must realize that God's condemnation awaits. Others have fallen, and we may, as well.
- Those who embrace the doctrine of 'unconditional eternal security' do not believe that the disobedient Israelites, those destroyed by God in the wilderness, actually lost out. Nor do they believe that the sinning Corinthians, those whom Paul says were in jeopardy of falling, means that they could lose out with God. A dangerous doctrine.

**V.13.** This, to me, is one of the greatest promises in all the Bible - denoting the 'faithfulness' of God. The last verse was a warning; this is an encouragement.

- The trials we (Christians) face in life are nothing more than 'normal'. And, because God is in control, no temptation, no trial, no test, no hardship, no problem, no anything can come to us beyond that which we can bear.
- And all of that is true because 'God is faithful'. Our strength and security are in Him. He promised not only to 'go with us', but that He would never leave nor forsake us. Amen! What an awesome God!
- 'who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able'. God knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows our limits, as to exactly how much we can bear. Note: Those things, which He knows we are not capable of handling in our present spiritual condition, He will not allow to come our way.
- And the good news is: when tested, He will make a way of escape - either over it, under it, around it, or through it. Yet, the 'route' is not the important thing, but the 'outcome' - 'that ye may be able to bear it'. God desires 'victory' for His people, with no thoughts of us 'just barely making it'.
- God provides His children adequate grace to overcome every temptation. And, remember, not only do we have God's 'grace', we have the 'blood of Jesus', the 'Word of God', the 'indwelling Holy Spirit', and 'Christ Himself' interceding in our behalf before the Father. Amen! If we will but rely on Him, He will take care that we will not be overcome.
- If a Christian yields to temptation and sin, it is not because the Lord's provision of grace is inadequate, but because the believer fails to resist his own sinful desires by the power of the Spirit.

**V.14.** 'So then, my beloved, continually flee from idolatry'. Note: The original implies that they were to turn their backs on idolatry, shun it, and so, fly from it.

**V.15.** I speak to you as unto men of discernment. 'Judge ye what I say'. Consider the language of my argument. 'Look now and see for yourselves whether what I am about to say is true'.

**Vs.16,17.** Consider the Lord's Table. When believers partake of the wine (fruit of the vine; grape juice) and bread at Communion Service, they identify with the shed blood and broken body of Christ. Note: His 'blood' was poured out on Calvary's tree that our sins might be forgiven (**Rom.3:25** - salvation) and our hearts might be cleansed (**Heb.13:12** - sanctified). His body was broken for our healing (**Isa.53:5**).

- Roman Catholics teach a doctrine of 'Transubstantiation': that the bread and the fruit of the vine actually become the body and blood of Christ during Communion, retaining the appearance of bread and wine (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary - 10th Edition). Note: The Bible doesn't teach such.
- Believers who partake of Christ at Holy Communion are 'one bread' and 'one body', of which Christ is the Head, and we are the members. Though we are many, the one loaf makes us all one body (the Church).

**V.18.** Paul uses Israel of the Old Testament as an example, saying, in essence, 'Consider the practice of Israel'.

- In that day, when a sacrifice was brought to the altar, it was not entirely consumed. That which remained was divided among the priests, which showed that they were partners with God. It was a time of sharing and giving thanks. Note: The main point here is not sacrifice, but communion.

**Vs.19-22.** Paul had mentioned that idols were nothing. Therefore, to worship an idol is to worship nothing (emptiness). Yet, the ones behind the idols are very real. Idolatry involves worship of demons - 'And I would not that ye should have fellowship with such (devils)'.

- Some members at Corinth had fallen into error, and because of that they failed to distinguish between righteousness and unrighteousness, between that which is holy and that which is defiled, between that which is of Christ and that which is of the devil.
- Paul goes on to say that it is impossible to be related to the Lord and to demons, simultaneously. Therefore, unless someone intends to provoke the Lord, he must be careful not to attend the heathen feasts.

**Vs.23-33. The Law of Love in relation to eating and drinking.**

- All foods are lawful, but not all are profitable and edifying to others. All that is lawful in itself is not necessarily lawfully done. Circumstances may make that a sin which in itself is not a sin. Note: It's not always easy to know when to defer to the weaker brother. Here, Paul gives a 'rule of thumb' to help in making the decision: we should always be sensitive and gracious.
- In Christ we have freedom, but this freedom shouldn't be exercised at the cost of hurting a fellow Christian.
- **V.24.** Let no man seek to gratify his own appetites (satisfy self) at the expense of the well-being of another. Note: The words 'another's wealth' speaks of the person's welfare (good) - also mentioned in **v.33** and **Rom.15:2**.
- **V.25.** 'Shambles' - food-market. In sacrifices, usually only a part of the victim was consumed. The remainder was given to the priest, or sold in the market. Therefore, a person could unknowingly purchase meat that had been offered to idols. Paul says, 'Eat, asking no questions for conscience sake'.
- All earthly creatures are the Lord's; and nothing is impure or unholy in itself.

**Vs.27-32.** You are free to eat any meat at any man's table (including the table of the unbeliever) unless he informs you that it has been sacrificed to idols. In that case, you are not to eat - but let him know, as a Christian, you have no part with idols and demons. (Good opportunity to witness for Christ.)

- Since idols are nothing, it would be lawful for you to eat such food, but, if you eat, you would be a stumbling block to a weak brother, or, perhaps, to a heathen who knows the stand of Christianity concerning the matter. Note: The main object of the believer's life is to please God. Therefore, that which cannot be done for God's glory (i.e., in honor and thanksgiving to Him as our Lord, Creator, and Redeemer) should not be done at all.

**V.33.** 'Even as I please all men in all things'. Paul sought to please all men, but did not claim that he had succeeded in his attempt. Surely, many were not pleased to hear Paul proclaim the truths of the gospel. Note: In **Gal.1:10** and **I Thess.2:4**, Paul speaks of 'pleasing men' as an evil thing. It's evil when it is done with a view to solicit favor, or so as to avoid persecution; it is good when it is done so as to lead them to faith.

- Note: In this age of 'me first' and 'looking out for number one', we would do well to follow Paul's standard: 'not seeking mine own profit (good; welfare), but the profit of others, that they may be saved'.



## Chapter 11

**V.1.** This verse is placed here by those who divided the epistle into chapters as a preface to the remainder of the epistle. Yet, there are those who believe it would have been a more proper ending to the previous chapter.

- Paul says, 'Pattern your lives after me as I pattern my life after Christ'. Not only did he preach a doctrine they ought to believe, he lived a life they would do well to imitate. Note: Since the Gospels had not yet been written, Paul could not tell these Corinthians to imitate Jesus. They didn't know what He was like; so, the best way to point them to Christ was to point them to a Christian whom they trusted (Paul himself) as a follower of Christ.
- As Christians, we should follow no leader further than he follows Christ.

**Vs.2-16.** Paul's main concern is 'irreverence in worship'. Therefore, in this section, he focuses on 'attitudes toward worship', and not on marriage or the role of women in the church.

- Note: The wearing of hats (head coverings), although seemingly insignificant, had become a huge problem because of the two cultural backgrounds involved. Jewish women always covered their heads in worship. For a woman to uncover her head in public was a sign of loose morals. Yet, on the other hand, Greek women worshipped without head coverings.
- In essence, Paul says, 'if anything you do can easily offend members and divide the church, then change your ways in order to promote church unity'. He goes on to tell the women who were not wearing head coverings to wear them; not because it was a Scriptural command, but because it kept the congregation from dividing over a petty issue that served only to take people's minds off Christ.

**V.2.** Paul praises them for remembering him. Then, he admonishes them to keep the 'ordinances' (rules, moral standards, codes of conduct) that he had taught them, which reveal God's will for His people in such matters as outward appearance, modesty, conduct, water baptism, Lord's Supper, etc. Note: God is not only concerned with the 'inner man', He desires the external to be properly and modestly dressed (**I Tim.2:9**).

- An interesting thought: When reproof must be given, it is always prudent to commend what is good in the person first. It will show that the reproof is not from ill-will, but from love, and for the sake of unity.

**V.3.** Paul comes to another question that had been raised, having to do with public worship.

And he mentions 'Three Headships':

- (1) God is the head of Christ,
- (2) Christ is the head of man, and,
- (3) Man (husband) is the head of woman (wife).

- Note: The husband's 'headship' is not based on societal consideration nor on the customs of a particular people, but on God's creative activity and purpose in making the woman to be a helpmeet for man.

- 'Subordination' (submission) does not imply inferiority, nor suppression, nor oppression. Just as Christ is not inferior because the Father is His head; the woman is not inferior, nor second-class, because man is her head.
- We are all created in God's image, and have equal value in the eyes of the Lord. Note: In the spiritual realm, 'There is neither male nor female' (**Gal.3:28**). In the Kingdom of God, 'Leadership never implies being greater'. Rather, it's servanthood, faith, and obedience that are the greatest. Remember: Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve (**Lu.22:27**).

#### **Vs.4-12. Guidelines for men and women in public services.**

**Vs.4,5.** A man having a hat, cap, turban, etc., on his head while praying or preaching would be dishonoring his head (Christ). It would show a lack of reverence for the Lord. Note: This was contrary to Jewish tradition. The Jewish canon did not permit a man to pray or prophesy (preach) unless he had a covering on his head. Yet, since the Jews refused to accept Christ as their promised Messiah, they continue to wear hats when worshipping. (They have not, as yet, recognized Christ as 'head' of man.)

- Paul says, the woman who prays or prophecies with her head unveiled (uncovered) dishonors her husband. To do so would cause her to be identifying Christianity with harlotry and paganism. She would be likened to the heathen priestesses who prayed and delivered the oracles bareheaded. Too, it would be the same as women who had their heads shorn as punishment for whoredom and adultery.

**V.6.** The veiled women were to be respected and honored as women. Men did not respect a woman in the worship assembly who was unveiled, or, without long hair (that which identified her as being a woman). Any woman that did such, would, in essence, be flaunting herself publicly and shamefully.

- If she refuses to be covered, 'let her also be shorn'. If a woman cuts her hair short (giving her the appearance of a man), or shaves her hair off, it marks her as one who is shameless; one who dishonors her 'head' (husband).

**V.7.** One sense in which the man is uniquely in the image of God, is, that to him was given dominion over the earth. And this was done before the creation of the woman. Thus, in the same sense, the woman is the glory of the man. Whatever dominion and authority she has is delegated.

**Vs.8,9. Order of creation.** Adam, the first man, didn't come from woman; but Eve, the first woman, came from (out of) man. Too, the man was not created for the sake of the woman, but the woman was created for the sake of man. Note: God created lines of authority in order for His created world to function smoothly. Therefore, both the man and the woman should keep to the rank God has chosen for them, and not dishonor their 'head'. To do so would be to dishonor God.

**Vs.10,11.** 'Power' - a symbol of authority, not of her having the power or authority, but being under the authority of her husband (her head), subjected to him. Paul is teaching submission to the divine order. According to Scofield, this 'power on her head' is the sign of her husband's authority.

- The phrase, 'because of the angels', has led to many and varied interpretations. I will list a few.
  - (1) On account of angels, if of nobody else.
  - (2) Especially out of respect for the angels.
  - (3) Because of her guardian angels.
  - (4) Because of the evil angels.
  - (5) Because the good angels approve of it.
  - (6) These angels are 'Church officials', or 'prophets', or 'holy men', or 'delegates' or the 'bridegrooms men'. And the list goes on.
- Note: The phrase 'because of the angels' likely refers to the fact that angels are concerned with proper order, and are shocked at conduct not according to God's will (**c.f. 4:9**).

**Vs.11,12.** From the Lord's point of view, man is not independent of woman, nor is the woman independent of man. Neither can exist without the other. In **Gen.2**, we read that woman came out of the man. And in **Gen.4:1**, we're told that man (Cain) came out of woman. Note: A major breakdown in today's society is 'single motherhood' (families with no father in the home). God never intended such to be the norm.

**Vs.13-15. Two schools of thought concerning 'head coverings' and 'long hair':**

- (1) Paul says that believers should look and behave in ways that are honorable within their own culture. In many cultures, for men to have long hair was considered appropriate and masculine. Yet, in Corinth, it was thought to be a sign of sexual perversion. Too, in that same Corinthian culture, women with short hair were labeled prostitutes. Therefore, Paul says the Christian women should keep their hair long in order to be believable witnesses for Christ. Note: Paul is not saying we should adopt all the practices of our culture, but that we should avoid appearances and behavior that would hinder our goal of being Christlike in our daily living.
  - (2) God made both man and woman; and He desires that the physical differences between the two be observed. Here, he mentions the hair of men and women - that the length of each should be such as to distinguish between the two, male or female. It's a shame (disgrace) for a man to have hair like a woman (to be effeminate). It dishonors his 'head' (Christ).
- Note: The long hair of a woman is provided her by nature. It has been given her instead of a veil. The Scriptures do not dictate 'spirituality' by the length of one's hair. The real issue here is 'submission to divine authority'.

**V.16.** Paul sums up his argument by saying, if anyone is 'contentious' (anyone wishes to dispute) about this minor matter of ritual (women appearing in public with uncovered heads), 'we' (Apostles and church leaders) recognize no other custom (practice) in worship.

**Vs. 17-22. Disorders at the Lord's Table.** Note: The Lord's Supper is a visible representation of the gospel - the death of Christ for our sins. It focuses on the remembrance of Christ's death and the glorious hope of his return. It's an act of fellowship among believers. And it strengthens our faith through fellowship with Christ and with other believers.

- In **v.2**, Paul commends them for keeping the 'ordinances'. Now, he criticizes them for the manner in which they did so. Because of wrong motivations, their coming together was proving to weaken rather than bless and strengthen.
- 'I am told that there are divisions among you; and I'm prone to believe it'. Note: Paul had spent 18 months in establishing the church in Corinth, and he knew the people well.
- 'Heresies' - adherence to religious opinions contrary to church dogma. Paul was certain that some divisions would occur in the Christian assembly. Yet, he also knew that such would bring to light those who defended the 'truth', those who were genuine.
- In the early church (which met in private houses), when celebrating the Lord's Supper, they would have a fellowship meal (later called the 'Agape Feast') followed by communion. But in Corinth, the meal had become a time of gluttony and excessive drinking rather than a time of preparation for communion. The meal was similar to a 'potluck', but there was very little sharing and caring.
- 'One is hungry, and another is drunken'. Those poorer had very little to eat, while the wealthy fared sumptuously (were filled to the full).
- So, Paul writes to correct these abuses.

**Vs.23-34. Order and Meaning of the Lord's Supper.**

- Just as 'Passover' celebrated the nation of Israel's deliverance from slavery and bondage in Egypt (made possible by the death of a lamb and its blood applied 'on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses'), the Lord's Supper celebrates deliverance from sin for Christians (made possible by the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ).
- Important to understand the meaning of Jesus' words when He said, 'this is my body' and 'This cup is the new testament in my blood'. Christians have several opinions as to what Christ meant.
  - (1) 'Transubstantiation': The 'bread' literally turns to Jesus' fleshly body, and the 'wine' is literally transformed into Jesus' blood (**c.f. 10:16,17**).
  - (2) Others believe the bread and wine remain unchanged, but Christ is spiritually present within the bread and wine.
  - (3) Still others believe the bread and wine symbolize Christ' body and blood. (I agree.)
- The 'significance' of the Lord's Supper relates to the past, present, and future.
  - (1) Past significance: It is a 'remembrance' of the death of Christ on Calvary's Cross for our redemption from sin and condemnation. A 'thanksgiving' for the abundant blessings of God made available by the sacrifice of His Son.

(2) Present significance: It is a 'fellowship' with Christ, as well as a fellowship with other believers. The risen Christ, as Host, becomes present in a special way. Too, we reaffirm our commitment to do His will, to remain loyal, to resist sin, and, to identify ourselves with the Great Commission.

(3) Future significance: It is a foretaste of the future kingdom and the heavenly banquet that we will enjoy together when all of God's children get home (**Rev.19:9**).

**Vs.26.** 'For as often'. The Bible does not set specific times when we should celebrate the Lord's Supper. But when we have the Communion Service (weekly, monthly, quarterly, or whenever), it is to be 'in remembrance of Jesus', to show his 'death til he come'.

- Note: (1) While still in the 'Passover chamber' with his disciples, the night before his crucifixion, Jesus said, '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' (Jn.14:1-3).
- (2) On the day of Jesus' ascension, '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' (Acts 1:10,11).
- (3) Some twenty years later, the Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church in Thessalonica, saying, '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' (I Thes.4:16,17). Amen! He is coming again! And as we celebrate 'communion', we are to remember His death, looking forward to that day.

**Vs.27,28.** It is possible to eat and drink at the Lord's table in an unworthy manner (wrong spirit, indifference, carelessness, having no intentions of being obedient to the will of God, etc.). To do so is to be guilty of crucifying Christ afresh and anew, and is an invitation to the judgment of God.

- Each man is to examine himself (search his own heart; measure his life by the 'Word'). If, upon self-examination, anything is found out of harmony with Christ and His Word, commit it to the Lord. Settle it in your heart. The Holy Spirit doesn't reveal such to keep you from participating in communion, but to help you get it settled so that you can participate. Amen! Then join the others in celebrating fellowship with Christ and the believers.

**Vs.29,30.** Anyone who participates in such an unworthy manner sins terribly, not only against himself, but against the Lord, and comes under God's judgment.

- Because of over-riding their consciences and Holy Ghost conviction, many have brought sickness, disease, etc., upon themselves; and some have even died premature deaths.

**Vs.31,32.** If we thoroughly search ourselves, and correct that which we have discovered amiss (if any), we will escape divine judgments. Note: We must not judge others, lest we be judged (**Matt.7:1**).; but we must judge ourselves in order to prevent our being judged and condemned by God.

- Yet, when we are judged and punished by the Lord, it is so that we will not be condemned with the ungodly of the world at the final judgment.

**Vs.33,34.** So then, fellow Christians, when you come to celebrate the Lord's Supper, 'tarry one for another' (prefer your brother). To do so would prevent the greediness Paul condemned earlier (**v.21**).

- Those of you who are hungry should first eat your meal at home, rather than coming to the 'Agape Feast' before communion and showing partiality.
- Paul concludes by saying, 'There are other questions which I shall try to settle in person when I come'.

## Chapter 12

**Vs.1.** Evidently, the Corinthians had inquired in their letter as to Paul's views concerning spiritual gifts. So, not wanting them to have misunderstanding about the matter, he writes to enlighten them. Note: God doesn't want us (believers) to be ignorant or unlearned concerning the 'gifts' of the Holy Spirit. So, I present two questions: (1) Is it possible for a Christian not to know about 'spiritual gifts'? (Surely) (2) Can a person love God, know about the 'gifts', and, yet, be taught wrongly about their existence, operation, etc.? (Surely)

- 'spiritual gifts' - 'supernatural manifestations' which come as 'gifts' from the Holy Spirit operating through believers for the common good (**cf.v.7**). There are many gifts. People have different gifts. And no gift is superior to another. They all come from the Holy Spirit, and their purpose is to build up the body of Christ, the church. Note: It's these 'gifts' that are the 'key' to Chapters 12,13, & 14.

**Vs.2,3.** As Gentiles (pagans, unsaved, without Christ), you were 'carried away' (led astray) to worship dumb and senseless idols (**cf. Ps.115:4**) just as you had been taught.

- Note: When writing to the Ephesians, Paul said, '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**). A picture of the past life of the non-Jews who were now a part of the Corinthian church.
- 'Since you are now meeting people who claim to speak messages inspired by God', you have asked, 'how can we know they are really inspired'? So, Paul proceeds to answer:
  - (1) The gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit will always exalt Christ as Lord of the church. Therefore, if anyone calls Jesus accursed, he is not speaking under the influence of the Spirit of God. Remember: Both Jews and Gentiles blasphemed Jesus. They mocked him, ridiculed him, spit upon him, called him an imposter and blasphemer, and then, crucified him. Yet, none of this was done with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
  - (2) On the other hand, no man can say 'Jesus is Lord' (Lord of his life; is presently living by faith; and, is continually becoming more like Christ) but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- Note: A man's life (daily living) is of much greater importance than his words.

**Vs.4-7.** There are various gifts, administrations, and operations; but all proceed from one Spirit, one Lord, one God.

- (1) The gifts of the Spirit are not uniform, but display diversity in unity. They are endowments imparted by the Holy Spirit.
  - (2) Different individuals render different services (administrations). Yet, the same Lord: Who, as Head of the Church, directs all ministries and assigns all functions.
  - (3) There are different ways of doing things, and varieties of things accomplished (operations), yet it is the same God who achieves his purposes through them all.
- It's important to note that these three statements concerning gifts, administrations, and operations, reveal, with perfect clearness, the doctrine of the 'Trinity in unity'.

- The gift, whereby the Spirit becomes manifest, is given for the benefit of the church, to edify the body, and, to spread the 'good news' of the gospel. No man has a gift, or manifestation, merely for himself. 'They are not given for show, but for service; not for pomp or display, but for edification; not to magnify those that have them, but to edify others' (M. Henry).

**Vs.8-10.** Paul gives a list of the nine gifts.

- (1) Gifts of revelation: (a) Word of wisdom, (b) Word of knowledge, (c) Discerning of spirits.
- (2) Gifts of power: (a) Faith, (b) Working of miracles, (c) Gifts of healing.
- (3) Gifts of inspiration: (a) Prophecy, (b) Divers kinds of tongues, (c) Interpretation of tongues.

- Note: They are not the same as the gifts and ministries mentioned in **Rom.12:6-8** and **Eph.4:11**. The 'spiritual gifts' mentioned in this chapter are all 'supernatural'. And they are not just for bishops, or ministers, or teachers of the word. They are for 'believers' - degreed or not degreed, ordained or not ordained, highly educated or with no education, but for whomsoever.

(1) **Word of Wisdom (v.8)**. According to the dictionary, wisdom is the ability to apply possessed knowledge and experience. But the 'Gift of the word of wisdom' is much more. It's the super-natural unfolding of God's plans and purposes concerning people, places, and things - and answers such questions as 'why' and 'how'. It is when God reveals a portion of His wisdom on a particular occasion for a particular purpose (need).

- This gift is not human intelligence. **Ex.** Paul, after conversion, was a wise man in the natural, but it was not his natural wisdom that revealed to him the details of the rapture of the church, as outlined in **I Thes. 4:13-17**.
- This gift is not deep insight into the Scriptures, but the revelation of God's unrevealed will and purpose, apart from His word. And it will always be in harmony with the written word.
- It is not 'administrative ability' - the ability to govern or minister in some particular office.
- It is not 'sanctified common sense', although, no doubt, most of us could benefit from an increased portion of such.
- One final word: This gift can come to any person filled with the Holy Ghost, who, in the natural, is neither educated nor wise.

(2) **Word of Knowledge (v.8)** - the supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit of a certain 'fact', or 'facts', in the mind of God.

- God is omniscient. He knows everything: past, present, and future. In His mind is the knowledge of all eternity. And this 'gift' is the revelation to man by the Spirit of God of a small portion of that knowledge.
- The gift is not a God-given increase in human knowledge. **Ex.** A person might pray asking God to help him remember some very important bit of information which he once knew but had forgotten. God might answer. And that's good. But it is not the gift of the word of knowledge.



- The word of knowledge is the revelation of something which a person has never known, and could not know unless given by supernatural revelation.
- (3) **Gift of Faith (v.9)**. There is a close relationship between the 'gift of faith' and the 'gift of miracles'. Yet, it seems the gift of faith is more 'passive', while the gift of miracles is 'active'. We may not always see the gift of faith operating, but the gift of miracles in operation would most always be obvious and dramatic.
- Four kinds of faith: Human, Saving, Faith the fruit, and Faith the gift.
    - (A) Human faith - head faith. It's the faith we have when we get on a plane - that we will arrive at our desired destination. Too, 'head faith' is the only kind of faith that demons have.
      - Demons believe the record God gave of His Son. They believe, and tremble.
      - Note: The remaining three 'faiths' are of the heart.
    - (B) Saving faith - is putting head faith into action by repenting, believing Christ to be God's Son, and, accepting Him as Saviour. Note: 'Saving faith' is also a 'gift' (**Eph.2:8**), but it is not the supernatural gift we are discussing here in this chapter.
      - All can receive saving faith. But, here, when Paul says, 'to another faith by the same Spirit', he is speaking of the supernatural 'gift of faith', which is distributed according to the sovereign will of God to Holy Ghost filled believers.
    - (C) Faith, the Fruit (Gal.5:22). Note: This is the faith without which no man can please God (**Heb.11:6**).
      - Some say, 'it is the development and growth of saving faith'.
      - Another says, 'it is wholehearted confidence, assurance, trust, and reliance in God, and, in all that he says'.
      - Note: I believe 'faith, the fruit', has to do with 'faithfulness' as well as that which is mentioned above. Surely, God is not pleased with the lack of faithfulness in the lives of the vast number of professing Christians of today.
    - (D) Faith, the Gift - is given for power. This is the gift of the Spirit by which one may work or receive miracles.
      - I mentioned earlier that the operation of this gift is not always immediately obvious. Ex. 'By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come' (Heb.11:20). The 'things' mentioned were a long time coming, but Isaac had supernatural faith to pronounce these blessings upon his sons.
- (4) **Gifts of Healing (v.9)** - for the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities without the assistance of natural means (i.e. doctors, medications, therapies, etc.).
- Note: Some of the greatest and most accomplished men and women of medical science are not 'born again'. If this 'gift' speaks of their abilities, etc., then it is held and operated by unbelievers rather than by Holy Ghost anointed Christians. Jesus said, 'These signs shall follow them that believe' (Mk.16:17,18).

- Too, the exercise of the 'gifts of healing' does not give a person the ability to heal all that are sick, all the time. Even Jesus could not do this (**Mat.13:58; Mk.6:5,6**). **Ex.** Once, when Jesus went near a hospital-type situation (Pool of Bethesda), He selected only one from among those sick or afflicted, and healed him (**Jn.5:2**). Yet, on many other occasions, when the crowds came to him, we are told that he healed them all.
- The fact that all are not healed does not, in any way, take away from the greatness of the ministry of healing. But there is one thing we must understand: When a person is used in the 'gifts of healing' - there will be healing.
- The question is often asked: 'Why gifts (plural) of healing?' Note: I can find no clear-cut Bible answer, but some have suggested: (1) It is because the 'gift' is manifested in many different ways, or, possibly, (2) it's that a person will be used in dealing with a certain form of sickness or disease more than another. (I do not support this theory.)
- Other purposes for the 'gifts of healing':
  - (1) They proved Jesus' claims to be the Son of God (**Lu.7:20-22**). Today, the gifts prove our claim to divine relationship with God.
  - (2) The 'gifts' in operation confirm the 'word' (**Acts 4:29,30,33**).
  - (3) The 'gifts' bring people within reach of the gospel. When multitudes followed Jesus (because of His healings), He took advantage of their presence to teach the 'word' (**Mat.4:23-25**).
  - (4) The operation of the 'gifts' brings glory to God (**Mk.2:12,13; Lu.18:43**).
- Biblical provisions for healing without the operation of the 'gifts':
  - (1) Call for the elders of the church to pray (**Ja.5:14**).
  - (2) In **Mark 16**, Jesus said that all believers may lay hands on the sick for healing.
- (5) **Working of Miracles (v.10)**. A 'miracle' is a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature. The 'gift' is 'the endowment of the Spirit for power over natural laws for a specific time and purpose'. **Ex.** In **Jos.10:12,13** - Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and it stood still in the midst of heaven. Note: This was a suspension of the laws of nature.
- Some Miracles in the Old Testament:
  - (A) Moses opened the Red Sea (**Exo.14:21,22**).
  - (B) Elijah called fire down from heaven (**I Kings.18:36-39**).
  - (C) Elisha divided the Jordan River, healed the water supply of Jericho with a cruise of salt, multiplied the widow's oil, raised from the dead the son of the Shunamite woman, pronounced a curse of leprosy upon Gehazi, and caused an iron ax-head to swim - all recorded in (II Kings).
- Some Miracles in the New Testament:
  - (A) Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding feast (**Jn.2:1-11**).
  - (B) Paul smote Elymas, the sorcerer, with blindness (**Acts 13:6-11**).
  - (C) Dorcus and Eutychus were raised from the dead by Peter and Paul, respectfully (**Acts 9:38-41; Acts 20:9,10**).

- (D) Jesus miraculously fed 5000; and on another occasion, 4000.
- Note: The church that fails to produce healings and miracles, as promised, fails to demonstrate the power of God to an unbelieving world. Too, nowhere in the Bible are we told that believers are to follow miracles. Yet, it does say, miracles will follow believers (**Mk.16**).
- (6) **Gift of Prophecy (v.10)**. The meaning of the Greek word used in the New Testament, translated 'prophecy', is 'divinely inspired and anointed utterance. It is totally supernatural. Note: Speaking in tongues is supernatural utterance in an unknown tongue; while prophecy is supernatural utterance in a known tongue. In manifestation, prophecy is identical to 'interpretation of tongues'.
- Prophecy may be exercised by all who are full of the Holy Ghost. 'For ye may all prophesy one by one' (**I Cor.14:31**). Note: The importance of this 'gift' is indicated by the fact that it is mentioned twenty-two times in chapters 11-14.
  - Mistaken ideas about the Gift of Prophecy:
    - (A) It is the same as the office of a prophet. Untrue. As mentioned, Paul said in **I Cor.14:31**, 'all may prophesy'. But in **Eph.4:8-12**, he tells us that '(Christ) 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 ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ'.
      - Note: Both the 'offices' and the 'spiritual manifestations' are called 'gifts', but the offices are the gift of Christ to the church, while the other is the gift of the Spirit to individual believers. **Ex.** In **Acts 21:8,9**, we are told that Philip 'had four daughters, virgins, which did prophecy'. Then, in **vs.10,11**, we read that 'there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus'. Philip's daughters were exercising the 'gift of prophecy', while Agabus had been given the office of a prophet. There is a vast difference.
    - (B) The gift of prophecy is given to foretell future events. Untrue. To prophesy is not to forth-tell, but to simply speak for another. If, in prophesying, some hidden truth is revealed, it is the 'gift of the word of knowledge' operating along with prophecy. **Ex.** When Mary visited her cousin, Elizabeth (Lu.1:46-55), she said 'from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed' (v.48). This was a 'word of knowledge' operating within the 'gift of prophecy'.
    - (C) The gift is for personal guidance. Untrue. The purpose of the gift is to edify and exhort (encourage) the church, and, to give comfort. Note: No spiritual gift is meant to take the place of common sense and good sound judgment.
    - (D) The gift is the same as preaching. Untrue. In Holy Ghost anointed preaching, the natural mind is anointed by the Spirit. In the manifestation of prophecy, the mind of the Spirit is speaking through the human speech organs.

- Paul's teaching concerning the Gift of Prophecy:
  - (A) It is speaking supernaturally to men (**I Cor.14:3**).
  - (B) It is given to edify, exhort, and comfort the church.
  - (C) It is given to convict unbelievers of sin (**I Cor.14:24,25**).
  - (D) Believers are to desire this gift, and to covet it (**I Cor.14:1,39**).
  - (E) It can never take the place of the written word.
  - (F) It must be judged (**I Cor.14:29**). Must harmonize with Scripture.
  - (G) It is not to be despised (**I Thes.5:20**).
  
- It's been said: it takes more faith to operate the 'gift of prophecy' than to operate the 'gift of tongues' because the natural human mind does not understand tongues. Yet, the human mind can understand prophecy. (It is spoken in the language of those present.) Oftentimes, a person's faith stumbles over this fact - fearing that his own thoughts might possibly get involved with what God is saying to the people.
  
- Sources of Prophecy:
  - (A) The Holy Spirit
  - (B) Man. Ezekiel said, 'Prophesying out of your own heart' (**Eze.13:2,3**). Jeremiah mentioned prophets who 'speak a vision of their own hearts and not of the mouth of the Lord' (**Jer.23:16**).
- Note: Oftentimes, the human spirit is confused with the Holy Spirit, and people do and say things of themselves - yet, attribute it to the Spirit of God. This brings unnecessary criticism, hinders the working of the Holy Spirit, and, at times, kills a service. (This doesn't mean the person is out of harmony with God, but, is surely in need of teaching.)
  - (C) Evil and lying Spirits (**Isa.8:19,20; I Kings 22:22**). Note: Inasmuch as prophecy can come forth both from the heart and mind of man, and, from evil spirits - believers are admonished to 'try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (**I Jn.4:1**).
  
- (7) Discerning of spirits. This gift gives supernatural understanding of the nature and activity of spirits. It enables one to distinguish between a spirit which is of God and one which is not of God. It is intended as a Divine safeguard against the church being deceived by false prophets. Remember, Satan is always trying to counterfeit the works of the Holy Spirit.
- Too, this gift is more limited than the three gifts previously mentioned (healing, miracles, prophecy). Revelation, as it relates to this gift, is limited to one subject: spirits. Yet, it is just as supernatural as all the other eight gifts.
  
- The gift demonstrated: In **Mk.7:32-35**, we read, 'And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him. . . Be opened. . . and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain'. Amen! This was plainly a case of healing. There is no evidence that a 'spirit' was binding the man.

- Yet, in **Mk.9:25,26**, we read: 'When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him'.
- Note: The 'discerning of spirits' made the difference in the manner in which Jesus dealt with those afflicted. The one deaf, with an impediment in his speech, was healed. The 'evil spirit' within the other was rebuked.
- What the Gift is not:
  - (A) It is not the 'gift of discernment', as it is so often entitled. No doubt, some have used this term when describing what is actually the 'word of knowledge', or, possibly, the 'word of wisdom'. It is for discerning 'spirits', and only that.
  - (B) It is not the ability to discover faults in others. (Man has proven that the Holy Ghost is not needed for such as that.) The 'good news' is: When a person is wholly sanctified, the fault-finding spirit is replaced with patience, kindness, and love.
  - (C) It is not that which the Apostle John speaks of in **I Jn.4:1**, when he said, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world'. \*\* This 'trying of spirits' is for all believers, not just for those filled with the Holy Ghost and used in the gift of 'discerning of spirits'.

#### (8) Divers kinds of tongues.

- The 'Gift of tongues' is the 'supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit' through a believer in a language which the believer has not learned.
  - On the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**) God did a 'new' thing. He gave 'tongues' as a sign of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. Until that time, the Holy Spirit had manifested Himself only through certain chosen vessels. But on that day, God filled and anointed all who would receive Him.
- \*\* The 'sign' of the Holy Ghost filling a person's life is the same today as it was then. Those who receive will still have the evidence of 'speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance'.

**Examples:** (1) When Cornelius (a Gentile) and his house (as recorded in **Acts 10:44-46**) were filled with the Holy Spirit - they spoke in tongues as the initial evidence.

(2) In **Acts 19:6**, we're told that when Paul laid his hands on some Ephesian brethren, 'the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied'.

(3) In the city of Samaria (**Acts 8**), there is no direct statement telling us that the believers spoke in tongues upon receiving the Holy Ghost baptism, but the evidence is very strong that it was their 'speaking in tongues' that attracted Simon's attention.

\*\* We must understand: The 'gift of tongues' (a message in tongues) is different from the 'evidence of tongues' (that which is manifested in the believer upon being baptized in the Holy Ghost). As far as its outward manifestation is concerned, it sounds the same. Both are supernatural utterances in an unknown tongue. But all who have had the 'initial evidence of speaking in tongues' (when filled with the Holy Ghost) do not necessarily exercise the 'gift of tongues'. In fact, most believers who have received the Holy Ghost baptism are never used

in the 'gift of tongues' - just as most such believers are never used in the 'gifts of healing' or 'working of miracles', etc.

- Note: There are those who believe that 'speaking in tongues' is not for today. They say the only reason believers spoke in the various tongues (languages) on the Day of Pentecost was so that those present (many in Jerusalem from different countries) could understand. But this is incorrect reasoning. It was not necessary that the many visitors to the city hear the believers speaking about 'the wonderful works of God in their own languages'. Most all Jews spoke the Aramaic dialect, which was the common language of the Hebrews at that time. In fact, when Peter addressed the crowd (**Acts 2:14-36**), it's believed that he spoke in the Aramaic - and all understood what he had to say.
- Some final thoughts concerning this 'gift':
  - (1) Speaking in tongues (not giving forth a message, but in personal edification) in Pentecostal circles, is often spoken of as 'devotional tongues'. Such is not to be interpreted. It is not a 'message'. Confusion comes when people think that any time someone speaks in tongues there must be an interpretation.
  - (2) Some teach, after receiving the Holy Ghost baptism (with initial evidence of speaking in tongues), a person can speak in tongues 'at will' (when they choose). (I disagree.) The 'gifts' are not operated at the will of man, but at the will of God. If operated at the will of man, it would be like saying, 'This man has the 'gifts of healing', therefore he can heal anyone he chooses, whenever he chooses. (The Bible doesn't teach such a doctrine.)
- Our responsibility is to 'earnestly desire' the manifestations of the Spirit, and to offer ourselves as channels through whom God can manifest Himself.
- (9) Interpretation of tongues - the supernatural 'showing forth' by the Spirit, through believers, of the meaning of the utterance in an unknown tongue (of a message in tongues). Note: This is not, necessarily, a 'translation' of the message - yet, it can be. It is, in actuality, a giving forth of the meaning of the message.

\*\* The 'gift of tongues' (giving a message in tongues) benefits the church, but only when accompanied by the 'gift of interpretation of tongues'. Too, the 'interpretation' will always be in the language of the people present. Together, they are equal to prophecy.

**V.11.** All of these 'manifestations' (gifts, out-shinings) are given by the Holy Spirit - apportioned to each one as He chooses.

**Vs.12.** Paul speaks of the 'church' as a body, having eyes, ears, hands, feet, tongue, etc., with each part having a specific function. The parts are different. Yet, in their differences, it is important that they work together. Paul was endeavoring to teach the Corinthians (and us) the need for all the gifts to be exercised, and, for each member of the body to respect the ministry of others.

**V.13.** A picture of the sinner coming to Christ for salvation. The baptism 'by one Spirit' is not speaking of 'water baptism' nor the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost'. It speaks of the person who repents of sins, believes in the resurrected Savior, and, is baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual transformation which takes place at conversion. The believer is now a 'new creature in Christ'.

\*\* The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the body of Christ at salvation. The 'minister' baptizes the believer in water (after conversion). And it is Jesus Christ who baptizes the believer in the Holy Ghost.

- And, remember, this enduement of power cannot be received into a person's heart and life until he has been pardoned and cleansed (saved and sanctified).

**Vs.14-27.** Every believer is important in the body of Christ. If a seemingly insignificant part of that body is taken away, the entire body becomes less effective. Too, for a believer to think his gift (place in the body) is more important than that of another - is 'spiritual pride'. Such will cause division in the church.

**Vs.28.** God placed leaders in the church for the primary purpose of bringing believers to maturity. Note: This is only a partial list of the 'ministry gifts' (**c.f. Rom.12:6-8; Eph.4:11-13**). It is not necessary, nor has God ordained it so, that all believers perform the same ministry. But it's important that every Christian minister. Each ministry is important, and all ministries contribute to the welfare and growth of the church.

**Vs.29,30.** Paul asks questions to help clarify what he had been endeavoring to teach concerning the 'gifts', etc. And all of his rhetorical questions have an implied negative answer, 'No'.

- All believers are not apostles; nor are they all prophets, or teachers, or workers of miracles. All are not used in the gifts of healing, or in giving messages in tongues, or in giving the interpretation of tongues.
- Note: When Paul asks, 'do all speak with tongues?', he was referring to the 'gift of tongues' (the giving of a message in tongues, which always requires an interpretation if it is to be a blessing or benefit to the church). He surely did not have in mind the 'speaking in tongues' as the initial evidence of the reception, or infilling of the Holy Ghost. Nor was he attempting to limit the use of tongues in prayer and praise, which are privately addressed to God.

**V.31.** 'Covet earnestly the best gifts'. Many have faltered here when trying to comprehend what Paul was actually saying. Too, some leaders have gone so far astray from Bible teaching as to designate certain individuals in the church to supposedly operate a certain spiritual gift at some particular time. (Such as that is unscriptural.)

- We don't do the choosing as to which 'gift' is best or needful for a certain time or occasion, nor do we determine who will be used of God in any particular gift. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. Only He, and Him alone, knows what is best for the occasion.
- 'yet shew I unto you a more excellent way'. Paul then gives us **chapter 13**, the 'love chapter'. He is not saying that 'love' is a better way to edify the church, but that these gifts (both spiritual and ministry) must be governed by love if they are to accomplish that for which they were intended

## Chapter 13

- This is a continuation of the discussion outlined in the previous chapter, having to do with 'spiritual gifts'. Here, the apostle emphasizes the importance of 'love' in the heart and life of the person who is to be used by God in the 'gifts of the Holy Ghost'.
- The chapter is divided into three parts: 'In **vs.1-3**, love is contrasted with other religious actions and attitudes ('it is love alone that counts'); in **vs.4-7**, love is described, mainly, in negative terms ('it is love alone that triumphs'); in **vs.8-13**, the theme of contrasts returns, and it is brought out that when other things perish, love persists, even into the eternal world ('it is love alone that endures' - Barth).

### V.1. Three statements often heard concerning 'spiritual gifts':

- (1) The 'gifts of the Spirit' are a possession of the individual. And, because of that, the individual can exercise his 'gift' at will (whenever he desires).
  - (2) A person, even when in a spiritually backslidden condition, can be used of God in exercising one of these 'spiritual gifts' (Dake).
  - (3) A person can be used of God in exercising a 'gift' without having the love of Christ in his heart. Note: I disagree with all three of these.
- Paul is not saying a person can be used in the 'Gift of tongues' without love. If such as that could be possible it would amount to nothing. It would be empty, and be without meaning - 'as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal'. It would neither profit nor delight.
  - Note: The 'gifts of the Spirit' are 'manifestations' (out-shinings) of the Holy Ghost, which now fills and floods the heart of the believer. And, remember: Only those filled with the Holy Ghost can be used in these 'gifts'. For God to allow otherwise would be utter confusion.

**V.2.** Without the love of Christ within; speaking in tongues, prophesying, having great knowledge, or, seemingly, accomplishing great works of faith - are of no spiritual value in the sight of God. Such manifestations are not of God, but of another spirit (**c.f. I Jn.4:1**).

**V.3.** If I should distribute all I possess for charity, and even give my body to be burned at the stake for the sake of the gospel, but have not the love of Christ - it avails me nothing. Note: If we leave charity out of religion, the most costly services will be of no avail to us.

### Vs.4-7. There are different kinds of love.

- (1) Strong affection arising out of kinship or personal ties. **Ex.** A mother for her child.
  - (2) Affection and tenderness experienced by husband and wife.
  - (3) Affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests. (Friendships)
  - (4) Agape - the love of God that has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (**Rom.5:5**).
- Remember: Love is more than just a good feeling. It is 'active'. It must be expressed. Jesus taught that upon it (Christlike love) hang all the law and the prophets (**Matt.22:40**). It is the fulfillment; of the law.



- Characteristics of Agape (Divine) Love:
  - (1) Patience - long suffering. It can endure evil, injury, and provocation without being filled with resentment or revenge. Notice v.7:
    - (a) Bears up under anything. There's nothing 'love' cannot face.
    - (b) Eager to believe the best.
    - (c) Always hopeful.
    - (d) Endures without limits. Note: It will put up with the slights and neglects of the person it loves, and wait long to see the kindly effects of waiting patiently.
  - (2) Kindness - love in action. Not inconsistent, or puffed up, or proud. Her heart is large, and her hand is open - ready to show favors and do good.
  - (3) Generosity - love in competition. It is not grieved at the good of others (their gifts, good qualities, honors, or estates). Not envious or jealous. 'The prosperity of those to whom we wish well can never grieve us; and the mind which is bent on doing good to all can never wish ill to any' (M. Henry).
  - (4) Humility - love in hiding. It subdues pride and vain-glory; and is never bloated with self-conceit. It is not apt to despise others, or trample on them, or treat them with contempt or scorn. It calms angry passions instead of raising them. Not on parade, nor lifting up 'self'.
  - (5) Courtesy - love in society. 'It does nothing out of place or time; but behaves towards all men as becomes their rank and ours, with reverence and respect to superiors, with kindness and condescension to inferiors, with courtesy and good-will towards all' (M. Henry). Always polite. Never rude.
  - (6) Unselfishness - love in essence. It's loving thy neighbor as thyself. It never seeks its own to the hurt of others. In fact, it often neglects its own for the sake of others. Never sour, or bitter.
  - (7) Good Tempered - love in disposition. It will never be angry without a cause. Never irritated or resentful. Anger cannot rest in the bosom where love reigns. Always remember: Where the fire of love is kept in, the flames of wrath will not easily kindle, nor long keep burning.
  - (8) Righteousness - love in conduct. Not apt to be jealous or suspicious. Never glad when others go wrong. It is the height of malice to take pleasure in the misery of another. Note: When truth triumphs, love rejoices.
  - (9) Sincerity - love in profession. Always just, joyful, and truthful. And when, in spite of reported truths, it cannot believe well of others, it will yet hope well. Is anchored in God, and hopes on.

**Vs.8-10.** Love is eternal; it will never come to an end. It's like the 'Word of God'; it will never pass away (**c.f. Matt.34:35**).

- Yet, Paul says, 'prophecies, tongues, and knowledge' will cease. They were given for the purpose of edifying the church on earth, and that, but for a time.
- This will take place at the end of this present age, 'when that which is perfect is come'. In heaven, they will be superseded.

- 'whether prophecies, they shall fail' - whether in the prediction of things to come, or in the interpretation of scripture by inspiration.
- Tongues shall cease, that is, the miraculous power of speaking languages never learned. Note: Dake believed that man, in eternity, will be able to speak in all the languages of all others of the universe. (I disagree.) I believe, in that day, we will all speak one language.
- Knowledge shall vanish away. Paul is not saying that the redeemed in that day will be unknowing. He is plainly speaking of miraculous gifts, a knowledge of mysteries supernaturally communicated. The apostle is here declaring that the 'grace of charity' is more valuable (since more durable) than supernatural gifts. Charity will last when they are gone; it shall enter into heaven, where they will have no place.
- Partial knowledge will be superseded by perfect knowledge. But, until then, we need the Holy Spirit and His 'gifts' in our churches. Note: The Bible doesn't teach, here, or elsewhere, that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, through His gifts, was to cease at the end of the first century era. Yet, it is still being taught by some.
- It is only 'that which is in part' that will be done away (come to an end). We now know 'bit by bit'; we learn only a part of anything; and, what we prophecy is incomplete. But when the time of fulfillment comes, it's then that the need for these 'special gifts' will no longer be needed.
- 'When that which is perfect is come'. Paul is not speaking of man having the 'completed Bible', as some teach, but of the glorified state of the redeemed. He tries to show how much better it will be with the church hereafter than it can be here. In that day, the church will be in the state of perfection, complete both in knowledge and holiness (**c.f. I Jn.3:2**).

**Vs.11,12.** The present state of the believer, even with the manifestation of the 'gifts', is a state of childhood. Yet, in the future, when all is made perfect, we are seen as having come into manhood. No longer will we 'speak', or 'understand', or 'think' as a child.

- There will be no need for the Gift of Tongues, or for any of the other 'gifts'.
- Things are dark and confusing now in comparison to what they will be hereafter.
- J.B. Philips said, 'At present, all I know is a little portion of the truth, but the time will come when I shall know it as fully as God now knows me'.
- Think about it: In that day, our knowledge will be complete and our insight, perfect. And not only that, but we will see Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) 'face to face'. We are going to see Him in His completeness, His splendor, and, in all His glory. Amen! What a Day That Will Be!!

**V.13. Three graces:** Faith, hope, charity.

- 'And now abideth'. When tongues, prophecy, miracles, and other manifestations of the Spirit have ceased, the above mentioned 'graces' (faith, hope, charity) will remain. God exalts Christlike character (true grace) more than ministry or the manifestation of spiritual gifts.
- Note: There are two schools of thought concerning 'faith' and 'hope'. (1) They will abide forever, just as will 'love'. (2) 'Faith' and 'hope' will cease, just as will the 'spiritual gifts', etc. (Calvin, and scores of others, believe this. (I disagree.)

- The 'greatest' in God's Kingdom will be those who are great in inward godliness and love to God - not, necessarily, those who are greatest in outward accomplishments.
- 'Love' is the highest characteristic of God! When writing his first epistle, the Apostle John said, 'God is love' (**I Jn.4:8**).

## Chapter 14

**This chapter outlines the 'tests' applied to 'tongues' and 'prophecy'.**

- V.1.** 'Follow after charity'. Pursue it. Make 'love' your aim. Obtain it, whatever the cost. Note: 'Love' is not mentioned among the gifts listed in **12:28** because it is not on the same footing (status). It belongs to a higher category. In fact, love is the standard by which the other gifts are judged.
- 'Desire (strive for) spiritual gifts'. Note: This charge applies to all Christians.
  - 'but rather (especially, chiefly) that ye may prophesy'. The apostle is comparing 'tongues' with 'prophecy'. He is not saying that 'speaking in tongues' is anything other than a good gift from God. It has its value.
- V.2.** 'For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men (those who cannot understand what is said), but unto God'. (God, himself, inspires the speaking in tongues, therefore, he understands it.)
- 'howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries'. Note: Those of the Corinthian church were exercising the gift of tongues, yet, with no interpretation. We must remember, that which cannot be understood can never edify. Therefore, Paul takes the remainder of the chapter to correct this practice by explaining the unprofitableness of tongues in public services without interpretation.
  - 'mysteries' - as to the results of speaking in tongues without an interpretation. Two different opinions: (1) Those things which neither the speaker nor hearer understands. (2) Secrets possibly revealed to the 'speaker', but unrevealed to others. (I agree with the latter.)
- Vs.3,4.** Prophecies are given for edification, exhortation, and comfort; all directed toward building up the body of Christ (the Church).
- He who speaks in tongues edifies (builds up) himself, but he who prophesies builds up the company of believers.
- Vs.5,6.** 'I would that ye all spake with tongues'. It's a good thing, a gift from God by which you may all be individually built up.
- 'but rather that ye prophesied', since by this means the entire body of believers will be built up. Note: Every gift of God is a favor from God, but those gifts that are the most valued are those that are most useful.
  - 'greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues'. Paul is not saying that the person who prophesies is more spiritual than he that speaketh in tongues; but 'greater' in the sense that he is used by God in a greater manner in building up the body of believers.
  - Paul is emphasizing, once again, that there is no benefit to the church if he speaks to them in tongues without an interpretation given that they might understand.
- Vs.7-9.** Even in the case of inanimate objects, such as musical instruments, unless they make a distinction between the sounds they produce, how will anyone know what is being played?

- If the trumpet does not sound a call that is distinct and clear, how shall the soldier prepare himself for battle?
- Therefore, in speaking, you must use a language that men can understand. If you fail in this, you will be pouring words into the empty air.

**Vs.10,11.** There are many kinds of voices (sounds, languages) in the world, and not one of them fails to convey meaning. But if I do not know (understand) the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him that speaketh. Note: The Greeks (and Romans) used the word 'barbarian' to denote anyone whose language, because they could not understand it (unintelligible), as sounding like mere babbling (gibberish).

**Vs.12-14.** So, since you have set your hearts on spiritual gifts, strive to excel (abound) in them for the building up (edifying) of the church.

- Therefore, if you speak in a strange language, pray that you may interpret.
- For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is inactive (unfruitful; contributing nothing to the process).

**Vs.15-17.** What then is my conclusion? I will both pray and sing with the spirit (in tongues) and with understanding. Note: The following is taken from the 'Full Life Study Bible'. 'Paul refers to his own experience, to his own private use of tongues unto God'. He says, 'I will pray with the spirit' (pray in tongues under the impulse of the Holy Spirit). The believer's spirit prays as the Holy Spirit gives the utterance. Paul is speaking here of the private use of tongues unto God, using tongues not only for praying, but also for singing, praising, and giving thanks unto God. To 'pray with the understanding' means to pray and praise with one's own mind in a learned language, also under the impulse of the Spirit'.

- The motive for all this is clear. Paul is thinking of the benefit to the church as a whole. Just as a Christian is not free to exercise his liberty in regard to idolatrous food without consideration for his brother (**c.f. 8:13; 10:29**), even so he is not free to act as he pleases in worship, but there too must consider the needs of others.

**Vs.18,19.** 'I speak with tongues more than ye all'. Some have taken this statement to mean that Paul spoke more learned languages than the Corinthians. Others teach that Paul was saying that he spoke with tongues, not only more than any single person among the Corinthians, but more than all together. (I disagree with both of these.)

- Paul is saying I speak in tongues more often than all of you. He considered speaking in tongues an important part of his spiritual life.
- But he goes on to say, 'in public worship I would much rather speak five words that people can understand and be helped by, than ten thousand words while speaking in tongues (in an unknown language)'.

**V.20.** 'Be not children in understanding'. Your tendency to overvalue glossolalia (tongues) shows you to be somewhat childish.

- 'Howbeit in malice (ill-will) be ye children. Note: Three stages of human growth are mentioned: (1) Infants who cannot yet speak, and who know nothing of sin, (2) Children beginning in school to receive their first instructions, and (3) Men of mature age and thought; men of growth and understanding. This verse means, 'Be not little school children in understanding. But in malice, be ye infants (those who cannot speak, and who know nothing of sin). In understanding, be men of maturity and growth'.
- Note: The Christian should always be childlike, but never childish (**c.f. 13:11**).

**Vs.21,22.** 'In the law it is written'. The 'law' here is used not for the Pentateuch alone, but for the Old Testament generally.

- 'I will speak to this people by men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers' (**c.f. Isa.28:11,12; Deut.28:49**).
- 'And yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord'. Paul is simply saying that when God speaks to men by means of strange tongues they will not listen - that is, they will not hear in obedience and faith. Therefore, tongues are ineffective as a means by which persons other than the speaker may be built up.

**Vs.23-25.** If an unbeliever visits a church where all are speaking in tongues (nothing going on but glossolalia), he will think they are mad (not that they were suffering from mental disease, but possessed). Note: 'The chief end of all gifts and worship services is to bring men to repentance and surrender to God' (Dake). Therefore, if an unbeliever cannot understand what is being said, the service, to him, is of no benefit.

- Tongues, without interpretation, fail to make clear the fundamental biblical truth that 'Jesus is Lord'. Note: On the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) it was altogether different. All the believers were speaking in tongues; yet, the many unbelieving Jews, visiting Jerusalem from the various nations of the world, understood what was being said. They were amazed, saying, 'we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God' (**c.f. Acts 2:6-11**).
- A question is raised: Was it the speaking in tongues of the believers, or the anointed preaching of Peter that brought conviction to the hearts of those visiting in the city? (No doubt, it was Peter's preaching (**Acts 2:37**)).
- Through the manifestation of the 'gift of prophecy' (words spoken supernaturally at the direction of the Holy Ghost in the language of the people), sin will be exposed, repentance called for, and sinners convicted. Remember: The supernatural manifestation of the 'gift of prophecy' and 'preaching' (even anointed preaching) are not one and the same.

**Vs.26-29.** Paul gives some final instructions as to the conduct of a church assembly, in which speaking with tongues and prophecy are prevalent.

- Whenever you assemble, let everyone be ready to contribute - whether a psalm (song of praise), a doctrine (a piece of teaching), a tongue (message in tongues), a revelation (a word of prophecy), an interpretation (of a communication made in a tongue). 'Let all things be done unto edifying' (to build up the church, making it strong in the faith).
- In the use of spiritual gifts there must be order and balance. (1) There is to be no more than two or three messages in tongues in any one service (or, possibly, in any one portion of a service). (2) Speaking in tongues must be done by one person at a time. (3) The messages

must be interpreted in order to be beneficial. (4) If no interpretation is forthcoming, we are told in **v.13** that the person giving the message in tongues is to pray that he may interpret.

- All prophecy is to be evaluated and weighed carefully as to what is said. Note: The word 'prophets', here in **v.29**, is not speaking of those holding the 'office of a prophet', but of those used of God in the supernatural 'gift of prophecy'. Remember: It is possible for spiritual gifts to be counterfeited by Satan. That's why they must be tested. The primary basis for judging prophecy is the written word of God, which is far more important than experiences or utterances.

**Vs.30-33. Guidelines concerning prophecies within the church setting.**

- Prophecy was not considered an irresistible impulse of the Spirit, for only one person was to give a prophecy at a time. Too, **v.30** does not mean that the one who is speaking is to be interrupted, but that after he has delivered his message another, if inspired to do so, might arise and address the audience. Taylor says, 'But if, while someone is prophesying, someone else receives a message or idea from the Lord he must not interrupt'.
- 'Ye may all prophesy'. Paul is not saying that all Christians necessarily will take part in the activity described as prophesying, only that all may do so (may be used in the 'gift of prophecy'). It is not man's decision. The decision lies wholly within the freedom of the Holy Spirit. And, remember, prophecy is a function (gift) rather than an office.
- 'The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets'. Notice the word 'spirits' is plural. They are under the control of the prophets. Therefore, a prophet could not plead, as some in Corinth were possibly doing, that he must speak because the Spirit compels him to do so. If there is a reason for him to be silent, he can be silent.
- If disorder appeared in the Corinthian assembly, it was caused by someone other than God. This is true, wherever. 'God is not the author of confusion'.

**Vs.34,35. Let your women keep silence in the churches**. It is clear from **11:5** that women can pray and prophesy in the church (apparently in public meetings). It is also clear in **Chs.12-14** that women have spiritual gifts, and they are encouraged to exercise them in the body of Christ.

- In the Corinthian culture women were not allowed to confront men in public. Yet, it seems as though some women who had become Christians thought their Christian freedom gave them the right to speak up in public worship and question the men. This was causing division in the church. It's likely that the women were raising questions in the worship service which could have more easily been answered at home without disturbing the service. Therefore, the purpose of Paul's words here was to promote unity, not to teach about women's role in the church.

**Vs.36-39.** What? did God's message to the world originate with you, or come only to you, that you should have rules and customs different from all other churches. If anyone claims to be inspired or a prophet, let him prove it by recognizing that this message I give to you has the Lord's authority. But if any man refuse this acknowledgement, let him refuse it at his peril.

**Vs.40,41.** Paul concludes with three commands.: (1) Covet to prophesy, (2) Forbid not to speak with tongues, and (3) Let everything be done in a proper and orderly way.

## Chapter 15

- Paul now comes to a new topic: **The coming of Christ and the first resurrection.**

**V.1.** 'I declare unto you the gospel'. In **vs.3,4** - Paul tells us, precisely, what the 'gospel' is: (1) Christ died for our sins, (2) He was buried, and, (3) He arose again the third day.

- Note: The gospel is 'good news', and is that which separates Christianity from all other religions.

**Vs.1,2.** Man has been given a Five-fold responsibility concerning the gospel:

- (1) It must be preached (**c.f. Rom.10:14,15**).
- (2) It must be received.
- (3) It must be believed from the heart (**c.f. Rom.10:9**).
- (4) It must be obeyed.
- (5) It must be kept in memory; held fast.

- Important note: Without believing the gospel, there is no salvation - 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek' (**Rom.1:16**).

**Vs.3,4.** 'According to the scriptures'. Everything was fulfilled just as the Old Testament prophets had foretold. Note: Scriptures were not fulfilled because they had been prophesied. It was the other way around. They were prophesied (foretold) because God is omniscient (all-knowing). He knows the future as well as the past.

**V.5.** Notice: Paul doesn't say that Cephas (Peter) was the first to see Jesus after His resurrection. Mary Magdalene had that distinction.

- The question is raised: Why do you suppose Paul doesn't mention Mary Magdalene? Was it because women were unimportant? (No. That's not the case at all.) The Lord's 'plan' was to train apostles to be His witnesses. They were the ones chosen to lay the foundation for His Church. And a requirement for this apostleship was that they had seen the resurrected Christ (**c.f. Acts 1:22**).
- Too, we don't know, exactly, when it was that Peter saw Christ on 'resurrection day', but we know it was sometime before Christ appeared to the two disciples, who were on their way to Emmaus that Sunday afternoon (**c.f. Lu.24:34**).
- 'then of the twelve'. Not only did Paul fail to mention the fact that Mary Magdalene had seen Jesus on resurrection day, but he omits the other women who saw Him (**c.f. Matt.28:9**), as well as the two Emmaus disciples - for the same reason - as mentioned in the paragraph above. Note: This is the only time Paul refers to the apostles as the 'twelve'.
- Too, why would Paul mention 'the twelve' as seeing the resurrected Christ when only ten of the disciples were present that Sunday evening? (The 'twelve', mentioned here, is the designation of 'an office'; the 'Apostolic Band'; witnesses who could prove the continuity between Jesus of Nazareth and the risen Lord.) **Ex.** The 'Class of 1968' met for their fiftieth reunion. That doesn't mean all members of the class were present.



- V.6.** We cannot be certain whether this appearance of the resurrected Christ took place in Jerusalem or in Galilee. Note: Some have suggested that this event should be identified with the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon the 120 on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**), who were quickly (after Peter's preaching) joined by thousands of new converts. (I disagree.) It's more likely that Paul is speaking of the occasion when Jesus met with the disciples on the mountain in Galilee (**Matt.26:32; 28:16,17**).
- Some of the 'above five hundred brethren', that were present on that day in Galilee, were still living when Paul wrote this 'letter' (AD59), as living testimonies of having seen the resurrected Christ. Amen! This shows that the 'resurrection' was not something done in a corner (**c.f. Acts 26:26**).
- V.7.** 'After that, he was seen of James'. Note: There are two schools of thought: (1) James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John. (2) James, the Lord's brother. He, like the rest of the Lord's brothers, did not believe in Christ as the promised Messiah before the 'crucifixion'. Yet, after the resurrection, we find him and the other brothers convinced that Jesus was Who He had claimed to be. An interesting note: In the 'Gospel of the Hebrews', it is alleged that James (the Lord's brother) made a vow that he would neither eat nor drink till he had seen Jesus risen from the dead, and that Jesus, appearing to him, said, 'My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from the dead'.
- V.8.** 'And last of all'. Undoubtedly, Paul is speaking of his meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road (**Acts 9:3-6**). He did not consider himself as one of the 'twelve'. They were direct witnesses and messengers of the risen Lord. Too, they helped to build the foundation of the church of Jesus Christ, the foundation that can never be altered (**c.f. Matt.16:18; Eph.2:20**). Therefore, it is believed that the twelve apostles, plus Paul, can have no successors.
- Paul saw himself as 'one born out of due time'. Note: The Greek term used here actually means 'before the due time', with Paul speaking of himself as being a member of the Israelie nation whose time to be born again had not yet come, nationally (future conversion of Israel).
- Vs.9-11.** Question: What did Paul mean by his statement, 'For I am the least of the apostles'?
- He had been an enemy of the Christian church. Therefore, in humility, he declares himself unworthy to be called an apostle (a chosen messenger). Too, he made no attempt to hide the truth of his past (**c.f. Eph.3:8**). Yet, he was used by God in a greater measure than any. Note: Paul's statement in **v.10**, 'I labored more abundantly than they all', is in no way a show of pride.
  - By God's grace Paul was not only truly a Christian but truly an apostle, which was demonstrated by his apostolic activities.
  - 'Whether it was I or they' (other apostles, as referred to in the list of resurrection appearances) that preached this gospel (that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead the third day) unto you, the wonderful part is - ye believed'.

**Vs.12-18. The importance of Christ's resurrection.**

- Paul mentions seven horrific outcomes if Christ is not risen:
  - (1) We have no guarantee of a resurrection for ourselves.
  - (2) Our preaching is in vain (without meaning).
  - (3) Our faith is vain.
  - (4) We are 'false witnesses', since we have preached such a doctrine.
  - (5) We are yet in our sins.
  - (6) All those who have died, as believers, are perished. Grave ends it all.
  - (7) We have no hope.
- In essence, Paul is saying: No resurrection, no salvation.

**V.19. Note:** There are various thoughts as to what Paul was actually saying here.

- (1) The Christian life would be miserable if we had no hope of a resurrection.
  - (2) 'If our hope in Christ were limited to this life only, we are of all men most pitiable' (Philips).
  - (3) 'If the hope we have of resting in Christ belongs to this world only, then we are unhappy beyond all other men' (Knox).
  - (4) 'If Christian life means simply hoping in Christ during this present life, Christians have lost both their present enjoyment of eternal life, and, the future to which they look' (Barrett).
- Remember: 'In Paul's day, Christianity often brought a person persecution, ostracism from family, and, in many cases, poverty. But most importantly, is the fact that if Christ had not been resurrected from death, Christians could not be forgiven for their sins and would have no hope of eternal life' (Life Application Bible). Therefore, 'if all that Christians give up and suffer is sacrificed to a delusion, they, in a sense, deserve most pity, because they have been most conspicuously befooled' (Pulpit Commentary).

**Appearances of Jesus during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension:**

- (1) Resurrection day: Mary Magdalene. Jerusalem (**Mk.16:9**).
- (2) " " Other women. Jerusalem (**Mt.28:9**).
- (3) " " Peter (**I Cor.15:5**). Time and place unknown.
- (4) " " Two disciples. Road to Emmaus (**Lu.24:15-31**).
- (5) " " Ten apostles (Thomas absent). Jerusalem (**Jn.20:19,24**).
- (6) Sunday following resurrection day: Eleven apostles (Thomas present). Jerusalem (**Jn.20:26-28**).
- (7) Time unknown: Seven disciples fishing. Sea of Galilee (**Jn.21:1-24**).
- (8) " " Eleven apostles. Mount in Galilee (**Matt.28:16,17**).
- (9) " " Five hundred brethren. Place unknown. (**I Cor.15:6**).
- (10) " " James. Place unknown. (**I Cor.15:7**).
- (11) Ascension Day: Eleven apostles. Mt. of Olives (**Acts 1:12**).
- (12) Date unknown: Saul (Paul). Road to Damascus. (**Acts 9:1-5; I Cor.15:8**). Note: It's believed that between **Acts 9: 22** and **9:23**, Paul went to Arabia (into the desert) and spent time with the risen Lord (**Gal.1:17**). The length of his stay is not certain.

**V.20.** 'But now is Christ risen'. Amen! Five wonderful words!

- 'and become the firstfruits of them that slept'. Note: Not only is Christ's resurrection a biblical truth, it is a historical fact; not 'mythic', or 'spiritual', or 'imaginary' - but an actual reality.
- Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead to enter into immortality with a glorified body.
- Note: 'First fruits' in Israel always anticipated a harvest. As the 'wave sheaf' (which was firstfruits of the harvest - **Lev.23:10**) is also a 'pledge' of the harvest, so Christ is the firstfruits and pledge of the resurrection for all mankind.
- 'firstfruits of them that slept'. 'Slept' is a term used of 'death'. This is not speaking of what is called by some, 'soul sleep', but is 'body sleep'. Only the body dies at physical death, and returns to dust from which it came. The soul and spirit are immortal (**Gen.2:7**).

**Vs.21,22.** 'For since it was through a man (Adam) that death resulted, it was also through a man (Christ Jesus) that the resurrection of the dead resulted' (Williams).

- 'Through the sin of Adam (**Gen.2:17; 3:6**) all men became mortal, because all derived from him the sinful nature (c.f. **figure 1, page 9**). Too, through the merit and resurrection of Christ shall all who are made to partake of the Spirit, and the spiritual nature, revive, and become immortal' (Matthew Henry Commentary).
- Note: Adam was a contrasting type of Christ. (1) The first man Adam was made a 'living soul' (**Gen.2:7**), having derived life from another, that is, God. The last Adam (Christ) was a living 'spirit'. He did not derive life; He was Himself the fountain of life; and He gave that life to others. (2) In origin, the first man was of the earth, earthy; the Second Man is the Lord from heaven. (3) Each is the head of a creation. In Adam, all die; in Christ, all will be made alive. (4) The Adamic creation is 'flesh'; the new creation, 'spirit' (Scofield). But, remember: Paul is not teaching that all will be saved, as some would have us believe.

**V.23.** 'Every man in his own order'. Everyone is not going to be resurrected and raptured at the same time. Note: There will be more than one 'catching away'. In fact, some believe there will be as many as seven raptures in the First Resurrection.

- **The order of the resurrections:**
  - (1) Christ
  - (2) Old Testament saints (**Matt.27:52,53; Eph.4:8-10**)
  - (3) They that are Christ's at his coming (**23**), which includes all born-again believers, dead or alive. Not one will be left behind.
  - (4) 144,000 Jews saved in the first half of the seven-year 'tribulation' (**Rev.12:5; 14:1**).
  - (5) The 'two witnesses' (**Rev.11:3-12**). Note: Some believe they will be caught up soon after the Antichrist comes to power in the midst of the tribulation; while others believe it will be at the very end of the 7-year tribulation.
  - (6) Great multitude of tribulation saints, saved after the rapture of the church.
  - (7) The unrighteous dead (**Rev.20:5,12,13**)

**Vs.24-28.** 'Then' - speaks of the end of the Millennium (of the 1000 years of peace on earth).

- 'During this time Christ will put down all rebellion, and will then deliver the kingdom to God that He may be 'all in all' as before rebellion started' (Dake).
- When Paul says that the Son is subject to the Father, he is not speaking of the Son in terms of 'essence', but in terms of 'function', or 'ministry', as the incarnate Son. Both 'God the Father' and 'God the Son' have special roles. Christ is in no way inferior to the Father, but his role is to 'defeat all evil on earth'. First, he defeated sin and death through his substitutionary death on the cross, burial, and resurrection; then, in the final days, he will defeat Satan and all evil.
- God is in control, in spite of how things might sometimes seem. He allows evil to remain, for now, until Jesus returns to earth at the end of this 'age'. Then, when the 'Millennial Reign of Christ' is ended, and the judgment of the 'Great White Throne' is completed, he will present to God the Father a world without sin.

**V.29.** Question: Is Paul sanctioning the ritual of baptizing in water for the dead? (No)

- Three thoughts:
  - (1) Some believers of that day were being baptized on behalf of those who had died without being baptized. They believed in the resurrection, so were baptized for others who had died, thinking this would secure them a place in the resurrection.
  - (2) Others teach that these were 'new converts' being baptized, taking their places in the body of Christ (church), filling the vacancy left by Christians who had died.
  - (3) I'm convinced that Paul is showing the inconsistency of false teachers. They denied the doctrine of the resurrection, yet, at the same time, had accepted the fallacy of baptism for the dead.
- Note: This is the only scripture in the Bible that mentions such baptism. Remember: The Corinthians had several errors and heresies in their worship and doctrine. This is one of them.
- Water baptism doesn't save anyone living; and it surely has no power to save someone dead. Salvation is a personal matter, and cannot be obtained by proxy.

**Vs.30-32.** Remember: This entire chapter refers to the death and resurrection of the body.

- 'I die daily'. Paul is not speaking of a daily dying out to sin (spiritual death), as is taught by some, but is saying, in essence, 'I risk my life every day for the cause of Christ'.
- If there is no resurrection, there is surely no sense in suffering persecution for Christ'.

**Vs.33,34.** An Exhortation to Holy Living in view of the Resurrection.

- 'Evil communications corrupt good manners'. Evil is contagious. Bad company is the ruin of a person's good character.
- 'Awake to righteousness, and sin not'. Awake to the need of going on to holiness and holy living. Note: It is possible for Christians to go to sleep, spiritually. That was not only true in Paul's day, but is surely true in our generation - due to the failure to pray, to read and study the Bible, to faithfully attend church, to tithe, etc.

- When writing to believers in Rome, Paul said, 'And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep" for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed' (**Rom.13:11**).
- 'For some have not the knowledge of God'. Those who held the view that there was no resurrection were literally 'ignorant of God'
- 'I speak this to your shame'. 'I say this to make you feel ashamed' (Beck), or, 'You should be ashamed that I have to write like this at all' (Philips).

#### **Vs.35-50. Method of Resurrection, and, What our bodies will be like.**

- The resurrection of the body was difficult for the Sadducees and Gentiles to comprehend. Therefore, Paul uses natural analogies to show that the resurrected body will be a glorified body, yet, still having its own individual personalities.

**Vs.36-38.** A 'grain of wheat' is used to illustrate the resurrection.

- (1) Plant the seed (grain of wheat).
- (2) Seed must die in order to produce new bodies of grain.
- (3) Bodies of grain that die are not the same bodies as those produced, but are like them. There is no difference in appearance between the original and reproduced grain.

#### **Vs.39-44. Nature of resurrected bodies.**

- 'All flesh is not the same flesh' - Some 'celestial' (heavenly) and some 'terrestrial' (that which pertains to the earth). The resurrection body is related to the earthly body in the same sense that the plant is related to the seed, yet different. Note: All resurrected bodies will be immortal, but they will possess different degrees of glory (splendor).
- 'It is sown in corruption' (a perishable body); 'Raised a spiritual body' (not subjected to earthly conditions).
- 'It is sown in dishonor' - a body of shame and humiliation; made from the dust of the earth, and subject to sickness and death. 'Raised in glory' - in splendor and beauty.
- 'It is sown in weakness: it is raised in power' - feeble and dying when planted; but raised in strength and power. Note: Our spiritual bodies will be above, and not limited to, the laws of nature.
- The Apostle John said it well: 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is' (**I Jn.3:2**).

#### **Vs.45-49. Contrasts between Adam and Christ.**

- 'The first man Adam was made a living soul (**Gen.2:7**); the last Adam (Christ, the Messiah) a quickening spirit'. Note: The words 'was made', concerning Christ, are not in the original. Christ is a quickening (life-giving) spirit. 'The Son quickeneth whom he will' (**Jn.5:21b**).
- Observe, it was not the 'spiritual' body that came first, but the 'natural'(physical).
- The first man (Adam) was made of earthly clay; the second man (Christ) is from heaven.
- The nature of the man made of clay is repeated in all men - all made of clay; and those heavenly-minded (born-again) are like the One from heaven.

- Just as we have reflected the likeness of him who was made of clay, so shall we be made in the likeness of the heavenly man.

**V.50.** It is utterly impossible for flesh and blood (physical bodies) to possess the kingdom of God; nor can the perishable inherit the imperishable. Note: A body liable to corruption, with all its sickness, disease, and suffering, cannot share with that which is imperishable. It cannot enter into the 'inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away' (**I Pet.1:4**). A 'change' is mandatory (necessary) for man to realize the promised blessings.

**Vs.51-53.** 'I shew you a mystery (a previously hidden truth); We shall not all sleep' (experience physical death). Undoubtedly, Paul expected the Lord's return to be soon - likely, during his lifetime.

- The mystery Paul speaks of is the 'truth' that when Jesus returns from heaven for his church (rapture), those believers who are alive will have their bodies transformed - made imperishable and immortal.
- 'In a moment (an indivisible unit of time), in the twinkling of an eye'. This expresses the suddenness with which the 'catching away' will take place. It could happen at any moment, maybe today. Note: The all-important question is: Are you ready?
- 'Last trump'. Four schools of thought. (1) It is the seventh and final 'trumpet judgment' of Revelation (taught by post-tribulationists). (2) It is not the last of a series of soundings (such as the seven in Revelation). (3) Dake: 'At the first trumpet the righteous dead will be raised to immortality. At the second (or last trumpet) the living saints will be changed to immortality and be caught up with the dead to meet the Lord in the air' (**I Th.4:16,17**). (4) In Old Testament times, there were different 'trumpet soundings' for the Children of Israel (assemble, prepare for war, go forward, etc.). This sounding is the 'trumpet call' that signals the 'end' of the church age. (I agree.) Note: Paul doesn't tell us 'who' is to blow the trumpet, but it is likely to be an angel or archangel.
- 'We shall be changed'. Not only will the 'dead in Christ' be raised incorruptible, but those alive 'in Christ' at that time (catching away) will put on incorruption and immortality.

#### **Vs.54-57. Final Victory over Death.**

- Paul places himself, as it were, at the time of the 'end'. He mocks death as already defeated, and no longer able to administer its old sting. Note: Death is the last enemy to be overthrown (**15:26**); and the moment for its defeat has not yet come. It still prevails, and it still has a sting, a sting which has behind it a force which is more potent because it is an agent of God himself.
- Death is not just a natural phenomenon, but a punishment, an evil that need not exist, and would not exist if man were not in rebellion against his Creator. Yet, for those in Christ, death is no longer a source of dread or fear. When Jesus arose from the grave, He took the sting out of death for all believers. He said to John (**Rev.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'. Aren't you glad it's Jesus Who holds the 'keys'?

**V.58.** (1) 'Be ye stedfast' - settled firmly in Bible doctrine, in truth of the resurrection, and, of victory in Jesus. (2) 'Unmovable'. Let nothing shake your faith or move you away from this hope of the gospel. (3) 'Always abounding in the work of the Lord'. There may be times we hesitate to do good because we don't see immediate results. But don't allow discouragement over an apparent lack of results keep you from working for the Lord **(Gal.6:9)**. Be faithful.

## Chapter 16

- Paul wrote quite a letter! He endeavored to answer the many questions received from believers of the Corinthian church, subjects such as:
  - (1) Divisions among Christians - which were a hindrance to the work of God;
  - (2) Differences between 'natural man', 'babe in Christ', and the 'spiritual man' - showing how carnality prevents spiritual growth (**c.f. figures, p.9**);
  - (3) Immorality rebuked - with steps outlined to be taken by the church in dealing with one of its members guilty of such sin;
  - (4) Marriage and divorce;
  - (5) Meats, and the limitation of Christian liberty;
  - (6) Disorders at the Lord's table rebuked - and importance of brotherly love;
  - (7) Spiritual gifts in the body of Christ; and,
  - (8) The 'resurrection' and 'catching away' of those in Christ.
- The Apostle **now comes** to his closing commendations and greetings.

**Vs.1-4.** 'Now concerning the collection for the saints'. The 'saints' mentioned here are the poor Christians at Jerusalem (**Rom.15:26**). They were suffering from persecution, poverty, and famine. Therefore, Paul was collecting a love-offering for them. Note: It is probable that the Corinthians had heard (possibly from the Galatians) of the collection Paul was organizing, and had consented to join the other churches in giving.

- Collections were to be received on the first day of the week (Sunday), the day all early Christians observed as their day for rest and worship.
- 'Every one of you'. All were encouraged to participate. Note: If every professing Christian would be faithful to tithe and give offerings (as God has prospered them), there would be an abundant sufficiency to take the 'gospel' to the four corners of the globe. 'God loveth a cheerful giver' (**II Cor.9:7**).
- If all believers of Corinth would do this, there would be no need for a hurried 'special offering' when Paul arrived.
- Whomsoever ye approve to take your 'gift' to Jerusalem, these I will send with letters of introduction and commendation. Note: Saints, recommended by churches, were approved by letters to other churches.
- If the collection is substantial, and it seems advisable that I go as well, we will all go together. Note: It turned out that the amount given was substantial, and Paul accompanied the Corinthian delegates to Jerusalem (**Rom.15:25,26**).

**Vs.5-12.** Paul outlines some of his future plan.

- He was writing this letter while at Ephesus, and expected to stay there until 'Pentecost'. Afterwards, he intended to visit Macedonia, stop back by Corinth upon his return, and, possibly, spend the winter with them - 'If the Lord permit' (if it is God's will). Note: That's always a good policy when having no direct word from the Lord concerning a matter (**c.f. Ja.4:15**).



**V.9.** A promising opportunity for winning souls to Christ has opened to me here in Ephesus. Yet, at the same time, 'there are many adversaries'. Note: That is always the case. (1) Peter said, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour' (I Pe.5:8). (2) Jesus, when giving His discourse on the Good Shepherd (**Jn.10:10**), said, 'The thief (adversary) cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy'. (Satan doesn't give up easily.) But the 'good news' is found in the last words of verse 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might it more abundantly'. Amen!

**Vs.10,11.** At this time Timothy (Paul's close friend and fellow-worker) was traveling through Macedonia, and Paul was sure that he would soon be reaching Corinth. Too, since Timothy was young, Paul exhorts them to welcome him, because he is devoted to the Lord's work, just as I am.

**V.12.** Evidently, in their letter to Paul, the Corinthians had requested that Apollos be sent to them to minister. Paul says, I have repeatedly urged him to accompany the brethren who are coming to you, but he feels it is not yet God's time. He will come, however, when it is more convenient.

**Vs.13,14.** Paul directs Corinthians (and all Christians) to do 'six things':

- (1) 'Watch'. Be alert to spiritual dangers. Be wide awake. Be continually on guard (**c.f. Mk.13:35-37**).
- (2) 'Stand fast in the faith'. Let nothing divide you, giving Satan opportunity to defeat you. Be firm in your convictions. Be unmovable (**c.f. Gal.5:1; Phil.1:27**).
- (3) 'Quit you like men'. Be courageous. Note: Paul views the Christian life as being in the arena, with faith, conviction, and courage the essential ingredients for success and victory.
- (4) 'Be strong'. Be a man! Have a backbone! Lead in the fight against Satan and evil! Note: One writer said, 'Either die in the contest - or win'. Another said, 'There is no substitute for victory'.
- (5) 'Do all things in love' (I Cor.13).
- (6) 'Submit one to another' (v.16). Note: Seemingly, this is one of the most difficult things for some to do. Yet, it is one of the most blessed - not only for husbands and wives, but for all believers (**Eph.5:21**).

**Vs.15-19.** 'The house of Stephanas' was the first family to receive Christ in Paul's ministry in Achaia, and had devoted themselves to the service of God's people.

- Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus were members of the Corinthian assembly who ministered to Paul's needs during his three-year stay in Ephesus - a tremendous help. Note: All three had Latin names. Yet, that's not surprising, since the city of Corinth was largely populated by those of the Roman empire.
- Aquilla and Priscilla' send their special Christian greetings, along with the congregation that meets in their house.

**Vs.20-24.** To greet one another with a holy kiss was an expression of mutual affection and friendship, a show of putting away anything that may divide, and, a uniting in the bonds of love.

- Note: Philips, Taylor, and others omit the word 'kiss', saying, instead, 'Give each other a handshake when you meet as a sign of Christian love'.
- When the Apostle says, 'The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand', he is not referring to the entire epistle, but just the 'salutation'. Ordinarily, there would be someone to whom he could dictate his letters, and then, would write the salutation with his own hand to authenticate it (**c.f. Col.4:18; II Thes.3:17**).
- 'Anathema' - 'devoted to destruction', 'accursed'. Note: Many Jews, as well as heathen Gentiles, had delighted in calling Jesus, the Christ of glory, accursed. Now Paul says, 'Let the person who does not love the Lord be accursed.'
- 'Maranatha' - 'our Lord cometh'. Note: The word 'Maranatha' is actually two words in the Aramaic - 'Maran' and 'atha'. And they express one of two possible ideas. (1) They could mean 'our Lord is come', signifying the 'incarnation'. Or, (2) they may mean 'our Lord cometh', signifying the 'Second Coming'. Note: I tend to think it is the latter. It is a lot like Paul's words to Titus, when he said, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ' (**Titus 2:13**); or John's final remarks in Revelation: 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus' (**Rev.22:20**).
- 'May God's love and favor rest upon you. My love to all of you who are in union with Christ Jesus'.