

mandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, **27** to the only wise God *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

saving grace of God that was revealed on the cross. If men seek to establish their own systems of salvation, they are at the same time seeking glory for themselves. If one is saved by meritorious deeds or works of law, then all glory cannot be given to God for our salvation.

The fact that salvation is by the grace of God assumes that all glory must be given to Him for our salvation. No greater statement could have been made by the inspired writer to conclude such a letter as Romans. Grace gives glory to God.

## Paul's Letter Of 1 Corinthians

### Author

The apostle Paul was the author of this letter. He identified himself as the author in 1:1 and 16:21 (See "Author" in introduction to Rm). With the aid of Aquila and Priscilla, Paul established the church in Corinth, and thus, writes to correct some problems of behavior and belief in these developing disciples (See At 18:1-3). Throughout the centuries there has been little question concerning Paul's authorship of both 1 and 2 Corinthians. The church of the second century accepted the Pauline authorship of the letter, and thus, there is today no reason to doubt the fact that he actually wrote both letters.

### Date

In 16:8 Paul wrote, "*But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.*" When Paul left Corinth in At 18 on his second missionary journey after establishing the Corinthian church with Aquila and Priscilla, he did not tarry in Ephesus. He stayed in Ephesus only a short time before going on to Jerusalem (At 18:19-23). Therefore, we would not conclude that the statement of 16:8 was written from Ephesus on the At 18 visit of the second missionary journey.

The only other time Paul was in Ephesus when he could have written this letter was on his third missionary journey. The 16:8 statement, therefore, was made on his visit to Ephesus on his third missionary journey. It was made in view of the fact that he was on his way to Corinth, both to finalize the correction of specific problems among the disciples (4:14-21), as well as to pick up the special contribution they were making for the famine victims of Judea (16:1-4). He tarried in Ephesus because of a great opportunity for evangelism that opened up to him, which opportunity probably referred to his teaching in the school of Tyrannus for two years wherein all Asia heard the gospel (16:9; At 19:8-10). The date of the writing from Ephesus would thus be around A.D. 53,54. It would have been a year or two later that he wrote the second letter.

### Historical Background

Corinth was located on the isthmus that connects Peloponnesus with the mainland of Achaia. The city of Corinth was the political capital of the province of Achaia (At 18:12). It was a Roman colony, and thus a center of trade because of its location. Its residents consisted of Jews who had migrated there for trade. Romans lived there who had come for political and military reasons. Greeks also lived in Corinth who had moved there from the countryside of Achaia. Therefore, the city was a center of great economic wealth and trade.

Corinth was also a religious center. The temple of Aphrodite was located in the city. At one time in the history of the Aphrodite temple worship, the temple itself housed around one thousand priestesses or temple prostitutes. Fornication, therefore, was a part of the temple worship. As a result, the religious fornication of the priestesses played a significant part of the sociological behavior of the Corinthians. Since fornication was an accepted religious practice, it was thus an accepted sociological practice among the Corinthians.

It is often assumed that the church in Corinth was established by Paul, Aquila and Priscilla on Paul's second missionary journey. We must keep in mind that Aquila and Priscilla had just come to the city when Paul arrived (At 18:1-3). We do not know if they were Christians when Paul arrived. If they were, then they as disciples existed in the city before Paul arrived. In this letter, however, Paul

at least claims to have baptized almost everyone to whom he writes. It was around A.D. 51 when he came to the city on this journey after leaving Macedonia (At 18). He stayed for a year and a half (At 18:11,18). Throughout his stay in Corinth, he supported himself with Aquila and Priscilla in the making of tents (See comments At 18:1-3).

Some have assumed that he first wrote a letter to the Corinthian disciples shortly after his first visit and establishment of the church. It is assumed that this is the letter about which he refers in 5:9. We do not know specifically what happened to this letter. It could have been lost or its contents may have been incorporated within the contents of the letter to which we now refer to as 1 Corinthians. While he was in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, he stayed for two years (At 19:8-10). It was possibly around the end of this stay in A.D. 54 or 55 that he wrote 1 Corinthians. Later on his third journey in A.D. 56 or 57, he wrote a third letter which is referred to as 2 Corinthians. Since we have only the documents of 1 and 2 Corinthians, therefore, some Bible students feel that the contents of the first letter were actually grafted into either 1 or 2 Corinthians.

### Theme

The theme of the letter surrounds the concept of the effect the gospel should have on the life of those who believe and obey it. The grace of God that was revealed through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus should touch the innermost behavioral principles by which every man should direct his life (See comments 15:1-4,10). It was his personal response to the gospel that led to the abundance of his life in preaching the gospel (15:10). He thus expects the Corinthians to respond in like manner. Therefore, Paul does not view the gospel as simply a historical event to believe or an intellectual acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God. He expects that the gospel be the motivating power by which one's life is controlled and directed (See Ph 1:27).

### Purpose

This is the most problematic church that is discussed in the New Testament. Paul had received reports concerning their sectarian attitudes that encouraged them to denominate into different groups. He had learned of their immoral practices and confusion over miraculous gifts that resulted from their arrogant attitudes. He had heard of their problems concerning sexual immorality. He had heard that some denied the resurrection. A host of problems had infiltrated this church, and thus, the Holy Spirit through Paul sought to leave for posterity this inspired manual for the correction of typical church problems that in one way or another seems to plague infant churches throughout the world. Paul thus wrote this document on church behavior in order to correct doctrinal problems and the behavioral practices that invariably result from erroneous beliefs. Some in the Corinthian church had asked questions of Paul concerning what was happening in the church. Paul answered their questions, and thus, gives us a document by which to answer some of the most common problems that destroy the Christian fellowship of any church.

In dealing with the problems of the Corinthian church, Paul developed his letter around sections of inspired answers that were meant to direct the behavior of the members of the church. The letter can be outlined according to his instructions. (1) He first dealt with the sectarian attitudes of the church that were dividing them after different personalities (1:1 - 4:21). (2) He then approached the immoral problems that prevailed among the members (5:1 - 6:20). (3) He instructed them concerning the responsibilities of the husband and wife in their relationship in the bond of marriage (7:1-40). (4) He then corrected concepts they had concerning the liberty that Christians have in Christ with reference to their relationship as brothers and sisters in Christ (8:1 - 11:1). (5) He gave instruction concerning the purpose and atmosphere of fellowship that must be maintained when they come together in the assembly (11:2-34). (6) He corrected problems related to the use of miraculous gifts in order to fulfill their purpose in the early church (12:1-14:40). (7) He corrected an attack against the fundamental doctrine of the bodily resurrection (15:1-58). (8) He concluded with a discussion concerning contributions for the famine victims of Judea and his future plans (16:1-24).

Throughout all these instructions, Paul leaves us with a document by which we learn the Holy Spirit's direction for godly living in societies throughout the world in every century that have given themselves over to ungodliness. 1 Corinthians was written only a few years after the establishment of the church in the early 50s. The disciples were only five or six years old in the faith when these instructions were given. The writing of the letter, therefore, helps us understand what God expects from Christians concerning their spiritual growth within five to six years after conversion. We study this letter in order to determine the responsibility God places on each disciple concerning spiritual growth and leadership in the church. If spiritual growth does not occur, then one is not a candidate for heaven. Spiritual growth is the sign of a submissive heart to the will of God. All those who will transition into heavenly dwelling must have a submissive heart.

## Chapter 1

1 ¶ Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,  
 2 to the church of God that is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their *Lord* and ours.  
 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
 4 ¶ I thank my God always for you for the

grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,  
 5 that in everything you were enriched by Him, in all speech and *in* all knowledge,  
 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,  
 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 8 who will also confirm you to the end *so that you will be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 9 God *is* faithful, through whom you were

## Chapter 1

### GREETINGS

1 **Called to be an apostle:** Paul was personally called by Jesus, and thus, he qualifies as a Christ-sent apostle (See At 9:1-6; see comments Gl 1:1). He had all the authority as the other Christ-sent apostles, which authority is important in reference to his corrections for the problems in the Corinthian church. He writes with the authority of a Christ-sent apostle. **Will of God:** Paul was chosen to be an apostle for a specific purpose (At 9:15,16; 2 Co 1:1). **Sosthenes:** Sosthenes is possibly Paul's stenographer. He is thus the one who writes the letter for Paul.

2 **The church of God:** This is the community of believers who belong to God in the city of Corinth. It is significant to notice that this reference to the church should be understood in the context of the division that prevailed in the church in Corinth (vss 10-13). Though they were divided among themselves over issues of personalities, Paul still referred to them as the one church of God. It is also essential to understand that disciples in Corinth were meeting throughout the city and area around Corinth in the homes of the members. This is the historical setting of the epistle, and thus helps us to better understand the instructions that Paul gives in this letter. **Sanctified:** Every member of the church has been immersed for the remission of sins (At 2:38; 22:16). The church is thus in Christ (Rm 6:3) and of God. Because the church is of God, it is cleansed by the blood of Jesus (At 20:28; Hb 2:11; Jd 1). **Saints:** Because the church is sanctified, every member is a saint (Rm 1:7; Ep 4:1; 1 Th 2:12; 1 Pt 2:5,9). The term "saint" refers to those who are living, and thus, they are living the saintly life in the midst of unbelievers in the world. **In every place:** Not only is this letter directed to the saints who lived in Corinth at the time of writing, it is directed to all Christians throughout the world in all time. Though Corinth had some unique problems, the Holy Spirit addressed the one universal church in order to deal with the church as a whole throughout the world. The disciples who lived in Corinth were members of the same church that existed in all the world. 3 **Grace:** God's acceptance of the Corinthian saints in view of their prideful and divisive attitudes exemplifies the grace of God toward His flock (See Rm 1:7). God accepted them, though they were struggling with divisive attitudes to accept one another (Compare comments Rm 14:1,2; Ph 4:2,3). They were still part of the universal church of

God. Though Paul will pronounce some judgments upon this church, he is patient with them until they correct some sinful practices and beliefs among themselves.

### THANKSGIVING

4 **Thank my God:** God's grace had been extended to the saints in Corinth through Jesus (Rm 1:8; Ti 2:11). Every evangelist thus thanks God for the fruit of his labors, for it is God who extends His grace to those who obediently respond to the gospel (Compare Rm 6:3-6). 5 **You were enriched:** Their lives were enhanced by their obedience to the gospel (See comments Jn 10:10). Their lives were enhanced by the miraculous gifts that came into their use by the laying on of Paul's hands (See comments At 8:18). Through the gift of prophecy they preached and taught the word of God that was revealed to them. 6 **Confirmed in you:** When Paul first came to them, the preaching of the gospel was confirmed by miraculous works from God (See comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4; 2 Co 12:12). The truth was thus established in their minds because they witnessed the power of God working through Paul. 7,8 **Behind in no gift:** Not only was the word of Paul confirmed by the miracles of God, it was also confirmed in them through their possession of miraculous gifts that came from the laying on of Paul's hands (12:8-12; At 8:18; 2 Co 12:13). They personally witnessed the work of God in their lives, and thus, were confident that God was working through them (See comments Hb 6:4-6). Their problem, therefore, did not center around a lack of faith, but a misguided use of miraculous gifts that was based upon pride and sectarian attitudes within the church. **Waiting:** Reference here could be to the end of time, which end should be desirous of Christians as Peter proclaimed. "But we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pt 3:13). Christians are to be "looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Pt 3:12; Ti 2:13-15; see Rm 8:19,23; Ph 3:20; compare 1 Th 3:13). However, in view of the phrase "to the end" in verse 8, reference here may be to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The destruction of Jerusalem was the fulfillment of the prophecies of Jesus (See comments Mt 24), and thus, was another confirming work of God to manifest that Jesus was sent from Him (Jn 3:2). The destruction of Jerusalem, therefore, was God's proof that He had established Christ and Christianity over Judaism. **Blameless:** The word here refers to one who is without accusation. They would be without accusation

called into fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**10 ¶** Now I urge you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions

among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

**11** For it has been revealed to me concerning you, my brethren, by those *of the household*

because they stood justified through the blood of Jesus (See Ph 1:6; Cl 1:22; 2:7). **Day of our Lord:** This is taken from Old Testament prophetic language wherein the day of the Lord was a time of the Lord's judgments on Israel and the surrounding nations. In this context, the destruction of Jerusalem would be a day of the Lord in time in God's judgment again on Israel. However, reference could also be to the final day of the Lord at the end of time (2 Th 1:10; 2 Tm 4:8). **9 God is faithful:** God will bring about that which He has promised (10:13; Dt 7:9; Is 49:7; 2 Co 1:18; 1 Th 5:24; 2 Th 3:3). **Fellowship of His Son:** Because of the Corinthians' obedience to the gospel, they came into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (See 15:1-4; Rm 6:3-6). Their immersion into Christ brought them into an eternal relationship with God (See comments Mt 28:19,20). They were thus partakers of the divine nature through Jesus (See Jn 15:1-8).

#### SECTARIAN ATTITUDES

The following verses portray the sectarian attitudes and denominational actions that began to settle into the church in Corinth. Therefore, it is necessary for every Christian to be able to identify what was happening in the Corinthian church in order to guard against divisive practices. It is important to understand how sectarian attitudes and denominational practices begin to splinter disciples into different groups. Though the Corinthian church's state of division at the time of Paul's writing had not developed to the point where the disciples were meeting in groups which had no fellowship with one another, it was certainly moving in this direction. Therefore, we must view the epistle of 1 Corinthians as Paul's attempt to stop the dividing of the disciples into denominational groups. Because they were meeting in different houses throughout the city, Paul wanted every disciple to feel a part of the whole church in Corinth and throughout the world.

**10 I urge you, brethren:** As an evangelist, Paul's plea was to them as brethren. The situation demanded of Paul that he beg them to cease from their direction of division. **Name of our Lord:** Paul pleaded with them on the foundation of the authority of Jesus that was invested in him. The fact that all Christians have submitted to one Lord is the foundation upon which unity must prevail (See 1 Jn 1:3). It is only when men begin lordship over the flock of God that division after personalities begins (See comments At 20:29,30; 1 Pt 5:1-4). The character of the church in any location should be according to Paul's admonition of the Philippian church which he exhorted to stand fast in one spirit for the sake of the gospel (See comments Ph 1:27). **Speak the same thing:** Unity is not based on speaking the same thing in the same way, but speaking the same fundamental teachings through the liberty of saying such in different ways. When Christians allow liberty of expressing fundamental teachings, then unity prevails over personalities and opinions. **No divisions:** Paul does not refer to differences of opinion. He is not saying that disciples

must be cloned into using the same words of speech in order to be identified as one body. He is not affirming that the church be regimented into unity by the codification of traditions in order that every member be subjugated to a catechism of regulations of men to which all must conform. Paul makes this statement in the context of the sectarian spirit that prevailed in the Corinthian church. He will define this in verse 12. Therefore, He pleads with them to abandon their party spirit for the sake of the unity of believers in an atmosphere of liberty (See comments At 15:10; Gl 5:1,2). Disciples must learn to treasure the fundamental truth that each member allows liberty in areas of opinion and unity that is based on standing together for the truth of the gospel. Growth in Christ necessitates learning the liberty of Christ that frees us from the strictures of man-made religious inventions. Christian maturity is characteristic of those who have learned not to use personalities, opinions or traditions as an occasion for division. **Perfectly joined together:** The misunderstanding of some brethren to what Paul says here is manifested by their efforts to submit every disciple to conform to the precision of accepted traditions, opinions, interpretations and behavioral practices. They think that in order for members to be perfectly joined together every member must be regimented into obeying the accepted opinions and behavior of men that are outside the authority of the Scripture. However, the fallibility of humanity argues against this understanding of what Paul means. There can be no atmosphere of being "perfectly joined together" as long as men seek to divide over personalities wherein members seek to invade the areas of liberty with dictates of humanly devised opinions and traditions. The church is perfectly joined together throughout the world when every member understands and practices freedom of expression that is based on allowing freedom in matters of opinion. At the same time, unity prevails when disciples maintain a firm stand on matters of teaching that pertain to salvation. If brethren seek to establish unity upon the basis of a codified list of practices and opinions that are foreign to the Scriptures, their very actions define the denominationalism that Paul is here attacking. When different groups of disciples establish their own unique codes or methods of work, denominationalism in the church has occurred. **Same mind ... judgment:** It is the work of every disciple to seek the answer to the prayer of Jesus in Jn 17:20,21 concerning oneness of those who believe on Him (See comments Jn 17:20,21). It is the nature of the true Christian, therefore, to be seeking reasons upon which unity can be established, not points upon which division can happen. This can happen only when disciples maintain a true understanding of the freedom that they have in Christ (See comments Cl 2:20-22). **11 Brethren:** At this time of their division, Paul still affirmed that they were brethren. Their division had not yet digressed to the point of disfellowship from the apostle. Though their case of divisiveness was acute, we must learn from the example of Paul. He did not seek to disfellowship these disciples

of Chloe, that there are disputes among you.

**12** Now I say this, that each one of you says, "I am of Paul," and "I am of Apollos," and "I am of Cephas," and "I am of Christ."

**13** Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you immersed in the name of Paul?

**14 ¶** I thank God that I immersed none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

**15** lest anyone should say that I had immersed in my own name.

**16** And I immersed also the household of Stephanas. Besides *this*, I do not know whether I immersed any other.

**17** For Christ did not send me to immerse, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.

because of the doctrinal and behavioral problems that are identified throughout this epistle. Those brethren who are quick to withdraw themselves from others who would behave and believe after the manner of the Corinthian church have not yet learned the mercy and patience by which God works with churches. In this context we must remember that the Corinthian brethren are at the most five to six years old in the faith. Therefore, at this time of writing, God is still patient with their struggles to grow, though there will be a time when action is to be taken. In the context of this stage of their growth, the inspired epistle is being written to be the Spirit's judgment to correct error that would certainly reap the "rod" from the apostle Paul upon his impending visit (4:21). Therefore, Paul writes to challenge them to correct their problems before he arrives (See 16:5-7; 2 Co 13:1-10). **Declared to me:** The household of Chloe did not report these matters in the context of slandering brothers. On the contrary, what they reported was true. The report was made to Paul in an effort to call on Paul to aid in the problem. Paul has subsequently responded by the writing of this letter. **Contentions:** There were quarrels among them. In the context of these statements, they were quarrelling over things that had no reference to biblical matters. In other words, the subject of their quarrelling in this context was not doctrine, but the personalities Paul here lists. It was the quarrelling that was wrong, not Paul, Apollos or Cephas. **12 I am of ...:** Herein is manifested the sectarian attitudes of the Corinthians that was moving them toward denominationalism. They were calling themselves after different personalities of the brotherhood. They thus became the Paulite church, the Apollite church and Cephite church. Paul adds sarcasm here by saying that if they do such, the Paulites, Apollites and Cephites have not only separated themselves from one another, but also from those who are the true church of Christ. In other words, any individual disciple cannot practice sectarianism in the church and at the same time be considered a part of the church of Christ. Therefore, if one belongs to Christ he has no right to separate himself from others who belong to Christ (2 Co 10:7). Fellowship is the gift of God to all those who have been immersed into a covenant relationship with Christ (See comments Gl 3:26,27; 1 Jn 1:3). Fellowship is broken only when God says it is broken. And God severs fellowship only when one violates a fundamental doctrine of belief or practices immoral behavior (5:11). When one manifests a sectarian attitude in the flock of God, therefore, he is violating the gift of God's fellowship which all who are Christ's have received as a result of their freedom in Christ. **13 Is Christ divided:** The answer to the question is obvious. Christ is not divided. If one

would divide Christ, then he is not of Christ. If one affirms that we have a right to join the church group of our choice, then he has manifested that he does not understand the oneness of the church either locally or universally. Since Christ is not divided, neither can His body of members be divided. **Crucified ... immersed:** In order for one to be of Christ, two things must occur: (1) Christ had to have been crucified for the one who is giving allegiance to Him, and (2) one would have to be immersed into the name of Christ. Christ has been crucified. Only those who have been immersed into Christ, therefore, belong to Christ (See comments Rm 6:3-6). Therefore, if one has not been immersed (baptized) he cannot claim to be of Christ. **14-16 Lest anyone should say:** Paul possibly followed the example of Jesus who did not personally baptize (Jn 4:2). Paul baptized the first converts, and then, he allowed them to do the baptizing of others. On his initial visit to Corinth, he remembered having baptized only Crispus (At 18:8), Gaius (Rm 16:23), and Stephanas (16:15). **17 Did not send me to immerse:** Paul was not sent by God to personally administer baptism as a legal act of law. He was commissioned to preach the gospel. The natural response to the gospel, however, is immersion for the remission of one's sins (At 2:38; Rm 6:3-6). Because of their sectarian attitudes, the Corinthians were taking pride in the fact that certain personalities had baptized them. Paul's argument is that it does not make any difference who does the baptizing. One's salvation does not depend on anyone other than himself. There is no such doctrine in the Scriptures concerning "baptismal authority," that is, one has to have been officially designated to baptize people. There is no teaching that says that the validity of one's baptism depends on the one who does the act of baptizing. **Preach the gospel:** This is the work of those who go forth for Jesus. They go forth to preach the death of Jesus for the sins of humanity, His burial, and His resurrection for hope to those who respond to the lordship of Jesus (15:1-4; See At 2:36-38). It is the response of people to the gospel that leads people to be immersed in order to be of Christ. **Not with wisdom of words:** Paul did not preach in order to exalt himself by use of intellectual philosophies or eloquent words. The power of his work was not in his presentation, but in that which he presented. He did not seek to distract from the glory of the cross by his own ability to present the event of the gospel (2:1,4,13). His point in this context, therefore, is to confront the practice of the Corinthians' glorying in personalities. He states that such glorying is contrary to the glory that should be given exclusively to Jesus for His crucifixion and who He now is, for it was through Jesus that all of us have come into a covenant relationship with God (Mt

**18 ¶** For the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

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

**20 ¶** Where *is* the wise man? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

**21** For since in the wisdom of God the world

by wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe.

**22** For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

**23** But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

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

**25** Because the foolishness of God is wiser

28:19,20). **Be made void:** In other words, if one's glorying is in the prideful skill of one's presentation and abilities, then his emphasis is not on the cross, but on himself. Such a person is not of the nature to be a candidate for heaven because the gospel has had no transforming effect on his character.

#### POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

**18 Preaching of the cross:** This is the message of every preacher. However, the message of the sacrificial work of God on the cross and the humble servitude that such stimulates in one's life is considered foolishness by the intellectually proud of this world (See At 17:18; 2 Co 2:15). **Are perishing:** Those who reject humble obedience in response to the cross remain in a state of condemnation (Mk 16:16). They are condemned because they have no atonement for their sins. Since one cannot be saved on the merit of good works (Rm 11:6; Ep 2:9,10), then the disobedient are in the process of perishing with the world because their chance for salvation is drawing to a close (At 17:18). On the other hand, those who are of a humble heart, and thus respond to the grace of God that was revealed on the cross (Ti 2:11), will be saved by the power of the gospel (vs 24; Rm 1:16). The power for salvation, therefore, rests in the cross and not in the efforts of man. **19** Paul's quotation of Isaiah 29:14 is meant to emphasize the point that God will eventually bring down those who stand on the abilities of their own intellect, wisdom and performance of good works. Those who would trust in their own abilities, whether religious or intellectual, will eventually perish. They will perish because they trusted in themselves and not in God. On the other hand, true wisdom is manifested in the humility of the person who responds in a manner of depending on the grace of God that was revealed on the cross (Ti 2:11). **20** When one understands the insignificance of the wisdom and intelligence of man in comparison to God, then he knows the answers to Paul's questions of this verse. In comparison to the wisdom of God, all human wisdom is foolishness. The work of God through the cross proclaims as foolish man's efforts to devise his own systems of redemption (2:6,8; 3:18,19; compare Is 33:18; 44:24,25; Jb 12:17; Mt 13:22; Rm 1:22). The conclusion to Paul's argument is that man has no chance of salvation that is based on his own abilities. Salvation is based on the cross, and thus, all who would be saved must flee to the cross (At 4:12). **21 Did not know God:** The wisdom of this world is limited to this world. It is thus not within the power of the worldly wise of this world to understand the wisdom of God that was revealed through the cross

(Compare comments At 17:22-31). Without God's special revelation through the inspiration of the apostles, no man would have ever known the purpose of the incarnation and crucifixion (See comments Ep 3:8-13).

**The foolishness of preaching:** According to the world, the message was foolishness. However, it was through this "foolishness" that was preached, that God would save the world. The "foolishness" about which Paul here speaks refers to the message, not the preaching. The preaching is the medium through which the message is made known to the world (See comments Rm 10:13-15). It was this message, the preached gospel, which men considered foolish. The proud stumble over this message (See Mt 11:25; Lk 10:21; Rm 1:20). However, those who have a humble heart will accept the message through their obedience to the gospel. They are not ashamed of the gospel, and thus, it is power unto their salvation (Rm 1:16). **22 Jews require a sign:** The Jews sought for a signal from God because they wanted to walk by sight and not by faith (See Mt 12:38; 16:1; Mk 8:11; Jn 2:18; 4:48). **Greeks ... wisdom:** The Greeks trusted in their own wisdom. Their intellectual self-sufficiency and pride led them to reject the gospel.

**23 To the Jews:** Though signs of God were given through Jesus (Jn 3:2), the Jews could not accept the humble origins and nature of Jesus as the Messiah. Their pride led them to stumble over the message of a crucified Messiah (See Is 8:14; 53; Lk 2:34; Jn 6:60; Rm 9:33; Gl 5:11; 1 Pt 2:8). **To the Greeks:** Because the Greeks pridefully trusted in their own intellect, they also could not accept the humbleness of the Savior who was crucified on a cross outside Jerusalem (2:14). The proud Greeks could not accept Jesus because His teachings contradicted the arrogance of their teachings that were based on intellectual pride, social haughtiness and immoral conduct. **24 Those who are called:** It is the nature of the called to be of a humble heart. Since the humility of the heart of the humble allows the gospel to affect them, they submit to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus by immersion (Rm 6:3-6). Therefore, the gospel is the power of God unto their salvation because of their humble nature (Rm 1:16). They are the called because they are those who humbly submit to the call of their Creator (2 Th 2:14). Their obedience manifests the wisdom of God because their humble character is manifested through their obedience (See Cl 2:2,3). Since it is only those of this character who will be candidates for heavenly dwelling, then God's wisdom is revealed through His plan to call on men to submit to what the world considers to be the foolishness of the humble cross of Jesus. **25** Though Jesus appeared

than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**26 ¶** For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.

**27** But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things that are mighty;

**28** and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, God has chosen, and things that are not, so that He might bring to nothing the things that are,

**29** so that no flesh should boast in His presence.

**30** But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

**31** so that as it is written, "*He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.*"

## Chapter 2

**1 ¶** And I, brethren, when I came to you *I did not come with excellent speech or of wisdom while declaring to you the mystery of God.*

**2** For I determined not to know anything

weak and foolish on the cross, His supposed weakness and the world's consideration of the foolishness of the sacrifice of the cross, actually revealed the wisdom and power of God to conquer the power of darkness (Cl 2:14,15). Therefore, in reference to the spiritual struggle between the forces of good and evil, the work of the cross far exceeded the wisdom of men. Since men do not really understand the raging war of the spiritual struggles between God and Satan, they could never have invented the plan of the cross as God's victory over Satan. If God had not revealed the purpose of the cross, men through the wisdom of this world could never have understood the death of a carpenter's son on a cross outside Jerusalem to be the eternal scheme of redemption for the salvation of man.

**26 Not many wise ... mighty ... noble:** Paul lists those who are less likely to humble themselves to the message of the cross. Those who excel in the wisdom of the world, or are in influential positions, or possess great material things, usually do not obey the gospel (See Jn 7:48). They do not obey simply because their focus in life is on that which is of this world. They view obedience to the gospel as a step toward taking their minds off worldly things. They are right (Mt 6:24; Js 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15). When one turns to the cross, his focus must turn from the world to that which is above this world (Cl 3:1,2). However, those who have their security in that which is of this world will find it difficult to place their faith in God (1 Tm 6:10,17-19; see Mt 11:25). Therefore, by identifying the nature of those who will not submit to the gospel, Paul has identified those who will submit. **27 Weak things:** God used those things the world considered weak, despised and insignificant in order to accomplish the salvation of man (Ps 8:2; Mt 11:25). He did such in order to provide a test that must be passed by all those who would seek eternal dwelling. It is a test to determine characters that are necessary for dwelling in eternity with others. Therefore, those who would humbly submit to the lowliness of the cross through immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus have qualified themselves for heaven (See comments Rm 6:3-6). **28 Bring to nothing:** Paul's revelation of God's plan in this context helps us understand that God never intended that the world be the final dwelling of His creation. The world was created only as an environment in which the characters of the redeemed would be tested and proved for candidacy for eternal dwelling. If one does not have the ability to focus his mind on things

that are above this present world, then he does not have the ability to dwell in heaven. If one cannot emotionally, intellectually and spiritually transcend in thinking to that which is heavenly, then certainly he is not of a mental attitude that can dwell with God for eternity. **29 No flesh should boast:** Herein is the test for eternal dwelling. God requires an attitude of mind that is necessary for eternal life. The arrogance of man works contrary to the mental and spiritual attitudes that God requires for salvation. It is for this reason that "*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble*" (Js 4:6). Every man, therefore, must humble himself before God (1 Pt 5:5,6). No man who trusts in his own religious, material or physical accomplishments of this world can be saved (Rm 11:6; see comments Ep 2:8-10). **30 But of Him:** Every Christian is in Christ by the power and working of God, not man. It was the wisdom of God that was revealed through Jesus who brought to us justification (righteousness), cleansing from sin (sanctification), and purchase by His blood for eternal dwelling (redemption). Therefore, righteousness (Jr 23:5; 33:16; Rm 4:25; 2 Co 5:21; Ph 3:9), sanctification (1:2; Jn 17:19) and redemption (Ep 1:7) are all from God, not from man. **31 Glory in the Lord:** Our glory is not in our works in the Lord, but in the Lord Himself (Jr 9:23,24; 2 Co 10:17). It was the Lord who accomplished our salvation, and thus, our glory is based on the grace of God who delivered us from the futility of our own efforts to save ourselves (See comments Gl 6:14).

## Chapter 2

### PREACHING THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST

**1 Excellent speech or of wisdom:** When Paul first went to Corinth (At 18), he did not resort to the abilities of men in speech or wisdom in order to appeal to the Corinthians (1:17; 2 Co 10:10). His preaching focused on the gospel (1 Co 15:1-4). The appeal and power of his preaching was in the gospel, not in his own abilities to preach the gospel (Rm 1:16). **2 Jesus Christ and Him crucified:** Every preacher in his evangelistic work among the lost of the world should focus on this subject. Preaching the gospel among the lost guards preachers from preaching the philosophies and religions of men. In his evangelistic outreach to the Corinthians, Paul focused on preaching the sacrificial death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope (15:1-4; see comments 1:23; 15:1-4; Gl 6:14). **3 Weakness:**

among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

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

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

**5** so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

**6 ¶** But we speak wisdom among those who are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this age nor of the princes of this age, who are being brought to nothing.

**7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom* that God fore-ordained before the ages to our glory.

**8** This *wisdom* none of the princes of this age has known, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

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

**10** But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

When he preached in Corinth, he realized his own inability (2 Co 4:7; 10:10). **Fear ... trembling:** Though Paul's faith was in God, he was in much anxiety for his life when he preached in the city of Corinth on his initial visit. Because of the hostility of the situation, the Lord had to come to him in the night in a vision in order to comfort him (See At 18:9,10). **4 Demonstration of spirit and of power:** Paul's proclamation of the gospel was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not through his skill to deliver great speeches to the people (Compare 2 Pt 1:16). What he spoke was confirmed by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit by miracles (Mk 16:20; Rm 15:19; 1 Th 1:5; Hb 2:3,4). **5** Because the Spirit worked in a miraculous manner through Paul, the faith of the Corinthians was not based on the intellect or abilities of Paul. Their faith was based in God who miraculously revealed Himself through Paul (See 2 Co 12:12; see comments 1 Th 1:5).

#### REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

Paul now explains the method by which God worked in him to reveal the mystery of salvation to the Corinthians and all men. **6 Perfect:** The inspired wisdom that was spoken was spoken to those who were receptive because of the humility of their hearts. Paul's definition of the mature, therefore, depicts those who are receptive to the message of their Creator. One thus judges himself spiritually immature when he or she rejects the gospel. **Wisdom of this age:** In contrast to the crafty speeches of great speakers who focus on wisdom that originates exclusively from this world, Paul's message originated from God (See comments Gl 1:11,12). **Brought to nothing:** All that is of the world and focuses on worldly things is coming to an end (Compare Is 14; 2 Pt 3). On the other hand, the word of the Lord will continue throughout eternity (Ps 102:25,26; Is 51:6; Mt 24:35; 1 Pt 1:23-25; 2 Pt 3:10). **7 The wisdom of God:** The New Testament apostles and prophets were given the word of God through inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pt 1:20,21). In this context, specific emphasis is on the mystery of salvation that was revealed directly from God (Ep 3:4,5; 6:19; Cl 1:26). This was the plan of God to save men which was in the mind of God before the creation of the world (Rv 13:8). **8** Because of their envious hearts, the Jewish religious leaders did not know the wisdom of the cross. It was not because God did not reveal Jesus to them (See Lk 23:34). If their envious hearts had not clouded their

minds, they would have recognized that Jesus was the Son of God. If they had recognized the sonship of Jesus, they would not have crucified Him (Mt 27:33-50; Jn 16:3; At 3:17; 1 Tm 1:13). **9** Paul's quotation here of Isaiah 64:4 and 65:17 is for the purpose of calling to our attention the marvelous mystery of the scheme of redemption that was in the mind of God before the creation of the world (See comments Rv 13:8; 17:8). In the foreknowledge of God, God knew the fallibility of man. The fall of Adam was thus foreknown (Rm 8:29,30). And since the fall was foreknown, there was of necessity the foreplanning of the scheme that would redeem man from the fall (15:20,21). **10 Through His Spirit:** Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God revealed to the apostles the scheme of redemption to all men. The revelation was precious to those who had obedient hearts (Mt 11:25; 13:11; 16:17; see Gl 1:12; Ep 3:3-5). The revelation of the scheme, therefore, depended on the work of God to reveal such, but also on the hearts of humble men who would recognize the work of God through the cross. Those who have a rebellious heart will not recognize the work of God through the cross. Therefore, they do not accept the message of the gospel as the revelation of God. **Deep things of God:** The things that were revealed were "deep" because they could not have been discovered through the intellectual abilities and wisdom of man. They had to be revealed through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to those who were searching for truth and deliverance from sin (2 Tm 3:16,17; see comments Jn 14:26; 16:13). Therefore, it was only by direct revelation from God that the apostles could have known the mystery concerning the incarnation of Jesus and the salvation that was provided through the cross. When Jesus was crucified at Calvary, the apostles first understood the death of Jesus as only an unfortunate termination of their hopes that Jesus would be their Messiah to deliver them from Roman oppression (See Lk 24:21). It was not until the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, that the purpose of the crucifixion was revealed to them (See comments At 2:29-36). In other words, if it were not for the work of the Holy Spirit to inspire the minds of the apostles, the crucifixion would have gone by in history as just another execution of another of the thousands of Jews who were crucified on crosses by the Romans. It was through revelation that the event of the cross the apostles experienced was linked with the eternal scheme of redemption. **11 What man knows:** No one can

**11** For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man that is in him? Even so the things of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

**12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God.

**13 ¶** Which things we also speak, not in the words that man's wisdom teaches, but what the Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual *words*.

**14** But the natural man does not receive the

things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

**15** But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no one.

**16** For "*who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?*" But we have the mind of Christ.

### Chapter 3

**1 ¶** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *men*, but as to carnal, as to infants in Christ.

know the thoughts of another unless one's thoughts are revealed through communication. **Spirit of man:** See comments 1 Th 5:23. **The things of God:** No one could know the mind of God if it were not for the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal God's mind to man. It is beyond the ability of the mind of man alone to conceive the true nature of God. Though we can reason from observation of the created world that God exists, we cannot understand the character and plans of God unless such is directly revealed to man (See comments Rm 1:20). **12**

**Not the spirit of the world:** The gospel was not determined by the skillful intellect of spiritual men (See comments Gl 1:11,12). **13 Words ... the Holy Spirit teaches:** The Holy Spirit identified the crucifixion of Jesus as the work of God. It was not just the execution of another Jew. Since the Spirit identified the cross as the work of God, therefore, Paul here affirms that the preaching of the cross is the work of the Spirit to communicate the scheme of redemption to the world. It was the work of the Spirit to inspire the apostles to identify the cross as the eternal revelation of God to save all men. In doing this, the Spirit connected all that Jesus had taught the apostles to God's eternal scheme of redemption (See comments Jn 14:26; 16:13). The knowledge of the purpose of the cross, therefore, was through the revelation of God. By inspiration of the Spirit, that which was revealed was recorded for us to read in these very words of Paul. Inspiration is the work of the Spirit to guide men to record the revelation of God. There is thus a difference between revelation and inspiration. All Scripture is the result of the inspiration of the Spirit, but not all Scripture is revelation from God. Certain historical facts and people were known by the inspired writers. However, it was by inspiration that the writers knew that these personalities and historical facts should be recorded in Scripture. Therefore, all Scripture is inspiration. People, places and events that were personally known by the inspired writers are revelation only in the sense that the Spirit wanted such personally known people, places and events recorded in the Bible. **14**

**The natural man:** This is the uninspired man. In contrast to the Greeks who trusted in their intellect and the Jews who trusted in their traditions, the inspired man trusted in the revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. **Foolishness to him:** Paul here contrasts the natural man who considered the gospel foolishness (1:20-25) with the spiritual man God used in order to reveal that the cross was the scheme of redemption of God for man.

Because the natural man is proud and arrogant, he does not receive the message of the gospel. He cannot because he trusts in those things that are of this world (See comments 1:26-30; compare comments Mt 16:23).

**Spiritually discerned:** Because the mentality of the natural man is world oriented, he will first of all not recognize that the gospel event of the cross and empty tomb were the work of God to save man. Secondly, since he does not recognize the gospel event as the work of God, he will not consider humbling himself before the crucifixion of Jesus on a cross. **15** In contrast to those who pride themselves in the wisdom of this world, the apostles first received and accepted the revelation of God that the cross was more than the crucifixion of another Jew. It was in fact the work of God to bring into action the eternal scheme of redemption. When this message was preached, spiritually minded men accepted the cross by humbling themselves before God in obedience to the gospel (See comments Rm 6:3-6). **Judged by no one:** Since the message of the cross was revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit, the apostles cannot be judged by the intellectual standards of this world. The cross refers to things of God. Such things cannot be judged by those things that are of this world. And thus, those who have obeyed the gospel are also not judged by the standard of the things of this world. **16** Paul asks who would be so presumptuous to judge God. Since no man can judge God, then certainly no one can judge those through whom God has worked by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Paul makes these statements in the context of those in Corinth who were questioning his apostleship. There were those arrogant disciples who accused that he was just another man preaching a message that was the result of his intellectual abilities and clever speech. By affirming his inspiration, Paul begins in this context with his defense of his apostleship. Those arrogant members who trusted in their own intellectual abilities needed to understand that what he spoke was delivered to him by revelation of God and preached by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (See comments Gl 1:11,12).

### Chapter 3

#### CARNAL THINKING CHRISTIANS

**1** The past tense of the verbs in verses 1 & 2 indicates that Paul's initial delivery of teaching after he preached the gospel, had to be "milk" because they did

2 I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for until now you were not able *to receive it*, even now you are still not able,  
 3 for you are still carnal. For where *there is* envying and strife, are you not carnal and walking as *worldly men*?  
 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and

another, "I am of Apollos," are you not *walking as worldly men*?

5 ¶ Who then is Paul and who *is* Apollos, but servants by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

not have the spiritual background upon which the "meat" of the word of God could be preached. Corinth did not have the spiritual background as other areas where the gospel was preached to spiritually minded Jews (See At 17:11). The rebuke here is that they are still not ready to receive the meat because of their carnal thinking. **Carnal ... infants in Christ:** The Corinthians in general had not grown in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (Hb 5:12; 2 Pt 3:18). They were "puffed up" and divisive in their behavior with one another. They had every sign of still being carnal in their attitudes, and thus, were unable to discern a message that could be understood by spiritually minded people. In this sense, therefore, they were babes in Christ. Paul's point is that the spiritual maturity of a Christian will determine one's ability to understand and apply the word of God. **2 Milk and not with meat:** The pride which led to divisions in the Corinthian church made it difficult for them to digest the weightier matters of truth. In their divisions over personalities and the issues which had no reference to salvational matters, their minds were unable to discern, and thus focus on the weightier matters (Compare comments Mt 23:23,24). They had not grown to the point of not allowing Satan to divert their attention to the issues about which they were dividing among themselves. Since the Corinthian Christians are at this time from five to six years old or less in the faith, these exhortations of Paul reveal to us that God expects Christians by this time to have grown out of the attitudes and actions that are characteristic with babes in Christ. Those who have been Christians for longer than this, and yet, continue to divide over personalities and non-biblical issues that have no reference to salvation, manifest their immaturity, and thus the condemnation of the Lord (See comments Hb 5:12-13). There is a time in one's spiritual growth in Christ, therefore, when he ceases being a babe in Christ to being a cantankerous, ill-tempered and divisive person. With babes, patience must be exercised in order that they grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. With cantankerous and divisive brethren, exhortation and rebuking must be carried out in order that they repent of their divisive attitudes and practices (See comments Ti 3:9-11). The brother who creates division over non-biblical issues is warped and sinning (Compare comments Gl 5:1,2). **3 Carnal:** Paul's judgment is direct and true. Though they had been Christians for only a few years, God had expected that by this time they should have grown out of the childishness of arrogant and divisive attitudes. This statement of Paul is thus God's measuring rule by which we would judge ourselves. If we maintain the attitudes and actions of the Corinthians who had been Christians for only a few years by the time this statement was made, then we are judged by God to be carnal. The evidence of carnality, therefore, is evidenced by the presence of envy, strife and divisions over non-biblical issues. Those who would

behave after this sort in the church are behaving as men with worldly minds. They are not spiritual. They are carnal. **4** It is here that Paul gives an example of how to identify the nature of those in the church who are carnal minded (See 1:11,12; Gl 5:20). In this case, they were dividing over their allegiance to personalities. However, the division may have gone beyond the personalities to taking sides with the particular opinions that were expressed by either Paul, Cephas or Apollos. In matters of opinion, Paul, Cephas and Apollos had a right to give their opinions. In chapter 7 Paul gives his opinion on some matters concerning marriage. He gives his opinion in this letter in reference to not marrying in the times of stress in which the church was at the time of writing (See comments 7:25,26,36). He simply expressed his opinion, not a doctrine to be obeyed. Cephas and Apollos may have expressed a different opinion on this or other matters. The Corinthians, therefore, were possibly dividing over the opinions of the great men who had worked among them. Their carnal thinking, therefore, was manifested in exalting one personality above another in order to win an argument over matters of opinion. In these matters of division, Paul identifies as carnal the divisive practice of promoting personalities to substantiate one's position.

#### FELLOW WORKERS IN CHRIST

**5 Who ... but servants:** Paul, Apollos and others were only instruments through whom the gospel and truth were communicated to the Corinthians (At 15:4; Rm 15:16; 2 Co 3:3,6; 4:1; 5:18; 6:1; Ep 3:7; Cl 1:25; 1 Tm 1:12). God's instruments in evangelism should not be used as the occasion for division. Therefore, Christians should not call themselves after the evangelistic instruments by which God seeks to communicate the gospel to the world (Compare Rm 10:14,15). If Paul refused in this context to allow men to call themselves after him, then certainly no other preacher should allow God's sheep to call themselves after himself (See comments At 10:25,26). **6 I planted:** Paul was the first to preach the gospel to the Corinthians (4:15; 9:1; 15:1; At 18:4; 2 Co 10:14). **Apollos watered:** After Paul came Apollos who edified and strengthened the Corinthians (At 18:24-27). These two evangelists, therefore, worked in two different areas of church growth in order to establish the Corinthian church. Paul was the church planter. Apollos was the church builder. In church planting and growing there are those who have the skills to plant. There are those who have the skills of edification. Every evangelist should consider his God-given gifts in reference to these two fields of work in carrying out the work of God to prepare men for heavenly dwelling. **Increase:** Credit for the increase in conversions of the lost and spiritual growth of the saved must be given to God. Since God is the author of the message of the gospel and the truth by which churches are edified, then

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

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

**9 ¶** For we are laborers together with God. You are God's field, God's building.

**10** According to the grace of God that is given to me as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation and another builds on it. But let

every man take heed how he builds on it.

**11** For no other foundation can man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

**12** Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble,

**13** each one's work will be manifested, for the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test each man's work *to determine* what quality it is.

**14** If anyone's work endures that he has built,

it is He who should receive all credit for the spiritual growth of the church. The evangelists are only messengers that God uses in order to deliver to man the means by which they can grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (See comments At 20:32; 2 Pt 3:18). **7** It is man's work to plant and nourish the seed of the kingdom. However, the fruit is produced by God. No man can claim credit for the product of the seed because he either planted or nourished the seed (Compare 2 Co 12:11). All credit must go to God because it is He who originated the scheme of redemption. **8 Are one:** As evangelists, Paul and Apollos had the same goal. They sought to convert and nourish. The result of their work should not minimize the labors of either. Therefore, it is wrong to cause division by comparing either the personalities or labors of the evangelists. Carnal thinking is manifested when Christians exalt and compare the efforts of one evangelist against another. It is also carnal when an evangelist compares his particular ministry in a competitive manner with that of another evangelist. Each evangelist has different gifts, and thus, works in different areas of the church. God never meant that every evangelist be cloned into the exact same ministry in order to take the gospel to the world and edify the church (See comments ch 12). **Reward according to his own labor:** We would not presume that degrees of reward are here assumed by Paul. Emphasis is on receiving the reward as a result of the labor. The reward is not based on the meritorious abilities of one evangelist over another. Paul is not promoting a competitive manner by which evangelists labor in order to receive greater prizes in heaven. Such an interpretation would argue against the very argument he is making in the context. He is simply stating that those who labor in their particular ministries will be rewarded because of their faithful labor (Rm 2:6).

**9 Laborers together:** Every worker in the church must remember this point. We work together, not against one another (Mk 16:20; At 15:4; 2 Co 6:1). **God's field:** The hearts of men is the field wherein the seed of the kingdom is planted. **God's building:** The church is built on the foundation of the sonship and messiahship of Jesus (See comments Mt 16:18,19; see 1 Co 3:6; Ep 2:20-22; Cl 2:7; Hb 3:3,4; 1 Pt 2:5). Paul's metaphor emphasizes the fact that the spiritual result of the fellow workers belongs to God for it is based upon the foundation of the work of God through Jesus. **10 Grace of God:** Paul accredits the power of his ministry to the favor of God. He did not work on his own accord. He labored as a result of God's choosing him for the purpose of preaching the gospel (See comments At 9:15).

**Laid the foundation:** Paul laid the foundation in Corinth by preaching the messiahship and sonship of Jesus (Mt 16:18,19). The church was subsequently built upon Jesus (vs 11; 4:15; Ep 2:20; 2 Tm 2:19; 1 Pt 2:6). **Take heed:** If one builds on his own abilities or personality, then the structure will divide within itself or divide from other churches. The denominational mentality of some churches can be traced to those who built the church around their own personality and not Jesus. The fruit of one's construction may not manifest itself until years after the evangelist is gone. If one has built upon the foundation of his own personality, then the fruit will be division within the church over succeeding personalities that will come to minister to the church. If the church is built on the strength of a single personality, the fruit of the building will be that the church will divide itself from other churches that are either built on Christ or other personalities. In either of the preceding cases, denominationalism arises, and thus the work of the laborer is manifested to be carnal. **11 No other foundation:** If disciples are built solidly on Christ, then there is automatically fellowship among all disciples in all the world (See Ep 2:20; 1 Pt 2:4). Jesus Christ is the source from which all fellowship flows. Therefore, when Christians are focused on Jesus, they are naturally brought together into fellowship with one another. **12 Gold, silver, precious stones:** This is that group of disciples who are able to stand the test of carnal spirits and trying times. They are spiritually strong because they are built on Christ. **Wood, hay, straw:** These are those disciples who have been built upon the foundation of personalities and opinions. In times of trial, they are easily consumed. **13 The Day will declare it:** There are two possibilities as to what "day" Paul has in mind. This could be the day of persecution and trial. It could also refer to the last day wherein the final judgment will result in a separation of the righteous from the unrighteous (Mt 25:46). Reference is here to those of the church, and thus, in either day of judgment it will be manifested if the work is "wood, hay, straw" or "gold, silver, precious stones." The judgment of each day will be the same. The fiery trials of persecution will weed out those who are built on personalities and opinions (See comments Mt 13:20,21). The fiery judgment of Jesus' coming will weed out the unrighteous (2 Th 1:7-9). **14 Receive a reward:** Since the reward is here stated to be in the future, the day of testing would possibly be an in-time judgment of one's work. If disciples who have been firmly planted on Jesus endure through the fiery trials of life, the evangelist will receive a reward in the end. **15 Work will be burned:** Paul had built on

he will receive a reward.

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

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

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

**18 ¶** Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this world,

let him become a fool so that he may be wise.

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

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

**21** Therefore, let no man boast in men. For all things are yours,

**22** whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come. All are yours.

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

the solid foundation of Jesus. However, because of the carnality of the Corinthians, they had digressed his work to squabbles over personalities and opinions. Though the Corinthian church might be burned, Paul would still receive his reward for his labors. Though the loss of those for whom he had labored would be a great disappointment, he would not lose his soul. Therefore, one's salvation is not dependent on the faithfulness of another. Regardless of the end result of an evangelist's laborers, the evangelist will be saved because he did the faithful work of evangelism and edification.

#### THE TEMPLE OF GOD

**16 *The temple of God:*** Paul's metaphor here is taken from the Old Testament. The temple of Jerusalem represented the presence of God with Israel, though God does not literally dwell in temples that are made with the hands of men (See comments At 17:26-28). The temple simply illustrated that God was working in Israel to carry out His eternal purpose of the cross. In this context, Paul affirmed that the Corinthian church was the temple of God in Corinth. The existence of the church was God's evidence to the Corinthian community that God was working in Corinth. ***Spirit ... dwells in you:*** The Corinthian Christians, therefore, were the manifestation of the work of the Spirit in Corinth as men and women humbly submitted to the message of the gospel and lived changed lives (See 6:19; 2 Co 6:16). **17 *Defiles the temple:*** There were those in the church in Corinth who were defiling the church by their divisive attitudes and practices (See 1:12). The word "defile" here means to defile by destroying. ***God will destroy him:*** Those who endanger the sheep of God will be dealt with by God (2 Th 1:7-9). It is a serious matter to manipulate or endanger the sheep of God in any way. Those who work in a divisive manner in order to denigrate the sheep by calling them after personalities and party opinions will be harshly dealt with by God (See Pv 6:17-19; At 20:28-31; Rm 16:17; 1 Pt 5:1-4; 3 Jn 9,10). ***Holy:*** The church has been cleansed by the blood of Christ and separated from the world (Ep 1:7). It is thus a spiritual house and a holy priesthood (See comments 1 Pt 2:5,9).

#### BE NOT DECEIVED

**18 *Fool ... be wise:*** The wisdom of this world puffs up (Pv 3:7). Those who are intellectually proud, therefore, must humble themselves in order to accept the humble nature of the gospel (Js 4:6,7; 1 Pt 5:6,7; see comments Mt 5:3-12). From what Paul states as a

problem with some in the Corinthian church, there seems to be the presence of a spiritual arrogance as Gnosticism. This false religious philosophy promoted the belief that an encounter with one's inner self gave him the insight to discern spiritual things. The fundamental world view of this belief promoted an arrogant "spiritual" attitude in those who claimed to have greater inner awareness against those who were considered by them to be less spiritual. Whether Paul's context surrounds those who took pride in the wisdom of the world, or the "spiritual" wisdom of the Gnostics, the point he makes applies to both parties. One must humbly submit to the message of the cross in order to be considered wise in the eyes of God (1:23,24). **19 *Wisdom of this world:*** When one seeks to compare the wisdom of man with the wisdom of God, the wisdom of man becomes insignificant and foolish. Man's greatest intellectual achievements are only elementary matters in comparison to the wisdom and knowledge of God. Therefore, one would certainly be arrogant to claim that he is spiritually above the acceptance of the wisdom of God as revealed through the cross. ***Catches the wise:*** God knows, and thus, will condemn those who have refused to submit to the cross because of their intellectual arrogance (See Jb 5:13). The occasion of the cross gives each man the opportunity to judge whether he is wise or foolish. Those who are truly wise accept the cross. Those who are puffed up in their own minds will reject the cross. **20 *The Lord knows:*** The omniscience of God allows Him to know the innermost thoughts and motives of all men (Ps 94:11). **21,22** Since God knows all things, one should be very cautious about boasting. We may be boasting about that which is actually not in his heart. One should not boast in the accomplishments of either Paul, Apollos or Cephas. One does not know the heart of man as God, and thus, one may boast in one who has an unrighteous heart. ***All things are yours:*** God has revealed all things that pertain to godliness (2 Pt 1:3). All things had been revealed to them that were "*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ...*" (2 Tm 3:16,17). Therefore, they needed nothing in reference to their salvation other than what God had given them. The world could offer them no wisdom or knowledge that would be beneficial toward their salvation. It was foolish, therefore, for them to seek after the knowledge and wisdom of men in order to merit their salvation (Compare 2 Co 4:5). All things of the world are given to the Christian for the purpose of bringing him into eternal glory (See Mt 5:4; Jn 10:10). Since all of them had received all things

## Chapter 4

- 1 ¶ Let a man so regard us as the servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.  
 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.  
 3 But to me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not judge my own self.  
 4 For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this. But He who judges me is the Lord.  
 5 Therefore, judge nothing before the time

until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will manifest the motives of the hearts, and then will everyone have praise of God.

6 ¶ And these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to think above what is written, that none of you take pride in one against another.

7 For who makes you to be superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did receive *it*, why do you boast

necessary for belief and behavior, then not anyone of them or group among them could exalt themselves over the others. **23** Since we belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God, then Christians are in possession of the world that belongs to God (Compare Rm 14:8). The Christian's attitude toward all that which is of the world, therefore, is not to be possessed by the world, but to understand that the world is possessed for the purpose of providing an environment to prepare him for a greater world beyond this present world (2 Pt 3:13).

### Chapter 4

#### SERVANTHOOD VERSUS ARROGANCE

**1 Servants ... stewards:** Paul, Peter and Apollos were stewards of God in the sense that they had been entrusted with the gospel (9:17; Lk 12:42; Ti 1:7; 1 Pt 4:10). They were servants in the sense that they ministered the gospel to the world (Mt 24:45; Rm 13:6; 2 Co 3:6; Cl 1:25). **2 Trustworthy:** Stewards must be faithful in their ministry to care for that which has been entrusted to them. In this case, they must be faithful in preaching and teaching the gospel that had been delivered to them by God. **3 Very small thing:** There were some in Corinth who were critical of Paul. They had set themselves up as judges concerning what they thought he should be doing. However, these self-appointed judges did not affect the decisions of Paul concerning what he knew he should be doing as a steward of God. He had not been sent out by the Corinthian church. He was not supported by them. Therefore, the judgments of those who questioned either his motives or actions were of little concern to him. He was God's man who had been chosen for a specific destiny (At 9:15). **I do not judge my own self:** Paul did not judge himself because he had been called by Jesus to accomplish a mission to the Gentiles. Since he would not rely on his own judgment, then certainly he would not be affected by the judgment of others. **4 He who judges:** Though Paul did not know of any areas where he was behaving contrary to the will of God, he did not consider himself to have been meritoriously justified before God because of his behavior. God is the only trustworthy judge because He judges from grace. **5 Judge nothing before the time:** This is Paul's rebuke of those who set themselves up as judges concerning his ministry. He exhorts that judgment should first be left to the Lord, and then, the judgment of the Lord will take place when He comes again (15:58). When the Lord does judge, there

will be nothing hidden from Him (Mt 10:26). All that is in a man's heart will be made known (3:13; Rm 2:16,29; 2 Co 5:10). Paul is confident that he will be found true, faithful and pure at the final judgment. It will be then that God will give praise to the faithful stewards (See 3:8; Rm 2:29).

#### PUFFED UP WITH SELF

It is at this point that Paul begins to deal with the central problem of some who are in the Corinthian church. This problem is an attitude of arrogant self-righteousness. They were "puffed up" (vs 6, 4:18,19; 5:2; 13:4). This attitude which was characteristic of many in the church led to the many problems that Paul deals with in this letter. **6 You may learn:** Paul uses himself and Apollos as examples of men from whom we should learn to model our lives. The model he wants us to understand is that we should allow our lives to be governed by the word of God. The principle he wants us to understand is that our pride should not lead us beyond those things that are written (See comments 2 Jn 9,10). When one is governed by an attitude of pride, he often goes beyond that which is written by binding where God has not bound or loosing where God has not loosed. He seeks to trust in his own religiosity, and by doing such, he pridefully trusts in his own religious inventions. **Puffed up:** Those who trust in their own religious inventions often become arrogant against their fellow brothers. They set themselves up as standards by which they judge others. When one is religiously puffed up, he always considers himself the judge of others. **7** These penetrating questions were asked in order to set the stage for correcting their attitudes. Their arrogant attitude was the foundation upon which division existed. **Differ:** They were the ones who were responsible for their own divisions. What spiritual gifts and blessings they had did not originate from themselves. All such things were the gift of God. "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven" (Jn 3:27; see Rm 12:3,6; 1 Pt 4:10). Therefore, they could not claim any credit for that which had been given to them from God. They received the miraculous gifts from Paul and Peter (See comments At 8:18). They could not, therefore, boast as if they had not received them from God. They had received the miraculous gifts through the medium of Paul and Peter, but their arrogance led them to judge the apostles from whom they had received the blessing. It was a case of the mouth biting the hand that feeds it. In this case, the mouth (some in Corinth)

as if you had not received it?

**8** Now you are already full. Now you are already rich. You have reigned as kings without us. And I wish you did reign, so that we also might reign with you.

**9** For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as *men* condemned to death, for we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

**10** We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ. We *are* weak, but you *are* strong. You *are* honored, but we *are* despised.

**11** Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are roughly treated and have no certain place of dwelling.

**12** And *we* labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we endure.

**13** Being slandered, we kindly respond. We are made as the scum of the world *and are* the refuse of all things until now.

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

were biting the hand of the Christ-sent apostles who ministered the gifts to them.

**8 You are ... full ... rich ... have reigned:** Paul is here sarcastic in reference to the Corinthians' attitudes. Their arrogance led them to feel overconfident in themselves and spiritually rich in comparison to one another. They thus puffed themselves up as kings. They presented themselves to be a church of all chiefs and no slaves. We do not assume that everyone in the Corinthian church manifested such arrogant attitudes. The households of Chloe and Stephanas were troubled about the situation, and thus reported to Paul. However, those who are described here were questioning Paul's apostleship, and thus his authority in these matters. Therefore, Paul rebukes the arrogant false teachers among them who boasted of having all things and of being rich with their "spiritual" arrogance. The attitudes moved them to reign as arrogant kings among the brethren. These prideful teachers thus intimidated the church into following after teachings that were bound beyond that which was written (vs 6; 2 Jn 9,10). The fact was that they were not reigning. They were tearing down the church because of their arrogant attitudes. **I wish:** Paul desired that they humble themselves to motives that were constructive. He could then join with them in building up the church. **9 The apostles last:** The irony of what Paul writes is revealed by his contrast of the self-righteous lives of the false teachers with the sacrificial lives of himself and the apostles who actually established churches as the Corinthian church. **Spectacle to the world:** By describing the life and work of the apostles, Paul portrayed the true position and persecution that came with the life of a servant of Jesus (See Hb 10:32,33). **10 Fools for Christ's sake:** In the opinion of the world who did not understand them, the apostles were fools (1:18,21; At 17:18; 26:24). However, the world was foolish for not accepting what they taught. The Corinthian false teachers seem to have been assuming positions and possessions in their efforts to "reign as kings." In contrast to this life-style, the apostles accepted persecution and poverty (2 Co 11:27; 13:9; see At 3:6; 23:2; Rm 8:35; Ph 4:12). Therefore, the proof of the apostles' sincerity was manifested in the hardships through which they willingly went in order to preach the gospel. Paul's indirect challenge to the arrogant false teachers in Corinth, therefore, is that he would like to see persecution and poverty in their lives as a result of their preaching the gospel among the nations. If their lives were worthy of the gospel (Ph 1:27),

they would also be that which they judged the apostles, that is, "fools," "weak," and "dishonored" for the sake of preaching the gospel to the world. It is evident that these self-appointed judges of the apostles and evangelists were, from the comforts of their Corinthian castles, quick to launch judgments against those who were in the heat of the battle. Paul's reply to them is that they join him in the battle, and then, he would consider their judgments. It is often easy for those who are not personally involved in the war of world evangelism to set themselves up as judges over those who are. **11** What Paul describes here in reference to the lives of himself and other apostles is evidence that their witness to the risen Christ is true. We cannot explain the willful suffering and persecutions through which all these men went without their having actually experienced the revelation of God through Jesus and His resurrection from the dead. The picture of their lives in this verse certainly distinguishes them from the materialistic life of some religious leaders in the world today who use religion as a means for material gain. **12,13 Working with our own hands:** Throughout most of Paul's missionary journeys he supported himself by making tents (See At 18:3; 20:34; 1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:8; 1 Tm 4:10). Herein is revealed Paul's test of the sincere evangelist. He supports himself as he preaches the gospel. Preachers who so labor should receive honor for their sacrificial work. The nature of Paul's challenge to the arrogant teachers of Corinth is that they should manifest their sincerity by supporting themselves. **Being reviled ... persecuted:** This would be the true test of those who would be evangelists for God. In order to take the gospel to the world, they must be willing to endure what Paul here describes (See Mt 5:44; Lk 6:28; 23:34; At 7:60; Rm 12:14). Those who seek to be servants of God as Jesus and the apostles must be willing to accept the persecution and poverty that comes with the work (Mk 10:17-22; Lk 9:23,57-62). If their witness as a Christian calls for persecution and poverty, then they must be willing to suffer the cost of the cross.

#### FOLLOW ME

**14 Beloved children:** The Corinthian church had been infiltrated with the Greek intellectualism that was prevalent in their culture. Their intellectual and supposedly "spiritual" arrogance had caused squabbling among them. Paul thus admonishes them as a father would his children (2 Co 6:13; 12:14; 1 Th 2:11; 1 Jn 2:1; 3 Jn 4). However, his admonition could go beyond the words

**15** For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you have* not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have brought you forth through the gospel.

**16** Therefore, I urge you, be imitators of me.

**17** For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my son, beloved and faithful in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways that are in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every assembly.

**18** ¶ Now some are arrogant, as though I would not come to you.

**19** But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord

wills, and will know, not the speech of those who are arrogant, but the power.

**20** For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

**21** What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and the spirit of meekness?

## Chapter 5

**1** ¶ It is actually reported *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication is not even *practiced* among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

of this letter. **I warn you:** As a Christ-sent apostle, Paul is coming to the Corinthian church. He is coming to correct matters that only a Christ-sent apostle could correct and in a manner by which only a Christ-sent apostle could. He is coming to exercise the rod of discipline (See comments 2 Co 12:19 - 13:4). **15 I have brought you forth:** The Greek word here (*paidagogous*) refers to one who is a tutor of a child. Paul uses an exaggeration in order to emphasize his point. They had countless tutors pulling them to and fro with every wind of teaching. However, they had only one father concerning their birth into Christ. Paul was the one who first preached the gospel to them. They were born again by their obedience to the gospel which he preached (2 Th 2:14; see At 18:11; Gl 4:19; 1 Pt 1:22,23; Js 1:18). **16 Imitate me:** "Imitate" comes from the Greek word (*mimaitais*) which is the word from which The English word "mimic" is derived. Paul wanted them to mimic his life-style (vs 6; 11:1; Ph 3:17; 4:9; 1 Th 1:6; 2 Th 3:9). **17 Who will remind you:** Paul was sending Timothy to Corinth in order to remind them of both his behavior and teaching (11:2; At 19:22; Ph 2:19). **Faithful:** Timothy was converted by Paul (See introduction to 1 Tm). **In every assembly:** The Holy Spirit had revealed a consistent doctrine to the apostles (Compare Jn 14:26; 16:13). All apostles taught the same fundamental teachings throughout the first century world. The harmony of their message is evidence of their inspiration. No group of men could independently teach a harmonious doctrine as the apostles did if they were not inspired by the Holy Spirit. Any man who claims to speak for God, but contradicts the teachings of the Bible, is not speaking from God. One would be presumptuous to speak contrary to the word of God while at the same time claim to be inspired by God. **18 Some are arrogant:** Though arrogance was manifested in the Corinthian church, we must not assume that the entire congregation had followed after the arrogance of some false teachers. Paul here states that those who are arrogant are saying that he will not personally come to the Corinthian church in order to defend himself. They have accused that he was "weak" (vs 10). They thus assume that he will not come. Paul assumes that they might deduct from his sending of Timothy that he is afraid of personally coming himself. But they are wrong. **19 If the Lord wills:** Though it is his decision to go to Corinth, he realizes that his life is still subject to the circumstances that may befall him. Therefore, it is the Lord's will in the sense

that the Lord makes it possible for him to go (See At 18:21; Hb 6:3; Js 4:15). Therefore, Paul believed that the Lord worked in some ways that were not perceived through sight. This is commonly referred to as the providential work of the Lord to carry out His work in the lives of His servants. **But the power:** When Paul came, there would be a Elijah-Baal prophets' contest between Paul and the arrogant false teachers. Paul would be coming with the miraculous power of a Christ-sent apostle. The sermon of words was conveyed through this epistle. Therefore, when he came it would not be a time for talk, but for miraculous judgment action unleashed through the authority of a Christ-sent apostle (See At 5:1-11; 18:8-11; 1 Tm 1:20). **20 The kingdom of God:** The reign of God as it is manifested from heaven is not manifested in word alone. The word of truth came by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. However, the words of truth were simply words without the miraculous power of God that was poured forth from heaven to confirm the preached word (Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). Therefore, the church exists because the word of God was confirmed by the power that was manifested from the kingdom reign of God in heaven (2:4). **21** The Corinthians had the choice concerning the nature of the coming visit of Paul. If they repented, then Paul could come without having to exercise his responsibility of administering physical discipline (See comments 1 Tm 1:20). **Rod:** The "rod" was not a hard sermon that would be preached to rebuke them for their arrogance. It would be the unleashing of apostolic discipline such as was witnessed by the Jerusalem church at the very beginning of the church (See comments At 5:1-11). The warning concerning the coming with the rod, therefore, was a stern warning to those arrogant teachers among them (See comments 2 Co 12:9 - 13:4).

## Chapter 5

### PURIFYING THE CHURCH

In this chapter Paul discusses an immoral situation that had entered the church. It was a situation wherein the Corinthians manifested their inability as a group to deal with sin within their fellowship. The sin involved a family matter within the church, and thus, the entire group for some reason failed to respond to the commands of God to disfellowship immoral members. In this case a brother was living with his father's wife. The woman involved in the sinful relationship was ap-

**2** And you are arrogant and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be removed from among you.

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

**4** In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when

you are assembled, and *with* my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

**5** deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that *his* spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

**6 ¶** Your boasting *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

parently not a Christian, for there is no rebuke concerning her disfellowship. Because Paul does not identify her as the man's mother, it is possible that the woman in this case was the immoral brother's stepmother.

**1 Reported:** Those of the household of Chloe had reported to Paul the matter of immorality (1:11). At least those of Chloe's household realized that the situation was sinful and that something had to be done. The household of Chloe, however, was the minority that was evidently overruled by the arrogant false teachers who would not deal with this immoral problem. **Fornication:** This is from the Greek word *porneia*. It is not the specific word for adultery, but the generic word that refers to any illicit sexual activity. The two people were living together in an immoral relationship. The immoral relationship of living together was not practiced among the Gentiles in the community, and thus, this situation was giving the church a bad reputation (Compare Lv 18:8; 20:11; Dt 22:30; 27:20). **2 You are arrogant:** Herein was the problem. The arrogant attitudes of some among the disciples led them to condone the sin (See 4:6,18; 5:2). **Mourned:** Instead of being emotionally sorrowful for the sin in which the brother was involved, they were haughty about the matter (2 Co 7:7-10). They should have been outraged with such a sin. Unfortunately, they became indifferent to the matter, and thus, they were in the process of allowing the disciples as a whole to accept such behavior. They were thus falling into sin as a group because of their insensitivity to sin (See comments Mt 5:4; Js 5:1). **3 I ... have judged already:** Paul was coming to Corinth, and thus, could have personally dealt with this matter. However, since immoral behavior affects the nature of the church, this matter had to be dealt with immediately. Therefore, Paul here exercises his Christ-sent apostolic privilege to withdraw the church's fellowship from this immoral brother through the proxy of the Corinthian disciples. He did not have to investigate the facts in this matter. The immoral man had violated a fundamental doctrine in reference to morality. Therefore, the decision was not as to whether or not the man was living in immorality. He was. Since the decision to withdraw fellowship was not being made by the Corinthian church, Paul made the decision and asked the church to carry through with his decision. He calls on the church to carry out his decision to deliver the immoral brother unto Satan (See comments 1 Tm 1:20).

**4 In the name:** Herein is revealed the authority of the word of God. Paul did not have to be personally present in order for this mandate to be carried out according to God's will. The epistle he here writes carried the authority by which the faithful in Corinth could act. We still have the same inspired letter today, and thus, the authority for Christians to act in response to God is still in the inspired letters of the New Testament. **You are assembled:** Since this was a public matter, it had to be

carried out in a manner that everyone could be informed. This was not a matter that was to be settled behind closed doors. One of the purposes for the action was to strike fear in the hearts of every member. Therefore, everyone was to be informed. At a time when the disciples assembled, the notice of disfellowship was to be made in order to deliver the immoral brother unto Satan. **With the power:** The Christ-sent apostles had the authority to inflict physical punishment (See comments 4:19-20; At 5:1-11; 13:11,12; 1 Tm 1:20). The power of Paul's apostleship was not limited to his presence. Therefore, we assume that when this brother was disfellowshipped, he was delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh without the presence of Paul. **5 Deliver ... to Satan:** The result of this apostolic pronouncement would happen without the personal presence of the apostle. Only the Christ-sent apostles had the power to inflict physical punishment upon those who sinned (2 Co 10:8; 13:10). Since there are no Christ-sent apostles alive today, this punishment cannot be pronounced upon sinning brethren. God will simply wait until the final judgment to carry out the punishment. Paul here says that Satan is responsible for the infliction. Our deduction would be that the apostles released the individual into the control of Satan who would go to the limit that he went with Ananias and Sapphira, that is, death (At 5:1-11). In this case, the punishment was limited to physical infliction, which infliction is not here revealed. **May be saved:** The purpose for the disfellowship and physical infliction is here revealed. It is for the purpose of shocking the sinning brother into mourning over his sin (Compare Ps 109:6; Pv 23:14; Lk 22:31). Therefore, if disciples do not practice the law of exclusion, they become complacent and indifferent to sin. Churches that do not obey God in casting out immoral members, do not take seriously their obedience to God (See 2 Th 3:6-12). Too many churches are disobedient in not being obedient to God's law of exclusion.

**6 Your boasting:** It is evident that the Corinthians were taking some pride in their forbearance of the sinful brother. But the forbearance of sin will eventually destroy the greater community of disciples. **Leavens the whole:** See Hs 7:4; Mt 16:6; 12; Gl 5:9; 2 Tm 2:17. Indifference toward the sin of those who habitually practice that which is contrary to the word of God will cause the entire group to become complacent toward the hideousness of sin. Therefore, those churches that do not practice the law of exclusion will slowly digress into social groups that lose their moral and doctrinal identity with Christ. **7 Purge out:** Upon the command of Paul, the Corinthian church did purge out the immoral man. He subsequently repented (2 Co 7:6,7,12). The primary purpose for which the disfellowship was to take place was to stimulate repentance on the part of the sinner. If they had not carried out this action, they would have

**7** Therefore, purge out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For indeed, Christ our Passover was sacrificed.

**8** Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

**9 ¶** I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with fornicators.

**10** However, *I did* not at all refer to association with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.

**11** But now I have written to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother if he is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner. With such a man do not eat.

**12 ¶** For what have I to do with judging those who are outside *the church*? Do you not judge those who are within?

**13** But those who are outside, God judges. Therefore, put away the wicked person from among yourselves.

## Chapter 6

**1 ¶** Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous and

continued to be the "old lump." Therefore, those churches that condone the practice of immorality have digressed as a church to be an "old lump." **Christ our Passover:** During the Jewish Passover feast, all leaven was to be cast out of the house (Ex 12:15; Lv 23:6). Since Jesus is our continual Passover (Is 53:7; Jn 19:14), Paul's illustration from the Jewish Passover is that all leaven of sin be cast out of the fellowship of the church.

**8** In this context it seems that this must be a continual practice, that is, it is continual whenever immorality crops up among disciples. Because the church is in continual fellowship with Christ, then she must continually purge herself of old leaven. **Nor with ... malice and wickedness:** The Corinthians were assembling and partaking of the Lord's Supper with malice in their hearts and in the company of the immoral man described in this context. They must correct the problem of sin in the church in order to partake of the Supper with sincerity and truth.

**9 I wrote:** Paul had earlier written concerning the matter of immorality in the Corinthian church. It is difficult to determine if this letter were lost or that it was grafted into the epistles of 1 & 2 Corinthians. Some Bible students believe that the earlier letter about which he speaks here was incorporated into the contents of 1 & 2 Corinthians. The sections of 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and 2 Co 6:14 - 7:1 could have been the first letter that was grafted into these two epistles we now have in the New Testament canon. However, the earliest manuscripts give the present order and content of the letters of 1 & 2 Corinthians. It is probable, therefore, that the letter to which Paul here makes reference was either lost by careless hands or was destroyed as a result of maliciousness on the part of the arrogant false teachers in Corinth (See comments 3 Jn 9). **Not to associate:** The immoral brother in this case was maintaining his fellowship with the church. But Paul says that this must come to an end. Christians are not to associate with those disciples who are living in immoral situations (2 Co 6:14; Ep 5:11; 2 Th 3:6,14). If they do, then the behavior of the entire church will be affected by the influence of immorality by becoming indifferent to sin in the church. **10 Of this world:** Paul wants to make it clear that he is not talking about the immoral people of the world. One must do his work in the secular world in order to maintain a job. The world is defined by the

nature of its behavior. Those of the world are materialistic (covetous). They often cheat people of their money by means of fraud (extortioners). They reverence both the material things of the world, as well as create religions after their own desires (idolaters). If the Christian would disassociate from those of the world, he would have to separate himself from the world and live in isolation. On the other hand, Christians must be cautious about their associations with those of the world. Their close friendships must be with Christians and not with those who are driven by the preceding behavioral attitudes toward the world. **11** The faithful Christian is not to condone, fellowship, eat with or associate with any brother or sister who practices the sins that Paul lists in this verse. We would judge, therefore, that these sins violate fundamental behavioral laws by which the Christian must direct his life (See comments Gl 5:19-21). **12 Judge those who are within:** God will deal judgment to those who are not in Christ. However, for those who are in Christ, and thus in the church, it is the responsibility of the members of the church to make judgments concerning whether one has violated the law of God in reference to what Paul has mentioned in verse 11 (6:2). It is thus within the authority of the church to cast out of their fellowship any member who violates the principles of verse 11. God has entrusted the church with the authority to judge concerning these matters in order to keep the church pure. The church does not have the right to establish laws. The laws of verse 11 have already been established by God. The church has only the authority to carry out what God has already bound. **13 Put away:** Since God has already established the law upon which Christians must act, the Corinthians must assemble together (vss 3,4) in order to cast out the immoral brother (See Dt 1:5; 17:7,12; 19:19; 21:21; 24:7).

## Chapter 6

### LAWSUITS AND BRETHREN

**1** The Corinthians were going outside the fellowship of the saints in order to settle matters of dispute within the fellowship of the saints. They were taking matters of the church before the courts of unbelievers. The language of this text indicates that Paul is greatly disturbed by this practice. He is not discussing cases

not before the saints?

**2** Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you incompetent to judge *even* the smallest matters?

**3** Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things that pertain to this life?

**4** If then you have judgments of things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those to judge who are least regarded in the church?

**5** I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is

not a wise man among you, not even one who will be able to judge between his brethren?

**6** But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

**7 ¶** Now therefore, there is an utter failure among you because you go to law with one another. Why do you not rather suffer wrong? Why do you not rather *allow yourselves to be wronged*?

**8** No, you do wrong and defraud, and this to *your* brethren.

**9** Do you not know that the unrighteous will

where those of the world might bring charges against the church or individual members of the church. Neither is he discussing charges that apostate Christians might bring against the church. He is discussing the squabbling of disciples against one another in the civil courts of law in Corinth. Paul's point of this section of scripture is that Christians should not settle matters of dispute within the church by resorting to the civil courts of unbelievers. However, this does not mean that the church cannot use civil courts to defend herself against the charges of unbelievers. Neither is he talking about not turning a brother over to the court who has broken the law of the land. If a brother breaks the laws of the land in reference to his brother, then such a case is for the civil courts to settle. What Paul is discussing in this context does not refer to those brethren who break civil law, whether their breaking of the law affects an unbeliever or a believer. If one violates civil law he should be responsible to the civil courts of the law. **2,3** Paul here rebukes the Corinthians by referring to what they should already know. If they possessed the intellectual superiority that they claimed, then certainly they could judge in these matters that pertain to church affairs. What he says in the following statements, therefore, should be viewed as sarcasm against those who claimed to have great intellect and wisdom in spiritual matters. If they thought that they would judge the world and angels, Paul sarcastically rebukes them by asking why they could not judge matters within the church. **Saints will judge the world ... angels:** Some Bible students have affirmed that Christians will pronounce the world wicked by their godly lives. This concept is true. However, there is no scripture in the Bible that states that Christians will actually judge the world through the pronouncement of judgment upon the wicked. No disciple should ever desire to be put in such a position. All judging rests on the shoulders of God. In view of the fact that Jesus has been assigned the only final judge of all things, it would be questionable to assume that Christians would function as judges of the wicked (See comments At 17:30,31). Only the apostles were promised the right to be judges of the world (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:28-30). And this they were by revealing the word of God to the world (See comments Jn 12:48). Their judgment would be by the inspired word of the Holy Spirit that they would deliver unto the world through the preaching of the gospel. When one rejected their word, he judged himself. Therefore, in this context it seems apparent that Paul is using

sarcasm to embarrass those in Corinth who claimed that they were spiritually and intellectually superior. **4 Least esteemed in the church:** Paul continues his sarcasm. He sarcastically reproves the arrogant false teachers in the church for taking their disputes before unbelieving courts and judges who are not guided by Christian principles. The statement here concerning the "least esteemed" (better, "those of no account"), is sarcastic. These members were considered least esteemed only by those among them who were arrogant. Therefore, Paul says it would be better to let those they considered inexperienced or less spiritual in the church to act as the judges than to take matters before unbelieving courts. **5,6 To your shame:** Paul here identified that he was speaking in a manner that should shame them because of their practices. He turns from sarcasms and asks for them to turn to the wiser and more spiritually mature members among them in order to judge in these matters. In the question that he asks in this verse, he assumes that they will be embarrassed by asking if there is not one wise person among them who can make correct judgments. The fact that they went before courts of unbelievers indicated that they were not wise in these matters. It manifested that they were carnal in their thinking. Now he encourages them to correct these matters, and thus, look to themselves in order to judge concerning matters of dispute in the church.

**7 Failure among you:** When it came to the test of spirituality and wisdom, they failed. Now it is time for them to behave according to godly principles in their relationships with one another. **Suffer wrong:** It would be better to suffer wrong than to take cases of church dispute before the courts of unbelievers. God will take care of those who commit wrong against the innocent (See Pv 17:13; 24:29; 20:22; Mt 5:38-42; Lk 6:29; Rm 12:17-19; 1 Th 5:15; 1 Pt 3:9). If the Christian suffers at the hand of those who are unbelievers, he should remember that Jesus suffered though He was innocent. If a brother is wronged by another brother, he should take steps to correct the matter (Mt 18:15-18). However, the offended party should not seek to settle the matter out of a spirit of retaliation or vengeance. God is the one who will eventually deal with the unrepentant and offending brother. **8** There were some sinful brethren in Corinth who made it a practice to use the civil courts and lawsuits in order to take advantage of fellow Christians. **9,10** We must keep in mind that what Paul lists here is in reference to those who will not be saved.

not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, **10** nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God.

**11** And such were some of you. But you were washed. But you were sanctified. But you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God.

**12 ¶** All things are lawful to me, but all things are not profitable. All things are lawful for

me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything.

**13** Meats for the belly and the belly for meats, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

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

**15 ¶** Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* the members of a harlot? Certainly not!

If Christians behave after the manner of what he describes, they cannot be saved. They are not candidates for heaven because of their unspiritual attitudes. **Be not deceived:** If a brother has convinced himself that he can behave after the manner of what is here described, then he has deceived himself. Those who live a life-style that is after the manner of what he describes will not enter into the heavenly kingdom of God that is yet to come. **Fornicators:** This is from the word *porneia* which refers to all sexual sin (See comments Gl 5:19-21; Ep 5:4,5; Rv 21:8). **Idolaters:** These are those who create religions and deities after their own desires. In the Corinthian context, they had created a religion that had justified sexual immorality in their worship of the god of fertility, Aphrodite, whom they had created after their own sexual desires. **Adulterers:** These are those who would violate the marriage contract by having sexual intercourse with someone other than their mate. **Homosexuals:** This is from the Greek word *malakoi*. The word here refers to those who are involved in sexual activity between men and men and women and women that is not natural according to God's plan of procreation. **Sodomites:** Reference here would be unnatural sexual activity between people, and even unnatural sexual activity of a human with an animal (See comments Rm 1:24-27). **Thieves:** These are those who have developed the life-style of selfishly taking the possessions of others. One is a thief whether he steals from an individual or from a government. When one takes that which he did not earn by honest labor, or which was not given to him as a gift, he is a thief. **Drunkards:** Those who drink alcohol in order to lose their senses have given themselves over to being the slaves of alcohol. **Revilers:** These are those who resort to abusive speech against others. **Extortioners:** These are those who use evil means in order to take either money or possessions that do not belong to them. **11 You were washed:** Before they were immersed into Christ for the remission of their sins (At 22:16; Ep 5:26; Hb 10:22), the Corinthian brethren had practiced the preceding sins. However, when they were baptized into a covenant relationship with Christ, they stopped such practices. They stopped because they were set apart (sanctified) for service to God, and thus, they stood justified before God by His grace (Rm 5:1,2). Since they were washed, sanctified and justified, they should not behave after the manner of their former life. They should be moved to respond with thanksgiving for what God has done for them through the cross (See comments 15:10).

#### BODIES THAT BELONG TO GOD

**12 All things are lawful:** This may have been a statement that was made and believed by some Christians in reference to moral and civil law. In their arrogance they justified their sinful behavior. However, all things are lawful if they are used for their proper use and in accordance with God's ordained purpose and laws (10:23). It is not that Christians may work outside either civil law or God's law. Christians are to live in subjection to both civil law and God's law (See Rm 13:1-7). **Profitable:** Something may be lawful, but not expedient or profitable. Though it may be morally right to do some things, the doing of such may not be beneficial to oneself or others. The Christian must exercise discipline and self-control in his life in order to work that which is good toward others (Gl 6:10). **The power of any:** Paul could be speaking in reference to himself. In other words, the false teachers in the Corinthian church had no authority over him as a Christ-sent apostle. However, in his personal life he brought himself under the discipline of himself in order to keep God's will (9:27). **13** God created all foods for the benefit of preserving the body (1 Tm 4:4,5). However, at the end of time, both the foods and the physical body will give way to a body that will dwell in a new heavens and earth (2 Pt 3:13). Food that is now necessary to preserve life will not be necessary for the preservation of the spiritual body that is yet to come. **Body ... for the Lord:** Since the body is the gift of God for our dwelling on this physical earth, then we should lawfully use it to His glory, not for our own self gratification. The body should not, therefore, be used to satisfy the lust of the flesh through gluttony or fornication (See 5:1; Gl 5:19; Ep 5:3; Cl 3:5; 1 Th 4:3). **14** In the last day God will raise up our body (Jn 5:28,29; Rm 6:5,8; 2 Co 4:14). However, it will be raised a changed body (See comments 15:35-54). This body that is confined to the limitations of this world, and must subsist on food of this world, will be changed to a spiritual body that is after the nature of Jesus' body (Ph 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2). The foods and appetites of the body of this present world will not be restored for the heavenly body (Rm 8:10,11).

**15 Members of Christ:** As Christians, our bodies are the extension of Christ in this world. Our bodies thus belong to God as a part of the spiritual body of Christ (6:13; 12:27; Rm 12:5; Ep 5:30; Cl 1:18). In committing the act of fornication, one takes the body of Christ and lays it with a harlot. **16** Paul's quotation here is from Genesis 2:24 where Moses spoke of the relation-

**16** Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For He says, "*The two will become one flesh.*"

**17** But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

**18 ¶** Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is outside the body. But he who commits fornication sins against his own body.

**19** Or do you not know that your body is the

temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

**20** For you have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.

## Chapter 7

**1 ¶** Now concerning the things about which you wrote to me. *It is* good for a man not to

ship of lawful marriage. In this context he is talking about unlawful sexual activity outside the bond of marriage. In the unlawful sexual intercourse of fornication outside the bond of marriage, one is bringing together into one the male and female as they are sexually brought together in marriage. Through the act of fornication, therefore, one desecrates the law of God in reference to marriage and sexual intercourse within the bounds of marriage. **17 One spirit:** Since the Christian's body is one with the Lord, then to unite with a harlot in fornication is to take a part of the body of Christ into the bed of fornication. The oneness that one establishes with the Lord is greater than any sexual relationship with another person. Therefore, the Christian should guard his membership with Christ by keeping himself away from fornication (See 6:15; Jn 17:21-23; Rm 8:9-11; Ep 4:4).

**18 Flee fornication:** The Greek word here is *porneia* (fornication). Since the Christian is united in body and mind with the Lord, he should flee from the temptation of sexual immorality (6:9; Rm 6:12; 2 Co 12:21; Ep 5:3; Cl 3:5; Hb 13:4). **Against his own body:** Except for the sin of fornication, all sin affects some who is the victim of the evil motives of the individual (Rm 1:24; 1 Th 4:4). However, in the act of fornication the individual's body becomes the instrument by which the sin is committed. Therefore, in the act of committing fornication the Christian cuts himself off from the body of Christ by using his own body as an instrument of sin. **19 Temple of the Holy Spirit:** In 3:16 Paul discussed the indwelling of the Spirit in each disciple. The Spirit indwells the Christians as he or she behaves after the manner of the body of Christ. In this context, he is emphasizing the importance of the physical body of every member by reminding them that the Spirit indwells each member (See Jn 2:21). Therefore, those who commit fornication rob God of one's own body by defiling the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. **Not your own:** When one becomes a Christian, he gives the totality of his life to the Lord (Rm 12:1,2; 14:7). Therefore, he should not behave in a manner that portrays selfish living after the lusts of the flesh (See comments Gl 2:20). **20 Bought with a price:** The price was the sacrificial offering of the incarnate Son of God (At 20:28; Gl 3:13; Hb 9:12; 1 Pt 1:18; 2 Pt 2:1). Since the price was high, then Christians should behave after a manner that is worthy of the price that was paid (Rm 12:5; Ep 4:1; Ph 1:27). Paul's point is that since we have been bought with such a great price, our lives should be lived in thanksgiving to God for giving His Son for our redemption. Redeemed people, therefore, do not belong to themselves. They belong to the One who redeemed them (See comments Gl 2:20).

## Chapter 7

### QUESTIONS ON MARRIAGE

The material that Paul gives in this chapter is challenging to understand if we read into the context our preconceived ideas. Bible students have disagreed over portions of this chapter for many years because they have come to the content of this material with ideas that would have not been known by the Corinthians who were the first recipients of this letter. This is especially true in reference to the material that Paul covers in the area of separation and divorce. However, we must first commit ourselves to interpret the chapter according to what it actually says. We must not come to this material with preconceived ideas of our own background. We must remember that the Corinthians had only this letter to make a decision concerning what Paul meant. We must remember that it was written specifically to them in their cultural and social background. When they received the letter, they could not make comparative studies with other New Testament letters. They could not because this and the previous letter that Paul wrote to them were the only inspired letters they possessed (See 5:9). It is also helpful to understand this material if we can place ourselves in the historical situation in which the Corinthian church was at the time the letter was written and received. They had been converted from a behavioral manner of life that was based on idolatrous beliefs that were contrary to the word of God (6:11). Since they were only a few years in the faith, we would assume that they were still struggling with some of the beliefs and behavior of their past life. In conjunction with this point, we must keep in mind that they were still living in Corinth, in a culture that was very immoral and idolatrous. They were also suffering persecution in an idolatrous environment. They were in times of distress, though Paul does not go into detail concerning the exact nature of the distress (vs 26). With these thoughts in mind, we must allow this text to state what it means from our simple reading of the material almost two thousand years removed from the events that were taking place in Corinth.

**1 Not to touch a woman:** What Paul means is that it is best not to become married in view of the present distress. This advice to remain celibate must be understood in the context of the persecution the Christians were enduring at this time and would endure during the tyrannical rule of Nero who eventually died in A.D. 68 (vss 8,26). Therefore, Paul is not establishing celibacy as a commandment of God. He is giving his own advice. They had the freedom to accept or reject his advice. Simply because he gave this advice did not mean

touch a woman.

**2** However, *in order to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband.

**3** Let the husband render to the wife due affection, and likewise also the wife to the husband.

**4** The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*. And likewise also, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*.

**5** Do not deprive one another except by agree-

ment for a time so that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer. And come together again so that Satan not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

**6** But I speak this by way of allowance *and* not by command.

**7** For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But every man has *his* own gift from God, one after this manner and another after that.

**8 ¶** I say to the unmarried and widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I *am*.

that a law was established. It was possible for any inspired writer to give advice in writing Scripture that was not meant to be considered law. This advice in this context is an example. Paul is simply affirming that celibacy is expedient in the times in which the Corinthians lived because a marriage relationship with children would be very difficult to maintain when enduring persecution. We must also keep in mind that marriage is an expedient, not a commandment. There are some who choose to remain unmarried. They choose to do so for the purpose of giving their entire lives to kingdom business (See comments Mt 19:10-12). This is an honorable purpose for which one would give his or her life. **2 *Fornication:*** Because of the strong sexual drive that is within the individual, men and women should marry if they cannot control their sexual desires. They should marry lest they are tempted to commit fornication, and subsequently, lose their souls (Rv 21:8). ***His own wife ... husband:*** In the beginning, God intended for men to marry and populate the world (Gn 2:18). Paul restates God's instructions here for the type of relationship that should be characteristic of the Christian home (See comments Ep 5:22 - 6:4). In this statement that each wife and husband have their own mates, Paul indicates God's plan for marriage. One should have only one mate for all his life (See comments Mt 19:3-9). Polygamy is not God's plan for the marriage relationship. The polygamist cannot carry out the God-ordained responsibilities that are intended to create the home atmosphere in which children are to be nurtured (See Ep 5:29,30). **3 *Due affection:*** In the marriage relationship, it is right that each mate give their bodies unto one another for the purpose of sexual satisfaction (See Ex 21:10; 1 Pt 3:7). This is natural in marriage and should be carried out in order that each partner in marriage find sexual satisfaction within the bond of marriage and not with someone other than the marriage partner. **4** Normal sexual intercourse in the marriage relationship is an obligation that each partner has toward the other. Sexual intercourse in marriage is a God-ordained blessing of marriage. All sexual relationships should be conducted within the bond of marriage (Hb 13:4). If sexual relationships are not confined to the bond of marriage, society digresses in its social environment. See Hb 13:4; Rv 21:8. **5 *Do not deprive one another:*** Paul here states that the sexual relationship of a man and woman in a marriage relationship is not solely for the purpose of procreation. It is an emotional and physical time of

enjoyment for the man and woman, and thus, should be cherished in the marriage as the gift of God. Married partners may abstain from sexual intercourse for an agreed period of time. They can do so for the purpose of focusing on prayer and fasting. However, they must come together again lest one partner be tempted to go outside the marriage relationship in order to satisfy sexual drives. Paul indicates that it should be a part of the Christian marriage relationship that both the husband and wife agree to have times of prayer and fasting (Compare Jl 2:16). In order to enhance the marriage relationship, it would be advisable that Christian mates spend time in prayer and fasting. The relationship between a husband and wife grows in times when they pray and fast together. **6 *By way of allowance:*** Paul is here giving his advice. This advice, however, is not to be accepted as a commandment. The abstinence from sexual activity in the marriage for the purpose of fasting and prayer was advised, not commanded. **7 *As I myself:*** At the time Paul wrote this letter, he was not married. There is no direct New Testament statement that affirms he was ever married. Because of the times of persecution (vs 26), he believed that men and women should live in celibacy with enough self-control to abstain from sexual intercourse. However, because some could not control their sexual drives, they should marry in order that they not commit fornication (vss 1,2).

It is at this point that Paul begins to give advice to three groups of people who are all in covenant relationship with God. (1) He gives instructions to Christians who have not yet married and those who have lost their mates (vs 8,9). (2) He gives instructions to Christian mates who are both Christians and in a marital covenant with one another (vss 10,11). (3) He gives instructions to those Christians who are married to one who is not a Christian (vss 12-16).

#### UNMARRIED CHRISTIANS AND WIDOWS

**8,9 *Unmarried ... widows:*** To the unmarried Paul gives his personal advice. Because of the times in which they lived, it was better to remain unmarried (vs 1,26). However, if they could not exercise sexual self-control, then they should marry. It is best to marry in order to prevent sexual immorality. Though marriage is not consummated for the purpose of satisfying sexual drives, sexual drives are to be satisfied only in marriage. Marriage is based on greater things than the satisfaction of sexual appetites. It is more than the physical

**9** But if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*.

**10** And to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord, that the wife not leave *her* husband.

**11** But if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to *her* husband. And do not let the husband send *his* wife away.

**12 ¶** But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who does not believe,

and she is pleased to dwell with him, let him not send her away.

**13** And the woman who has a husband who does not believe, and if he is pleased to dwell with her, let her not send *her* husband away.

**14** For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Otherwise, your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

**15** But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or sister is not enslaved in such *cases*. But God has called us to peace.

attraction of a man and woman. Paul covers the marital relationship in other contexts (See comments Ep 5:22-33; Cl 3:18-21). Therefore, in this context we must not misunderstand what he is saying. Since the Corinthians lived in a highly immoral society, Paul is here emphasizing marriage for sexual reasons in order to prevent sexual immorality.

#### CHRISTIANS IN MARRIAGE

**10,11 Not I but the Lord:** While He was on earth, Jesus gave revelation concerning what Paul only reviews here for instructions directed to those in covenant relationship with God (See comments Mt 5:32; 19:3-9; Mk 10:9; Lk 16:18). Therefore, it was not necessary for Paul to give further revelation on these matters or to go into detail concerning what Jesus had already revealed.

**Not leave:** A marriage partner should not separate from his or her mate (See Mt 2:14-16). In this context, Paul is not teaching that one should divorce his or her mate. Neither is he discussing the departure of the innocent party because the guilty party has committed adultery (Mt 19:9). He is discussing the incompatibility of two people which makes it impossible for them to live together. If living together in harmony is impossible, separation is allowable. However, the condition is that neither mate may marry. The two partners must remain unmarried or else be joined together in the marriage relationship.

#### MARRIAGE OF BELIEVERS TO UNBELIEVERS

**12,13 To the rest:** When Jesus was personally on earth, His ministry was to the Jews who were in covenant relationship with God. He gave the commandments concerning marriage relationships that were directed to them as people in their covenant relationship with God (See Mt 5:32; 19:2-10; Mk 10:9; Lk 16:18). However, in this context Paul is dealing with mixed marriages. There were those who were in a covenant relationship with God who were married to those who were unbelievers. This situation developed as one of the mates in a marriage was converted and the other was not. The problem was not that a Christian married one who was not a Christian. The Corinthian church was a relatively new church wherein many were being converted out of idolatry. However, the problem was growing wherein the congregation had many members who were married to mates who were not converted. Paul thus gives new revelation from God concerning this situ-

ation. **I say, not the Lord:** Paul gives inspired instructions concerning the marriage relationship about which Jesus did not personally speak when He was on earth, since His earthly ministry was to those who were in a covenant relationship with God. We must remember, however, that this revelation comes from the Lord through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These commands are not the opinion of Paul. They are from the Lord through Paul to those Christians who are living in a marriage contract with one who is not a Christian.

**Pleased to dwell with him:** If a husband or wife is converted, she or he should not take the initiative to leave the unconverted marriage partner. In other words, the believer should not divorce the unbeliever. The believer should take the initiative to preserve the marriage, and thus, give the children and unbelieving mate the opportunity to stay in close contact with one who has given themselves to the Lord (See comments 1 Pt 3:1,2).

**14 Sanctified:** If the unbeliever in the marriage agrees to stay with the believer, then the marriage is considered sacred by God. Separation of the two is avoided, and thus, if children are involved, the marriage continues for their benefit. If one would separate from the unbeliever, the unbeliever may take the children, and thus, the children would be raised outside the Christian influence of the believer. Therefore, the believer should not seek to leave the unbeliever for the sake of bringing up the children in the presence of the believer's Christian influence.

**15 If the unbeliever leaves:** If the unbeliever takes the initiative to divorce from the believer, then the responsibility for the dissolving of the marriage is not on the shoulders of the believer.

**Not under bondage:** Though this is often a controversial statement, the immediate understanding of the statement in the context of this letter, which was the only letter of inspiration the Corinthians possessed, was that the believer was no longer under the bondage of the marriage contract if the unbeliever took the initiative to divorce himself or herself from the believer. There are two primary positions that Bible students take concerning what Paul here teaches. (1) It is assumed in this case that the unbeliever departs in order to live in an adulterous relationship with another person. The believer, therefore, is under no obligation to maintain a marital relationship with the unbelieving mate. He or she could divorce the unbeliever on the grounds of adultery (Mt 19:9). (2) Paul is not giving another exception for divorce between two who are in a covenant relationship with God. He is

**16** For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?

**17 ¶** But as God has assigned to everyone, as the Lord has called everyone, so let him walk. And so I instruct in all the churches.

**18** Was anyone called having been circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called in uncircumcision? Let

him not be circumcised.

**19** Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

**20** Let each one remain in the same calling wherein he was called.

**21** Are you called *being* a bondservant? Do not worry about it. But if you are able to become free, rather use *it*.

**22** For he who is called in the Lord *while* a

discussing a different situation than what Jesus discussed in Mt 19, that is, the marriage of one who has become a Christian to one who has rejected the gospel. This is a different situation than the one wherein Jesus gave directions to the Jewish couples in Mt 19 who were both in a covenant relationship with God. In the context of the Corinthians, the situation was that a converted person came into covenant relationship with God, while the other did not. The Corinthian church, therefore, was asking Paul what to do in such situations if the unbeliever decided to desert the believer for any reason. Paul instructed them that if the unbeliever should depart, the believer is no longer obligated to be a marriage partner to the departed unbeliever. The deserted believer is not under the bondage of a marriage contract concerning the marriage relationship. The believer is thus free to remarry and should not suffer the suppression of sexual drives, loneliness, economic poverty, and the possible deprivation of a home situation wherein children would be without a mother or father. The deserted Christian mate should not be confined to the burden of a single parent household because of the unfaithfulness of an unbeliever who refused to obey the gospel. **Called us to peace:** The believer has the responsibility of maintaining a peaceful environment within the home if the unbeliever decides to depart. Rage and reviling would accomplish nothing except drive the unbeliever further away. See comments 1 Pt 3:1-6. **16** Paul concludes his instructions concerning mixed marriages by exhorting the believer to remain with the unbeliever. If the believer maintains a Christian attitude in the marriage, there is the possibility that the unbeliever will be converted. Therefore, the believer should take no initiative to depart from the unbeliever. All initiative to depart must be with the unbeliever. It is the responsibility of the believer to conduct himself or herself in a manner that would possibly lead to the conversion of the unbeliever. Therefore, the believer must conduct himself or herself in a manner that will encourage the unbeliever to preserve the marriage.

#### REMAINING AS ONE IS CALLED

**17** Paul is still discussing the marriage relationship in this context. He here discusses that one must preserve the marital relationship that he or she has at the time either become a Christian. Throughout the New Testament there is neither commandment nor advice given that a Christian should take the initiative to break up a marriage relationship. In the preceding context of verses 12-16, the believer was exhorted to maintain his or her marital relationship with the unbeliever. If the

unbeliever agrees to remain with the believer, then the believer must remain in the marital relationship. Therefore, one must remain in the marital relationship he or she has at the time of conversion. However, this would not apply to a polygamist relationship since such a relationship is not a God ordained relation of one man for one wife for life (See comments Ep 5:22-33). **18,19** Those Jews who were converted must not seek to change the fact that they were Jews. Neither must the Gentiles become as Jews. "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love*" (Gl 5:6; see Rm 2:27,29; Gl 3:28; 6:15; Cl 3:11). **Keeping of the commandments:** What is important as a Christian is not changing one's marital situation, but obeying the will of God (Jn 14:15; 15:14; 1 Jn 2:3; 3:24; 5:2). **20** The statement of this verse is directed to those who have obeyed the gospel. In the preceding context Paul spoke of the unbeliever who might choose to change the marital situation by deserting the believer. However, Paul here states that those who obey the gospel should not seek to change their marital status at the time they obey the gospel. We assume, therefore, that regardless of one's marital status, he or she must remain in the marital relationship he or she is in at the time of conversion. The Holy Spirit gave no instructions to any New Testament writer concerning the breaking up of marriages when people became Christians. In fact, the precise message of the instructions the Holy Spirit gives in this context is that such should not be done. Those who obey the gospel are commanded to make every effort to preserve their marriage relationship when they become Christians, not to dissolve such. Therefore, it would be presumptuous of any man to teach something that is contrary to what the Holy Spirit has here specifically commanded concerning the preservation of marriages. **21,22** If a slave had the opportunity to gain his freedom after he became a Christian, then he should take the opportunity to be free. **The Lord's freeman:** Whether the slave who became a Christian gained his freedom or remained a slave, his relationship with Christ continued the same. He was set free from sin through his obedience to the gospel in order to become the slave of righteousness (Compare Jn 8:36; Rm 6:16-18; Cl 3:24; Pl 16; see Js 1:9,10). **Christ's slave:** When any person obeys the gospel, he or she becomes the slave of Jesus (See 6:20; 9:21; Gl 5:13 Ep 6:6; 1 Pt 2:16). As a Christian he is not his own, but one in whom God dwells to accomplish the work of God on earth (Gl 2:20). **23 Bought with a price:** The price that was paid was the incarnate blood of the Son of God (6:20; At 20:28; 1 Pt 1:18,19; Rv 5:9;

bondsman, is the Lord's freeman. Likewise, he who is called *while* free, is Christ's bondsman.

**23** You were bought with a price. Do not become bondsmen of men.

**24** Brethren, let each one remain with God in the *state* wherein he was called.

**25 ¶** Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord. However, I give my opinion as one who has obtained mercy by the Lord to be trustworthy.

**26** Therefore, I suppose that this is good because of the present distress, that *it is* good for a man to remain as he is.

**27** Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife?

Do not seek a wife.

**28** But if you marry you have not sinned. And if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless, such will have trouble in the flesh. I am trying to spare you.

**29 ¶** But this I say, brethren, the time *is* shortened so that from now on both those who have wives should be as though they had none,

**30** and those who weep as though they did not weep, and those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, and those who buy as though they did not possess,

**31** and those who use the world as not misusing *it*, for the form of this world is passing away.

**32 ¶** But I want you to be free from concern.

see Lv 25:42). Since they were freed in Christ, then they would not become the bondsmen of those false teachers in Corinth who were seeking to bind on them that which God had not bound (See comments At 15:10; Gl 5:1,2). **24** The application of the principle that is stated here applies to both the marital status and the slavery status of those who became Christians in Corinth. Paul was not breaking up marriages, neither was he on a campaign to set the slaves free (See Ep 6:5-8; Cl 3:22-24). This statement of Paul simply means what it says. One must remain in the civil or marital state he or she is in at the time of conversion. In this context, reference is specifically to those who are married.

#### CONCERNING THE UNMARRIED

**25 Concerning virgins:** Paul now turns to answer the Corinthians' questions concerning those young people of both sexes who are unmarried in the church.

**I give my opinion:** What advice he gives here is not by commandment of the Lord (See 2 Co 8:8). It is simply his judgment in view of the circumstances that are explained in the following verse. **26,27 The present distress:**

Paul does not explain any particular distress. Not too long before the writing of this letter, Caesar Claudius ran the Jews out of Rome (At 18:2). The persecution that Nero would launch against Christians could have already begun, and thus, the time had come when Christians were headed into great persecution that would come upon them from the Roman government (See comments in introduction to Rv). Add to this the fact that this letter was probably written about fifteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Jewish persecution of the church was still prevalent. Also, antagonism between Rome and the Jewish State was building. In A.D. 70, Rome would eventually crush Jewish nationalism with the destruction of Jerusalem (See comments Mt 24). Therefore, these were not peaceful times. Though we do not know all the social and political troubles that prevailed in the environment, we do know that they were such that Paul would give the advice of these verses. We must also understand that the distress about which Paul speaks was not temporary. It was a distress (persecution) that would continue for years. It would be a time when it would be

difficult to marry and bring children into a world of hardship persecution of Christians. **Remain as he is:** The advice is that one remain either single or married. If married, one should not seek to be loosed from his or her mate. If single, one should not seek to be married.

**28 If you marry you have not sinned:** If one did marry against Paul's advice in this context, he or she has not sinned because Paul is giving only his advice, not a commandment from God. Therefore, Paul can give advice by inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the writing of this inspired epistle without that advice being bound as law. **To spare you:** Paul's advice to remain in the situation in which he or she was at the time of conversion was based on his concern for the husbands and wives. These were not the best of times for a Christian family, and thus, one should not change his marital situation.

**29,30 The time is short:** In comparison to eternity, the Christian's life on earth is short. It is too short to be concerned about those things that will not continue into eternity (Compare Rm 13:11; 1 Pt 4:7; 2 Pt 3:8,9). Since marriage will not be a part of our heavenly dwelling (Mt 22:30), then it is not something that should be focused on in times of distress about which he refers in verse 26. Our focus should be on those values and principles that will endure past the end of all things of this world (See comments Mk 10:28-30; Lk 14:25-33).

**31 As not misusing:** For the Christian, the world is not the end. It is only the means to the end. The end is the new heavens and earth that is yet to come (2 Pt 3:13). Christians, therefore, should have their minds focused on those things that are above and beyond this present world (Cl 3:1-3). In this way they will properly use the things of this world. The Christian's goal is not to remain attached to this world. It is not his goal to rule over this world. It is his desire to see the passing of this world in order that the heavenly realm of existence be established. See comments 2 Pt 3:11-13; see Ps 39:6; Js 1:10; 4:14; 1 Pt 1:24; 4:7; 1 Jn 2:17.

**32 Without concern:** In the times of persecution Paul wanted them to be free from the worries of providing material necessities to maintain a family with small children (Compare 1 Tm 5:5). **Things of the Lord:** In times of persecution, those who are single would have

He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.

**33** But he who is married cares for the things of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

**34** There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.

**35** And this I speak for your own benefit, not that I may put a restraint on you, but for that which is proper, and that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

**36 ¶** But if anyone thinks that he behaves himself improperly toward his virgin *daughter*, if she is past the flower of *her* youth, and if it

must be, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin. Let them marry.

**37** Nevertheless, he who has settled the matter in his heart, not being compelled, but has authority over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin *daughter*, does well.

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

**39 ¶** The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives. But if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

**40** But according to my opinion, she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

to think about their service to the Lord instead of worrying about mates and children in a marriage relationship. **33,34** In normal times of peace, it is the responsibility of the husband to care for the things of the world in order to provide for his family. Paul thus uses the general responsibilities of the husband in times of peace to remind them of the difficulty of fulfilling this responsibility in times of persecution. In the times of distress in which they were in, he thus discouraged marriage in order to spare them from the added burden of family responsibilities. It is not that Paul is teaching celibacy as a manner of life (See 1 Tm 5:14,15). The times of physical distress in which they lived called for the advice that they remain single in order that they focus on the Lord through those times (See Lk 10:40). A woman who is married has to care about providing for a husband and children (Ti 2:4). However, in times of distress this would be difficult. **35** For those who could control sexual drives (vss 1,2), Paul advised that they remain unmarried in order that they focus on serving the Lord without the distraction and worry of providing for a mate or children. **Restraint:** This could be translated "snare." In other words, Paul did not want his advice to bind them to celibacy. There were some among them with strong sexual desires, and thus, it would be best for them to marry, even in times of distress (vss 1,2,8,9). It would be better to marry in times of distress than to be tempted to commit fornication. **Without distraction:** In times of distress, those who remained single would better commit themselves to the service of the Lord without the burden of providing for mates and children.

**36 If any man:** The custom of the culture of Corinth was that the parents, specifically the father, or guardian in the absence of a parent, had the authority to give the daughters for marriage. In this case, if the daughter were passing the usual age for marriage, Paul encouraged the father or guardian to let her marry. If they felt that they were unfair to her in not allowing her to marry, they should allow her to marry even though they were in times of distress. **He does not sin:** Paul again reminds them that he is talking concerning his own advice and not the commandment of the Lord (vs 25). This is

inspired advice. But it is not inspired commandment. If they did not follow his advice, they would not be sinning against God. **37,38** The parent or guardian who determined it to be unwise to allow the daughter to be married did not need to give her in marriage. He should not feel guilty about not giving the daughter in marriage because of the times of distress. If she remained unmarried she would be spared the burden of caring for the things of the world in order to provide for a husband and children (vs 34). Therefore, the father can forbid her to marry without sinning against God. We must keep in mind while reading throughout this advice of Paul, that the environment for Christians was hostile to their faith (vs 26). In the context of persecution, therefore, Paul's advice against marriage must be understood.

**39 Bound by law:** God's principle for marriage is that one person marry another person, and that marriage exist until one mate dies (See comments Mt 19:1-9). If one mate dies, then the living mate may marry another (Rm 7:1-3). **Only in the Lord:** If a Christian woman's husband dies, she is at liberty to marry again. However, Paul states here that she must marry one who belongs to the Lord. Since the religiously split marriage produced problems when only one mate was converted (vss 12-16), then Paul's stipulation here would only be reasonable for wise women who had either experienced marriage to unbelievers or who had worked with women who were married to unbelievers in the congregation. It would certainly be unwise on the part of a Christian to bring himself into the bondage of an unbeliever in a marriage contract. Since it would be unwise on the part of older women who had lost their husbands to death to marry unbelievers, then certainly it would be unwise for a young virgin to marry an unbeliever. **40 Happier:** Again, this advice is in reference to the circumstances of distress in which they lived (vs 26). Caring for a family in times of persecution would be a great burden on fathers and mothers. It is for this reason that Paul suggests that the unmarried remain such. **My opinion:** Again, Paul does not bind celibacy. He knows that he writes by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but what he writes in this context concerning celibacy is only his inspired advice, not the commandment of God (vss 25,35).

## Chapter 8

**1 ¶** Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

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

**3** But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

**4 ¶** Therefore, concerning the eating of those things sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world and that *there is*

no other God but one.

**5** For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there are many “gods” and many “lords”),

**6** but to us *there is* one God, the Father, from whom *are* all things and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things and we through Him.

**7 ¶** However, not everyone *has* this knowledge, for some accustomed to the idol until now eat *meat* as a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

## Chapter 8

### MAINTAINING UNITY IN AREAS OF OPINION

Corinth was an environment of idol worship and religious immorality. Fornication was a part of the idolatry of the Corinthians. Animals were sacrificed to gods that had been created after the imaginations of immoral men who sought to gratify their own lusts of the flesh. The meat of these sacrifices was partially consumed in the temple at the time of sacrifice and by the one who offered the sacrifice. The remainder of the meat was sold in the public market place of the city (See 8:4,7,10; 10:19; At 15:20,29). In this chapter Paul is expressing his concern for the new converts. In expressing his concern, he establishes principles for maintaining unity in the midst of different opinions (See comments Rm 14).

**1 Knowledge puffs up:** In the eyes of God, there is no religious significance to meat. God created all meats to be eaten according to the will and taste of the individual. However, some of the new converts of the Corinthian church were still living with a conscience that was trained by their past idolatrous life. However, some in the congregation who knew that there was no religious significance to meat, were intimidating some of the new converts to eat meat against their conscience (See Rm 14:14). These brethren who had knowledge that there was nothing in meats, were eating with a puffed up attitude toward those who were still struggling with a past religious significance of meat (Rm 14:3). Therefore, Paul proceeds in this chapter to give advice concerning the relationship between stronger and weaker brethren in relation to those things that are matters of opinion. He teaches that at times stronger Christians must forego their rights of exercising their Christian liberty in order to protect the conscience of the new convert. Patience and love must be exercised toward the new converts until they grow in the faith to understand that God placed no religious significance on any food.

**2** Those who knew that there was nothing in an idol were doing wrong by intimidating the weaker new convert to eat the meat that was sacrificed to idols. Knowledge that has no consideration for the weaker brother is knowledge that is used in an arrogant and unloving manner. One's knowledge as he grows as a Christian must be used to edify new converts in their growth. **3** One's love of God is manifested in his love and consideration of his brother. See comments 1 Jn 3:10,11; see 1 Jn 3:13-17. **Known by Him:** God knows the heart of the person who considers both the will of God and the

conscience of the new convert (See Mt 7:23; Gl 4:9; 2 Tm 2:9). He knows our actions, though our brethren know our heart by our actions. Therefore, in order to manifest that one loves God, he must behave in a loving manner in his relationship with his brother.

**4 An idol is nothing:** An idol is only a reminder of a god the worshiper has created after his own image. Therefore, the idol actually represents the emotional intellect of the one who conceives with reverence the imagined god (See Lv 26:1; Is 2:8; 10:10; 41:24; Ez 30:13). There is thus nothing in an idol beyond the ability of man to conceive. **No other God:** There is only one God (8:6; Dt 4:35,39; 6:4; Mk 12:29; 1 Tm 2:5). He is the God who is beyond the comprehension of the minds of men (See comments At 17:22-29). **5,6 For even if:** If there were other gods, there would be only one God for the Christian, for it was to this God that the Christian has given his submission. Paul here applies the reasoning of the pagan religious mind. The Corinthians understood that different men gave their submission to different gods, and thus, submitted to what they conceived to be the demands of that god. Paul asked from the viewpoint of pagan reasoning, therefore, that at least the Corinthians should submit to the demands of the God to whom they gave their allegiance through Jesus. **There is one God:** Though the Greeks submitted themselves to gods they conceived of being in heaven or on earth, the Christian has submitted himself to the one true and living God of heaven (Mt 2:10; Ep 4:6). **From whom are all things:** See comments At 17:22-29 (Rm 11:36). **One Lord:** There is only one Lord to whom we have given our allegiance and submission (Jn 13:13; At 2:36; Ph 2:11; see comments Ep 4:4-6). Jesus was the creator of all things (Jn 1:1-3; Cl 1:16; Hb 1:2). Since all things are upheld by the power of Jesus' word (Hb 1:3), we continue to live because of Him. Our existence on earth, therefore, depends upon the grace of God to continue all things as they are.

**7** We must keep in mind that this context is discussing something that had religious connotations from past religious practices by those who gave reverence to idol gods. It is not discussing that have no biblical foundation opinions that we would make religious, and thus, bind on the church. The context of what is stated is based on the culture of idol worship and pagan religions that were prevalent in Corinth. **Not in everyone this knowledge:** There were in the Corinthian church new converts who had not yet changed their thinking concerning the foods that were sacrificed to idols (10:28).

**8** But meat does not commend us to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

**9 ¶** But take heed lest somehow this freedom of yours becomes a stumbling block to those who are weak.

**10** For if anyone sees you who have knowledge sitting in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things that are sac-

rificed to idols?

**11** For through your knowledge, the weak brother, for whom Christ died, will perish.

**12** And so by sinning against the brethren, and wounding their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

**13** Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, lest I make my brother stumble.

In their conscience, they were still living in the past. **Being weak is defiled:** These new converts continued to believe that the sacrificial meat had spiritual connotations connected with it when eaten. On the other hand, there were those who had been Christians for a longer period of time who had grown out of the reverential consideration of any meat that was offered to an idol god. The case was that these stronger Christians were intimidating the younger Christians to eat the meat, and thus, the younger Christians ate against their conscience. In eating, their consciences were defiled. When they ate they were renewing in their minds their past reverence they had toward sacrificial meat. **8 Does not commend us:** There is no religious significance in meat or any other food. We cannot make food a part of our worship to God (Rm 14:17). The eating of food does not have any bearing on our salvation. "For every creature of God is good. And nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tm 4:4; see Mk 7:19). All foods, therefore, can be eaten by the Christian. However, if one grew up in a religion that placed religious significance on certain foods, then such a person will continue to have such feelings toward certain foods until he realizes that God created all foods without religious significance. This is a process of growth with which the stronger brethren must be patient.

**9,10** God has placed no religious significance on foods. This does not mean that our liberty of eating certain foods should be used to cause someone to stumble by eating against their conscience. Because of one's knowledge that meats have nothing to do with salvation, he could eat without offending his own conscience. However, if the new converts were intimidated to eat the meat that they had formerly eaten in reverence to idols, then the freedom to eat on the part of the knowledgeable brother would be a stumbling block to the new convert. The weak brother would thus sin in eating against his conscience (Rm 14:23). What Paul is stating is that the conscience of the weak brother (the new convert) must be guarded by the strong brother (the knowledgeable brother). The conscience of the weak brother must be guarded until he grows out of his past religious connotations that he put on the eating of certain foods (Compare Gl 5:13). **Idol's temple:** Some of the stronger brethren were going to the "temple restaurant" and eating the meat that had been sacrificed to idols. The new converts witnessed this, and thus, were confused concerning the practice because they still thought of idol gods when thinking of the meat that was sold and eaten in the temple. Paul is saying that the

knowledgeable brothers should not go to the temple to eat the meat if such causes the new converts to be encouraged to eat against their conscience. One must stay away from the temple foods for the sake of the new converts (10:27-33; Rm 12:13,21). **11** If the new convert is encouraged to eat, he sins because he has not eaten out of faith (See comments Rm 14:23). Therefore, the strong brother has encouraged the weak brother to offend his own conscience by eating what he believes has religious connotations in reference to idols. The strong brother would cause the new convert to lose his soul if he encourages the weak brother to eat against his conscience. **12 You sin against Christ:** One has the liberty to eat what foods he so chooses, for all foods are clean (Mk 7:19; 1 Tm 4:4). However, if one uses this freedom to encourage a new convert to eat in order to wound his own conscience, then he has sinned against Christ (See Mt 25:40; Rm 14:15). Paul's point is that the older Christians in the faith have a responsibility toward the new converts. The knowledgeable brethren must walk in love until the new converts grow out of their religious connotations that they were taught while living in idol religions. **13 I will never eat meat again:** This shows how committed Paul is to the principle he has taught in this context. He would willingly forego any liberty he had until the weak brothers grow to understand that there was no religious significance to the eating of meat (See Rm 14:21; 2 Co 11:29). Therefore, our conduct is often governed by the consciences of the new converts (Rm 15:1). Stronger Christians must be willing to sacrifice their liberties in Christ in order to nurture the new converts. However, this teaching also assumes that the new converts must grow to the point of being where the stronger brothers were in their thinking concerning foods. If one does not grow out of a conscience that was trained by idol worship and pagan gods, then he has the problem of refusing to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (2 Pt 3:18). If a "strong" brother remained in his thinking that meats had religious significance, then this brother must be approached for his refusal to understand the liberty that one has in Christ to eat meats. Brothers who are older in the faith must lovingly teach new converts the freedom that one has in Christ. It is a freedom from the bondage of pagan religious beliefs that held one in captivity before conversion (See comments Gl 5:1,2). Freedom in Christ is a fundamental teaching that must not be endangered lest we take ourselves back into religions of bondage from which we escaped in our obedience to the gospel. It is in Christ that we are truly free, and thus disciples must maintain their freedom.

## Chapter 9

- 1 ¶ Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?  
 2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet indeed I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.  
 3 ¶ My defense to those who examine me is

this:

- 4 Do we not have the right to eat and to drink?  
 5 Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, even as the other apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?  
 6 Or do only I and Barnabas have no right to refrain from working?  
 7 Who *as a soldier* serves at his own ex-

## Chapter 9

### THE RIGHTS OF A CHRIST-SENT APOSTLE

When considering the context of this chapter, we must keep in mind that it was Paul's general practice to support himself through tentmaking when he stayed at any location for a period of time. He did such while in Corinth (At 18:3), Ephesus (At 20:33-35) and Thessalonica (1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:6-13). When he was in transit and speaking to unbelievers in evangelistic work, he received support from the churches. However, when he was located with brethren for extended periods of time, he worked to support himself.

1 In this discussion Paul applies the principles of chapter 8 to his own life. In beginning this discussion he reaffirms his apostleship. His apostleship was based on Jesus, personally appearing to him and calling him into apostleship (15: 8; At 9:3,17; 18:9; 22:14,18; 23:11). **Seen Jesus:** At least one qualification for being a Christ-sent apostle was seeing Jesus and being personally called into apostleship by Him (See comments At 1:21,22). **My work:** The Corinthians were in Christ because of the sacrificial labors of Paul. Paul had given up his previous life. He had refused the financial support of the Corinthian church (See comments 3:6; 4:15; At 18:1-3,11). Their existence as a saved body of people, therefore, was based on his being called by Jesus and his sacrifices to work in Corinth. However, there were some in Corinth who questioned his apostleship. They questioned his motives for preaching to them. Such only indicates the limits to which arrogant attitudes will take those who have set themselves against God's workers. Paul had manifested the spirit of servanthood in his life. The false teachers in Corinth manifested the spirit of pride and selfish ambition (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). **2 Apostle ... to you:** The generic meaning of the word *apostolos* (apostle) is "one sent." Since Paul was sent to Corinth by Jesus, then he was the only apostle who first preached the gospel to them (15:1,2). **Seal of my apostleship:** Since Paul was the first to preach the gospel in Corinth, then the existence of the Corinthian church was the evidence of his apostleship of preaching the gospel. Their very existence as a church of Christ, therefore, proved his apostleship. Add to this the fact that he worked the signs of a Christ-sent apostle among them (2 Co 12:12). He had also imparted the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to them (See comments At 8:18; Rm 1:11). Therefore, the Corinthian church was the certification (seal) of his apostleship.

3 **My defense:** The word "defense" is from the Greek word *apologia*. The word is also used in At 22:1; 25:16; Ph 1:7,17; 1 Pt 3:15. It seems inconceivable that a Christ-sent apostle would have to defend himself as such for a church that actually experienced firsthand

the "signs of an apostle" (2 Co 12:12; compare Gl 2:8,9). We would assume, therefore, that those who were questioning his apostleship had come into the church after Paul left. They had not personally experienced the miraculous power of the apostle, and thus, were challenging those in the church concerning Paul's authority as an apostle. The report from the house of Chloe (1:11) was a plea from the brethren who personally knew Paul. It was a plea that he write this defense, or else come and correct the problem. **4** In this context Paul begins with his right as an apostle to be supported by the church. By asking the question of this verse, his implied answer is that he as an apostle has the right to be supported by the church (1 Th 2:6,9; 2 Th 3:6). The word "right" here could be translated "authority." Therefore, the emphasis would not be on privilege, but necessity. The authority of his apostleship demanded the necessity of the church to support him (Compare 3 Jn 7,8). **5 A believing wife:** The other apostles, including Peter, were married (See Mt 8:14; Mk 1:30; Lk 4:38). Since they were married and went forth with their wives to preach the gospel (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19,20), then it was the responsibility of the church to support them (See comments Rm 10:15). The apostles went forth with Christian wives. Therefore, their wives willingly went forth with them in order that they fulfill their Christ-commissioned responsibility to preach the gospel to the world. Such is a good example for all evangelists and their wives who go forth to evangelize the world. **Brethren of the Lord:** The physical brothers of Jesus who were born to Mary and Joseph also became evangelists to preach that their half-brother, Jesus, was the virgin-born Messiah and Son of God (See Mt 13:55). **6** It seems that Barnabas also supported himself as an evangelist throughout his journeys. A very important point concerning the support of an evangelist is given in the example of Paul and Barnabas. In reference specifically to Paul, a close examination of his journeys in his writings reveals that he supported himself most of the time throughout his journeys (See comments At 20:34,35; 2 Th 3:7,8). He had certainly received support from the Antioch church on his initial few months after leaving Antioch (See At 13:1-4). However, when the money they sent with him ran out, he and Barnabas went to making tents (See comments At 18:1-3). The Philippian church supported him, with Silas and Timothy, on a portion of the second journey after leaving Philippi (Ph 4:15,16). However, this contribution only subsidized what he and those with him made through making tents. The example here is obvious. Single evangelists would do well to go forth with the initial support of the church, but with the goal of supporting themselves in order to carry on with their journey (See comments 3 Jn 1-8). This would not be a binding example of Paul, but at least it mani-

pense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of the fruit? Or who feeds a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

**8 ¶** Do I say these things *only* as a man? Or does not the law say the same also?

**9** For it is written in the law of Moses, “*You will not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.*” Is God concerned for oxen?

**10** Or does He say *this* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written so that he who plows should plow in hope, and that he who threshes in hope, should be partaker of his hope.

**11** If we sowed to you spiritual things, *is it a*

great thing if we reap your material things?

**12** If others are partakers of *this* right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we have not used this right, but we endure all things so that we should not hinder the gospel of Christ.

**13** Do you not know that those who minister holy things live *from the things* of the temple? And those who wait at the altar are partakers *of the food* of the altar?

**14** Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

**15 ¶** But I have used none of these things,

fested his dedication to preach the gospel to the world. **7** Though Paul supported himself much of the time throughout his journeys, he still had the right to receive support from the church. This is the point of his argument to those in Corinth who were challenging his apostleship. As an apostle he had a right to the financial support of the church. He asks three questions here that have obvious answers. Those who go to war, are paid. Those who plant a vineyard eat the fruit thereof. Those who milk the goats and cows, drink the milk. Therefore, those who preach the gospel financially have a right to live from the gospel by the support of those who are converted by their preaching of the gospel (vs 14; see comments Gl 6:6). **8,9 The law:** Paul here resorts to principles of the Old Testament law concerning the support of those who minister the requirements of the law to the people. **You will not muzzle the ox:** The ox is allowed to eat the grain as it is trodden out of the husk (Dt 25:4; 1 Tm 5:18). This Old Testament illustration is used in order to teach that God is concerned more for his evangelists than an ox. If God cared for the ox in its menial labors to tread out grain, then Paul's conclusion is that He would certainly be more concerned for the evangelists. Those churches, therefore, who do not support evangelists, but allow the ox to eat of the grain, are more concerned over an ox than they are over the financial well-being of an evangelist. **10 Plow in hope ... partaker of his hope:** Those who plow in evangelism of the lost and edification of the church, should have the right to receive pay. It is right for an evangelist to hope for pay as a result of his labors. This would especially be true of elders who work in edification of the church (See 2 Tm 2:6). The laborer who expects to be paid has a right to be paid for his services (Compare 2 Co 11:8). **11 Reap your material things:** The evangelist who preaches and teaches the word of God has a right to receive financial support from those to whom he ministers the word of God. “*Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches*” (See comments Gl 6:6; see Rm 15:27). **12 If others:** Others had come to Corinth after Paul left. It seems that the Corinthians had supported them. This verse would also indicate that the Corinthians were supporting those who were opponents of Paul. In other words, the opponents of Paul were being inconsistent. They were saying that Paul had no right to financial support while at the same time they were extracting support from

the church. **We have not used this right:** While he was in Corinth, Paul did not receive support from the church. He did not take their support because he did not want to be accused of preaching for money, the very thing they are accusing him of doing at the time he wrote this letter (See comments 3 Jn 5-8). He thus supported himself by making tents (At 18:1-3; 20:33-35; 2 Co 11:7-9; 12:14; 1 Th 2:6). The Corinthian society was accustomed to supporting philosophers or teachers of some strange doctrine. In order that they not associate him with this group of self-proclaimed false teachers, Paul chose not to exercise his right to be supported by the newly converted Corinthians (See 2 Co 11:12). The actions of the Corinthians in this verse to support false teachers justified Paul's reasons for not being supported by them. His argument against the false and accusing teachers was that he preached without receiving contributions from the Corinthians. This was in contrast to his accusers. They were accusing him, who was their father in the faith while they were receiving pay. **Not hinder the gospel:** There are often cultural situations wherein an evangelist should support himself when preaching the gospel. He should not receive support from an unbelieving audience to whom he preaches in order that he not be accused of preaching for money. We must keep in mind that this situation is in reference to the initial preaching of the gospel to unbelievers. After people are converted, and thus taught their responsibility of supporting evangelists, the converted manifest their lack of spiritual growth when they do not support evangelists. Churches are spiritually immature if they do not carry out their responsibility of supporting evangelists. Such churches have not learned the spirit of God's grace and the commission of Jesus to take the gospel to all the world (See comments Ph 4:10-18; 3 Jn 5-8). **13** Paul again refers to the Old Testament. The Levitical priests who administered those things that were required of the Jews in fulfillment of requirements of the law, were justified in receiving payment from the worshippers (Lv 6:16,26; 7:6,31; Nm 18:8-31; Dt 18:1; see Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7,8). **14 The Lord has commanded:** No stronger language could have been given to the church concerning their responsibility to financially support evangelists in their work of world evangelism and church edification. Any church, therefore, that does not financially support the work of evangelists is sinning against this commandment of the Lord. Even the Corin-

nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me, for *it would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

**16** For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast about, for necessity is laid upon me. For woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.

**17** For if I willingly do this, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted

with a stewardship.

**18** What then is my reward? That when I preach the gospel I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I not abuse my right in the gospel.

**19 ¶** For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a bondservant to all, that I might gain the more.

**20** And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I

thian church in its carnal thinking was at least carrying out this commandment in reference to the false teachers in their midst (vs 12). It seems inconceivable that a church would claim to be a church of Christ, and yet, not obey this commandment which has been God's plan throughout His work with mankind to get the gospel to all the world. Every church should answer the question that Paul asked the brethren in Rome. "*And how shall they preach unless they are sent?*" (Rm 10:15). Churches that are not supporting the work of evangelists to preach the gospel to the lost and edify the church, have not been converted to the work of God to save the lost (See comments Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19,20). They are immature in their understanding of their responsibility as Christians.

**15 Used none of these things:** He had not used his right to be financially supported by the Corinthian church, for he supported himself while in Corinth (At 18:3). Neither was he writing this letter in order to move them by guilt to support him. He wanted to remove all accusations that he was preaching for money (vs 12; 2 Co 11:10). **Make my boasting void:** Any preacher who supports himself in preaching the gospel should be proud that he does such. If the Corinthians had supported Paul, then he would not have the argument of this context against the false teachers in Corinth who were living off the Corinthians. The sincerity of self-supporting preachers is magnified in the fact that they make tents while preaching the gospel. Paul says here that he would not condescend to full-time support in Corinth in order that his boasting concerning self-support not be questioned by his accusers. We must keep in mind, however, that he is writing these things to Christians who are only a few years in the faith. Churches that are well established with members that have been Christians for several years have no excuse for not supporting preachers. The problem with such churches is selfishness and a lack of understanding their responsibility to support the preaching of the gospel. The problem with the Corinthian church was their naive support of any self-proclaimed teacher. **16 Necessity is laid upon me:** Sincere preachers of the gospel are going to preach regardless of whether they receive any support from the church. The message of the gospel is as fire in their bones and they cannot help but preach the gospel (See Jr 20:9). Any other motive for preaching moves one to be a hireling (Jd 11). The motivation of the true preacher is that he must speak because of the gratitude in his heart for his own salvation (15:10; see comments Rm 1:14,15). He is driven to speak forth the gospel in the face of danger and poverty (See At 9:15; 16; 15:25,26). Of his own peril that he had experienced and would experience in his ministry, Paul said to the

Ephesian elders that he would not stop preaching, even if it meant the loss of his life (At 20:24,25). Such is the determination of the preacher of the gospel who is driven to fulfill his destiny. **17** In verse 16 Paul said that he could not boast if he preached the gospel in order to receive a salary. If a preacher considers preaching the gospel as a secular job, then he is a hireling. He is preaching for money. Paul affirms here that he is preaching willfully without receiving support. Because he is preaching out of a sincere heart that is driven by his appreciation of God's grace, then he has a reward (15:10; see 3:8,14; 2 Tm 4:7,8; Rv 14:13). **Entrusted with a stewardship:** Paul had been given the responsibility of taking the gospel to the Gentiles (At 9:15; Rm 1:1; Gl 2:7; Cl 1:27). It was therefore his destiny to accomplish this task (See comments At 20:24,25). Because he knew his Christ-appointed work, he would not allow anyone or anything to detour him from his course. And so should preachers consider their work as preachers of the gospel. One must feel that God has called him to the work of preaching the gospel. Once one determines that it is God's will that he preach the gospel, then persecution and hardship will not deter him from his calling. **18 My reward:** Paul was proud that he could preach the gospel without being a financial burden to the church (10:33). He knew that his preaching of the gospel did not depend on the support of the church. He knew that he could finish his course of evangelism that was assigned him by Christ (At 9:15) without being hindered by support because he could support himself through the making of tents. This does not mean, however, that he did not receive support from the church at times during his journeys (See Ph 4:15-17). It means that he had confidence that his preaching would not be determined by whether he received support from the church. His self-support gave him confidence to fulfill his mission of preaching the gospel.

**19 I am free:** When a church supports a local evangelist, the church often seeks to govern the work of the evangelist. Paul here says that he is free from such control. He was not obligated to serve the unnecessary local demands of brethren who might impose on him those things that would conflict with his ministry as a Christ-sent apostle to the Gentiles (See comments Lk 4:42-44; At 6:1-7). He knew that unspiritual or unlearned brethren did not understand the nature of the work of an evangelist. He was thus free from their manipulation that would come with their support. Since he was free from their demands, he could speak those things that needed to be said without the intimidation of brethren who might threaten to drop his support. His statement concerning financial freedom is not a statement of arrogance. He simply knew that some brethren who do not

might win the Jews. To those who are under law I became as one under law (though I myself am not under law), so that I might win those who are under law.

**21** To those who are without law, as without law, though not being without God's law but under Christ's law, so that I might win those who are without law.

**22** To the weak I became as weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, so that I might by all means save some.

**23** And this I do for the sake of the gospel so that I might be a partaker of it.

**24 ¶** Do you not know that those who run in

a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain *the prize*.

**25** And every man who strives exercises self-control in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we an imperishable.

**26** Therefore, I thus run, not with uncertainty. I thus box, not as *one who* beats the air.

**27** But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

## Chapter 10

**1 ¶** I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, how all our fathers were under the cloud

know the work of an evangelist – in this case the work of a Christ-sent apostle – will seek to control or manipulate those they financially support. Such practices often lead to the evangelist being stolen from the lost to whom the Lord has sent him to preach the gospel. It also often leads to the preacher not preaching those things churches need to hear in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (2 Pt 3:18). **Slave to all ... gain the more:** Churches often covet their preachers, and thus, steal them away from the lost (Lk 4:42-44). They use their financial support of the evangelist in order to intimidate the evangelist away from the lost to whom God has commissioned him to go. Paul here states that he is free from the confinement of such churches in order that he might be an evangelist to the world (See 2 Co 4:5; Gl 5:13). **20 To the Jews ... a Jew:** In order to communicate the gospel to the people of the many cultures to which he went, Paul culturally identified with both Jews and Gentiles (Compare At 16:3; 18:18; 21:20-26; Rm 11:14). He was willing to give up his own customs in order to relate with others. He did this in order to have an opportunity to preach the gospel in a manner that would be understood by all men. **21 As without law:** These were Gentiles who were not under the Old Testament law. However, they were under the law of God (Rm 2:12-14). **22 As weak:** Reference here is probably to those who were new in the faith. He sacrificed his rights in order not to encourage new converts to act against their consciences (8:9,11-13; Rm 14:1; 15:1; 2 Co 11:29). **I have become all things to all men:** Paul was willing to sacrifice his rights (10:33). He was willing to sacrifice his rights to the material things of life. He was willing to sacrifice his rights to maintain his own culture. He was willing to sacrifice all that was necessary in order to get the job done of evangelizing the world. God calls on all evangelists to do no less in obedience to the great commission (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19,20; compare Rm 1:14,15; 11:14). **23 The sake of the gospel:** Paul was willing to make any sacrifice that was necessary in order to share with the Corinthians the reward that comes from the result of obedience to the gospel. That reward is eternal life in heaven. The sacrifices of his personal life, therefore, were small in comparison to that which we shall receive as a result of God's grace.

**24,25 One receives the prize:** The Isthmian games were a part of the Corinthian culture. The competition of these games was a useful illustration that Paul here used to portray the struggles one has in the Christian work. Before one could receive the prize in the games, he had to commit himself to the task of the race, and thus, exercise great self-discipline in order to prepare for the race. In order to finish the Christian race, one must exercise no less commitment and discipline. See comments Hb 12:1,2. **Imperishable:** The trophy one may receive by winning a race in the Isthmian games would soon perish away. However, if Christians exercise great discipline in the Christian race, they will receive an eternal reward. If they will faithfully run the race, they will receive the prize of eternal glory in heaven (2 Tm 4:7,8; Js 1:12; 1 Pt 5:4; Rv 2:10; see comments 1 Pt 1:4,5). **26 Not with uncertainty:** Paul was confident that God would give the reward. He did not trust in his performance of law or good deeds. He trusted in the grace of God (2 Tm 2:5; see comments Ep 2:8-10). He was not as one boxing the air. There was substance to his hope, and thus, he endured the Christian race with confidence in God's promises (See Hb 6:18,19). **27 I discipline my body:** The Christian must not allow the lusts of the flesh to detour him from the race (See Rm 6:18; 8:7,13; Gl 5:17; Cl 3:5). He must exercise self-discipline in order to train his character to be fit for eternal dwelling. The preacher who preaches to others without bringing his lusts under control, will lose his own soul. Therefore, one's good works in preaching are not enough to save one from an unholy life (See comments Hb 12:14).

## Chapter 10

### TEMPTATION TO APOSTASY

In this context Paul warns the Corinthians. He uses the apostasy of Israel to show that "most of them" (vs 5) were lost because they did not take heed to remain faithful. Therefore, God is not interested in numbers, but in the faithfulness of the few who commit themselves to serve Him.

**1,2** The fathers, the nation of Israel, had a covenant relationship with God (Dt 5:1-5). They were God's people of the Old Testament era. However, this rela-

and all passed through the sea.

**2** And *they* were all immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

**3** And all ate the same spiritual food.

**4** And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from a spiritual Rock that followed them. And that Rock was Christ.

**5** But God was not well pleased with many of them, for they were scattered in the wilderness.

**6 ¶** Now these things were examples for us so that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

**7** Do not be idolaters as some of them were,

as it is written, "*The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.*"

**8** Nor let us commit fornication as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell.

**9** Nor let us try the Lord as some of them tried *Him*, and were destroyed by serpents.

**10** Nor complain as some of them complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

**11** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

**12 ¶** Therefore, let him who thinks he stands

tionship that Israel had with God did not prevent the apostasy of the majority of the nation. Paul here lists the great things that God did with Israel, which things did not prevent their apostasy. **The cloud:** This was the Shekinah which led Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness (Ex 13:21,22; 14:20; Nm 10:34; 14:14; Ps 105:39). **The sea:** God divided the Red Sea in order that Israel escape from Egypt (Ex 14:21,22,29; Nm 78:13). **Immersed into Moses:** They went under the cloud and through the sea in order to be committed unto the leadership of Moses. Israel was delivered from the destruction of the Egyptian armies because they followed the cloud of God and passed through the divided waters of the Red Sea. In the Corinthian context, the Corinthians were delivered from the destruction of spiritual death through the waters of immersion into Christ for the remission of their sins (See comments Mk 16:16; At 2:38; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6; 1 Pt 3:21). They were baptized unto (*eis*) a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (See comments Mt 28:19,20). **3,4 Same spiritual food:** God miraculously provided the manna of the Sinai wilderness in order to preserve the nation for entrance into the land of promise (Ex 16:4,15,35; Dt 8:3; Ne 9:15,20; Ps 78:24; Jn 6:31). **Spiritual drink:** God provided water for Israel from a rock (Ex 17:5-7; Nm 20:11; Ps 78:15). The food and drink were spiritual in the sense that they were miraculously provided by God. They were provided in order to preserve the heritage of Abraham through whom God planned to bring the Redeemer into the world (Gn 12:1-3; Gl 3:16). **Spiritual Rock:** Israel also had the blessing of the spiritual leadership of the Christ who was with the nation through the wilderness wanderings (Compare Dt 32:4,14,18; Is 17:10; 26:4). They were given the law by which they would be directed (See Rm 3:2). **5 Many of them:** This is the same warning that Jesus gave in Mt 7:13,14 that the gate is wide and broad for destruction. God is not interested in numbers, but in faithfulness. For this reason, most of Israel fell from God's grace because of their unfaithfulness (See Nm 14:29-32; 26:65; Ps 106:26; Hb 3:17; Jd 5; see comments 1 Pt 3:20,21). Though God delivered them from Egyptian captivity, they were destroyed because of their unfaithfulness.

**6** Paul now makes application of the Israelite illustration. It is an application of warning to which every Christian should give heed. The Corinthians would be

allowed by God to follow after their own lusts (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12; see Hb 6:4-6; 2 Pt 2:20-22). However, God will eventually destroy them in hell if they persist in their unfaithfulness (Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). **Lust after evil things:** The fall of most in Israel was the result of their following after their lusts (Nm 11:4,34; Ps 106:14). Those Christians who lust in order to fulfill the desires of the flesh will eventually fall victim to their own lusts. The fulfillment of the lusts of the flesh will result in one's sin and subsequent destruction from the presence of God (See comments Js 1:13,14). **7 Idolaters:** The idolatry was the result of Israel's desire to create a religion after her own lusts (See Ex 32:6). The Israelites thus pacified their own consciences by deceiving themselves into believing that it was religiously right to follow after the lust of the flesh. The Corinthians were born out of a religion that promoted the fulfillment of the lust of the flesh through fornication and gluttony (vs 14; 2 Co 6:17). **8 Fornication:** The Baal-Peor idolatrous religion that the Israelites had created after their own desires led them to commit fornication. As a result, God rained down judgment on them where in one day 23,000 died (Nm 25:9; Ps 106:29). This was in conjunction with the one thousand that were executed by the judges of Israel (Nm 25:5). **9 Try the Lord:** They tempted the preexistent Son of God by turning against the commandments of God (See Ex 17:2,7). In the Corinthian context, God's people were again tempting the Son of God by participating in the temple feasts and the immorality associated with it (6:12-20). **Serpents:** As a result of their sin, Israel was punished with a plague of poisonous snakes that were sent from God (Nm 21:6-9). **10 Nor complain:** Moses was the representative of God's authority among the Israelites when they came out of Egyptian captivity and during the forty years of wilderness wanderings before they entered the promised land of Canaan. Therefore, when they complained against Moses they were complaining against God (Ex 16:2; Nm 14:2). **Destroyed:** As a result of their complaining, God destroyed them (Nm 14:37). **The destroyer:** This was the angel through whom God worked to bring death to those who rebelled against His authority (Ex 12:23; 2 Sm 24:16; 1 Ch 21:15; Hb 11:28). **11 As an example:** The events wherein God punished disobedient and rebellious people were recorded in the Old Testament in order to remind Christians that God is storing up wrath for the last day. He will destroy those who disobey Him

take heed lest he fall.

**13** No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man. But God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to endure*, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape so that

you may be able to endure.

**14 ¶** Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

**15** I speak as to wise men. You judge what I say.

**16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not

(Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). Paul's point is that since God brought punishment upon those He had brought out of Egyptian captivity, He will also punish the unfaithful who have been brought out of the captivity of sin through their obedience to the gospel. Simply because one has been immersed for remission of sins does not mean that he will be saved. The condition for salvation is his continued faithfulness. One should also keep in mind that because God is delaying His judgment, one should not become indifferent to the fact that He will judge. We should not be deceived into thinking that because God delays punishment that He will not punish (See comments 2 Pt 3:3-7). **Written for our admonition:** Christians should study the Old Testament in order to learn from the examples of obedience and disobedience that are therein recorded. Old Testament examples were written for our learning (Rm 15:4). We must learn from how God worked among His people in the Old Testament in order to understand how He works today. Because God is storing up punishment for the disobedient must not be considered to be God's ignoring of sin. God delivered immediate judgment on Israel in the initial establishment of the nation of Israel after her deliverance from Egyptian captivity. He dealt so with the early establishment of the church (At 5:1-11). Today, He stores up all punishment for the last day when disobedient Christians will suffer the destruction of hell (Mt 10:28).

**End of the ages:** In At 2:16,17 Peter affirmed that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had come in the last days of national Israel. Paul's emphasis here is the same. From Pentecost in A.D. 30 to A.D. 70 when national Israel was destroyed by the destruction of Jerusalem, God was patient with Israel for forty years as evangelists went forth preaching the sonship and messiahship of Jesus. This end of the ages of national Israel had come upon all men at the time Paul and his readers lived. Therefore, the destruction of national Israel loomed in the near future (See comments Mt 24; Hb 9:26; 1 Pt 4:7; 1 Jn 2:18). Around A.D. 65,66 James wrote, "*Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near*" (See comments Js 5:1,8). Therefore, at the time James wrote, the coming of the Lord in judgment on national Israel was near. **12 Lest he fall:** When one becomes arrogant in his faith, he has laid himself open for a fall from the grace of God. The very confidence by which he thinks he stands, is that which causes him to fall. His arrogance moves him to trust in himself, and thus, he leads himself astray after this own righteousness (Rm 11:20). We must not assume that one's fall here refers to one becoming irreligious or pagan in behavior. In the Corinthian context, the false teachers were falling after their own arrogant religiosity (See comments Rv 2:2-6).

**13 God is faithful:** In contrast to the one who trusts in himself, God stands by those who trust in Him (1:9; Ps 125:3). One stands, therefore, not because of his ability to guarantee his salvation, but by the grace of God (See comments Ep 2:1-10). **Temptation:** All men are

tempted. But the temptation to sin originates from within the individual (See comments Js 1:12-15). Sin occurs, therefore, when the lusts and pride of the individual are carried into action that is contrary to the will of God (1 Jn 2:15). **A way of escape:** Since temptation originates from within the individual to carry out lust and pride, the way of escape originates from within one's heart. In order to escape temptation, therefore, one must look within himself. It is within one's heart that he must seek the way of escape from the lure of the environment in which he lives. It is because the source of temptation lies within one's heart, that he cannot blame anyone or anything that lies outside his heart for the sin he may commit in carrying out the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life. **Able to endure:** One is able to bear only when he trusts in the will of God in his heart. If God's word is not securely stored up within one's heart, he will give his heart over to the evil influences of the environment in which he lives (Compare Hb 4:12; Js 1:21; compare comments At 20:32).

#### THE TEMPTATION OF IDOL FEASTS

In the discussion that follows, Paul brings to a conclusion the argument he began against idol worship in 8:1. In his teachings of this discourse, he sought to completely separate the Corinthians' behavior from the idolatrous culture in which they once lived and to which some of them were tempted to return. The lesson he clearly states is that Christians should not allow ungodly cultural influences to become a part of their Christianity. Regardless of the acceptance of cultural practices that are contrary to the will of God, the Christian should not allow such practices to become a part of his life.

**14 Flee:** Since temptation originates from within the heart of man, the Christian must separate himself from that which stimulates emotions, feelings, and subsequent actions that are contrary to the will of God. In this case, the Corinthians must flee from the idolatrous worship of Corinth that involved fornication (vs 7; 2 Co 6:17). The principle here is that Christians should flee from anything that would lead them to compromise their allegiance to the commandments of God (See Mt 6:34; 22:37; Mk 12:30). **15 Wise men:** Paul seems to resort to a sarcasm here in reference to those in Corinth who claimed to be wise. They were puffed up because of their knowledge that there was nothing in the eating of meats that had been sacrificed to idols (8:1). However, their overconfidence in their knowledge would lead them away from the will of God. It would at least discourage the new converts who were still struggling in their separation from the idol worship in which they once participated. **16 The cup ... the bread:** In this reference to the Lord's Supper, Paul affirms that when we partake of the Supper, we are communing or fellowshiping (*koinonia*) with the blood sacrifice and universal body of Jesus (See 11:23-32; Mt 26:26-29; Lk 22:20; At 2:42). In this context, Paul is referring to the body of believers

the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

**17** For *though* we are many, *we are* one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.

**18** ¶ Consider Israel after the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

**19** What then do I mean? That an idol is anything or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?

**20** But I *say* that the things that the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. And I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

**21** You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

**22** Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

**23** ¶ All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful, but all things do not edify.

with whom each member communes with the other when partaking of the cup and bread. In partaking of the cup and bread, Christians are reminded of their union with the universal body of Christ because of the common obedience of all members to the gospel of Christ. **17 *One bread and one body:*** In partaking of the Lord's Supper, Christians manifest their unity of one faith in worship of one Lord. The bread is symbolic of the unity of the body. Therefore, every time Christians meet together to partake of the Supper, they proclaim the unity of the church throughout the world (12:12,27; Rm 12:5; Ep 4:4,16; Cl 3:15). The teaching of Paul is contrary to the denominational practice of churches today who practice independence from one another. Paul wants us in the Supper to remember the oneness of the body of Christ. Each individual member is a part of that body regardless of where he or she assembles.

**18 *Partakers of the altar:*** Israelites who partook of the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, also partook of the sacrifice that was being made (Lv 3:3; 7:6-19; 8:31; Dt 12:17,18). In the same way, those who partook of the pagan feasts of Corinth and ate of the meat sacrificed to idols were partaking of the idolatrous worship. Therefore, though we understand that there is nothing in the meat, Paul urges that Christians stay away from fellowship with the pagan ceremonies of idolatrous worshippers. **19** There was nothing in an idol or the sacrifices to an idol (8:4). The only significance to either was in the imaginations of the worshippers. Therefore, Paul is not discussing the supposed religious significance of either idols or foods taken in reference to idols. He is discussing the religious connotations that misguided religionists place on such things. The Christians who knew that there was no religious significance to either idols or foods must set an example for the community that God does not consider the religious inventions of men to have any significance. **20 *Sacrifice to demons:*** Any religion that is created after the misguided religious desires and imaginations of men, therefore, is a tribute to demons (Compare Lv 17:7; Dt 32:17; Ps 106:37; Gl 4:8; Rv 9:20). Such was the idolatrous worship of pagan minds in Corinth. Therefore, Paul did not want the Corinthian brethren participating in idol feasts. Their participation would give the impression that they condoned the false religions of Corinth. Therefore, Christians should stay away from religions that are created after the desires and traditions of men (See comments Mk 7:1-9). When one becomes a Christian, he should separate himself from man-made religions in order to

be joined to the body of Christ (See comments 2 Jn 9-11). **21** The Corinthians had to make a choice. If they were going to fellowship with the body of Christ, they could not partake of the false religions of man (See 2 Co 6:15,16). They could not be members of the church while at the same time associating with other religions in order to give the impression that they condoned the religious inventions of those who have been deceived by Satan. **22 *Stronger than He:*** If one would attempt to provoke the Lord to jealousy, he will certainly reap the wrath of the Lord (Dt 32:21; Ez 22:14). What Christian, therefore, would seek to provoke the Lord to jealousy with his participation with a false religion? Though there is nothing in an idol or foods offered in respect to an idol, one should not use his liberty to eat meat or associate with pagan temples in any way that might give the impression that he condones idols or foods sacrificed to idols. It is important, therefore, that one be cautious about his participation with religious groups in order to give the impression that he condones religious error. This does not say, however, that what other religions do should govern what the church does in matters of opinion. In the context of what Paul is discussing – idol worship – the discussion is not in reference to matters of opinion. These were matters of fundamental doctrine in reference to the one true and living God as opposed to pagan gods. Christians enjoy freedom among themselves in matters of opinion. However, when God speaks, they give their obedience to God's law. It is for this reason that the Christian's relationship with those who have not obeyed the gospel is evangelistic. The disciples of Jesus must never refuse an opportunity to teach others the truth of God's word as Paul never refused to go into any synagogue. **23 *All things are lawful:*** As an individual, Paul understood the freedom that we have in Christ (6:12). We must understand this statement in the context of this discussion. The idols were nothing and neither were the foods that were eaten in respect to the idols. However, it was not wise to partake of such in a context wherein the new convert might get the impression that one was paying homage to an idol. Our knowledge that there is nothing in an idol or the foods offered to idols should not be used as an occasion to encourage another to eat the foods offered to the idols (8:12). ***All things do not edify:*** Something could be lawful, but not necessarily beneficial for edification. Eating of meats sacrificed to idols by the knowledgeable Christian was lawful, but it was not expedient for the sake of the new convert (8:12). Something may

**24** Let no man seek his own *good*, but every-one another's *good*.

**25** Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake,

**26** for "*the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.*"

**27 ¶** If any of those who do not believe invite you *to a feast*, and you desire to go, whatever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake.

**28** But if anyone says to you, "This is offered in sacrifice to idols," do not eat for the sake of the one *who informed you*, and for conscience' sake. [For "*the earth is the*

*Lord's, and all its fullness.*"]

**29** I do not mean your own conscience, but of the other. For why is my freedom judged by another *man's* conscience?

**30** For if I by thanksgiving be a partaker, why am I slandered for that for which I give thanks?

**31 ¶** Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**32** Give no offense either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,

**33** just as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of the many, that they may be saved.

be lawful, therefore, but considered not expedient because it causes the new convert to act against his own conscience (See comments Rm 14). **24** Because individuals come into a brotherhood of believers through immersion into Christ, they come into a fellowship wherein they have responsibilities toward one another. They come into a fellowship of slaves who seek the best for others (See comments Mk 10:43-45). They thus seek to edify one another in an environment of mutual love. See Rm 15:1,2; 1 Co 13:5; Ph 2:4.

#### WISE USE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

**25** Paul now turns to giving instructions as to how one should wisely use his freedom in Christ in reference to the idol worship of the Corinthian culture. **Eat whatever:** If the meat was bought in the market, then it was possibly meat that had been sacrificed to idols. However, Paul instructs the Christians to simply buy and eat the meat without asking if it was meat that had been sacrificed to idols. **26** One must remember that all foods were created by God in order to sustain the physical part of man (Ex 19:5; Ps 24:1; 50:12; see comments 1 Tm 4:4). There is no religious significance to any food. **27** If a Christian were invited by an unbeliever to a house and served meat, he was to ask no questions concerning the origin of the meat. **For conscience' sake:** They were not to ask in order to eat the meat in ignorance as to its origin (Lk 10:7,8; see comments Rm 14:23). **28 Do not eat:** If the Christian were informed that the meat that was set before him was sacrificed to idols, then he should not eat. He should not eat in order to inform the host that he will not do that which would condone the teaching that there were other gods other than the one true God (Dt 10:14; Ps 24:1). The strong Christian who has liberty to eat any meat, should not allow the unbeliever or the new convert the opportunity to believe that he has any respect for the idols of false gods (8:7,10,12). **29,30 Conscience ... of the other:** Paul now explains that in the context of eating meat sacrificed to idols, the leadership of the strong brother must lead in protecting the conscience of the new convert. Therefore, the point of his instructions is for the sake of the new convert, not the conscience of the strong brother or even the unbeliever. Paul's instructions, therefore, must be understood in the context of the one body relationship that the members have with one another. In this relationship of unity, it is the responsibility of the stronger breth-

ren to maintain their relationship with the new converts. The strong must maintain the fellowship for the sake of the new convert. Though one may have liberty in Christ to do something, that liberty must first be considered in reference to new converts who might be encouraged to act against their conscience (9:19; Rm 14:6). Keep in mind that the one who might be encouraged to eat against his conscience is the new convert, not the older brother who should have grown out of giving any religious significance to meats offered to idols. The fact that there existed in the Corinthian church those who were converted out of idol worship, and yet had spiritually grown past showing any religious significance to idols, is evidence that God expects Christians to grow in reference to these matters. Consider also the fact that the members of the Corinthian church, even those who had been Christians for the longest time, were only Christians for five or six years. Therefore, by this time these strong Christians with knowledge concerning idols, had grown in five or six years to understand that there was nothing in an idol or the meats offered to idols. We would assume, therefore, that the new converts of the congregation would eventually grow out of their thinking that neither idols nor foods had any religious significance. If they did not, then they would be guilty of not growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pt 3:18). If they did not grow, their spiritual immaturity in these matters would be manifested in a few years if they maintained their same attitude toward meat as they had at the time Paul wrote.

**31 To the glory of God:** The Christian's life is given in its entirety to God (Rm 12:1,2). Therefore, the motivation behind the Christian's behavior is in thanksgiving for all that God has done through His grace (15:10). When one is motivated by grace, he is motivated to glorify with his life that there is only one Lord to whom he has given his life (Cl 3:17; 1 Pt 4:11). **32 Give no offense:** The Christian should not conduct himself in a manner that would dishonor God through his offense of the new convert (Rm 14:13). His conduct must portray obedience to the one true God, and thus, become the opportunity for the unbelievers to ask concerning his hope (1 Pt 3:15). **33 Not seeking my own:** The Christian is to behave in a manner that puts others first in his mind. In his personal conduct, Paul lived that which he preached. He became an example to those he sought to save through the preaching of the gospel

## Chapter 11

1 ¶ Be imitators of me even as I also *am* of Christ.

2 ¶ Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions as I delivered *them* to you.

3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the

woman *is* the man, and the head of Christ *is* God.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, *while* having *his* head covered, dishonors his head.

5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for she is even as the woman whose head is shaved.

(9:22; Rm 15:2; Gl 1:10). **11:1** This verse should actually be the concluding verse of chapter 10 and the discussion concerning idols. **Imitate:** This is from the Greek work *mimaitais*. It is the word from which the English word "mimic" is derived. Paul here establishes his behavior for the Corinthians as an example to be followed. However, the condition for following his example is as he follows Christ (See 4:16; Ep 5:1; Ph 3:17; 1 Th 1:6). The Holy Spirit allowed him to write this unique statement because of the nature of his life as a dedicated individual who had given himself to Christ (See comments Gl 2:20).

### Chapter 11

#### MAINTAIN GOD-ORDAINED ROLES

In verses 2-16 Paul writes concerning the influence of the culture on the behavior of the women in the Corinthian church. He writes to correct the behavior of some of the sisters who seem to have been influenced by either temple prostitutes or the unruly behavior of some women of the culture.

**2 Keep the traditions:** One should certainly not confuse Paul's use of the word "traditions" here with the man-made religious traditions by which false religions are constructed (See comments Mk 7:1-9). He speaks of inspired teachings by which they must conduct their thinking and lives (7:17; 15:3; 2 Th 2:15; 3:6; see Gl 1:11,12). **3 The head:** This metaphor is used to signify that which is the center of reference and in control. Christ is the center of reference to every man who has submitted to His will. Therefore, Christ is in control of the submitted through the authority of His word (Jn 12:48). The husband is the center of reference in the home, and thus, the one who has the final authority in the family (See comments Ep 5:22-33). In her relationship with her husband, therefore, the wife should manifest an attitude of subjection to the husband in order to preserve the order of the home. An insubordinate wife presents an environment in the home wherein there is no final authority, and thus, children grow up without learning how to respect authority. Patriarchal societies produce insecure men. **Head of Christ:** No one manifestation of the Godhead (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) works independently of the Godhead. Therefore, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the head of Christ (Jn 14:28). **4** Paul addresses here the conduct of the men in the assembly who publicly prayed and preached by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He uses the Greek word *anair* which refers specifically to the male members of the church. **Head covered:** The literal translation of this phrase is "having something down over his head." That which one is to have down over his head is not mentioned in the Greek word. We would assume that such

things as hats, caps or napkins are not in Paul's thinking. Verse 14 indicates that what is under discussion is the hair. However, it was a custom of the times that women wear veils that covered their faces. The veil symbolized the woman's subjection to her husband and the fact that she gave herself sexually only to her husband. If she did not wear the veil, then she was manifesting a spirit of rebellion. There are some Bible students who believe that reference here is to the hair of the man and woman. In other words, the man should not pray or prophecy while manifesting an effeminate appearance as a woman. **Dishonors his head:** If a man prays or prophesies in public with the appearance of a woman, he dishonors his headship. **5 Every woman:** There were women in the New Testament who were inspired in their prayers and teaching (At 21:9). However, there is no indication where any sister taught or prayed in a manner wherein she usurped authority over a man (14:34). Their work of praying and teaching was always in an environment wherein they maintained their submission to the brothers. Though the environment wherein they maintained their submission may be determined by the culture, Paul instructs that they should not conduct themselves in a manner where they lose the glory and honor of their position. Since the covering of the women manifested their position in public life, Paul is talking about more than the assembly of the church (See comments 1 Tm 2:8-15). **Uncovered:** The Greek word here is *akatakalyptos*. This word does not define that which is the covering. Since it is a generic term, then the context would have to determine what the covering is. Verse 4 in conjunction with verse 14 would identify the covering here as hair. There were possibly some Corinthian sisters who were cutting their hair in order to be identified with the temple prostitutes of Aphrodite. Their wrong behavior was not in cutting their hair or in having short hair. Many women throughout the world naturally have short hair. The problem here was the cutting of their hair in order to be identified with the temple prostitutes. Such behavior brought shame upon the church. It manifested an attitude of insubordination of these women to those outside the church. **Dishonors her head:** By cutting their hair, these wives were behaving in a way to be identified with the idolatrous temple worship, and thus, were bringing shame upon their husbands. It brought shame upon the body of Christ because such an act manifested to the society that these women were behaving in an insubordinate manner in reference to their husbands. When Christians behave in a manner to identify with cultural practices of the world that manifest principles contrary to the will of God, then they bring shame upon other disciples. It is not the place of Christians to introduce those things in a society that are considered ei-

**6** For if the woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

**7** For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of man.

**8** For the man is not of the woman, but the woman from man.

**9** Nor was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.

**10** For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of authority on her* head because of the angels.

**11** Nevertheless, in the Lord, neither is the

man independent of the woman, nor the woman independent of the man.

**12** For as the woman originates from the man, even so the man also *is born* through the woman, but all things *are* of God.

**13 ¶** Judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God *with her head* uncovered?

**14** Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?

**15** But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her, for *her* hair is given to her for a covering.

**16** But if anyone seems to be contentious,

ther rebellious or immoral. Compare comments 1 Pt 3:1-6). **6** It was shameful in the culture of Corinth for a woman to cut her hair in order to look like a man. In the Old Testament, the head was shaved in times of mourning (Lv 10; Jb 1:20). In this context Paul affirms that if the sisters want to shave their heads, then they must accept the shame that goes with doing such (See Nm 5:18). If they shave their heads in order to identify with the temple prostitutes, then in the eyes of the Christian community they have shamed themselves before the church. Therefore, Christians must be careful not to present themselves in a manner that identifies them with an immoral and disobedient world. **7** The man should not reject his God ordained position in life by covering his head. The woman should not reject her position by shaving her head. We must keep in mind that the principle of the headship of man and submission of woman was determined by God. However, how such is manifested within a culture is determined by the culture. Paul does not explain in what manner a woman is to remain in a submissive role. The fact is that she is, and thus, she should exercise caution in her life in order to manifest a position of submission in relation to her husband. In the Corinthian culture the covering had great significance in reference to the position of the wife in reference to her husband and other men. This cultural significance, therefore, determines the use of the veil that covered the woman's face. However, in most societies throughout the world today, the covering means nothing in reference to the woman's submission to the man. **8,9** **Woman for the man:** The woman was created from man (Gn 2:21) and given to the man (Gn 2:18). She was created for man (Gn 2:18) and was given to be the glory of man (See comments 1 Tm 2:13,14). The relationship of the woman to man, therefore, is a place of glory. When women walk outside their place of glory, they do not exalt themselves in the eyes of God. What Paul instructs in this context is for the purpose of guarding the position of the woman both before society and before the church. **10** **Authority on her head:** Though Paul does not define how long the covering of hair should be, he assumes that the Corinthians can culturally determine the length that would indicate her submission to the headship of her husband. Whatever the length may be, it must indicate that she is guarding her husband's authority and headship in the family. **Because**

**of the angels:** Angels function submissively before the presence of God. Some Bible students have affirmed that Paul means here that there were angels in their presence. The woman's sign of submission, therefore, must be maintained in order to manifest their demeanor of submission for the sake of angels. However, the Greek word *angelos* that is used here can be translated "messengers" (See Gr. in Mt 11:10; Lk 7:24; 9:52; Jb 2:25). Reference could possibly be to the evangelists in their midst. **11,12** The man and woman are mutually dependent on one another. It is God's plan that the woman function in a submissive manner in order that the man may guard her position of honor. The wife that does not allow her husband to function as the head of the family has moved herself out of a position wherein her honor is protected. The man is dependent on the woman who adds wholeness to his life. His very existence depends upon the power of the woman to continue the human race through procreation. Together, both man and woman are dependent on God, for both were created and sustained by the power of God (See Gl 3:28).

**13** Paul asks the question of this verse knowing that the Corinthians would answer in the negative. **Head uncovered:** The same Greek word is used here as in verse 5. That which is the covering is not identified by the word. Therefore, we can identify the covering only by the context in which this word is used. Verse 14 identifies the covering as the hair. The Corinthians knew what the covering was about which Paul spoke. They would therefore judge that it was not proper for the woman to pray with her hair shaven. **14** It is in this passage that Paul identifies the covering about which he is talking. It is the hair. It is the cutting of the hair in order to manifest an insubmissive attitude that is the problem. In the cultural context of the Corinthians, the cutting of the woman's hair identified the women of the church with the rebellious cultural practices of women manifesting a spirit of insubordination. The problem is not the covering. It is the attitude by which the hair was cut. We must not lose focus of the issue in the context. Paul is not condemning the short hair. He is dealing with the attitude of those women who were rebelling against their God-ordained position. The cutting of the hair was only the indication of the problem. **15** **Given to her for a covering:** It is here that Paul explains that

we have no such custom, nor the churches of God.

**17 ¶** But in giving these instructions I do not praise *you* because you do not come together for the better but for the worse.

**18** For first of all, when you come together in assembly, I hear that there are divisions

among you, and in part I believe it.

**19** For there must also be factions among you so that those who are approved may be made known among you.

**20** Therefore, when you come together, *it is* not to eat the Lord's supper.

**21** For in eating, each one takes before *oth-*

the hair manifested the glory of the woman. If a woman would present herself in a manner to be identified as a man, then she has forsaken her glory. In the culture of Corinth, emphasis on the long hair indicated the woman's willingness to maintain her position in society. The long hair is given to her for a covering instead of a veil. Therefore, she could signal her willingness to maintain her position in society by the wearing of long hair instead of the physical covering or wrap that was used to cover the face. Paul used the Greek word *koma* for the first time here in this chapter. It refers to the physical veil that was used to cover the face in order to show submission. However, in this passage Paul is saying that the long hair of the woman would take the place of the *koma* in that long hair would also manifest the position of the woman. **16 Seems to be contentious:** The insubmissive attitudes of some of the Corinthian sisters was contrary to the teaching of submission that had been taught to all the churches. It is thus not a point of dispute, but one to which the sisters must submit in order to maintain the God-appointed role of the woman (vss 2,3; see 1 Pt 3:1-6). **No such custom:** It was not Paul's custom to be argumentative about matters of opinion (2 Tm 2:24; Ti 3:9). In cultures where the woman's covering indicates the position of the woman, there may be points of discussion on this matter. However, in those cultures where the covering signifies nothing in reference to the woman's position, then the matter is not a point of discussion. Women were free to do with their covering as they so chose. Therefore, Paul's discussion of this context developed only because of some sisters who were not maintaining their positions in reference to male leadership. The problem was not the covering, but the attitude of some puffed up sisters. Though the covering had to be discussed because it was the cultural symbol of submission, contentions over the covering must not divert our attention away from the real problem.

#### FELLOWSHIP AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

This section of teaching must be understood in the historical context that the Corinthian disciples gathered together in the homes of the members throughout the city of Corinth, as other disciples did in other cities of the first century. Since assembly in church buildings would not exist until the first of the fourth century, the logistics of assembly of disciples must always be understood to be in a house setting in the New Testament. And since nowhere in the New Testament is a church determined by the ability of all members to meet together at the same place, the disciples in any city met in many houses through the cities, and thus the were the church in multiple assemblies in every city.

**17 Come together ... for the worse:** The reason for their coming together was to celebrate their salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus and to encourage

one another (See comments Hb 10:24,25). They came together to gather around the Lord's Table in order to celebrate their unity because of the oneness of the universal body of Christ (10:14-17). However, because of their puffed up attitudes, their coming together was an occasion for strife and discord (vs 33). For this reason, their coming together promoted division instead of unity.

**18 In assembly:** The Greek text literally reads, "in assembly." Therefore, Paul is discussing the public assembly context of their fellowship when they came together in different houses. This would be an occasion where they had to consider one another. Jews and Gentiles would have to consider one another's culture and customs. Individuals would have to consider mutual responsibility to encourage one another. The disciples had "living room" assemblies in the first century. Therefore, one could not overlook the needs of others in such a close encounter situation with one's fellow disciple.

**Divisions:** They had denominationalized or divided among themselves because of their sectarian attitudes (See comments 1:12,13; 3:3). They had divided among themselves because of their prideful use of the miraculous gifts in their assemblies. **19 Factions:** This word is from the Greek word *haireseis*. Reference is to sects among the disciples of Corinth that were caused by allegiance to different individuals (1:12,13), prideful attitudes in reference to the use of miraculous gifts (ch 12-14), and questions over teaching concerning the resurrection (ch 15). **May be made known:** Occasions of division among disciples provide an opportunity to manifest those disciples who truly have a heart of love, mercy and forbearance. It also provides the occasion for the proud to manifest their true character before all. God will allow the occasions of division to occur in order to test the sincerity of those who claim to be Christian (Compare Dt 13:3; see Lk 2:35; 1 Jn 2:19). It is during times of church troubles that the spirit of love, mercy and forbearance is manifested within the hearts of those who truly love God and seek to behave after His will (See comments Ph 4:5). **20 It is not to eat:** The Corinthians, as well as many first century churches, conducted every Sunday what was generally referred to in the first century as a love feast (vs 21; 2 Pt 2:13; Jd 12). As the Passover meal, at which time Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, it was a time of celebration. For this reason the love feast of the early church was a celebration meal. In the case of the Corinthian church, however, this feast turned into an occasion for division, selfishness and disorder. The unchristian attitudes that were generated during their love feasts made it impossible for them to have a mind of celebration in order to eat the Lord's Supper which was taken after the love feasts. **Lord's supper:** This is the only time this phrase is used in the New Testament in reference to Christians partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine in remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead

ers his own supper. And one is hungry and another is drunken.

**22** What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and to drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What will I say to you? Will I praise you in this? In this I do not praise *you*.

**23 ¶** For I have received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread.

**24** And when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "This is My body which is for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

**25** After the same manner *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

**26 ¶** For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

**27** Therefore, whoever eats this bread and

(See comments Mt 26:26-29). The assembly of Christians on the first day of the week provided an opportunity for them to come together in their different homes in order to remember the One who paid the sacrifice for their sins (See At 20:7). It was a time to celebrate their covenant with God. It was also an opportunity to remember the one universal body which was purchased with the sacrificial blood of Jesus (10:15-17). **21** The Corinthian love feast had digressed into an occasion to manifest of pride and selfishness. The rich brethren were not being considerate of the poor. Some were eating in the love feast before others could come in order to have a share of the food (vs 33). The love feast that should manifest Christian brotherhood had digressed to a feast of gluttony and drunkenness. As a result, their minds were in no condition for partaking of the Lord's Supper. Their unholy state of mind made it impossible for them to partake of the Supper with a correct mental attitude. **22 Houses in which to eat and to drink:** It would be better for them to eat something at home before they came to an assembly in someone else's house. It would be better to do this than to come with the wrong attitudes they had for the poor and toward one another. In the statements of this verse Paul shamed them for harboring unholy attitudes which led them to carry out unholy practices when they partook of the love feast with one another. He does not condemn them for gathering together to have the love feast (See vs 33,34). Neither does he condemn the eating of a meal in or at the house of meeting. If he did this, then he would be condemning the eating of a meal in the Christians' homes because most Christians in the first century met on Sundays in their homes. What Paul is condemning is the practice of something good as the occasion of the love feast to manifest their selfish and inconsiderate attitudes toward one another (See 16:19; Rm 16:5). **The church of God:** When Christians behave among themselves in a manner that is portrayed here in reference to the digression of the love feast, then the community is shown an assembly of people with ungodly attitudes. Those Christians, therefore, who would seek their own interests at the expense of the reputation of other disciples, have brought upon themselves the judgment of God. If the Corinthians could not cease from their gluttonous and drunken meal, then they should stop the love feast for it brought themselves as the body of Christ into disrepute. Paul calls on them to respect the poor. He calls on them to consider the reputation one another.

**23,24 I have received:** What Paul now explains

came to him by revelation of the Lord (15:3; Gl 1:11,12; Cl 3:24). The Lord directly explained to him the significance of the Lord's Supper (See comments Mt 26:26-29). **Took bread:** In the Lord's Supper the bread represented the incarnate body of Jesus that was sacrificially nailed to the cross, as well as the universal body of members (10:16). **Is for you:** The word "broken" is not in many Greek texts, and thus, could be dropped from the reading as many translations do. The text would read, "This is My body which is for you." There were no bones broken in the crucifixion of Jesus' body. **Rememberance:** God knew that men would forget the significance of the atonement of His Son. For this reason, the Supper was instituted in order to regularly remind Christians of who they are and why they are the sons of God. It is imperative, therefore, that Christians regularly partake of the Supper in order to remember the sacrificial offering of Jesus. **25 The cup:** Paul is not placing emphasis here on the physical cup that is used only as a container in which the fruit of the vine is contained. The bread of the previous verse did not need a container as the liquid of the fruit of the vine. Therefore, he simply refers to the cup to stand for the fruit of the vine that is within the cup. **The new covenant:** Jesus gave His blood in order to institute a new covenant between God and man. Therefore, when one is immersed into Christ, he comes into this new covenant relationship with God. It is new because the Old Testament covenant between God and Israel was taken away (See comments Hb 10:5-10). **26 As often as:** Paul did not command a specific time for the taking of the Lord's Supper. However, we would assume from the context here that the Corinthians were partaking of it on the first day of the week (Sunday) when they came together. This was the day when they came together for the assembly of the church (vs 18; 16:1,2; see At 20:7). Since they were coming together for the love feast and assembly on Sunday, they were corrupting their attitudes and the Supper by their gluttony and drunkenness at the love feast. Therefore, because of their sinful attitudes, they were not able to partake of the Supper in a worthy manner on the first day of the week. **Proclaim the Lord's death:** When Christians come together to partake of the Lord's Supper they make a proclamation that Jesus died for their sins. Paul affirms that Christians should partake of the Supper until Jesus comes again. **27 An unworthy manner:** Paul does not mean here that we must be spiritually worthy in order to partake of the Supper. If this were true, then no one could partake of the Supper because all have sinned (Rm

drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

**28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

**29** For he who eats and drinks not discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment to himself.

**30** For this reason many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

**31** For if we judged ourselves, we would not

be judged.

**32** But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we may not be condemned with the world.

**33** ¶ Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

**34** And if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home so that you do not come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

3:9,10,23). There is no man or woman who can meritoriously qualify to partake if reference is to spiritual worthiness. If Paul were discussing the worthiness of the individual, then if one did partake, he would be arrogantly trusting in his own good works. He would be arrogantly comparing himself with his brother who felt that he could not partake because he felt unworthy. Therefore, Paul cannot be teaching here that one's general worthiness in reference to God is a qualification for partaking of the Supper. If such were true, he would be teaching something that is contrary to the context in which he makes this statement. What he does refer to is the unworthy attitudes of the Corinthians that were developed during their gluttonous and drunken love feasts (vss 20-22). Because of the unholy and arrogant attitudes that were generated during the love feasts they could not partake of the Supper that followed the love feast. The unholy attitudes that came out of the love feasts before the Supper made it impossible for them to partake of the Supper in the right state of mind. **28 Examine himself:** At the time one partakes of the Supper, he should be examining his attitude toward his brother. If he is not in unity with his brother, then he judges himself to have an unworthy attitude at the time he partakes of the Supper (10:15-17; see Mt 26:22; 2 Co 13:5; Gl 6:4). Therefore, one should be in a worthy state of mind at the time he partakes of the Supper in order to proclaim the Lord's death, as well as to remember the oneness of the body of Christ. It is for this reason that any assembly of the saints wherein the Supper is observed, there must be no hysterical outbursts or uncontrollable situations. **29** For one to partake of the Supper in a casual or irreverent manner is to despise the sacrificial body of Christ and His body the church (vs 22). Partaking with such an attitude is to bring condemnation upon oneself because he is not considering the seriousness of his relationship with either his brother or the Lord. If he is not considering the Lord's body and his brother at the time he eats and drinks, then he is judging himself unworthy because he has an ungodly attitude at the time of partaking. **30 Many are weak ... sleep:** Some Bible students have affirmed that Paul's reference here is to their spiritual sickness. Because of their unworthy manner and the atmosphere surrounding the Supper, such was a manifestation of their spiritual sickness. Some were "asleep" because they had already fallen away (Compare 2 Pt 2:20-22). On the other hand, some Bible students affirm that reference here is to physical affliction that was brought upon them as a result of their corruption of the body of Christ. If

this were not the case in the absence of Paul, it was certainly going to take place when Paul came (See comments At 5:1-11; 1 Tm 1:20). He was coming with the rod of discipline in order to correct these matters among them (4:20). As a Christ-sent apostle, he had the authority to deliver sinners to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. It is best to understand this passage metaphorically in the sense that many among them were spiritually sick and some were simply spiritually dead. **31 If we judged ourselves:** If they were judging themselves to be unholy, and thus, correcting their sinful practices and attitudes in reference to the Supper, then there would be no need for someone else to judge them. Paul is urging them to take the initiative to judge their own relationship with God (vss 28,29; 2 Co 13:5; compare Ps 32:5; 1 Jn 1:9). **32 Disciplined by the Lord:** Because they did not judge themselves in order to correct the problems surrounding the Supper and other sinful attitudes and practices of the church, the Lord was directly chastising them (2 Sm 7:14; Ps 94:12; Hb 12:5-8,11; Rv 3:19). It is for this reason that some would assume that physical affliction had come upon them. As with Ananias and Sapphira, some had possibly died in punishment for desecrating the Lord's Supper (At 5:1-11). Since this was not sufficient to correct the ungodly atmosphere that surrounded the Lord's Supper, Paul was coming to finalize their chastisement from the Lord (4:20). **33** When they come together for their love feast, they must wait on one another. This would manifest consideration for one another. It would allow the poor an opportunity to partake of the food. It would also prevent some from eating, and then going home after partaking of the Lord's Supper. **34** If there are those who are too hungry to wait, then they should eat something at home before they come to the assembly (vs 22). In this way, they would not be coming together for the purpose of simply eating at the love feast. They would be coming together for the proper reason of being with their brethren, as well as to come together for the Lord's Supper. If they come together and carry on in a gluttonous manner, then they have judged themselves. **When I come:** There were evidently other things that needed to be corrected than what was discussed in this context. Therefore, Paul was going to personally set these things in order when he came (See 4:20). He was coming with the authority of a Christ-sent apostle, and being such, he had no choice but to exercise the authority of such an apostle. God gave the apostles disciplinary authority in order to bring the church into maturity during its early years of existence.

## Chapter 12

1 ¶ Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.

2 You know that when you were Gentiles *you were* led astray to dumb idols, however you were led.

3 Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus

accursed. And no one can say that Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

4 ¶ Now there are many kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are many kinds of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are many kinds of operations, but it is the same God who works all in all.

## Chapter 12

### MIRACULOUS GIFTS

Chapters 12-14 have been some of the most controversial and studied chapters in the Bible. They have also been some of the most twisted contexts of Scripture among those who have sought to create a religion after their own emotions. In these chapters Paul deals with the misuse of miraculous gifts. The gifts were misused because of the puffed up attitudes of some Corinthian disciples. In fact, we have these portions of Scripture to study because of the puffed up attitudes of the Corinthians. The miraculous gifts permeated the Corinthian church, as well as all the early churches of the first century to which the Christ-sent apostles traveled. Or, the gifts were received by those who traveled to the early Passover/Pentecost feasts when the apostles were still in Jerusalem (See comments Mk 16:17-20; At 2:38,39; 8:18; Rm 1:11). In the absence of an inspired written New Testament, God administered through the apostles' hands the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts firmly established the first Christians in their conversion out of Judaism and idolatrous religions. However, in the case of the Corinthian church, we have Paul's instructions concerning the use of the gifts because of the Corinthians' misuse of the gifts. Ephesus, Philippi, Derbe and a host of other churches did not have the arrogant and puffed up attitudes as was typical of the Corinthians. Therefore, there was no need to write exhortations as 1 Corinthians 12-14 to these churches. Because the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to the Corinthians who misused the gifts, and not to the other churches, leads us to affirm that the gifts were only temporary in the church. Once their purpose was completed, there would be no further use of the gifts, and thus, they would pass away. If it were not for the misuse of the gifts at Corinth, therefore, we would have no information concerning their use among the early first century churches. It is on this basis that we must conclude that the gifts were meant to be only temporary in the church, and thus, would pass away when the fullness of the inspired New Testament was written and distributed among the churches. It is on this basis also that we must conclude that the miraculous gifts were never meant to be the foundation upon which the church was to be based. Believers were to focus on Christ, not the work of the Holy Spirit through the miraculous gifts.

1 **Concerning spiritual gifts:** The word "gifts" is not in the Greek text. However, it is clearly understood that the subject of this context is about the manifestation and function of the miraculous gifts that were given by the Holy Spirit (vss 5-11). The purpose for which the gifts were given was to edify and build up the infant church until it was firmly established upon the word of God. 2 **Gentiles:** It is good for us to remember our

state of being lost when we were outside Christ (Ep 2:1,2). In this case, Paul reminds the Corinthians that they were once in the bondage of their self-deception of belief in idols (6:11; Ep 2:11; 1 Th 1:9; 1 Pt 4:3). They had created gods after their own imaginations, and subsequently, they made idols to represent their gods (Ps 115:5; Is 46:7; Jr 10:5; Hk 2:18,19). **You were led:** Regardless of their being led astray after their own religious inventions, they were led back to God through the preaching of the gospel (2 Th 2:13,14). 3 No one who is truly speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit would either speak or live in order to curse the name of Jesus. The truly inspired man who spoke would also live the life about which he spoke. **Accursed:** This is from the Greek word (*anathema*) that could be transliterated "anathema." The emphasis of the meaning of the word is on being destroyed from the presence of God (See Gl 1:6-9). The emphasis of Paul's statement here could be that anyone who spoke by the direction of the Spirit would obviously not proclaim Jesus accursed (See 1 Jn 4:2). **Jesus is Lord:** Except through the revelation of God, Jesus would have been just another Jew and an innocent "criminal" crucified on a cross. However, the messiahship and sonship of Jesus were made known to man through the revelation of God. His reign and lordship over all things were made known by inspiration of the Spirit (See At 2:36,37).

4 **Many kinds of gifts:** Though there are different functions of the miraculous gifts, all of them originated from the same Spirit (vs 11; Rm 12:3-8; Hb 2:4; 1 Pt 4:10). Since there is only one Spirit (Ep 4:4), then the one Spirit works in unison through the gifts. 5 **Differences of ministries:** This is the administration of the gifts to carry out the work of only one Lord Jesus (Rm 12:6; Ep 4:4-6). Since the one Godhead works in unison, the division that existed in the Corinthian church did not originate from God, but from man. Since God works as one, so should those who claim to work on behalf of His cause. Churches that claim to have the Spirit working through them, but do not work with other churches of Spirit-filled disciples, do not have the one Spirit working through them. 6 **Many kinds of activities:** The miraculous gifts manifested themselves in different ways. Nevertheless, one must not understand the diversity of the function of the gifts in a way that would attack the oneness of God. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all work as one, though God has manifested Himself in the three works of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through the miraculous gifts God manifested His work through men in several ways. 7 The miraculous gifts were not given for the purpose of self-exaltation as the Corinthians were conducting themselves with one another. They were given for the benefit of edification (See Rm 12:6-8). The very purpose for which the gifts were given was based on serving the needs of oth-

**7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone to profit *all*.

**8** For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

**9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

**10** to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *various* kinds of languages, to another the interpretation of languages.

**11** But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to every one individually as He wills.

**12 ¶** For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the one body, though they are many, are one body, so also *is* Christ.

**13** For by one Spirit we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondservants or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

ers. What God had given for the purpose of administering service to others, the Corinthians were using as an occasion for self-exaltation. **8-10 Word of wisdom:** From this we would assume that through the Spirit a special gift of wisdom was given to members to be able to make decisions concerning matters wherein judgments were to be made (See Js 1:5,6). If the discussion of 2:6,7 is a commentary of what is discussed here, Paul's meaning here could be on the word that comes as a result of the inspiration of the Spirit. **Word of knowledge:** Knowledge was revealed to the New Testament prophets in order that they understand and teach the truth of God to the disciples (See 2:11,16; Rm 15:14; 2 Co 8:7). **Faith:** Reference here is possibly to an exceptional faith that was granted to specific members in order to carry the church through times of hardship and persecution (See 13:2; Mt 17:20; 2 Co 4:13). **Healings:** In every region where there were disciples and where a Christ-sent apostle went, there were those who were given the miraculous gift to heal diseases among unbelievers in order to confirm the message and messengers of God (See comments Mk 16:17-20; At 5:12-16; 19:12; 28:8,9; Hb 2:3,4; Js 5:14). **Miracles:** Paul does not give us a distinction between miracles and healings, though here he uses the word *dunamai*. This would possibly refer to all miraculous powers that would be exercised for the specific purpose other than healing diseases. Through miracles, God's power was instantly manifested. Through the prayers of righteous men, God's power continues to be manifested in the lives of the disciples (See comments Js 5:13-16). **Prophecy:** This would include inspired preachers, teachers or even Christ-sent apostles (14:3,24,25), praying and singing (15:14). **Discerning of spirits:** Through this gift the Holy Spirit allowed the early Christians to determine the inner character of those who professed to be inspired preachers or teachers (See 1 Jn 4:1; 2 Jn 7: Rv 2:2). **Kinds of languages:** This was the inspired ability to speak in different foreign languages which one had not previously studied. The purpose of this gift was to make it possible for the gospel to go quickly into all the world, as well as to edify multilingual churches (See At 2:4,6-8; 10:44-46; 19:1-6). Therefore, the gift to speak in the languages of men was specifically a sign to and benefit for the unbeliever (14:22). **Interpretation of languages:** If a foreigner came into the assembly that did not speak the language of the local culture, there were those local brethren who could miraculously translate their message for the benefit of the foreigner, or in order that the foreigner report to the church the work of God in other areas (See comments At 14:26,27). **11 As He wills:**

The oneness of the work of the preceding gifts was accomplished in the fact that they all originated from the work of the one Holy Spirit. The administration of the gifts was not the work of the particular individuals who possessed the gifts. It was the will of the Spirit to work through the manifestation of the gifts. Therefore, the Spirit did not contradict Himself. For this reason, the prophets all spoke the same thing and prayed the same thing. Any man who claimed to have the Spirit, and yet, spoke in contradiction to the revelation of the Spirit through the word of God, did not have the Holy Spirit of God. Any man who claimed that the word of God was not the final authority in religious matters, was speaking against what the Spirit had said concerning the finality of the word of God (2 Tm 3:16,17). He thus did not have the Spirit of God. Therefore, no man could so speak as to make the Spirit of God contradict Himself or deny what He had already revealed through the inspired Scriptures.

#### UNITY OF THE GLOBAL BODY

**12 The body is one:** This is a fundamental truth (See comments Jn 17:20,21; Rm 12:4,5; Ep 4:4-6; Cl 1:18). There is only one universal body of Christ. Though the body is made up of many individuals, it must function as a unit. Every member of the body, therefore, must strive to maintain the unity of the body throughout the world (1:10; Ph 1:27). See comments Jn 15:1-8. **13 Immersed into one body:** It was the Holy Spirit who explained through Peter the purpose of immersion in water in relation to one's salvation. It was the Holy Spirit that explained that one must be buried with Jesus in the likeness of His death and raised in the likeness of his resurrection in order to come into the one body (See comments At 2:38; Rm 6:3-6; Gl 3:27,28). Therefore, all those who have believed in Jesus as the Christ and have submitted to obedience of the gospel, have been added to the one universal body of Christ by God (At 2:47). Baptized believers are not added to a diversity of bodies. They are added to the one body of Christ which exists throughout the world. **Drink:** All the Corinthians quenched their spiritual thirst with the spiritual life-giving water that flooded from God (Jn 7:37; see Jn 6:63; 1 Pt 2:2; 2 Pt 3:18).

Paul begins here by teaching a fundamental truth concerning the unity of the body. He wanted to encourage those who felt that their gifts were inferior. He instructs that the body must function as a unit (vss 14,20). He emphasizes the fact that all gifts or abilities of each member of the universal body are necessary for the functioning of the entire body (vss 15,16). Since all parts of

**14** For the body is not one member, but many.

**15 ¶** If the foot says, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

**16** And if the ear says, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

**17** If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling?

**18** But now God has set the members, each one of them in the body, just as He has desired.

**19** And if they were all one member, where *would be* the body?

**20 ¶** But now *they are* many members, but one body.

**21** And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I

have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

**22** On the contrary, more indeed, those members of the body who seem to be more feeble are necessary.

**23** And those *members* of the body whom we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable *parts* have more abundant presentation.

**24** For our more presentable members have no need *of it*. But God has composed the body, having given more abundant honor to that *member* which lacked,

**25** so that there should be no division in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another.

**26** And if one member suffers, all the mem-

the body throughout the world are necessary, then there should be a mutual dependence of one member on another (vss 15,16). Those gifts that may seem less honorable, should be exalted because they are necessary for the survival of the body (vss 22,23). He points out that the unrepresentable parts are to be honored because they have overcome their handicap (vss 23,24). He concludes this discussion on unity by emphasizing the fact that the universal body must function without division in order to survive as the church of Christ (vss 25,26). Therefore, each member must manifest a concern for every other member of the body in order that unity prevail in the church (vs 27). Though he was writing this letter from a different location, he, the Corinthian disciples, and all members of the body of Christ throughout the world must function as a united force against the forces of Satan.

**14** The church is not a set of institutionalized rules that have been inscribed on a piece of paper by men in order to produce meritorious salvation. The church is people. It is a body of many individuals who have submitted to the lordship of Jesus, and thus, are motivated in their lives to follow the instructions of their Lord. The membership of the submitted is the one universal church of Christ because all the members have submitted to the one gospel of Christ. The members are one, therefore, because they obediently followed the directions of Christ through the Spirit-inspired word of God (See comments Jn 12:48). **15-17** Paul metaphorically uses here different organs of the body in order to illustrate the unified functioning of the body wherever it exists throughout the world. Each body part has a special feature and use. The entire body needs every member in order to function as a whole body. Not every member of the body must be cloned into being eyes, feet or hands. Every member must be encouraged to use his or her abilities in order to make the body function harmoniously. The Corinthians were manifesting a divisive spirit by excluding the importance and function of every ministry. However, the body must work together. The members must not manifest a spirit of pride in reference to

the miraculous gifts. Paul answers their wrong attitudes by saying that each gift is necessary for the functioning of the whole body. **18 Just as He has desired:** The Corinthians must remember that the miraculous works of the Spirit were given according to the will of the Spirit, not the will of the individuals who possessed the gifts (vs 11; see Rm 12:3). **19** If each member tried to work independently of the other members, then the body would dissolve. The body thrives on the basis that each member provides a vital link in the chain of fellowship that exists between all members (See comments Ep 4:11-16).

**20,21** Though the church is made up of many members throughout the world, no one member can say to another that he can stand alone as a member of the body. Members of the body of Christ must recognize their mutual interdependence on one another, not independence from one another. Members are not autonomous from one another. Neither does a group of members in one area have a right to meet together in order to declare their autonomy from any other group of disciples in the same area. **22** Though one member may seem to be weaker in his function in the maintenance of the body, his abilities are necessary for the functioning of the global body of Christ. **23** Those members of the body that are judged to be less presentable must also be considered necessary for the functioning of the body. Because they are necessary, they are to be honored. **24** Since God is the one who made the body, then we must consider that He made each member of the body to be important. Therefore, since the Spirit is the author of the gifts that function among the members of the body, there is no gift that is less important, for all have originated from God. **25 Should be no division:** The members of the church must work in mutual appreciation and gratefulness for one another in order that there be no divisions. If members recognize the necessity of one another's contributions to the body, then they will care for one another. **26** When disciples care for one another throughout the world, then no member of the church suffers without other members suffering also.

bers suffer with it. Or, if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

**27 ¶** Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

**28** And God has designated some in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *and* varieties of languages.

**29** *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all*

teachers? *Are all workers of miracles?*

**30** Do all have the gifts of healing? Do all speak with languages? Do all interpret?

**31** But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet I show to you a more excellent way.

## Chapter 13

**1 ¶** If I speak with the languages of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Therefore, the fellowship of the church should be close in order that no one member be allowed to suffer alone in times of hardship. The Corinthians' contribution to the famine victims of Judea illustrated the care the church must manifest toward its members, regardless of where the members live (See comments 16:1-7).

**27** Individual members make up the church of Christ (Rm 12:5; Ep 1:23; 4:12; 5:23,30; Cl 1:18,24). Though individual members make up the body of Christ, they should not function in order to ignore one another. Individuality in the body is retained when each individual supplies his or her abilities to the function of the whole body. **28** Paul indicates that there was an order by which the gifts were given in the beginning of the church (See comments Ep 4:11,12). **Apostles:** The first ones to announce the gospel to the world were the Christ-sent apostles (See Jn 14:26; 16:13; At 2:37,38; Ep 2:20; 3:5; see Lk 24:48; Jn 15:26,27; At 26:16). **Prophets:** The New Testament prophets went forth as evangelists in order to speak the truth that was already revealed through the apostles (At 13:1; Rm 12:6). **Teachers:** These were those with the gift of teaching who labored in local churches in order to build them up in the knowledge of the word. **After that:** Paul now lists those gifts or works that were carried out by the apostles, prophets and teachers. These were miracles (vs 10), healings (vs 9; Mk 16:17-20), helps (Rm 16:3,9), administrations (Rm 12:8) and tongues (vs 10). **29,30** The Corinthians misunderstood the necessity for the harmonious function of the different gifts in a local situation. The fact that each member had a different function meant that they did not all function in the same manner. The point of Paul's questions is to point out the fact that all members of the church function in different capacities. Because they function in a different capacities must not be an occasion for one member to frown on the importance of another member and the ministry of his gift. **31 The best gifts:** The best gifts are not here identified by Paul. The word gifts is plural, and thus, more is in his mind than the gift of prophecy which he considered one of the most essential gifts in 14:1,39. We would assume that a loving attitude that would produce unity among the believers would be greater than any of the miraculous gifts. At least this is what Paul affirms as he leads his readers into the more excellent way of love in the following contexts. **A more excellent way:** The way of love is more excellent than the function of miraculous gifts. Love is more excellent than prophecy, languages or healings. The Corinthians, therefore, should be striving after love instead of competing over the use of their gifts. Their goal for the church should be to grow beyond the ministry of the miraculous gifts. Their goal

should be to grow to where each member becomes a servant to other members in a spirit of love. Paul thus defines love as the central fiber that holds the church together as a body (See Cl 3:14,15; see comments Jn 13:34,35). Without love, the church is simply a social club of religious people who gather together out of tradition.

## Chapter 13

### THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

In the first three verses of this chapter Paul emphasizes the importance of love over the miraculous gifts. Unity in good works is based on love (Jn 13:34,35). **1** If one used his gift of speaking in languages without a heart of love, then he would be as the clanging musical instruments that were used in the pagan worship of the temples of idol gods. **Languages... of angels:** Angels would not have a language that is as the language of man which is produced with words through the physical mouth of man. However, Paul may have conversed in some way with angels on his visionary experience of being caught up to the third heaven (2 Co 12:4). If one could speak with angels, such would be of no spiritual benefit without a spirit of love. **Love:** In this chapter Paul uses the Greek word *agape* for love. This is the primary Greek word that was used for expressing unconditional love. This is the word that is used in the New Testament to refer to man's active response to God, as well as his godly relationship with his brother (See Jn 14:15; 15:14; Rm 13:10; 1 Jn 2:3-5; 3:17,18; 5:3). **2** Without love, the ability to miraculously teach the word of God is empty (12:8-10,28; 14:1; see comments Mt 7:22). Without love, the privilege of understanding all things in reference to God's work among men is useless. Without love that moves us to respond to our brother's needs, the ability of one to remain personally faithful in belief of God is useless (See Mt 17:20; 21:21; Mk 11:23; Lk 17:6). **3** One could legally perform the duties of his beliefs after a meritorious manner. However, the doing of such is worthless without being moved by a heart of love (See Mt 6:1,2). One could meritoriously give himself into the hands of those who would persecute him unto death for his faith. However, if the giving is not a love response to the grace of God, then it is useless. **Profits me nothing:** The actions of life that Paul mentions in these first three verses are good works. However, meritorious performances do not prepare one's character for eternal dwelling in heaven. One can meritoriously do the works without a heart of love, but he cannot love without doing the works (See comments Js 2:14-26). It is a heart of love that is essential for one to

2 And if I have *the gift of prophecy* and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and do not have love, I am nothing.

3 And if I give all my goods to *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, and do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 ¶ Love suffers long *and* is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not exalt itself, is not puffed up,

5 does not behave unbecomingly, does not seek its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil,

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth,

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 ¶ Love never fails. But where *there are prophecies*, they will be abolished. Where *there are languages*, they will cease. Where *there is knowledge*, it will vanish away.

be able to dwell in heaven.

4 There are fifteen qualities explained here concerning the nature of love (See comments Gl 5:22,23). These are qualities that are manifested in one's relationship with his fellow man. In this case, this should be the nature of the Corinthians' relationship with one another in their behavior as a disciples of Jesus (Cl 3:12-15). Disciples that do not behave in this manner, have fallen into carnal behavior as the Corinthians (3:1-3). Paul personifies love as one who manifests specific characteristics. **Suffers long:** Love patiently endures the weaknesses of others. Love is not quick to discard a relationship simply because of a disagreement (Pv 10:12; 17:9; 1 Th 5:14). **Kind:** Love does not portray a harsh attitude with one's brother or mate (Ep 4:32). Through the nature of kindness, love actively works toward the benefit of all those with whom it comes into contact.

**Not envy:** Love is not jealous over the accomplishments of others, nor does it seek for the possessions of others (Gl 5:26). It will thus build up and not tear down.

**Not exalt itself:** Love does not push itself forward in order to be recognized, but is willing to humbly work in the background of the crowd in order to exalt others. Love does not work in order to draw attention to itself.

**Not puffed up:** Love is not prideful or arrogant, and thus, does not insist on having its own way or consider itself better than others. It does not exalt itself above others. It does not lift itself up by knocking others down.

5 **Not behave unbecomingly:** Love does not behave in a manner that manifests little consideration for others. Love does not ignore the person of others for the sake of exalting itself. **Seeks not its own:** Love does not love to be first. It does not seek to have its own way by ignoring the thoughts and dreams of others (See 10:24; Ph 2:4; 3 Jn 3:9,10). **Not easily provoked:** Love does not easily lose its temper when something either goes wrong or is said that would generate anger. Love does not react to disagreeable situations with rage and anger, but responds with calmness and gentleness.

**Thinks no evil:** Love does not search for evil in the lives of others. Love does not search for evil in order to destroy its enemies by slanderous character assassination.

6 **Not rejoice in iniquity:** Love does not take pleasure in finding sin in the lives of others. It does not rejoice when another sins or makes a mistake. It does not exalt itself above others by pointing out the mistakes of others (Ps 10:3; Rm 1:32). **Rejoices in the truth:** Love seeks truth and not evil. Love is identified in the one who searches for truth and not evil in the lives of others.

7 **Bears all things:** When things become

difficult, love does not cease to work. Without retaliation, love endures malicious slander that is spoken against it. **Believes all things:** Love believes and seeks the good in all situations and people, and thus hopes for the best. Love is positive about life, and not negative. **Hopes all things:** Love believes that all things are working together for the good of the Christian (Rm 8:28). Love believes that the best is yet to be. **Endures all things:** Because love believes that all things are working together for good, it looks on the positive side of things when things seem to go wrong. Love is always confident about the future. True love never quits though things may go wrong. Love never quits in the face of trials, discouragements, persecutions and temptations.

#### PASSING OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS

Since love exceeds the value of the miraculous gifts, it is Paul's argument in the following verses to exemplify love by stating that the miraculous gifts will pass away. In verses 1-3 he argues that love must be at the center of our behavior. In verses 4-7 he argues from the standpoint of showing the behavior of love. In the final verses of this chapter, he exemplifies the importance of love by the passing away of that which the Corinthians exalted, that is, the miraculous gifts. Since the miraculous gifts will pass away, then the Corinthians' emphasis must be on love, for it will be love that will guarantee their unity after the passing of the miraculous gifts (See comments Cl 3:12-15). 8 **Love never fails:** It never fails in comparison to the miraculous that would eventually pass away. **Prophecies ... languages... will vanish away:** Paul is saying that the time would come when the gifts of prophecy, languages and knowledge will no longer be available. They will pass away because they are no longer needed. He uses these three miraculous gifts to represent all miraculous gifts, and thus, he teaches that the time was coming in the Corinthians' lives when the gifts would vanish away. They would vanish away because the means by which they were imparted would vanish away. The gifts were imparted by the laying on of the apostles' hands (See comments At 8:18; 19:1-6; Rm 1:11). Paul and all the apostles would eventually die. The means by which God had commissioned that the miraculous gifts be given to the church, therefore, would pass with them. However, by the time of the passing of the apostles, the purpose for which the gifts were given would also have vanished. Their purpose was to strengthen the infant New Testament church in the absence of the inspired written spiritual guide of the New Testament. However, when the apostles had accom-

**9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

**10** But when that which is complete has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

**11 ¶** When I was a child I spoke as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child.

But when I became a man, I put away childish things.

**12** For now we dimly see in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then will I know just as I also am known.

**13** And now abide faith, hope, love, these three. But the greatest of these *is* love.

plished their work of revealing all truth to the church, then the need for the gifts to strengthen the early churches no longer existed. The miraculous gifts were to exist only until the time when a loving response to the word of God maintained the existence and function of the church (See comments Jn 13:34,35). **9 Know in part:** They knew only a portion of the whole. At the time Paul wrote this letter, the Corinthians had verbally revealed to them through himself and their prophets only portions of God's complete revelation that would later come to them through the entire written record of the New Testament. Therefore, the inspired Scriptures would eventually supersede inspired prophecy (See comments 2 Tm 3:16,17). Their prophets spoke only a portion of what would later come as a whole (8:2). The Corinthians should not emphasize the miraculous gifts (the part), but focus on what would result from the miraculous gifts (the whole). **10 That which is perfect:** The Greek word for "perfect" (*teleion*) refers to that which is complete or whole. In this context Paul is contrasting the perfect with that which is only partial. That which was only "in part" had reference to what they knew, not what they did through the miraculous gifts (vs 9). What they knew was revealed to them through the inspired prophets. Therefore, Paul contrasted the partial revelation of God's word by means of the miraculous gift of prophecy with the complete writing of the word of God that would guide the church for centuries to come. The Corinthians knew only the partial revelation of the word of God. However, they would know all things that God intended that the church know (2 Pt 1:3). Paul wrote these things in view of the fact that God would preserve the church throughout the centuries through the members' loving response to the revelation of His directions for them. **Be done away:** The Corinthians must understand that the gifts about which they were competing with one another were only "in part." Since the gifts were only "in part," then it is assumed that the whole would come. It was not that the gifts functioned in part. They were only a part of God's scheme to establish the church which would later be based on the fully revealed word of God. Therefore, when the whole came, the part was done away because it had fulfilled its purpose. The Corinthians must not emphasize the part when the whole is coming. They were concentrating on the performance of the gifts, whereas Paul here speaks of the foundation of our faith that is based on the whole. The foundation of our faith is the word of God (Jn 20:30,31; Rm 10:17). Through a loving response to the word of God, one maintains fellowship with God and his brothers in Christ (1 Jn 1:3). Therefore, the church continues to exist because men lovingly respond to the word of God.

**11 Spoke ... understood as a child:** Some men never put away childish speaking and understanding. They still excite one another as children over fantastic stories and competitive attitudes. However, the mature

man puts these things away. When one becomes a man, he is not driven by childish competition in the invention of spiritual games. Paul calls on the Corinthians to grow up. They were behaving as children by their competitive spirits that were controlled by jealousy and envy. In their puffed up attitudes they used the blessing of God as a means of belittling one another's ministry. **12** When the church was in its infancy, she could only see dimly in the mirror what would eventually reflect the full revelation of God. The church could see dimly because all revelation that God intended the church to have had not yet been revealed to any one congregation. **But then:** There are two possible interpretations to what Paul here refers. He could be referring to the time when the church received the full revelation of God that He intended for the church to have. He could also refer to his transition into heavenly dwelling. Since in the context he is contrasting the partiality of the miraculous gifts upon which the Corinthians were seemingly focusing their attention with the "whole" that was to come, he could possibly be referring to the time that as disciples they must focus on a loving response to the word of God in order to maintain unity. It would be in this state of existence that the church would have to depend on the word of God in order to maintain unity based on love instead of their childish competitions over the use of the miraculous gifts. In studying this context, we must not forget the great emphasis God places on the revealed written word of God. Since the conclusion of the miraculous gifts that were given to establish the early church, God has communicated to the church through the written word. In studying contexts as this in the New Testament, we must not forget that the miraculous gifts were only a brief work of the Holy Spirit in reference to the centuries that followed wherein the church has depended on the word of God. **I will know:** Paul refers to knowledge. When the entirety of the revelation of God had been revealed to the church, the members would know all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pt 1:3; see comments 2 Tm 3:16,17). **13** Faith, hope and love must prevail in order that the church continue. Faith and hope refer to the individual's personal relationship with God. However, love refers to the individual's relationship with his fellow brother on earth (Jn 13:34,35). Since the church is the fellowship of God's people on earth, love must prevail in order to offer members an atmosphere of preparation for eternal dwelling. Faith and hope will have no reward of eternal dwelling if there is no personal relationship with one's brother in Christ (See Mk 12:28-31; Jn 2:16; 14:15; Rm 13:10; 1 Jn 4:7-21). It is for this reason that love is the primary objective of the faithful, since it is the loving faithful who will be rewarded with eternal life in a heavenly environment. Faith and hope keep one pointed in the right direction, the direction of heaven. But it is love that will transition this life into eternal glory.

## Chapter 14

**1 ¶** Pursue love, yet desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.

**2** For he who speaks in an *unlearned* language does not speak to men, but to God, for no one understands. However, in spirit he speaks mysteries.

**3** But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

**4** He who speaks in a language edifies himself. But he who prophesies edifies the church.

**5** I wish that you all spoke with languages, but *even* more that you prophesied, for greater

is he who prophesies than he who speaks in languages, unless he interprets so that the church may receive edification.

**6 ¶** But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with languages, what will I profit you unless I will speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by teaching?

**7** Even things without life, whether flute or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or harped?

**8** For if the trumpet produces an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the

## Chapter 14

### PROPHECY AND LANGUAGES

**1 Pursue love:** After focusing the attention of the Corinthians on the answer to the problems that prevailed in Corinth, Paul now turns to the correct use of the miraculous gifts of prophecy and languages. **Especially ... prophesy:** The gift that was most beneficial to the work of the local church and world evangelism was the gift of inspired preaching, teaching, singing and prayer (vs 39; 12:31). Through this gift the word of God could go forth with great rapidity. Through this gift the Spirit revealed inspired instructions by which the church would be directed in edification. It was through this gift, therefore, that the church was instructed to behave after a Christlike manner in order that the gospel go to all the world. **2 A language:** The 1611 *King James Version* added the word "unknown" to the text here, but the word "unknown" is not in the Greek text. The addition of the word caused some confusion. Some interpreters thought that Paul was talking about some unknown language to mankind. But such is not the case, for he speaks in this context of the same miraculous ability that was imparted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost (See comments At 2:1-7; 10:46). He speaks of the miraculous endowment of being able to speak in a foreign language without having studied that language. **Speaks ... to God:** When he speaks in a language that cannot be understood by those to whom he speaks, then he can only be understood by God. He would be speaking the mysteries of God, but what he said would only be a mystery to those who could not understand what he was saying. What Paul is introducing is the argument that the prideful use of the gift of languages was useless if such was used when no interpreter was present. Therefore, the speaking in the language when no one could understand what was being said was a manifestation of pride on the part of the one speaking in the language. **In spirit:** This could be a reference to the Holy Spirit, though the article is not in the Greek text. "In the Spirit" is a phrase that is commonly used in the New Testament to refer to the direct work of the Holy Spirit (Rv 1:10), which translation is here used by many translations. However, in Greek the phrase is simply "in spirit". **3** In contrast to the one who speaks in languages that cannot be understood by the audience,

the one who prophesies through the direction of the Holy Spirit speaks in a manner to be understood, and thus, edifies the church. Since he can be understood, then his gift is more beneficial to the disciples. **4 Edifies himself:** In contrast to the one who speaks by inspiration wherein the entire congregation can understand (prophecy), the one who speaks in a language the church cannot understand only edifies himself. If the one who possessed the gift of languages had also the gift of interpretation, then he could edify himself and others by interpreting what he spoke in a foreign language. However, if he did not have the gift of interpretation, then he edified only himself in the sense that he had evidence of his possession of the gift of languages. By way of comparison, the gift of prophecy was given for the purpose of building up the church. On the other hand, the gift of languages was not the inspired teaching or preaching of truth, but simply the communication of truth into another language. The one who had the gift of languages was only communicating that which had already been revealed through the prophets. **5** It would have been great if every member spoke with languages in order that the gospel be propagated to all language groups. However, for the benefit of the local Corinthian church, it would be better if they had the gift of prophecy whereby the church could be edified through inspired preaching, teaching, praying and singing (vs 15). If the one who speaks in a language is able also to interpret what he says to those who do not understand the language he is speaking, then his speaking will benefit everyone.

**6 What will I profit:** Paul begins here with discussions concerning the misuse of the gift of languages. His first point is obvious. If one stands up and speaks in a language that is foreign to the audience, he argues that the speaker does not benefit those to whom he speaks. The preaching or teaching of truth in a foreign language without the translation of that language does not profit the audience. **7** If a musical instrument is played without the noise of the instrument being orchestrated into a melody, then the sound of the instrument is unintelligent and unappealing to those who listen. In other words, the use of uninterpreted languages in the assembly is as repulsive and useless as the sound of an instrument that is not played to the tune of composed music. **8 The trumpet:** If the one who blows the trumpet for battle blows the trumpet with a sound that is not

battle?

**9** So you also, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

**10** There are, perhaps, so many kinds of speech in the world, and none of them *is* without significance.

**11** Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the speech, I will be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks *will be* a foreigner to me.

**12** So you also, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, seek that you may abound for the edification of the church.

**13 ¶** Therefore, let the one who speaks in a language pray that he may interpret.

**14** For if I pray in a language, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

**15** Then what is *the conclusion*? I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the mind also. I will sing with the Spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

**16** Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, seeing he does not understand what you are saying?

**17** For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other *person* is not edified.

**18 ¶** I thank my God *that* I speak with languages more than you all.

**19** However, in the assembly I would rather speak five words with my mind, so that I

distinct to those whom he would warn, then those who hear will not prepare for battle. **9** Unless one speaks a language that can be understood by the congregation, no one will know what is being said. No spiritual benefit is accomplished unless what is spoken can be understood by those who hear. **10** There are many languages that are spoken throughout the world. Each language is developed by words of a society that communicate activities, events and interpersonal relationships of the society. **11** *Foreigner*: The literal meaning of the Greek word here is “barbarian,” that is, one who could not speak the Greek language. If the one who hears does not understand the language that is spoken, then he would be as a foreigner to the one who speaks. **12** *Edification of the church*: Paul teaches that the one speaking in a language must speak in a language that is understood by the assembly. If the language is not understood by the congregation, then there is no edification of the members. The argument is that if the language cannot be understood, then the one speaking should be silent. Therefore, any speaking in the assembly of the disciples that is not understood by the assembly as a whole must be stopped.

**13** *May interpret*: In order for the gift of languages to be of benefit to the assembly, there must be interpretation of the language that is spoken. Therefore, the one who has the gift of languages must pray for the ability to interpret what he speaks. Since it was by the laying on of the apostles’ hands that the gifts were given, then we would assume that the answer to the prayer of the one who seeks to interpret would be the coming of Paul or another Christ-sent apostle in order to lay hands on them that they receive the gift of interpretation (See comments At 8:18; 19:1-6; Rm 1:11). We must also keep in mind that the gift of languages was not specifically for the benefit of a local assembly. The gift was meant for the rapid evangelization of the nations (vs 22; compare 12:7,10,11). **14** Paul takes his argument of this context to a personal level. One may of his own voluntary will pray in an uninterpreted foreign language. However, he would not be edified if he did not understand the language that he was speaking. **15** *With the*

*spirit*: The context would demand that reference here is to the Holy Spirit. We must keep in mind that in the context of this verse Paul is discussing the Spirit-inspired activities of the assembly through the exercising of the spiritual gifts. He thus speaks here of inspired prayer and singing. Since the disciples who were converted out of pagan temple worship would not know how to word their prayers according to the word of God, the prayers of the saints were directed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (vs 26; see comments Rm 8:26,27; Ep 5:18,19; Jd 20). *Sing with the Spirit*: Since they did not have anything as songbooks, then it would be reasonable that the Holy Spirit would inspire certain brethren with songs that were according to the will of God and not after the manner of their former worship in pagan temples (Ep 5:19; Cl 3:16). *The mind*: The songs and prayers must be understood. If they were not, then there would be no edification accomplished in the church. **16** It was customary that individuals lead the singing or lead the prayers in the assembly. If what these individuals were saying was not understood by the assembly, then the assembly could not consent to what was being said. If one gave a prayer of thanksgiving to God in a foreign language, then those who did not understand the language could not understand, and thus, give their consent to what was prayed. **17** One may by inspiration say the right things in the prayer, but if it is not understood by the audience, then there is no edification of those who hear.

**18** Paul traveled among many language groups throughout his journeys. Therefore, the Spirit blessed him with the gift of languages whereby he could quickly preach the gospel to everyone to whom he went. Though some of the Corinthians prided themselves in speaking in languages, Paul here states that he spoke in more languages than all of them. **19** *That I might teach*: If he were among brethren in an assembly, Paul states that it would be useless to speak to an assembly in foreign languages because no teaching would be accomplished. He assumes that the Corinthians here will deduct that the speaking in a foreign tongue in the assembly is useless if the audience cannot understand what is

might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a language.

**20 ¶** Brethren, do not be children in thinking. However, in malice be babes, but in thinking be mature.

**21** In the law it is written, “*With men of other languages and other lips I will speak to this people, and yet for all that they will not hear Me,*” says the Lord.

**22 ¶** Therefore, languages are for a sign, not to those who believe, but for unbelievers. But prophesying is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe.

**23** Therefore, if the whole church comes together into one place, and all speak with languages, and there come in the uninformed, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad?

**24** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or uninformed *person* comes in, he is convinced by all *and* he is convicted by all.

**25** The secrets of his heart are revealed. And so falling down on *his* face he will worship God and report that of a truth God is certainly among you.

**26 ¶** What then is it, brethren? When you

being said. **20 Do not be children:** Paul refers back to what he has already said concerning their childish behavior in reference to the use of the miraculous gifts (13:11; see 3:1; Ps 131:2; Rm 16:19; Ep 4:14; Hb 5:12,13). The Corinthians were evidently being amused as children with the ability to speak in languages. Their puffed up attitudes with one another led them to be competitive concerning the use of their gifts. **Be mature:** They needed to spiritually grow up (13:11). In order to grow up, they must cease their competitive spirit with one another in reference to the gifts, for the gifts would pass away (13:8-10). **21 The law:** The quotation here is from Isaiah 28:11,12. Therefore, the Holy Spirit classifies the book of Isaiah as part of the law (Compare Jn 10:34; 12:34 15:25; Rm 3:20). **Other languages:** In the context of Isaiah 28, Isaiah was prophesying the captivity of Israel because of their rebellion against God. The invasion of Palestine by those who were speaking a foreign language was a sign of God's judgment against them. In this context, the Corinthians' misuse of the foreign languages, and thus the confusion among them in the assembly, was a sign of God's displeasure of them for acting as children. Their competitive use of the languages in the assembly resulted in their speaking at the same time. Confusion thus resulted, and the assembly was not edified. In fact, their speaking at one time developed a confused assembly wherein the unbelievers who might come in would consider them mad (vs 23).

**22 Languages ... a sign ... to unbelievers:** Paul now explains the purpose of the gift of languages. The gift was a signal to unbelievers of God's work among His people (See comments Mk 16:20; Hb 2:3,4). It was thus meant to be an aid in the evangelization of the lost. The gift of languages not only helped in communicating the gospel to the lost, unbelievers were curiously drawn to preachers and teachers who could speak their languages without having studied them (See At 2:11,12). Therefore, the Corinthians who were taking pride in the speaking of languages during the assembly without an interpreter were wrongfully using their gift. The gift that was meant to aid evangelism to the lost was being used by them to manifest pride among the disciples. **Prophesying ... for those who believe:** The gift of inspired preaching, teaching, praying and singing was given for the benefit of the church. Through the gift of prophecy the church was edified and directed according to the will of God. What Paul is instructing is that those who have the gift of languages need to be among the lost in

the work of evangelism. Those with the gift of prophesy need to be among the brethren for the purpose of edification. **23** Paul here instructs concerning the proper use of the gifts of languages and prophesy. **Together into one place:** Since the context here is in reference to the conducting of the assembly, Paul affirms that it is the responsibility of the members to conduct the assembly. The assembly was not taken over by the Holy Spirit (vs 32). Nowhere in the entire New Testament is there evidence that the assembly of the saints was taken over by the Holy Spirit. Paul here argues that if unbelievers attend their confused and disorganized assemblies, they will think that the Corinthians are mad because of the simultaneous and confused manner by which they were using the gift of languages (See At 2:13). **You are mad:** Any assembly of the saints that is conducted with the confusion of people speaking at the same time is here judged to be madness according to Paul's inspired use of the word "mad". Assemblies of God's people should always be conducted in the spirit of maturity and sobriety. **24 Convinced ... convicted:** In contrast to languages that the unbeliever could not understand, those who prophesied would be able to instruct the unbeliever concerning what he must do to bring his life into harmony with the will of God (See At 2:36-38; Hb 4:12). **25** The result of the preaching of the truth of the gospel will bring repentance in the lives of those who are honest and sincere. **God is certainly among you:** The assembly of the saints should be conducted in a mature manner by which the unbeliever can know that God is among His people who conduct themselves with dignity (See Is 45:14; Dn 2:47; Zc 8:23; At 4:13).

#### INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE ASSEMBLY

**26** All that Paul here mentions had come to them by the inspiration of the Spirit. **Psalms:** The Corinthians had come out of a pagan idolatrous culture. It would certainly not have been appropriate for them to sing the songs of the temple of Aphrodite in the assembly of the Lord's people. Therefore, the Spirit possibly guided certain individuals to come to the assembly with songs that were according to the will of God (See Ep 5:19; Cl 3:16). **Teaching:** Through the songs the inspired prophets taught the word of God by singing to the assembly. **Revelation:** Reference here would be to truth revealed to the individual who had not previously known of the truth. Though all truth was first delivered to the church through the Christ-sent apostles, it was impossible for

come together, every one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a language, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

**27** If anyone speaks in a language, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by three*, and *each* in turn, and let one interpret.

**28** But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God.

**29** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

**30** If *anything* is revealed to another who is sitting, let the first keep silent.

**31** For you can all prophesy one by one so that all may learn and all may be exhorted.

**32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

**33** For God is not *a God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

**34** ¶ Let your women keep silent in the assemblies, for they are not permitted to speak. But *they are* to submit themselves, as the law also says.

**35** And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is improper for women to speak in the assembly.

new converts to remember all that was delivered. Therefore, through the gift of prophecy the early Christians were reminded what was delivered to them by the apostles (See comments Jn 14:26; 16:13). **Interpretation:** If there was one present who addressed the assembly through a foreign language, then there had to be someone present who could interpret (vs 13). If there were no interpreter present, then the one speaking in a foreign language had to remain quiet. **Done for edification:** Edification refers to the benefit the entire assembly receives from the ministry of the gifts. Therefore, in the assembly of the church, the ministry of each member was to be directed toward the benefit of the group and not the benefit of the individual (vs 7; see 2 Co 12:19). **27 In turn:** Those speaking in languages were not to speak at the same time. In each assembly there were to be no more than three who would speak in languages. If a foreign language were used in the assembly, there must be one who could interpret any language that was spoken. Paul's instructions here would certainly apply to all assemblies of the saints. Nowhere in these instructions does he allow everyone in the assembly to be speaking at the same time. In fact, the instructions are given in order to stop such confusion. **28** If there were no one present who could interpret the languages that were spoken, then those who spoke in languages were to keep silent. **Speak to himself:** He must not speak publicly, but meditate to himself concerning what he would say. **29,30** As with those who speak in languages, so with the prophets in reference to how many would use their gift during the assembly. No more than three prophets should speak to the congregation during any one assembly. **Others judge:** There were certainly those in the assembly with the gift of discerning spirits (12:10; 1 Jn 4:1; Rv 2:2). When the prophet spoke, those with this gift would discern the truth of that which was spoken. This was possibly God's system of checks and balances that guaranteed that the young churches not be led astray by every wind of doctrine (Compare Ep 4:11-16). **31 One by one:** If while one prophet was speaking, another had truth revealed to him, then the one speaking should sit down and allow another prophet to speak. One prophet, therefore, should not be allowed to dominate the speaking in the assembly. **32 Subject to the prophets:** The Holy Spirit did not take over the assemblies of

the first century church. The spiritual gifts that came from the Holy Spirit were in subjection to the one who possessed the gift (See comments 2 Tm 1:6). Therefore, the Holy Spirit nowhere took control of an individual in such a manner that he or she was out of personal control. People who allow themselves to be self-hypnotically out of control are not under the influence of the Holy Spirit. They are the victims of their own emotional hysteria and self-deception. **33 Not a God of confusion:** The Holy Spirit does not lead men into conducting chaotic assemblies by hysterical worshippers. Therefore, any assembly of religious people that is chaotic is not from God. Such assemblies are not a testimony to the unbeliever that God is present (vs 25). They are only assemblies that testify to the fact that biblically ignorant religionists will allow their behavior to go uncontrolled in order to find emotional satisfaction in misguided beliefs. The entire context of what Paul is here teaching is contrary to religious assemblies that have come under the disruption of members who have emotionally lost control of themselves in an effort to find emotional release. Paul's instructions here emphasize assemblies that are in order, not disorder. **34 Let your women keep silent:** In order to continue to correct the Corinthian chaotic assemblies, Paul instructed that the women keep silent in the assemblies (See 1 Tm 2:11,12; Ti 2:3,4; 1 Pt 3:1). The women must not speak out in a manner that would either disrupt the assembly or usurp the authority of men to control the assembly. In the expression of singing, women are not behaving in order to control the assembly (Ep 5:19; Cl 3:16). Therefore, women should sing. **To submit themselves:** The women should so behave in the assembly as to portray the nature of a submissive individual to God's appointed authority. It has always been a principle of God since the beginning of time that the women work in a submissive relationship with men in matters of spiritual leadership (Gn 3:16-18; compare Ti 2:3,4; 1 Pt 3:5,6). In this discussion Paul seeks to bring this principle into the context of the assembly of the church. **35 Ask their own husbands:** If Christian wives do not understand something that is said in the assembly, then they must ask their Christian husbands at home. They must do this in order to prevent confusion in the assembly. If there is a woman who has no husband, then the assumed principle is that this woman ask for clarification outside the

**36 ¶** Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or *did* it come only to you?

**37** If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

**38** But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

**39 ¶** Therefore, brethren, desire to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in languages.

**40** Let all things be done properly and in order.

## Chapter 15

**1 ¶** Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

**2** by which also you are saved, if you hold fast to that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

assembly context. **Shameful:** It is shameful for the sisters to behave in an insubmissive manner in order to cause confusion in the assembly of the church.

**36** Paul concludes his instructions to the Corinthians concerning their pride that was manifested in their assemblies. He is here sarcastic in asking them if the word of God originated from them. Or, he asks if it were only the Corinthians who received the word. **37 I write ... the commandments of the Lord:** This statement should put to silence the arrogance of those who claim to speak from God. If they speak in order to conflict with what was revealed through this letter, then they are speaking that which is false (See comments 2 Pt 3:15,16). Any prophet, therefore, who stood up and spoke anything that was contrary to what Paul has revealed was speaking against the commandments of God. Assemblies that behave contrary to the instructions that he gives here are not assemblies that bring glory to God. They are assemblies that have been created after the doctrines and emotions of men (See comments Mk 7:1-9). **38 Let him be:** If anyone would reject what is said by Paul, let him suffer the consequences of his rejection of the commandment of God. Those who reject God's commandments through Paul will bring God's judgment upon themselves because of their arrogant attitude against God. **39 Desire to prophesy:** Paul concludes by exalting the gift of speaking by inspiration (12:31). However, those who have the gift of prophecy should not look down on those who have the gift of languages. There is one Spirit, and thus, the Spirit is working through both the gift of prophecy and the gift of languages. **40 Properly and in order:** Their assembly must be decent in the sense that they must not portray an atmosphere of confusion. The prophets and those gifted with languages must speak in order to edify the church. Every assembly of the saints, therefore, must edify everyone present by being conducted in an atmosphere of dignity.

## Chapter 15

### DEFINITION OF THE GOSPEL

This is one of the great chapters of the New Testament wherein Paul explains some fundamental truths concerning our salvation and the foundation upon which our faith rests. He answers the questions of some of the Corinthians who were questioning the resurrection of the body at the end of time (See comments 2 Co 5:1-8).

**1 The gospel:** The word "gospel" comes from the Greek word *euangelion*. The word means "good news."

However, within the word itself there is no definition of what the good news is. It is in these first few verses of this chapter that Paul explains the central message of the good news of God for man in reference to his salvation. **I declare:** The nature of the good news (the gospel) is to be declared. **I preached:** The good news is preached (Gl 1:11,12). It is preached through the medium of words. Therefore, the gospel is not words. It is not the words of the teachings of Jesus. It is not the words of the New Testament. The words are only the medium through which the gospel is declared and preached. Paul is here using words to explain the gospel, but these inspired words are not the gospel. **You received:** When one receives something, he accepts it as truth. Therefore, the gospel can be accepted as truth into one's thinking (11:23). However, to accept it as truth means that one responds to or obeys the gospel. One cannot claim that he has received the gospel if he has not obeyed the gospel. One obeys the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (See comments Rm 6:3-6; 1 Pt 4:17). **In which you stand:** Paul metaphorically used the word "stand" to explain the gospel as that upon which one bases his emotional stability and spiritual well-being (See Rm 5:2; 11:20; 2 Co 1:24). In other words, the gospel must affect the behavior of the individual because it affects the mind. When one receives the gospel he receives into the totality of his being that which can bring peace of mind and hope for the future (Compare Ph 4:6,7). **2 By which also you are saved:** It is through the power of the gospel that one is saved (Rm 1:16). However, if one does not obediently respond to this gospel, he cannot be saved (See 2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pt 4:17). The gospel is God's only hope that is given to man for his salvation (Compare At 4:12). Though Paul here has not explained how one is saved by the gospel, he has affirmed that one is saved by the gospel. **Believed in vain:** The gospel was preached to the Corinthians. They obeyed, and subsequently, Paul affirms here that they must continue to believe the words by which he communicated the gospel to them. In this chapter, he addresses some in the congregation who were doubting the resurrection of the gospel, and thus, undermining the faith of many in the church. It is necessary, therefore, to continue in one's belief of the words by which the gospel is communicated to us. In our case today, it is necessary that we believe in the testimony of the gospel as it is recorded in the New Testament (Compare Jn 20:30,31). **3,4** In the first two verses of this context Paul only talked about the gospel. The words by which he discussed the gospel are not the gospel. This is to say that the words of

**3** ¶ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,  
**4** and that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures,  
**5** and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.  
**6** After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater

part remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.

**7** After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

**8** And last of all He was seen by me also, as to one born out of due time.

**9** ¶ For I am the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God.

**10** But by the grace of God I am what I am.

the New Testament are not the gospel. The words are only the medium through which the message of the gospel is communicated. In verses 3 & 4 he explains the fundamental principle of the good news (the gospel). It is a historical event, not a document of words. **First of all:** The first thing that Paul delivered to the Corinthians upon entry into Corinth was the gospel (1:23; 2:2; 11:2,23). This is the first message that must be delivered to the unbeliever because the gospel is the only means by which one can be saved (At 4:12). Paul delivered to the Corinthians the same gospel he had received (At 22:16). **Christ died for our sins:** All men have sinned (Rm 3:23). Sin separates us from God (Is 59:1,2). And in separation from God, one is spiritually dead and doomed to condemnation (Rm 6:23). Therefore, one needs good news concerning his spiritual state of death. The gospel is good news in that Jesus died for our sins according to prophecy of the Old Testament (Ps 22; Is 53; Dn 9:26; Zc 12:10; 13:7; At 3:18; 1 Pt 1:11; 2:24). The first great news of the gospel event is the death of the incarnate Son of God. **He was buried:** Jesus died and was buried in a tomb outside Jerusalem. **He rose again the third day:** Jesus was buried in order to be raised from the dead. It is good news that Jesus died for our sins. It is good news that He rose to manifest His power over physical death (vs 17; Ps 16:10; 110:1; Is 53:10; Hs 6:2; Mt 12:39,40; Lk 11:29,30; 24:26; At 2:25; 1 Pt 1:11). The gospel, therefore, is the death of Jesus for our problem of sin. It is His burial and resurrection for our hope. Through His death, Jesus answered our problem of spiritual death (Rm 5:12). Through His resurrection, He answered our problem of physical death (vss 20-22). In order to connect with the historical event of the gospel, one must obey the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (See comments Rm 6:3-6).

#### THE APPEARANCES

**5** In the context of this chapter Paul is confronting those who were denying the bodily resurrection. After reminding them of the centrality of the gospel to the Christian's salvation in verses 1-4, his first point of argument is the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead. If Jesus were raised, then we can trust that we will be raised by Him when He comes again. **He was seen:** Paul's proof of the resurrection of Jesus is the testimony of those who saw Jesus after the resurrection (See comments Mt 28:9,10). The resurrection would have meant nothing if Jesus had not been witnessed to be alive after His death. **By Cephas:** It is not clear in the chronology of appearances when this appearance took

place (Lk 24:34). **The twelve:** See Mt 28:17; Mk 16:14; Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19,24-29. At the time of these appearances, Judas Iscariot had already hanged himself. Therefore, Paul's reference here to the twelve is to the group of twelve Christ-called and sent apostles. The group was completed when Matthias was added in At 1:15-26. **6 Five hundred brethren:** This must have been a marvelous occasion. We do not know where this appearance took place, though it could have happened in Galilee. At the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, many of the five hundred brethren were still alive. If Jesus had not been raised from the dead, then any one of the brethren could have denied the resurrection. An appearance before such a group of people also disproves any theory that the apostles invented the resurrection story. Since all these brethren could give their testimony to experiencing Jesus after His resurrection, then the appearances of Jesus can be answered only in the fact that He was actually raised from the dead. **7 Seen by James:** This appearance is not recorded in the records of the gospel (vs 5; see Lk 24:50; At 1:3,4). **8 One born out of due time:** The last person to whom Jesus appeared was Paul (9:1; At 9:3-8; 22:6-11; 26:12-18). Jesus appeared to Paul for a special purpose. He appeared to him in order to call him into apostleship to be a witness to the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel (At 9:15). The Christ-sent apostles were called during the ministry of Jesus. However, Paul was called after the ministry of Jesus, though he was personally called by Jesus.

**9 Least of the apostles:** Paul was defending his apostleship to those in Corinth who denied such. He manifested his confidence in his apostleship by humbly expressing his relationship to the original twelve. In Ep 3:8 he stated that he was "less than the least of all the saints" (See 2 Co 12:11; 1 Tm 1:15). He stated such because he persecuted the church (At 8:3). By making these and other statements concerning his apostleship, Paul manifested his confidence in his apostleship. Men who proclaimed themselves as apostles (Rv 2:2), and thus trusted in the approval of men to maintain their self-proclaimed position, would not make such statements. Paul was thoroughly confident in his personal calling into apostleship by Jesus on the Damascus road. He needed no approval of man in order to be assured of his Christ-sent apostleship. **10 By the grace of God:** The calling of Paul into apostleship illustrates the work of God through His grace (Ep 3:7,8; 1 Tm 1:12). Paul did not earn his call into apostleship. In fact, his persecution of the church placed him as far away from God as one could possibly be. However, God knew that Paul

And His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *that was* with me.

**11** Therefore, whether *it was* me or them, so we preach and so you believed.

**12 ¶** Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how can some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

**13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

**14** And if Christ has not been raised, then

our preaching *is* vain and your faith *is* also vain.

**15** Moreover, we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise, if *it is* that the dead are not raised.

**16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised.

**17** And if Christ has not been raised, *then* your faith *is* vain. You are still in your sins.

**18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

was a sincere and honest personality, and thus, He provided for him the opportunity to respond to the miraculous appearance of Jesus. ***I am what I am:*** Paul could claim no meritorious accomplishment for either his calling or his salvation. All was by the grace of God (See comments Rm 5:1,2; Ep 2:1-10). ***His grace ... was not in vain:*** All that God did toward Paul because of His grace was not a wasted effort. It was not useless because Paul responded with thanksgiving. Before he responded through immersion for the remission of his sins, he legalistically labored under the legal system of Judaism. He wrote he advanced greatly in his former religious life. See comments Gl 1:13,14. ***I labored more abundantly:*** When God's grace was extended toward him, he worked more abundantly than when he lived under a legal system of religiosity. Grace will always motivate one to work harder than legal religiosity. When one is motivated by grace, he cannot do enough in thanksgiving for his salvation. When one is motivated by works, he sees how little he can do in order to earn his salvation (See comments Ep 2:1-10). There are thus two concepts of motivation in reference to one's beliefs concerning his salvation. Through a legal understanding of one's relationship with God, one seeks to trust in his ability to perform the law of God in order to merit salvation. On the other hand, by being thankful of one's relationship with God, because of grace one is motivated by gratitude of what God has done in reference to his salvation. The legal system of religiosity never brings peace of mind and assurance of salvation simply because one is always in question concerning his ability to perform. However, through a grateful response to grace, one trusts in God's grace, and thus, he has peace of mind because of grace (See introduction to Gl). ***11 I or they:*** Both Paul and the twelve apostles preached the same gospel (See comments Gl 1:15-24). Therefore, the Corinthians had received the same gospel message that was preached throughout the world.

#### THE BODILY RESURRECTION

**12** Some of the Corinthian false teachers were being inconsistent in their preaching and teaching. They were teaching that Jesus was raised from the dead, however, they were denying that there would be a general bodily resurrection of the dead at the end of time (See comments Jn 5:28,29; compare At 17:32). **13** If there is no such thing as a resurrection from the dead, then Jesus was not raised from the dead. The general resurrection of all at the end of time and the resurrec-

tion of Jesus either stand or fall together. This matter goes beyond the concept of just a resurrection. Jesus was bodily raised from the dead in order to be proved to be the Son of God (Rm 1:4). Paul's argument is that if there is no bodily resurrection at the end of time, then Jesus was not bodily raised from the dead. Some Gnostics believed that only the spirit of Jesus was raised. This teaching may have been coming into the Corinthian church. What one believes concerning the resurrection of Jesus will greatly affect what he believes concerning the general resurrection of all at the end of time (See comments 1 Th 4:14). ***14 If Christ is not risen:*** The fact of the resurrection to come is dependent on the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. Not only is Jesus' resurrection the proof of His sonship (Rm 1:4), it is the evidence that we shall be raised when He comes again. Therefore, the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation upon which our preaching has validity and our faith has substance. There would be no such thing as Christianity if Jesus were not raised from the dead. ***15 Found false witnesses:*** The personal witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus proclaimed that He was raised (At 2:24). If Jesus were not raised, then all of them were liars. What Paul is affirming is that the entirety of Christianity stands or falls on whether Jesus was or was not raised from the dead. **16** If there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead, then Jesus was not raised from the dead. Some in Corinth were possibly denying the resurrection because they had not personally experienced a resurrection of the dead. However, one does not have to personally experience the work of God if he relies on the valid testimony of those who have personally experienced the miraculous work of God. No Christian in this century has experienced a resurrection of the dead. Nevertheless, we believe because we trust the witnesses who first experienced the resurrection of Jesus. ***17 Your faith is vain:*** The only justification for the existence of the church is the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead. There is no reason to believe in a future resurrection if Jesus' body is still in the tomb. Eternity for the Christian depends on an empty tomb. ***Still in your sins:*** If Jesus were not raised from the dead, then He was just another Jew who died at the hands of Roman executioners. He was not the sacrificial Lamb of God, and thus, there was no atonement for sins (See At 20:28; Rm 4:25). ***18 Perished:*** If Jesus were not raised from the dead, then those saints who have died, have ceased to exist (See comments 1 Th 4:13-18). They are gone forever. ***19 Most to be pitied:*** If we believe in a future

**19** If we have hope in Christ only in this life, we are of all men most to be pitied.

**20 ¶** But now Christ has been raised from the dead *and* has become the firstfruits of those who are asleep.

**21** For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

**22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive.

**23** But everyone in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

**24** Then *comes* the end when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He has

abolished all rule and all authority and power.

**25** For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.

**26** The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death.

**27** For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things have been subjected, it is evident that He is excluded who put all things in subjection to Him.

**28** And when all things are subjected to Him, then will the Son also Himself be subject to Him who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all.

**29 ¶** Otherwise, what will those do who are

resurrection without the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, then our faith is not based on the evidence of a resurrection. If we trust in Christ in this life without any hope of a resurrection, then our trust is confined to this world. If we have hope of an afterlife without evidence of our own existence after death, then we are a group of men to be pitied by the world. This is the case of all world religions that are not based on the resurrection of Jesus. Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and the host of man originated religions are religions of men to be pitied. They have a vague hope of an afterlife without the evidence of the resurrection of the founders of the religions.

**20** In this context Paul is discussing physical death and physical resurrection, not spiritual death which he discusses in Rm 5:12. **The firstfruits:** The metaphor is taken from the Old Testament. The firstfruits of the Jewish harvest were presented in a feast to celebrate the beginning of the harvest (Lv 23:9-11; Nm 15:18,19). The firstfruits of the harvest were the indication of the greater harvest that was to come. Jesus was not the first to be resurrected from the dead. However, He was the first to be raised never to die again (At 2:24; 1 Pt 1:3). Therefore, He is the representative in resurrection of all those who will be raised in Him when He comes again (vs 23; At 26:23; Rv 1:5). **21 By man came death:** When Adam sinned against God, he was driven from the tree of life, lest he eat thereof and live forever (Gn 2:17; 3:6,19,22-24; Ez 18:4). As the representative of all humanity, he separated humanity from the tree of life. Therefore, "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hb 9:27). As physical death came into the world by the sinful actions of Adam, so resurrection from the dead came by the righteous actions of Jesus (Dn 12:2; Jn 5:28,29; 11:25; compare Rv 22:14). **22** The consequence of Adam's sin was the physical death of all humanity, because all humanity was driven from the tree of life (Gn 3:22-24). The consequence of Jesus' obedience, was the resurrection of all the dead. **In Adam ... in Christ:** The argument could be made that the phrase "in Adam" would refer to all those who are physically descended from Adam, and thus, Paul has in mind all humanity. On the other hand, "in Christ" refers only to those who are the spiritual descendants of Christ. These are those who have been immersed into Christ, and thus, have come into contact with the life preserving blood of Jesus (See comments

Rm 6:3-6; Gl 3:26,27). Therefore, Paul states here that only those who are in Christ will be raised when Jesus comes again. This would be in the thought of what Jesus said in Jn 5:24 that those who come to Him have passed from death into life. The Christian has passed from death into life in this life because he has been buried with Jesus, and subsequently, raised with Him in order to walk in hope of a bodily resurrection to come (Rm 6:3-6). **23 His own order:** This is the order of resurrection. Jesus was first raised never to die again. When He comes again, there will be the resurrection of the saints (1 Th 4:15-17). In this context, Paul speaks only of the resurrection of those who are in Christ. This discussion is not in reference to the lost. **24 The end:** This is the end of the physical world as we know it (See comments 2 Pt 3:10-13). The resurrection will take place before the end of the world. When kingdom reign has been delivered to God the Father, and He terminates all powers of earth and the unseen world, then shall come the end of this dispensation of time and the world. **25 He must reign:** Jesus is now reigning as King of kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tm 6:15; 2 Tm 2:11,12). He now has all authority over all things (Mt 28:18). There is nothing that is in existence that is not now under the authority of His reign (See comments Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pt 3:22). Jesus will reign in this capacity until the last enemy is destroyed (Ps 110:1; Mt 22:44). **26 The last enemy ... is death:** Not only is physical death the enemy of the living, it is the enemy of Jesus because it was brought into the world through sin (vss 20-22; Gn 3:22-24). Jesus will destroy physical death by the resurrection (2 Tm 1:10; Rv 20:14; 21:4). **27** God, the Father, put all things under the authority of the kingdom reign of Jesus when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father (See Ps 8:6; 110:1; Dn 7:13,14; Jn 13:3; 17:2; Mt 28:18; At 2:34; Hb 2:5-9). All things in heaven and earth, except the Father, were put under the rule of Jesus. **28** When all things have been completed in reference to the eternal plan of God concerning creation, then the Son will submit Himself to God, the Father. The Son will not give up His deity in His submission. He will submit Himself to the authority of all that is God in order that there be the sole authority of the kingdom reign of God throughout eternity (See 3:23; 11:3; 12:6). Since Paul is revealing things to us that have not yet occurred, nor are in our realm of being, we must not

immersed for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they immersed for the dead?

**30** And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?

**31** I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you that I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

**32** If according to men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

**33 ¶** Be not deceived, evil company corrupts

good morals.

**34** Awake to righteousness and do not sin, for some have no knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.

**35 ¶** But some will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what body do they come?"

**36** Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

**37** And what you sow, you do not sow that body which will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

**38** But God gives it a body as He pleases,

suppose that we understand everything that is said. These are matters of God, and thus, beyond our full comprehension. The Holy Spirit reveals them to us in order to comfort us concerning events that are yet to happen. He wants us to be fully assured that God has all things in control, regardless of the presumptions of men who think they have God figured out.

**29 Immersed for the dead:** If God does not have all things under control through the present kingship of the Son, then why would one who is dead in sin be baptized for the old man of sin? Believers are baptized in order to wash away the sins of the old man (At 2:38). They are baptized in order to be raised a new man (See comments Rm 6:3-6). However, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Paul reasons that it would be foolish to be baptized in order that we be raised at the end of time. In other words, one's baptism in water for remission of sins makes sense only if there is a physical resurrection at the end of time. **30 Stand in jeopardy:** Paul and the others who witnessed the resurrected Jesus, walked by fact. They walked by the fact that they had actually witnessed Jesus after His resurrection. Because of their personal witness to the resurrected Jesus, they were willing to risk their lives for the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus (At 15:25,26; 2 Co 11:23-28; Gl 5:11). **31 Boasting in you:** Paul was able to boast in the conversion of the Corinthians because they had submitted to Christ (See Rm 15:16; 1 Th 2:19). **I die daily:** As a result of his commitment to accomplish his Christ-given mission to preach the gospel, Paul daily gave himself to his destiny (Rm 8:36; 2 Co 4:10; see comments Gl 2:20). **32 Fought with beasts at Ephesus:** We have no record of this event. Possible reference could be to events during the two years while Paul was in Ephesus when he was thrown to wild animals for preaching Jesus (See At 19; 2 Co 1:8). This could have been the time when Aquila and Priscilla risked their lives for him (Rm 16,3,4). Paul here argues that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then his persecution for preaching the gospel is of no value toward the future. If there is no resurrection, then this life is all there is. If this is true, then we must live as if this is all the life we have (See Ec 2:24; Is 22:13; 56:12; Lk 12:19). **Let us eat and drink:** This was the philosophy of life of the Epicureans. They believed that happiness was attained by enjoying the pleasures of this world. **33 Evil company:** The deception is in the fact that one can keep company with those who live and believe contrary to fundamental teachings, and

yet, not be influenced by their teachings (1 Co 5:6). Paul's argument is that if they continue to fellowship those in Corinth who were denying the resurrection, then eventually they would start living after their world view, which world view was expressed in verse 32. **34 Awake to righteousness:** One should not be deceived into thinking that his beliefs do not affect his behavior. In the context of this discussion, the erroneous belief that there would be no resurrection of the dead led some to live unrighteously in this life. Since they did not believe in the resurrection, they followed the Epicurean world view of following after the pleasures of this life. They thus sacrificed righteousness for worldly pleasures. Therefore, Paul exhorts here that they should repent to a life of righteous living (Rm 13:11; Ep 5:14). **The knowledge of God:** The arrogant false teachers in Corinth who thought that they knew God – reference could possibly be to Gnostic beliefs – were actually ignorant of God. If one lives worldly while at the same time claiming to know God, he does not know the God of heaven (Compare 1 Th 4:5). Therefore, those in Corinth who claimed to know God, but lived according to the flesh, should be ashamed.

#### RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

**35** Paul answers in the following context the two questions that he poses here. However, neither he nor we can fully understand how the dead are raised. Neither can we fully understand the resurrected body (See comments 2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Jn 3:2). He writes concerning those things that are beyond our comprehension. **36 Foolish one:** He addresses those who are truly empirical in their thinking, and thus do not think beyond that which is of this world. Paul begins his illustration with the sowing of seeds that must first be planted in order to transform into something completely different (See Jn 12:24). **37** What goes in the ground is not the same as what comes out of the ground. As a seed, the body dies and is buried in the ground. However, when it sprouts forth from the ground, it goes through a transformation. And so it will be with our resurrection. The body that goes into the ground will not be as the body that will be resurrected. The body that is buried is the seed from which the new body is raised. **38 God gives:** The God who created our bodies in the first place is able to give us a glorious body as Jesus (Ph 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2). As God has empowered seeds to transform through death and sprouting, so he will empower our buried bodies to transform into an immortal body.

and to each seed its own body.

**39 ¶** All flesh *is* not the same flesh. But *there is one flesh* of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fish, another of birds.

**40** *There are* also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the glory of the heavenly *is* one and the *glory* of the earthly *is* another.

**41** *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.

**42 ¶** So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown perishable. It is raised imperishable.

**43** It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power.

**44** It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.

**45** And so it is written, "*The first man, Adam, became a living soul.*" The last Adam *became*

a life-giving spirit.

**46 ¶** However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.

**47** The first man *was* from the earth, earthly. The second man *is* from heaven.

**48** As *was* the earthly, so also *are* those who are earthly; and as *is* the heavenly, so also *are* those who are heavenly.

**49** And as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly.

**50 ¶** Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

**51** Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

**52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and

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**39** In the creation of living flesh, God created different flesh in man, fish, birds and other animals. Therefore, it should not be difficult to understand that He can again create a habitation in which we will dwell that is different from our present bodies. **40,41 Heavenly bodies:** God also created the stars, moon, planets and galaxies. **Earthly bodies:** God created all earthly bodies of fish, animals and man. The celestial and terrestrial bodies are different. Each body, however, has its own glorious presentation as the work of God. **42 Raised imperishable:** The body that we now have will decay away when it dies and is buried. However, when it is raised, it will be a body that will not die. If it will not die, then neither will it decay (See Dn 12:3; Mt 13:43). **43 Raised in glory:** The body that we now have loses its honor and dignity when it dies and is buried. However, when we are raised, we will be changed to a glorious body. Jesus will transform our lowly body so that it may be conformed to His glorious body (Ph 3:21; see Lk 20:36; Cl 3:4). **Raised in power:** The body we now have does not have the power to survive physical death (Hb 9:27). However, the body which will come forth from the grave will have power over physical death. **44 Raised a spiritual body:** Our present body was designed for dwelling in this present physical environment. However, the glorious body we shall have will be especially prepared for eternal dwelling in the new heavens and earth (2 Pt 3:13). **45 The first man:** The physical body of Adam that was made from the dust of the earth became a living soul only when God breathed into it the breath of life (Gn 2:7). **The last Adam:** Paul refers to Jesus who will breathe into our mortal bodies life, and thus, we shall be raised from the dead (Rm 5:14,21; see Jn 5:21; 6:57; Rm 8:2; Ph 3:21; Cl 3:4).

**46** Adam and our physical bodies have come first in God's plan for our eternal dwelling. After the fulfillment of God's purpose for the creation of this world and our physical bodies, then comes the spiritual body to

dwell in the eternal environment which God has planned for the righteous (2 Pt 3:13). **47** Adam is the father of us all since he was the first to be created (Gn 2:7; 3:19; Jn 3:31). Our present bodies originated from the elements of this earth. **The second Man:** Jesus originated from heaven, and thus, our new bodies will originate from God (Jn 3:13; see comments 2 Co 5:1-8). **48** Since all men have been born after the nature of Adam, we shall suffer because of the limitations of the body that we have from the dust of the earth. However, those who are born after the image of Jesus shall have a glorious body after Him (Ph 3:20,21; 1 Jn 3:2). **49 Image of the heavenly:** When John wrote, he did not understand the nature of the resurrected body that is to come. He only revealed that we would be as Jesus (1 Jn 3:2). We do know that our body will not be after the image of the dust of the earth. Though we do not understand what we shall be, we do know that our body will be heavenly in nature in order to dwell in a heavenly environment (Rm 8:29; 2 Co 3:18).

#### THE RESURRECTION EVENT

**50 Flesh and blood:** The nature of our present body is not made to dwell in the environment of heaven to come (Mt 16:17; compare Jn 3:3-5). A body that dies and decays will not dwell in an environment where there is no death. **51 A mystery:** Paul here reveals what will happen at the time of the resurrection. It is a mystery in the sense that this is the direct revelation of God through the Holy Spirit. Though we do not understand all the details and the nature of the transformation that will take place, we are metaphorically given a picture that is sufficient to satisfy those who seek to trust in God to do what He has promised to do. **We will all be changed:** The body that is buried is the seed from which the changed body will be made by God through resurrection. Our bodies will be changed from being corruptible, dishonorable, weak, natural and mortal (vss 42-45). **52**

we will be changed.

**53** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

**54** So when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will be brought to pass the saying that is written, "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*"

**55** "*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*"

**56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

**57** But thanks *be* to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**58** ¶ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not *in vain* in the Lord.

## Chapter 16

**1** ¶ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, you must do also.

**2** On the first *day* of the week let each one of you put something aside as he may prosper

**In a moment:** The resurrection and transformation will not be a process that will be carried out over hours, minutes or even seconds. In a split second, all will take place at the last moment of earth history (See comments 1 Th 4:13-18). **53 Must put on imperishable:** Our present bodies must be transformed into the glorious body in order to dwell in the heavenly environment to come. It must put on the ability to exist without end (2 Co 5:4). **54 Death is swallowed up in victory:** The changing of our bodies will be the end of death. Physical death will be terminated (See comments Rv 20:11-15; see Is 25:8). **55 Hades is the abode of the spirits of those who have died.** However, after the resurrection and transformation, there will be no need for hades because death will no longer exist (See Hs 13:14; see comments Lk 16:19-31). **56 The sting of death:** Physical death came into the world when Adam sinned. His sin resulted in his being driven from the garden of Eden and away from the tree of life (Gn 3:22-24). His sin, therefore, resulted in physical death being suffered by all humanity (vss 20-22). Adam only introduced death because he was the first to sin. However, all men have sinned (Rm 3:23). **Power of sin:** It is law that manifests our sin (Rm 6:12-15; 7:7-13; 8:2,3). Therefore, because we sin against law we deserve death (Rm 6:23). We deserve death because no man can live perfectly in order to be saved by the merit of keeping law (See comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). **57 Thanks be to God:** We can have victory over sin only through the grace of God that was manifested on the cross through Jesus (Ti 2:11). We can have victory over the grave only by obediently responding to the grace of God. Our thanksgiving, therefore, must be to God for providing Jesus who gave us victory over death through obedience to the gospel (Rm 6:3-6).

**58** In view of the future resurrection, Paul calls on the Corinthians to remain faithful (Ep 6:10,14; 2 Pt 3:14). They must not move from their hope. One's hope of resurrection to immortality that is to come should move him to remain committed. **Always abounding:** One's thanksgiving for what God has done for us through Jesus should move us to abound in the work of the Lord (vs 10; Ph 2:12,13; Ti 2:14). **Labor is not in vain in the Lord:** Good works that are accomplished by those who are outside the Lord are profitable to the betterment of the community. They are beneficial to the preservation of society. However, they are in vain in reference to

one's salvation. John wrote that their works will not follow them because they will not go into eternal glory as the righteous (Rv 13:14). Those who are not in the Lord do good works in vain, for they are not in a covenant relationship with the Lord. No one who is outside Christ will be saved. Therefore, it is imperative that one come into the Lord in order that his labors follow him into eternal glory (See comments Rm 6:3,4; Gl 3:26,27).

## Chapter 16

### SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

**1** There was a great famine in the area of Judea during the reign of Caesar Claudius. This famine occurred between A.D. 41-45 and was prophesied in At 11:27,28. Another famine is mentioned by Josephus which occurred between A.D. 44 and 48. It was in the context of this famine that Paul's plea for the Corinthian contribution is made. The historical context that leads up to what he states in these few verses is that the Gentile disciple that Paul had converted had determined to send a contribution to the Judean disciples. This request was made by Paul, and subsequently, the Gentile churches were eager to contribute (Gl 2:10). As a result of Paul's plea, the churches of Achaia (2 Co 9:1,2; 8:10), Macedonia (Rm 15:26) and Galatia were generous to make this special contribution. Their actions manifested love, and thus relaxed tensions between Jewish and Gentile churches. The contribution manifested the truth that they were all of the same universal body. Their contributions also manifested the fellowship that should be characteristic of disciples throughout the world when brethren in any one region of the world are suffering from hardship that is inflicted by nature. **2 The first day of the week:** The opportunity to take up the contribution was on Sunday when the saints gathered together. This was the regular assembly time of the saints (At 20:7), and thus, presented itself as the ideal time to take up contributions for worthy causes. **Put something aside:** Paul instructs that each member determine what he or she can give. The special collection was brought together and stored by the church. Individual control of one's money was thus relinquished to congregational control when the individual contributions were made. The contribution was made for a specific purpose, and thus, every member knew that the totality of the contribution would go to the famine victims of Judea. **As he may**

so that there be no collections when I come. **3** And when I come, whomever you may approve by letters, these will I send to carry your gift to Jerusalem. **4** And if it is fitting that I also go, they will go with me. **5 ¶** Now I will come to you when I will pass through Macedonia, for I am passing through Macedonia. **6** And it may be that I will remain with you to *spend the winter*, so that you may send me on my journey wherever I go.

**7** For I do not wish to see you now in a passing visit, but I hope to stay a while with you if the Lord permits.

**8 ¶** But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.

**9** For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are* many adversaries.

**10 ¶** Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear, for he does the work of the Lord as I also *do*.

**11** Therefore, let no one despise him. But send him forth in peace so that he may come

**prosper:** No percentage or set amount was determined for each member to give. Each member had the responsibility of determining how much should be given according to his or her prosperity (See At 20:33-35; 2 Co 9:6,7). **There be no collections when I come:** Paul did not want his presence in Corinth to be identified with contributions (See comments 9:4-15). When he later came to collect the contribution, he stayed approximately three months (At 20:1-3). According to what he commanded here, he did not want them to take up contributions while he was in their presence. He wanted to continue to challenge the false teachers in Corinth to support themselves instead of living off the Corinthian brethren. Since he did not want the collecting of contributions to take place when he was present, he wanted them to take care of this matter before he came. **3 Whomever you may approve:** Paul was cautious with the Corinthians concerning the handling of money. He did not want the responsibility of handling their contribution for the famine victims because there were some greedy and dishonest brethren in their midst who assumed that he was the same (See At 20:33-35). Paul did not want to give them an opportunity to slander him after their own unrighteousness. **4** If the opportunity presented itself that he be able to go to Jerusalem, Paul said that the designated Corinthian brethren with the contribution could go with him (See 2 Co 8:4,19).

#### FUTURE PLANS

**5** Paul was on his third missionary journey when he wrote this letter (At 19:21; 2 Co 1:15,16). He had planned to visit Corinth at an earlier time, but was hindered in doing so (2 Co 1:15,23; At 20:1,2). However, he is now on his way, sending this letter before in order to make sure that the problems mentioned in this letter were corrected before he arrived. **6 Spend the winter:** As it worked out, he did spend the winter with them (At 20:2,3). **Send me on my journey:** Paul uses the Greek word *propempe* (See At 15:3; 20:38; 21:5; Rm 15:24; 2 Co 1:16; Ti 3:13; 3 Jn 5-8). This is the word that is used to explain the financial support of the one who is on a journey. The early Christians housed the early evangelists. They then supported them on their way to evangelize the lost. This does not contradict what he said in verse 2. He did not want them to support him while he residentially worked in Corinth. He supported himself by making tents while located with them for the winter. What he lacked was made up by the churches of Macedonia. However, when he left to go out on his mis-

sion to the lost, he encouraged them to fulfill their responsibility to evangelize the lost through support of an evangelist. **7 If the Lord permits:** Paul prayed for the Lord to be with him. He asked others to pray for him. However, the answer to our prayers is for the Lord to decide (At 18:21; Js 4:15). **8,9** Paul evidently wanted to wait in Ephesus because of an opportunity that presented itself during the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Lv 23:15-22). **Door has opened:** The open door about which he here speaks could have been the opportunity he had in Ephesus to speak for three months in the synagogue of the Jews (At 19:8). This would certainly have been an opportunity, since he was usually able to speak in the synagogues only for one or two Sabbaths before being prohibited to speak further (At 17:2; 18:4). However, he eventually moved from teaching in the synagogue to teaching in the school of Tyrannus (At 19:9). This opportunity continued for two years. As a result, all Asia heard the word (At 19:10). When Paul saw an opportunity to edify the church and evangelize the lost, he took it. He delayed his plans to go to the Macedonian and Achaia churches in order to seize the opportunity to stay almost two and a half years in Ephesus. It is also worthy to note that he delayed his collection of the famine relief until he took advantage of the great open door that was made available in Ephesus for the evangelization of Asia. Saving the lost took priority over the famine relief work of Judea (See Gl 2:10). **10 If Timothy comes:** Paul had desired Timothy to precede him to Corinth in order to exhort the church to repent in those areas of sin about which he wrote in this letter (At 19:22; 2 Tm 1:2). **Without fear:** Paul here wrote to protect the tender nature of Timothy (See comments 1 Tm 4:12). He knew that the arrogant teachers in Corinth would seek to intimidate Timothy from preaching and teaching in order to rebuke those who were teaching error. The sending of Timothy could possibly have been Paul's way of determining who the arrogant false teachers were in Corinth. How they treated Timothy would determine who was listening to Paul. **He does the work:** Timothy was one who was dedicated to the work of preaching and teaching (Ph 2:20; 1 Th 3:2). As Paul, he had committed himself to sacrificially preach the gospel to the lost and edify the church. **11 Let no one despise him:** No one was to show disrespect for Timothy because he came as a representative of Paul (See comments 1 Tm 4:12; Ti 2:15). **Send him forth:** Paul here asks that they also fulfill their financial responsibility of supporting Timothy when he left Corinth to go to other places for

to me, for I am waiting for him with the brethren.

**12 ¶** Now concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly encouraged him to come to you with the brethren. But it was not his will to come at this time, but he will come when he has an opportune time.

**13 ¶** Watch, stand fast in the faith, behave like men, be strong.

**14** Let all *that* you *do* be done in love.

**15 ¶** I urge you, brethren, you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have dedicated them-

selves to the ministry of the saints,

**16** that you submit yourselves to such, and to everyone who works with *us* and labors.

**17 ¶** I am glad about the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they have supplied.

**18** For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men.

**19 ¶** The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

**20** All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

the work of church edification and evangelism (See vs 6). In the first century, the inspired prophets worked among all the churches. They did not locate at one church for great periods of time. The examples of Paul and Timothy clearly indicate that the work of an evangelist was to move among the churches and the lost in order to carry out their responsibility of church edification and evangelization. In the absence of the written word of God, the Holy Spirit edified the churches through the preaching and teaching of inspired evangelists as Timothy and Paul. In the Corinthian situation, Paul did not want to receive financial support from the church when he was located for an extended period of time at a particular location. However, as in this situation, he exhorted the churches to financially make it possible for both Timothy and himself to be set forward on their journeys in moving among the churches and the lost. **12 Apollos:** Paul strongly urged Apollos and other brethren to immediately go to Corinth. He possibly wanted Apollos to go to Corinth before Timothy. Apollos had been there before, and thus, would have been received by them in order to correct the prevailing problems (1:12; 3:5; At 18:24-28). **Not his will to come at this time:** Neither Paul nor any other of the Christ-sent apostles exercised dictatorial powers over the church or individuals. If they had, then Apollos would have been quite rebellious on this occasion. Apollos did not want to go to Corinth at the time Paul wanted. He also may have had an open door of opportunity as Paul (vss 9,10).

#### FINAL EXHORTATIONS

**13 Watch:** They were responsible for being cautious about false teaching (Mt 24:42; 1 Th 5:6; 1 Pt 5:8). **Stand:** They were responsible for continuing in the faith (15:1; Gl 5:1; Ph 1:27; 4:1; Ep 6:10; Cl 1:11; 1 Th 3:8; 2 Th 2:15). **Brave:** They were responsible for maintaining a courageous stand in times of persecution (7:26). **Strong:** They were responsible for standing up in the face of adversity (Ps 31:24; Ep 3:16; 6:10; Cl 1:11). The responsibility to carry out the above admonitions lies on the shoulders of each Christian. One's faithfulness to the Lord, therefore, is the personal responsibility of every member. **14 Done in love:** Christians are to behave toward each other with a spirit of love in their relationship with one another (Jn 13:34,35; 1 Pt 4:8). **15 Household of Stephanas:** Stephanas and his household were some of the first converts in Corinth (1:16;

Rm 16:5). After their conversion to the Lord, they determined to serve the church. Paul says here that they dedicated themselves to the service of the saints (2 Co 8:4; Hb 6:10; see comments Mk 10:35-45). In this verse Paul speaks of the ministry of service which was carried out by Stephanas and his household. In the following verse, he speaks of the responsibility of the church to the service of the household of Stephanas. **16 Submit yourselves to such:** This is not the submission to an autocratic leader or one in whom power has been invested. They were to humble themselves and submit to the sacrificial service of the household of Stephanas (See comments Hb 13:17; compare At 6:3). The church is a group of slaves who seek to serve one another. In Corinth there were those who were puffed up, and thus, refused the service of those as the household of Stephanas. Therefore, Paul here admonishes that members must submit to being served (Ep 5:21; 1 Th 5:12).

**To everyone who works with us and labors:** Not only were they to submit to the local service of the household of Stephanas, they were to submit to men as Timothy and Apollos who labored and worked in the area of evangelism and church edification. **17 What was lacking on your part:** The Corinthian church did not send financial support. However, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus personally helped Paul. The church did not take the initiative to help, but these three brothers did. Paul seems to give an indirect rebuke to the church for their lack of concern (See 2 Co 11:8,9; Ph 2:30; see comments Ph 4:10-18). **18 Refreshed my spirit:** Paul was greatly encouraged by the attitudes of the three brethren who came to him (Cl 4:8). **19 Aquila and Priscilla:** This husband and wife mission team helped Paul in the establishment of the Corinthian church (At 18:1-3,18,19,26; Rm 16:3-5). **Church ... in their house:** The early Christians met in the homes of the members. They had no church buildings, and thus, they met as many small groups throughout a city (Rm 16:5; Pl 2). The church consisted of multiple assemblies throughout cities in which it was established. **20 The holy kiss:** The customary practice of greeting of the culture in which the early church lived was the holy kiss. Paul here exhorts that such be practiced in order that the brethren manifest their acceptance of one another (Rm 16:16). The practice of the holy kiss manifested their close fellowship and affection toward one another. **21** Paul personally signed this letter in order to authenti-

**21** *This is the greeting with my own hand, Paul.*

**22 ¶** If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Come, O Lord.

**23** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

**24** My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

cate its origin. However, it was written by Sosthenes while Paul dictated it (1:1). **22 Accursed:** This Greek word (*anathema*) means to be destroyed (See Gl 1:8,9). The Holy Spirit is serious about our love of the Lord. All those who do not obediently love the Lord will eventually be destroyed from the presence of the Lord (Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). Therefore, there will be no hope for those who do not turn to God in order to be obedient to His will. **Come, O Lord:** This is from two Greek words (*marana tha*). The phrase is a short prayer that the Lord come (Jd 14,15; Rv 22:20). As all faithful Christians,

Paul was looking for and desiring the coming of the Lord (2 Pt 3:14). If one is not looking for the coming of the Lord in order to deliver us from this world, then he is attached to this world. His mind is on things of this world (See comments Cl 3:1-3). **23,24** Paul concludes the epistle as he often introduces his messages to the churches. All is centered around the work of God through His grace (Rm 16:20). It is because of God's grace that we are who we are. Therefore, our gratitude is to Him for His gift of grace.

## Paul's Letter Of 2 Corinthians

### Author

The author of this letter identifies himself in 1:1. "*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God ....*" The apostle Paul wrote this letter in order to follow up on things that he had written in 1 Corinthians (See "Author" in introduction to Rm).

### Date

A delegation of brethren from Corinth had already come to Paul in Ephesus to report concerning problems that had taken place in Corinth since his departure after the initial establishment of the church (At 18). Paul wrote the 1 Corinthian letter in order to correct these problems. 1 Corinthians was possibly taken to Corinth by these men or Titus (1 Co 16:17-19). Paul also sent Timothy to Corinth in order to exhort the brethren to repent before his coming. He did this in order that he not have to come to them with the rod of discipline (1 Co 4:17; 16:10,11). Timothy's return to Paul with reports concerning the unrepentant attitude of some of the disciples to the apostolic authority of Paul motivated the writing of this letter (2 Co 1:23 - 2:1; 12:14 - 13:6).

The 1 Corinthian letter was written from Ephesus during Paul's two to three year visit there, possibly at the end of his stay (At 19:1-10). Therefore, 1 Corinthians was probably written between A.D. 54 and 55 while Paul was on his third missionary journey. This letter was written about one year after the writing of 1 Corinthians. It was written while Paul was in Macedonia on his third missionary journey. At the time, he was on his way to Corinth to personally correct some problems in the church, as well as collect the Corinthians' contribution for the famine victims of Judea (1 Co 16:1-4). Since the letter was probably written about a year after 1 Corinthians, the date of writing would be in the autumn of A.D. 56 when Paul intended to stay the winter with the Macedonian churches (See 8:10; 9:2). He was on his way to Corinth. However, some brethren needed to repent before he arrived. If they did not repent, this third visit would be one over which he would mourn because he would have to exercise the power of a Christ-sent apostle in order to discipline them (12:21).

### Theme

Since there were those in Corinth who were challenging the apostleship of Paul, this letter was written to contrast the arrogant leadership of these false apostles to the humble nature of the servanthood of the apostles of Christ. The theme of the letter, therefore, is to proclaim the humble perseverance in affliction of the true servants of Christ (See 6:4-10; 11:16-33).

### Purpose

Timothy had returned to Paul after exhorting the Corinthian church to repent and follow the in-