

1 CORINTHIANS

Author :

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Date :

About 56 AD.

Themes :

God had used Paul to found the church at Corinth (Acts 18:1-18), but after his departure teachings and practices contrary to the gospel of Christ had found a place among the Christians there. Individuals were guilty of various errors and sins and the church as a whole was being damaged by factions. Paul wrote this letter to correct the faults there. He pointed out to them the holy, humble way believers should live, worship, and serve God. Above everything else he emphasized the way of love (chapter 13).

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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 which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

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

4 I always thank my God for you, for the grace of God which is given to you by Jesus Christ, 5 *so* that in everything you are enriched by him, in all *kinds of* speaking and complete knowledge, 6 since the testimony of Christ was established among you, 7 *so* that you are not inferior in any gift, as you wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will establish you to the end, *so that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9

1:1 Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1. "Will of God" – whatever any believer is he should be that by the will of God and know it is God's will for him to be that. It seems that Sosthenes wrote down this letter as Paul dictated it to him. Compare Rom 16:22.

1:2 Paul speaks of what all believers in Christ are. They form a called out assembly (note on Church at Matt 16:18). They belong to God (16:19,20; John 17:9,10). They are set apart ("sanctified" – John 17:17-19). They are "in" Christ (Eph 1:1,4). God has called them to be holy (to be a special people belonging to a holy God. Note at Lev 20:7). They have one Lord (8:5,6; Rom 10:9).

1:3 Rom 1:7.

1:4 Rom 1:8; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Tim 1:3.

1:5-7 "Enriched" – Rom 10:12; 2 Cor 8:9; Matt 7:11. God had given them every spiritual ability to serve Him – 12:4-11,28-31; Rom 12:6-8. Paul is not speaking merely about the leaders, preachers and teachers in the Church, but about all believers there. The spiritual life in the Corinthian believers was good evidence that the gospel he preached to them was true (v 6). And it caused them to look forward eagerly for the second coming of Christ (v 7; Matt 24:30; 2 Thess 1:7; 1 Pet 1:7,13; 4:13).

"Gift" – talent, ability given by God.

"Coming" (v 7) – here Paul uses the Greek word meaning "revelation" (apokalupsis). He says nothing about a hidden coming of Christ, a secret rapture. He says that the Corinthian believers were looking for Christ to be openly revealed. Compare Titus 2:13.

1:8 "To the end" – Phil 1:6; Rom 5:9,10; 8:29,30; John 10:28,29; Heb 7:25; 1 Pet 1:5.

"Blameless" – Eph 1:4. The blameless are those against whom no accusation can be brought. Compare Rom 4:8; 8:33,34. The "day" of Christ is the time of His sec-

ond coming (v 7).

1:9 "Faithful" – God will fulfill all His promises to believers and keep them to the end (v 8; 1 Thess 5:24; Titus 1:2; 2 Tim 2:13). "Fellowship" – 1 John 1:3; John 14:23. **1:10** See 12:25; Rom 12:16; Eph 4:3. Is it possible for all believers to be "perfectly united in . . . mind and . . . purpose"? Evidently. See also 2:16; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:13; Phil 1:27; 2:2; Acts 4:32. Of course Paul is speaking of the teachings of Christ and his apostles. It is possible for all believers to agree on these teachings, but very difficult. It requires a thorough knowledge of God's word, a firm belief in it, and a determination to apply it in every situation.

1:11,12 This was a mark of their immaturity and lack of spirituality – 3:1-4. They knew much and spoke well (v 5), but practiced little of the truth they knew – a common fault everywhere and always. They made far too much of men – another common fault in all times (3:5-8). "Apollos" – Acts 18:24-28. "Cephas" is another name for Peter. Both names mean "rock."

"Of Christ" – those who said they followed Christ alone where no more mature and spiritual than the others, if they made this a reason for division in the church and looked down on others. Observe that Paul was not pleased with the fact that there was a group there saying that they were "of Paul." He did not want such things. He always pointed people to Christ, not to himself.

1:13 Neither Christ nor His Body can be divided (12:12,13). Believers are to recognize this fact, accept one another, and live in the unity they have in Christ (Eph 4:2). Paul is saying in this verse, "who is any person compared to Christ? Do not exalt any man to too high a place."

1:14-17 Notes on baptism at Matt 3:6; 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Paul knew that as far as salvation is concerned repentance and faith were the vital things (Acts

these, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of no effect.

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 intelligent.

17:30; 20:21; Rom 10:9,10). If baptism had been essential for salvation (as some today confidently assert) could Paul possibly have taken this attitude toward it? It is evident that the duty of all believers to live in harmony with each other was more important to Paul than questions about baptism.

1:17-25 In v 17 Paul is not denying that Christ told His disciples to baptize (Matt 28:19), or that all believers should be baptized. He is speaking about the essence of his ministry, the one overwhelmingly important thing – preaching the gospel.

Observe here what Paul avoided in his preaching – human wisdom. He knew that such wisdom was really foolishness (v 20), and that by it no one can come to a true knowledge of God (v 21). And he knew that God had appointed the clear preaching of the gospel as the way to bring men to salvation (vs 21,23; 15:1,2; Rom 1:16). Preaching with human wisdom is the same as trying to empty the cross of Christ of its power. And we may be sure that anything which does that is not of God, and is of no use in the salvation of men.

Verse 18 speaks of two classes of people – the “perishing” and those “being saved.” The attitude of people toward Christ’s cross reveals which group they are in. In these verses the “perishing” (see John 3:16; Luke 19:10) are of two kinds (v 22) – the religious law-keeping Jews and the idolatrous Greeks with their love of philosophy. The cross is foolishness to both kinds of people. Why? They do not understand it (2 Cor 4:4), and they do not believe it is necessary (the gospel is not man’s way of thinking, but God’s – Rom 8:5-7). Moreover, they do not want it (they are self-confident and proud and the cross would humble them in the dust).

There are many such people today. They do not think it is foolishness to lie, cheat, steal, live for temporary pleasures, or bow down to images made by men. To them only the cross (which is the wisdom of God – v 24) is foolishness!

But some people are “being saved” (salvation begins with the new birth – John 1:12,13; 3:3-8, and goes on to the resurrection and glorification of believers – Rom 8:23,30). To them the cross is the power of God (vs 18,24; Rom 1:16). They have

20 Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the debater of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world by *its* wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the “foolishness” of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 For the Jews require a *miraculous* sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ

experienced its power. It has completely changed their lives (2 Cor 5:17). To them it is also the wisdom of God (v 24). They see far more of God’s wisdom in any aspect of the cross than in all the works of all the world’s wise men and philosophers who do not believe and know Christ.

1:19 Isa 29:14.

1:20 True wisdom begins with the fear of the one true God, and this the wise men, scholars and philosophers who belong to this world (and not to Christ) do not have (see Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7). So they do not have even the barest beginning of wisdom. But the point here is that God made all their so-called wisdom as foolishness by the cross. The cross is God’s one way of saving men, and it is a way none of the wisest of men ever once thought about. The way of wisdom cannot bring salvation to anyone. It is not God’s way. See also Col 2:8.

1:21 There are three important truths here.

First, men with all their philosophy, intellectual activity or mystic knowledge did not come to the knowledge of God. Actually quite the opposite happened – they lost the knowledge of God that mankind once had (see Rom 1:21-23).

Second, God saves people through what seems foolishness to so-called wise men – the preaching of the cross (v 18). “The ‘foolishness’ of what was preached” – this seems a more accurate translation of the Greek than “the foolishness of preaching.” Compare verses 23 and 25. The Gospel message is certainly the very opposite of foolishness, but it seems like foolishness to those who are wise in their own eyes. And that is Paul’s meaning here.

Third, salvation comes only to those who believe this preaching (Rom 1:16,17).

1:22 Mark 8:11; John 6:30; Matt 12:39,40.

“Sign”, “Wisdom” – they sought for what they thought was a rational basis for everything. They were not content to believe something simply because God said it was true.

1:23 “Stumbling block” – a crucified Messiah was not according to their expectations or desires.

“Foolishness” – they reasoned that only criminals were crucified, and how could a crucified criminal have anything to do with anyone’s salvation or display any of the wisdom they sought.

1:24 “Called” – Rom 1:6; 8:30. The “called”

the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty, 28 and lowly things of the world, and things which are despised, God has chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 so that no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But by him you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, and

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, according to what is written, he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you declaring to you the testimony of God, I did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, 2 for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And 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 man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who

of v 24 are those "being saved" of v 18.

1:25 See how different God's wisdom is from man's, and how far above it. Compare Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33-36.

1:26 This was true then and true now. In India from among the intellectuals, or the high castes God has called some but not many. It has pleased Him to call many from among the poor and uneducated, the lower castes or no castes. Compare Christ's words in Matt 11:25,26. Caste pride is not something He looks on with favour.

1:27-29 Here is God's good purpose in choosing the lowly and despised to be His people. He loathes men's pride, and cannot stand those who boast in their strength and influence. See Jer 9:23; Prov 6:16,17; 16:5; Isa 1:31; 2:12-18; 13:11; Jer 17:5; Matt 18:3,4; Jam 4:6. He has arranged matters so that all that men take pride in will come to nothing and that no human being will be able to boast in His presence - Rom 3:27; Eph 2:9.

1:30 Believers are in Christ (Eph 1:1,4). They are there because God the Father has chosen them. And Christ is to them all they need for salvation, for time and for eternity. Christ is a far higher wisdom than anything the world knows or can know (Col 2:2,3,8,9). And even the most uneducated and lowliest believer in Christ has more true wisdom than any wise man or philosopher without Christ.

"Righteousness" - notes at Matt 5:6; Rom 1:17; 3:21-26; 10:9,10; Phil 3:9.

"Sanctification" or "holiness" - notes at John 17:17-19; Rom 1:7.

"Redemption" - notes at Matt 20:28; Ps 78:35. Believers in themselves have none of these things, but only in Christ (Eph 1:1,4).

1:31 Jer 9:24. Compare Ps 34:2; 44:8.

"LORD" in the Hebrew of Jer 9:24 is Jehovah; here in 1 Corinthians it refers to Christ. Christ is the incarnation of Jehovah. See other references that teach this at Luke 2:11.

2:1 "Wisdom" that is, what men regard as wisdom.

2:2 Paul came to Corinth directly from

Athens which prided itself on being the world's center of philosophy and wisdom (Acts 17:15; 18:1). He realized afresh how important it was to keep to the heart of the gospel. And the heart of the gospel is Christ, Christ crucified for the sins of men. If any preacher gets away from this he is moving away from the very center of God's revelation, and he is in danger of having a weak and ineffective ministry (though it may be successful in the eyes of men).

2:3 He was not afraid of what men might do to him. Rather he feared that the people in Corinth might be as indifferent to the gospel as the "wise" men of Athens, and that his preaching might fail because of a lack in him. Weakness and trembling in any preacher are better by far than self-confidence, dependence on intellect, or a careless attitude. Compare 2 Cor 12:9,10.

2:4 See 1:17. Paul was capable of using wise and persuasive words if he thought the occasion required them (Acts 17:22-31). But he knew the two most important elements in preaching were to have the right message and the power of God's Spirit to deliver it. It is quite possible for preachers even with the right message to try to talk people into God's kingdom and fail to achieve this because of a lack of God's power. So see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Eph 5:18. People are not saved and established in the faith by being impressed with the wisdom or eloquence of the preacher, but by trusting Christ.

2:5 True faith must be created in people's hearts by the power of God's Spirit. If they base their faith on the wisdom or eloquence of a preacher or merely on his convincing arguments, it will be superficial and fall short of the faith which brings salvation. The Christian faith is reasonable, but arguments for it directed to the reason alone will not bring new life to the heart of anyone. Christ's servants must proclaim Christ and His cross with the power of God sent down from heaven.

2:6,7 Paul does not want his readers to think he is praising ignorance, or that when it comes

are mature, but not the wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, that comes to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained for our glory before the world *began*, 8 which none of the rulers of this world knew. For if they had known *it*, 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 the heart of man,
the things which God has prepared
for those who love him.

10 But God has revealed *them* to us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which 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 of God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. 13 These things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know *them*, because they are spiritually evaluated. 15 But he who is spiritual *properly* evaluates all *these* things, yet he himself is not *properly* evaluated by any man.

16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

to wisdom believers in Christ are nowhere. They have available to them God's secret wisdom, unknown to the wise and powerful of this world (1:30; Col 2:2,3). On "wisdom" see also Ps 51:6; 90:12; 111:10; Prov 1:7,20; 2:1-6; 3:13; 8:1-36; 9:10; Eph 1:17; Jam 1:5. Before the creation of the universe God foreknew and chose His people (Rom 8:29,30), and He ordained that they should have the highest of all wisdom – the knowledge of God and of Christ.

2:8 "Lord of glory" – Paul gives to Jesus a title that can refer only to God. Compare Ps 24:10 where Jehovah God is the "King of glory." See also Acts 7:2; Jam 2:1. Other references that show Jesus is Jehovah are at Luke 2:11. The fact that men crucified a divine person reveals they did not know God or have God's wisdom.

2:9 Isa 64:4 has similar but not these exact words.

2:10 The wisdom Paul speaks of cannot be found out by man's intellect or philosophical reasoning, or by searching into religion or mysticism or the occult. God reveals it by His Spirit. There is no other way to receive it. Compare John 16:13-15. And the only way to receive God's Spirit is by believing in Jesus Christ.

2:11 No one can know what God is thinking unless He reveals it, but the Holy Spirit can know it because He is God. This verse teaches that God's Spirit is not some impersonal influence or power. He is a person who has knowledge and can reveal it (v 10).

2:12 The world (mankind in general in its fallen sinful condition) does not have God's Spirit and cannot receive Him (John 14:16,17). Believers in Christ have received God's Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13), and can know what others cannot possibly know (v 14).

2:13 Observe Paul's emphasis on "words." God's Spirit had given the apostles the very words that expressed God's truth, and not merely general ideas in the mind. Compare Matt 4:4; 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16.

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" –

this expression in Greek can be translated in different ways, though the above translation seems as good as any to the author of these notes. Literally it is "comparing (or explaining or combining – the Greek word means all three) spiritual with spiritual." The word "things" is implied and is needed to make a proper English sentence.

2:14 See 1:18,23; Rom 8:5-8. If we would accept and understand God's truth it is absolutely essential that God's Spirit teach us. So Eph 1:15-19. "Natural" = unsaved.

2:15 1 John 2:20,27; John 3:8. Only believers in Christ made spiritual by God's Spirit can see the true state of things and people. But those without the Spirit will not understand Christ's people and so will be unable to rightly evaluate them. Proper judgment must be based on spiritual understanding, and this no one has by nature.

"Evaluates", "evaluated" – in Greek the same word used in v 14. Here it means to determine the worth or truth of a person or thing.

2:16 Isa 40:13. This is given as evidence of the above truths. Natural men (those without God's Spirit) cannot know God's mind and so they cannot understand the mind of believers. This is because believers no longer think like people of the world. They share in God's mind through Christ. This does not mean that believers know all that Christ knows. It does mean that because Christ is in them, and they have His Spirit, they are at the source of God's truth, and He can enable them to understand it.

Is this true only of apostles and great and wise Christian leaders? No, it is true of all spiritual believers (1:26-28). Education, great intellectual ability, and human wisdom have nothing to do with it. God's Spirit giving understanding to man's spirit – this is the great essential. Observe that all through this passage of Scripture God's Spirit is seen to be different from man's spirit. This is the teaching of God's Word everywhere. See notes at John 14:17; Rom 8:9,16; Gal 3:2;

3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people*, but as to carnal, as to infants in Christ. **2** I fed you with milk, and not with *solid* food, for until now you were not able to *receive it*, and you still are not able. **3** For you are still carnal. For while *there are* envy, and strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal, and behaving like *unbelieving* men? **4** For while one says, "I am of Paul", and another, "I *am* of Apollos", are you not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each man? **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. **7** So then nei-

ther he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God gives the increase. **8** Now he who plants and he who waters are one. And each man will receive his own reward according to his own labour. **9** For we are workers together with God. *You are* God's field, you are God's building.

10 In accordance with the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master builder, I laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let everyone take care how he builds on it. **11** For no one can lay any other foundation than *the one* that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, **13** every

Eph 4:18; Jude 19.

3:1,2 "Spiritual people" – compared to those who do not have God's Spirit all believers are spiritual (2:14-16; Rom 8:5-9). But among believers themselves some are much more spiritual than others. And some, unfortunately, behave all too much like people of the world who follow their sinful nature. On the whole the Corinthian believers were like this. Spiritually speaking, they were still babies, and Paul could not teach them the deep things of God (compare 2:6; Heb 5:11-14).

"Carnal" – or "fleshly" – all too often falling prey to the old fallen nature. In 2:14 and 3:1 Paul speaks of three kinds of people.

"Natural" are those who do not have God's Spirit.

"Spiritual" are those who have God's Spirit and who walk in accordance with the Spirit. And "carnal" are those who have God's Spirit but in some ways behave as if they do not.

3:3 Here was the evidence that they were "carnal." For jealousy and quarreling among believers do not come from God's Spirit, but from the fallen nature in people (Gal 5:19,20; Jam 3:14-18). Believers in Christ have no right to behave like unbelieving men. They are God's holy people, having God's Spirit, and are called to a higher way of living.

3:4 See 1:11,12. Still today many believers show their worldliness and carnality by their factions, by their pride in their sect or church or denomination, and by their giving glory to men.

3:5-9 Believers should see that the Lord alone is the important one and that all who preach and teach His Word are mere servants, and in themselves nothing (v 7). The Lord is the one who assigns different tasks to different servants (v 5), and it is God who prospers the work, not men (v 7). God alone is the source of truth and spiritual life and blessing. The true servants of God, such as Paul and Apollos, have one purpose (v 8), and believers should recognize this and with one heart and mind accept them all (1:10), but should not make too much of any of them.

3:7 "Anything" – here is the proper view any servant of God should have toward himself.

Compare 15:9; 2 Cor 3:5; Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15. See also Ex 3:11; Jud 6:15; Jer 1:6. This is surely one reason for Paul's great fruitfulness. He was not concerned with man's praise or blame, honor or contempt. His whole purpose was to serve God in humility of spirit.

3:8 Verse 14.

3:9 "Workers together with God" – God's servants are joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, have God's Holy Spirit living in them, and are doing the Father's work. Can any work be as noble, as splendid, as rewarding as this?

"God's field" – Matt 13:24.

"God's building" – v 16; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:5.

3:10 In v 7 Paul says he is not anything. Here he says that all he has done as a servant of Christ was by the grace of God. God freely gave him all his abilities and opportunities. See also 2 Cor 3:5,6.

"I laid the foundation" – Paul began the work in Corinth (Acts 18:1). Others were building on the foundation he laid.

3:11 Isa 28:16; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6. Paul laid the foundation in Corinth by preaching and teaching the truth about Christ, and by the power of God's Spirit working in him bringing people to put their faith in Christ for salvation. Paul then left Corinth, and other builders were at work.

3:12 If builders are spiritual and practice and teach the treasures of God's Word, it is as though they were using precious metals and gems. But if builders are worldly and behave like unbelieving men (v 3) and build with their own ideas of how to build, it is like using wood, hay, or straw. All that comes out of self in believers, from the "flesh", will come to nothing on the day of judgment, even if it is work related to the church, and said to be done in Christ's name. (And is there not a great deal of such effort in the churches?) But all work that comes from God's Spirit in them will stand the test on that day.

3:13-15 "Day" – Paul speaks of the day when God will judge the work of all His servants. Verse 13 says it will be a revealing judgment, a fiery judgment, and a testing judgment. The amount of a person's work will not be the important thing in that day, but

man's work will be made clear, for the day will make it known, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test everyone's work as to what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built *on the foundation* remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but as if through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy. And you are that *temple*.

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become foolish so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. For it is written,

He catches the wise in their own craftiness.
20 And again,

The Lord knows that the thoughts of
the wise are useless.

21 Therefore let no one boast about 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 belong to Christ, and Christ *belongs* to God.

4 So men should regard us as the servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you, or by *any* human judgement. Indeed, I do not judge myself. 4 For I

the quality of it. The chief thing will not be that which seems to be good work before God's fire tests it, but what remains afterwards. With what care and reverent fear and trembling (2:3) should God's servants go about their work.

3:14 Matt 16:27; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12.

3:15 "Will suffer loss" - means the loss of the rewards he might have had. Compare 2 John 8.

"Fire" - compare 1 Pet 4:17,18.

3:16 Both individually and as a whole Christ's believers are God's temple. A temple is where worship goes on and offerings are given to God (Rom 12:1,2; Heb 13:15,16; 1 Pet 2:5). It is where God's presence is (Ps 11:4; John 17:23; Acts 2:4; Rom 8:9). Christ's believers are now the only temple God has on earth. Those who reject Him or them may go to man-made temples, but God is not there (Acts 17:24).

3:17 "Destroy, destroy" - the same Greek word is used twice. It has other meanings - corrupt, injure, ruin, or mar. Paul may be referring to the false teachers who troubled the Corinthian church and so many other churches - Rom 16:17,18. Believers do not destroy God's temple - they are God's temple and others are trying to ruin them. At Corinth it seems clear that false teachers were preaching worldly wisdom, ignoring Christ's cross, and perverting the gospel. See 2 Cor 11:4,13-15,18. Such teaching as theirs is what injures God's temple. And we may be sure that God will deal very harshly with people who try to ruin His holy work.

3:18 "Let no one deceive himself" - 6:9; 15:33.

"Wise" - men become truly wise in God's eyes, not by going after worldly wisdom, but by rejecting it and believing Christ's gospel. Such people are fools in the eyes of the world (1:18).

3:19 See 1:20; Job 5:13.

3:20 Ps 94:11. Since our own wisdom is futile and foolish we should reject it.

3:21 Verse 4; 1:12,29,31. Men are instruments in God's hands. All praise should go

to God who made the instruments and uses them, and not to the instruments themselves.

3:22 God has appointed His servants for the benefit of believers (v 5; Eph 4:11-13). The whole earth is the field where believers are planted, watered and caused to grow. All the events of this present life work for their good (Rom 8:28). Death too is theirs - it is a gift which frees them from the mortal body and from the presence of all sin and all troubles. For the believer in Christ death is a door which opens into a higher, better life with God. All things in the future are also theirs - they are God's heirs, joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17; Matt 5:5; Eph 1:14; Rev 21:7). Then why this boasting in men, this exalting one over another?

3:23 Believers do not belong to men, but to Christ (John 6:37,39; 17:6). They must boast in Him alone (1:31).

"Christ belongs to God" - 11:3; 15:28; Matt 3:17; John 3:16; 14:28.

4:1 See 2:7; 3:5,10; Rom 16:25; Gal 1:11,12; Eph 3:2,3. Paul and the other apostles of Christ did not invent their teachings. God had revealed them and placed them in their care. Paul wanted everyone to understand the importance of this fact.

4:2 Faithfulness is the one absolute essential for all servants of Christ. See Matt 24:45; 25:21,23; Luke 16:10; 19:17.

4:3,4 Paul was not much concerned about the judgment of the Corinthians on his faithfulness. He was Christ's servant, not theirs. Christ had sent him and told him what to teach, not they. He was responsible to Christ, not to them. Compare Rom 14:10-12. He did not judge himself because that was not his work, and he knew that no one is capable of judging himself properly, let alone others. Only God can do that, for only He knows for certain what He has given an individual to do and what may be that individual's motives, struggles, temptations, difficulties, inner failures and successes.

Paul's conscience was clear - see Acts 23:1; 24:16. This lack of worry about the

know nothing against myself, yet I am not counted righteous by that. The one who judges me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes. He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make known the purposes of the heart. And then everyone will have praise from God.

6 And these things, brethren, I have applied as an example to myself and Apollos for your benefit, that you might learn in *our case* not to think beyond what is written, so that none of you becomes puffed up for one against another. 7 For who makes you to differ *from others*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you received it, why do you boast, as if you had not received it?

8 Already you are full! Already you are rich! You have reigned as kings without us! How I wish you really were reigning, that we also might reign with you. 9 For it seems to me that God has displayed us, the apostles, last *in the procession*,

judgment of others gives freedom to serve God as He directs.

4:5 He means judge nothing about the faithfulness of others or their motives. Later on he told them to judge the outward behavior of people (5:12; 6:1-6). Christ can and will judge the hidden things of the heart. This no man should try to do.

"Praise from God" – Matt 25:21,23; Rom 2:29; 2 Cor 10:18; Gal 1:10.

4:6 The problem with the believers in Corinth was that they were not viewing God's servants in a Biblical way ("what is written"). Paul used the illustration of himself and Apollos to show them this. They were judging men, exalting or condemning as they pleased, and they needed to learn not to do this.

4:7 Some were boasting in their abilities or position or the fact that they were followers of one teacher rather than another. They had fallen into the absurd sin of considering themselves superior to other believers there (this is the exact opposite of what their views should have been. See Phil 2:3. Compare Luke 18:9). Paul reminds them that whatever they had that was worth having was a gift from God, so that if they boasted they should boast in the Giver and not in themselves (15:10).

4:8-13 In these verses Paul uses irony or sarcasm to strike a blow at their boasting. He does so for the benefit of their spiritual life.

4:8 Paul seems to be saying, "Evidently, you think you have risen very high in the Christian life; tshat you have reached the goal of perfection; that you have begun to reign with Christ in glory!"

4:9 Paul is referring to the persecutions and hardships the apostles endured (Acts 5:17,18,40; 12:1-4; 14:19; 16:22-24; 2 Cor 11:23-27). In those days the authorities sometimes made criminals parade before the people before executing them. Paul says

like *those* condemned to death. For we have been made a spectacle to the world, and 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* honoured, but we *are* despised. 11 Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are poorly clothed, and are beaten, and homeless. 12 And *we* labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we bear it; 13 being slandered, we plead. To this day, we have become *like* the filth of the world, *and like* the scum of all things.

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my dear children I warn *you*. 15 For though you may have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Therefore I beg you, imitate me. 17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you. He is my dear son, and faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my ways

his position in the world seemed like that. But he does not believe this is because of blind chance or fate. He knows that God has done this for a good and wise purpose.

4:10 "Fools for Christ's sake" – this means that they were willing to reject the wisdom of the world and preach what the world called foolishness (1:18,23). The Corinthian Christians were not actually very wise – they only thought they were.

"Weak" – 2:3; 2 Cor 12:9,10.

4:11 2 Cor 11:27. Such is the way the world treats the best and most spiritual of all people. Compare Heb 11:36-38; John 15:18-21; 16:33.

4:12,13 "Working with our own hands" – Acts 18:3; 20:34,35.

"Bless" – Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27,28; Rom 12:14; 1 Peter 2:21-23.

"Scum" – that is, the world treated the apostles of Christ as if they were the lowest, basest and worst of all people.

4:14 Paul's purpose in writing these things was not to move them to pity him or to make them ashamed. He saw their poor spiritual condition and in love for them ("my dear children") was trying to warn them about it.

4:15 They had experienced spiritual birth into God's kingdom (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8), and this was through the ministry of Paul. Compare Gal 4:19.

4:16 Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6. Paul was not at all trying to draw men after himself (3:1-7). But he knew that God had made him an example of how men should live and had revealed to him the gospel he preached. He was an imitator of Christ, so it was safe for believers to imitate him – 11:1. He was not like many who preach one thing and practice something else (Matt 23:3; Rom 2:21-24). It was not safe to follow the false teachers who had come to trouble them.

4:17 Paul was not Timothy's natural father but his spiritual father (Acts 16:1; 1 Tim

in Christ, which I teach everywhere in every church.

18 Now some *of you* are puffed up, 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 talk, but the power of those who are puffed up. 20 For the kingdom of God *is* not in talk, but in power. 21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

5 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles, that a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are

1:2). He could tell the Corinthians that Paul's way of living agreed with his teaching.

4:18 These people were of one of the factions there opposed to Paul. With their worldly wisdom and sinful pride they thought themselves quite superior to him. And they thought he would not return to Corinth.

4:19 "If the Lord wills" – this was always a governing thought in Paul's life. Compare Jam 4:13-16.

4:20 Paul's opponents in Corinth could make good speeches but could they live good lives? Christ's true gospel is the power of God to salvation (Rom 1:16). It makes men new (2 Cor 5:17). If a person is not changed, if he has no power to live a humble, obedient, holy life, his talk and teaching are in vain. Compare Rom 14:17.

4:21 "Rod" – he was Christ's apostle and their spiritual father (v 15). He had the right to discipline, rebuke and chastise then if their condition required it. See 2 Cor 13:10. Of course he preferred to have loving fellowship with them without the need of harsh discipline. The choice was theirs. See 2 Cor 1:23,24.

5:1 The way Paul put this – "father's wife" instead of "mother" – indicates that he meant stepmother. The man was guilty of a sin that unbelievers condemned (it was also condemned in the law of Moses – Lev 18:8; 22:30; 27:20).

5:2 "Puffed up" – or "proud." Were they proud of their worldly wisdom in this matter? Or of their tolerant attitude? Did they think that the gospel of Christ gave Christians a license to do anything they pleased? Paul now reveals how any local church should behave toward a sinning member. There should be grief – grief that dishonor has come to Christ, that a fellow Christian has fallen so low, that the church is in danger of God's judgment. And it is their responsibility to put out of their fellowship the Christian, even if he is a leader – or especially if he is a leader – who will not repent of his sin. A church not willing to exercise such discipline is headed for God's judgment – 11:30-32.

5:3 Is it the business of Christian leaders or the church as a whole to judge individual Christians? Yes. It is their duty to keep the church pure, to rebuke sin and judge behavior contrary to the holy way of life Christ

puffed up. *You* did not mourn greatly, so that the one who did this deed might be put away from among you. 3 For indeed I, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already reached a decision (as though I were present) *about* the one who has done this deed. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 *I have decided* to hand this one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your boasting *is* not good. Do you not know

taught. See vs 12,13; Matt 18:15-17; Acts 5:1-11. This is not the same thing as one individual judging another (this we should not do – 4:3,5; Matt 7:1-5; Rom 14:4,13). This is a church matter, a matter of who is worthy to be in its fellowship, of what standards a church should have.

5:4,5 Discipline must be taken in the name of the Lord Jesus, in His presence, by His power. He is the great purifier of the Church and its Head and Lord. Local churches should act on His authority. Handing the sinning Christian over to Satan means to put him out of the church and to have nothing more to do with him until he repents – vs 11,13. And, it seems, it means to give Satan a chance to afflict him. Outside the Church is the world which is Satan's realm (John 14:30; Eph 2:2; Col 1:13; 1 John 5:19). Satan has the ability to afflict men's bodies (Job 2:4-7), and he has the power of death (Heb 2:14. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; etc).

Handing over to Satan is a terrible and painful discipline indeed. But here Paul reveals a good purpose for it. He wanted the man's flesh to be destroyed and his spirit saved.

"For the destruction of the flesh" – here the Greek word (*sarx*) is used, a word that has several meanings. It may mean literal flesh, or the body, or the sinful nature in man, among other things. It appears that Paul is speaking of the death of the man, or at least the wasting away of his literal flesh. Certainly it does not mean the destruction of his sinful nature. The sinful nature in a believer is not destroyed in this life (see notes on Romans chapter 7, etc), and in any case, Satan is not in the business of destroying men's sinful nature except by destroying their bodies where their sinful nature resides – that is, by killing them.

"That the spirit may be saved" – God always has a good purpose in disciplining His people (11:32; Heb 12:7-11). Is it possible that the only way to save some people is to take them away by death before they go further into sin? These verses create this impression. See also 11:30. If this is necessary, we can believe that God will do it rather than have one of His people lost forever (John 6:49,50).

5:6 Verse 2. He means that sin may have

that a little yeast permeates the whole lump? 7 Therefore, purge out the old yeast, that you may be a new lump, since you are without yeast. For truly Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old yeast, nor with the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the yeastless *bread* of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, 10 but not at all *meaning* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the greedy, or extortioners, or with idolaters. For in that case you would have to leave the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother if he is sexually immoral or greedy or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, *and* not to eat with such a person.

12 For what business do I have judging outsiders also? Do you not judge those who are

inside? 13 But God judges those who are outside. Therefore put away that wicked person from among yourselves.

6 When anyone of you has something against someone else, dare *he* go for judgment to the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And since the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life! 4 If then you have matters requiring judgment about things pertaining to this life, appoint as judges *even* those who are least esteemed in the church. 5 I speak to your shame. *Can* it be that there is not a wise man among you? Not even one who would be able to judge *a dispute* between his brethren? 6 But *instead*, brother goes to law against brother, and that in front of unbelievers!

small beginnings in a church but spread all through it. This is one reason why it is so important to deal with it immediately and firmly. If the church does not do so, people in it may get the idea that sin is unimportant, and that they can get away with anything they wish to do.

5:7 "Old yeast" means old corrupt habits. The church is like a "new lump" of dough and the things of the old life are to have no place in it. Compare Eph 5:25-27; Col 3:5-12. The Passover Feast was eaten with bread made without yeast, yeast being a type or picture of evil - see Ex 12:14,15; Lev 23:5,6. Christ's death on the cross was the spiritual fulfillment of the Passover (Matt 26:26-28; John 1:29; 6:53-58).

5:8 Of course, keeping the "Feast" does not mean literally observing the old Jewish feast of the Passover. Christians were never taught to do this. The Festival of believers is a continuous "feasting" on the truths concerning Christ their Passover. It is fellowship with Him in a new life. Pride, factions and quarreling, immorality, dishonesty, etc, are to have no place in this "Feast."

5:9-11 Believers must not treat fellow Christians who sin as they treat people of the world. Believers live in the world and cannot avoid its sinful people. But someone sinning "who is called a brother" is a different matter altogether. Here is a plain command that we are not to associate or eat with such a person. See also 1 Thess 3:6.

5:12,13 Verse 3; 6:1-5; 11:31. Though individuals do not have the right to judge and condemn other individuals, the church has the right to judge who can be in its fellowship. And they must exercise this right. When wicked men are expelled, the church can grow in purity and power. When they are not expelled, disaster waits at the door. If adulterers and adulteresses, thieves and dishonest persons, etc are permitted to

remain in fellowship, then God, in large measure, will withdraw His blessing. There may be many spiritual gifts in such a church and seeming success in the ministry, but the rottenness there will rob it of true spiritual life.

6:1-8 Some Christians still seem to think it is all right to bring lawsuits against one another in secular courts. Even whole churches and denominations sometimes engage in this. Here the words of the apostle (which are inspired by God) utterly condemn any such thing. It is "shameful" (v 5), it shows an utter lack of wisdom in the church (v 5), and it means that the church is defeated in its Christian life and walk (v 7).

6:1 "Unrighteous" here means those outside the Church, people of the world. Eph 2:12. "Saints" are believers, not some exceptionally holy believers (note at Rom 1:7). Notice the word "dare." To Paul Christians contending with each other in court was absolutely wrong and shocking. See Matt 5:23-26. The church should decide all disputes between Christians.

6:2 This refers to the judgment that will take place when Christ comes again. Christ's people will reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21; 20:4). That is, they will administer God's kingdom with Him, and this will include judging. Compare Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev 2:26,27.

6:3 Ruling and judging with Christ will mean ruling and judging over all creation and created beings, even the highest. Cannot believers, then, judge the lowly matters of earth?

6:4 It seems he is speaking with irony or sarcasm. Or it could be put in the form of a question - "do you appoint as judges those who are least esteemed in the church?"

6:5 "Wise" - some of them thought they were very wise indeed. Paul is saying their behavior casts doubt on whether there was

7 Now, therefore, there is utter failure for you, because you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated? 8 Instead, you do wrong, and revile, and *do* this to *your* brethren!

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor men who practice sodomy, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are

not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything. 13 Foods for the belly, and the belly for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God has both raised up the Lord, and will raise us up by his own power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of a prostitute? Absolutely not! 16 What? Do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For two, he says, "will be one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who is sexually immoral sins against his own body.

even one wise man there.

6:7 Christians engaging in lawsuits with fellow Christians is not merely failure, it is "utter" failure. They are overcome by the spirit of this world, by greed, or malice, or desire for revenge, or determination to get what they think are their rights, regardless of what happens to their Christian testimony and the reputation of Christ. Their love, their humility, their obedience to God have fallen by the wayside (if indeed they ever had these qualities). It is better to suffer wrong and be cheated than to fight with other Christians for one's so-called rights in a secular court. Compare Matt 5:38-41; Luke 9:23; 14:33.

6:8 It is sad that such words then and now apply to any who profess to belong to Christ.

6:9 "Do you not know" – vs 2,3,19; 3:16. Evidently Paul wondered whether some of these Christians had even the most basic understanding of what it means to be a believer. Did they think that because they called themselves believers they could live as they pleased? Paul now corrects any such mistaken view. Compare 3:18; 15:33; Gal 6:7; Eph 5:6; 1 John 3:7. In a world like this, being deceived is all too easy (Jer 17:9; Heb 3:13; Rev 12:9). And people like to think that no matter how they live they can have a place in God's kingdom and God's heaven. They are mistaken. God's kingdom is not for the wicked, but for those who repent, for the poor in spirit, for those who love righteousness enough to accept persecution for it (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 5:3,10), for those who prove their faith by their good works (Matt 25:34-36; Jam 2:14-26). Let every person who names the name of Christ take this to heart and depart from evil (2 Tim 2:19).

6:10 Eph 5:5; Col 3:5,6; Rev 21:8.

6:11 "And such were some" – true believers were once sinners like everyone else (Eph 2:3; Titus 3:3). But they no longer live as they once did.

"Washed" – John 13:10; 15:3; Titus 3:5.

"Sanctified" – John 17:17-19.

"Justified" – Rom 3:24. They were new creations in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), and this was a result of the work of God's Spirit.

6:12-20 Now Paul speaks of the freedom that believers have in Christ. Writing to other churches Paul had said that believers are not under the law (Rom 6:14), that Christ had given them liberty (Gal 5:1), that in the matter of food and the observance of days there is no restriction whatever (Rom 14:1-6,14). It seems some Christians in Corinth were twisting Paul's teaching and saying that any believer was free to practice whatever he pleased, including sexual sins. Paul here fights this false teaching. He shows that believers have not been set free from the law so that they might sin, but that they might not sin. Verse 12 gives two restrictions on the liberty believers have (10:23,24,31 adds two more). They must do only those things which are beneficial and must not become enslaved to any desire or habit (compare Rom 6:16-18; John 8:34).

Verse 13 was aimed at those who thought they were free to commit sexual sins just as they were free to eat anything they wanted. But the two things are entirely different. No kind of food is contrary to God's purpose for man's stomach, but sexual sins are against God's purposes for the human body. God will raise the bodies of believers from the dead to live an eternal life in glory and holiness (v 14). Believers now must recognize this and use their bodies for God's high purpose.

6:15 See 12:27; Rom 12:4,5; Eph 1:22,23. A believer should never even consider doing what Christ Himself would not do.

6:16 Gen 2:24.

6:17 John 17:21-23.

6:18 "Flee" – Gen 39:11,12; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22. And where should we run? See Prov 18:10. Believers must not even permit themselves the thought of sexual immorality (Matt 5:28; Eph 5:3). We should not try to see how close we can get without sinning, but stay as far away from it as

19 What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have *received* from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

7 Now concerning the things you wrote to me about: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* sexual immorality, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband give to the wife the affection due *to her*, and likewise also the wife to the husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body; the husband *does*. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. 5 Do not deprive one another, unless *it is* with *mutual* consent for a time in order to give yourselves to fasting and prayer. Then come together

possible.

6:19,20 See 3:16. The temple does not belong to itself but to God. It is set apart for His worship and praise. A believer has no right to use his body as if it were his own. Here is the clearest restriction on the freedom believers have in Christ. They must do only those things which please and honor God's Spirit who lives in them.

"Not your own" – John 6:37; 17:6.

"Price" – Matt 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18,19.

7:1-40 Certain facts may help us to understand Paul's teaching on marriage in this chapter. Paul believed in the full inspiration of the Bible (2 Tim 3:16), and would never have dreamed of contradicting anything that God had revealed in it. God Himself ordained marriage for the good of mankind (Gen 2:20-24; Matt 19:4-6). Paul himself elsewhere described the marriage relationship in beautiful and meaningful language (Eph 5:25-33). He did not forbid marriage to believers and knew that anyone who did so was deceived (1 Tim 4:1-3). He emphasized the freedom believers had either to marry or not to marry. He did not teach that being single was a holier state than marriage.

He was writing to Christians at Corinth who had written him a letter of enquiry. He was writing them in view of a "present crisis" (v 26), and the "time was short" (v 29). At such a time in his opinion it was better for those who were single to remain so, if they could (vs 8,9). Certain things Paul said here are general truths good for all time, others had to do with the particular circumstances in Corinth at that time.

7:1 Paul taught elsewhere that it is also good for people to marry (1 Tim 5:14). He certainly would have agreed with Heb 13:4.

7:2 The single life at Corinth at that time was good, but only if single believers could abstain from sexual immorality (6:13-18).

7:3-5 Any marriage is headed for trouble

again, so that Satan does not tempt you because of a lack of self-control. 6 But I say this as a concession *and* not as a command. 7 For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

8 Therefore, I say to the unmarried and widows: It is good for them if they remain just as I *am*. 9 But if they cannot control *themselves*, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*.

10 And to the married I give this command, *yet* not I, but the Lord: The wife must not separate from *her* husband; 11 but if she separates, she must remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband. And the husband must not divorce *his* wife.

12 But to the rest I say *this* (I; the Lord *did* not): If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she is willing to live with him, he must not

when either husband or wife will not follow this principle.

7:5 If they stay apart for any considerable time they may be giving Satan an opportunity to tempt them to sin with others.

7:6 He is probably referring here to v 2. He neither commanded believers not to marry nor to marry.

7:7 "As I myself" – single (vs 8).

"Gift" – God gives the gift of marriage to some, the gift of the single life to others. And we may be sure that all of God's gifts are good. By His grace some have the desire for marriage and the opportunity to marry other believers. Others by God's grace have the desire and ability to live without marriage and without immorality. Compare Matt 19:11,12. This was true then, and is true now.

7:9 Being aflame with desire, being always distracted with struggles against sexual temptations, is harmful to the spiritual life. And God wants His people to be spiritual and victorious whether they are married or unmarried.

7:10,11 What he has said before was not a command (v 6). Believers are free either to marry or not to marry. But having married they are not free to divorce each other. So he gives a command based on the teaching of Christ Himself – Matt 5:32; 19:3-9; Luke 16:18. Marriage between believers is a binding relationship as long as husband and wife live.

"But if" – there may be cases when one of the partners finds the marriage intolerable and leaves. Such a person must not marry again as long as the other partner is still alive.

7:12-16 "The Lord did not" – Paul does not mean that the Lord Jesus had not taught him about the following circumstances. He means that when Jesus was on earth He did not say anything about them. Paul taught

divorce her. 13 And the woman who has a husband who is an unbeliever, if he is willing to live with her, she must not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. In such *cases* a brother or a sister is not bound. But God has called us to peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O man, whether you will save *your* wife?

17 But as God has allotted to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him live. And so I appoint in all churches. 18 Is any man called being circumcised? He should not become uncircumcised. Is anyone called being uncircumcised? He should not become circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing. But keeping the commandments of God *is the important thing*. 20 Everyone should remain in the same *situation* in

which he was called. 21 Were you called while *you were* a slave? Do not be concerned about it. But if you can become free, then use *the opportunity*. 22 For the one who is called by the Lord *while* a slave, is the Lord's free man. Likewise the one who is called *while* free, is Christ's slave. 23 You are bought at a price. Do not become the slaves of men. 24 Brethren, everyone should remain with God in the *situation* in which he was called.

25 Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give judgment as one who has obtained mercy from the Lord to be faithful. 26 Therefore I think this is good in 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 loosed. Are you not bound to a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But even if you marry, you have not sinned *by doing so*, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless, such people will have trouble in the flesh, and I would spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short. So that from now on those who have wives should be

that believers should marry only believers (v 39; 2 Cor 6:14,15; etc). But either a husband or wife may become a believer after marriage and the other not. Paul here gives clear directions about such a case.

7:14 Observe the way Paul uses the words "sanctified" and "holy" here. He uses it in the sense of being set apart. He is not saying that an unbeliever is cleansed from sin and becomes morally pure because of marriage to a believer. He means that such an unbeliever is set apart from unbelievers who are not married to believers – presumably God will deal with that unbeliever and with the children of such a marriage in a special way. Paul does not explain what he means by this, but we may reasonably think that the difference in treatment will be real and meaningful. On "holy" and "sanctification" see notes at Lev 20:7; John 17:17-19.

7:15 "Peace" – a believer must live in peace with an unbelieving husband or wife if that is possible, and must be at peace if the unbeliever decides to leave. There should be no bondage, no attempt at compulsion in such a case.

7:16 "Save" – a believing husband or wife, by a holy life, by a good testimony to Christ, by prayer and patience may bring the unbelieving spouse to Christ and salvation in Him.

7:17-24 In these verses Paul is speaking of marriage as well as the other conditions of life he uses as illustrations. God has "called" each one to a certain condition, and He has "assigned" each a certain place. The important thing for every believer is to know what God's will for him or her is and remain obedient to it. There should be no grumbling and complaining about one's lot in life, but a recognition that God's will is best and a humble acceptance of it.

7:17 We should not think Paul is speaking

only about the situation in Corinth.

7:18 Jews who became believers in Christ should not try to destroy the marks of their Jewishness, and Gentile believers should not think they must be circumcised (as some false teachers taught – Acts 15:1).

7:19 In this Church era a mark in the body, or the absence of it, has no importance in God's sight. Doing God's will is the important thing. See Gal 6:15; Rom 2:25-29.

7:21,22 Slavery was very common in those days in the Roman empire, and many slaves believed in Christ. What should they do about their enslaved condition? Accept it with peace, gain freedom if possible (but not, of course, with violence), and recognize that Christ has made them free – free from bondage to sin, death and the law of Moses. Compare John 8:36; Gal 5:1. On the other hand those who are not physically slaves to men should recognize they are Christ's "slaves" (Rom 6:16-22). In other words, believers in every condition of life should recognize that their relationship to Christ is the important thing and serve and glorify Him.

7:23 See 6:20.

7:24 The fact that this is the third time he has said this indicates its importance (vs 17,20).

"With God" – whatever situation we as believers are in we should live as in God's presence, recognizing His nearness to us.

7:25 Verses 10,12.

7:26 "Distress" – the same Greek word is used in Luke 21:23; 2 Cor 6:4; 1 Thess 3:7. His point is that in certain times and conditions it is better for believers not to marry. It is also true that in all times it is better for some (possibly few) believers not to marry (compare Jer 16:1,2).

7:29-35 "The time is short" (v 29). It is not

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 possessed nothing, 31 and those who use this world, as not misusing *it*. For this world's *present* form is passing away.

32 But I want you to be without anxiety. 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 *also* 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 say for your own benefit, not that I may put you under restraint, but *to point out* an excellent way so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distractions.

36 But if any man thinks he is not behaving properly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and if it need be so, let him do what he wants, let them marry. He does not sin *in this*. 37 Nevertheless, he who stands firm in his heart, not being under compulsion, but having power over his own will, and having so determined in his heart

clear what Paul meant by this. It is likely he foresaw that even greater trouble would soon come on the Church. Some think he was expressing his conviction that the Lord Jesus might come very shortly (compare Rom 13:11,12. Neither he nor any other apostle knew the time of Christ's coming). However that might be, he expected tremendous changes would soon take place (v 31), and he wanted believers to be occupied with only the most important thing on earth - their love and service for the Lord (v 35).

7:36-38 Paul wants it to be clear that he is not forbidding marriage to anyone. Even in those changing and difficult times he says believers had freedom to do what seemed good to them as they walked with God.

7:39 Verse 10; Rom 7:2. Paul insists that believers should marry only believers. This is what he meant by "in the Lord."

7:40 "Happier" - can those who do not marry be as happy as those who do? Yes, even happier, if the single state is God's gift to them (v 7).

"Spirit of God" - Paul knew he had the Spirit of God. He means here that he thought God's Spirit was inspiring him to write as he just did.

8:1-13 This was another matter of disagreement among Christians in those days - some said it was all right to eat food that had been offered to idols, others said it was wrong. All of them knew certain facts that had a bearing on this question. But Paul raised the discussion to a higher level. Christian love, he says, is more important

than knowledge; and knowledge without that love can be a harmful thing. He gives the highest possible principles of action for believers - love fellow believers, try to build them up, and abstain from anything that might harm them.

that he will keep his virgin *unmarried*, 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 law to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband has died, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, *but only* in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she remains as *she is*, in my judgment. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

8 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 And if anyone thinks he knows something, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know *it*. 3 But if anyone loves God, that one is known by *God*.

4 So concerning the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice to idols: We know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* but one God, *and* no other. 5 For though there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many *called* gods and lords), 6 yet for us *there is but* one God, the Father, from whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom *we live*.

than knowledge; and knowledge without that love can be a harmful thing. He gives the highest possible principles of action for believers - love fellow believers, try to build them up, and abstain from anything that might harm them.

8:1 Knowledge can produce pride and arrogance in oneself. Acting in love causes others to grow in their Christian lives.

8:2 No one ever knows all there is to know about any subject. To be proud of one's little knowledge is a foolish thing. It is wisdom to humbly acknowledge how little we know.

8:3 Love for God is better than all knowledge. In itself it is the highest kind of knowledge (13:2; 1 John 4:7,8). God knows those who love Him - He recognizes them as belonging to Him, He approves of them (compare 2 Tim 2:19; Gal 4:9).

8:4 Deut 6:4; Ps 115:2-8; Isa 44:6-9.

8:5 He means that idolaters think there are many gods and lords both in heaven and on earth, but believers in Christ know there is only one true God, one true Lord. See in 10:20 what he says about the many gods and lords some people worship. See also Acts 14:15.

8:6 Verse 4. To say there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, is not to say the Father is not Lord. Jesus Himself called Him Lord - Matt 11:25. In the same way, to say that there is one God, the Father, is not to say that Jesus Christ is not God. God the Father inspired the writers of the Bible to call Him God (Isa 9:6; John 1:1; Acts 20:28; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:3,8; 1 John 5:20).

7 However everyone *does* not *have* this understanding. For some, being conscious of the idol, to this hour eat *such food* as something offered to an idol, and because their conscience is weak *it* is defiled. 8 But food does not commend us to God. For if we eat, we are not the better, or if we do not eat we are not the worse.

9 But watch out that somehow this liberty of yours does not become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have understanding sit at food in the temple of an idol, will not his weak conscience encourage him to eat those things which are offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother, for whom Christ died, be ruined? 12 But when you sin against the brethren like this, and

wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ. 13 Therefore, if *such* food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, lest I cause my brother to stumble.

9 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 *Even* if I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who judge me: 4 Have we not the right to eat and to drink? 5 Have we not the right to take along a wife, a sister *in the Lord* just as the other apostles, and as the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or have only I and Barnabas not the right to refrain from

Paul says that through Him all things came into existence – these same words are used of God in Rom 11:36. Actually, to say that Jesus is Lord is to say He is God. See notes at Luke 2:11; Phil 6,10,11. Are there, then, two Gods? Absolutely not. There is one God, three persons in the one Godhead. Notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc. Observe that Paul defines the one true God as the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1; Isa 40:25-28). He is the One we should seek, the one we should worship, and no other.

8:7 He means not everyone knows that an idol is nothing, and that food offered to an idol is still just food and does not become unclean. They thought it was wrong to eat such food even in their own homes, and if they ate it their consciences accused them. A "weak" conscience is one which thinks something is sinful though it actually is not, or one which is not able to decide whether it is sinful or not.

8:8 This is what some at Corinth would have said. Paul agreed with it, but says in the following verses that there is a higher principle than this.

8:9-13 Compare 10:23-33; Rom 14:14-23. Believers have freedom to eat or not to eat this or that food. But there are other matters which should concern them more than this freedom. Fellow believers should mean more to them than pleasing themselves.

8:10 "Temple of an idol" – Paul later said that no believer should eat in such a place (10:19-21), and he certainly is not suggesting here that it is all right to do so.

8:11 Christ loved those weak brothers enough to die for them. Should not strong believers love them enough to abstain from behaving in a way that might harm them?

"Ruined" – or "destroyed" – Rom 14:15. This means injured in their spiritual life. It does not speak of final destruction from the presence of the Lord as in 2 Thess 1:9 (see John 6:37-40; 10:27-29; Rom 5:9,10; 8:28-39).

8:12 Anyone who is the cause of a believer sinning is sinning himself both against that

believer and against Christ (compare Acts 9:4; Ps 51:4).

8:13 This is a principle Paul followed in everything, not just in the matter of food. And so must we (10:24,32,33). It is the principle of love. Those who love as they ought are always willing to deny self for the good of others.

9:1-27 The principle Paul taught in chapter 8 was self-denial for the good of other believers. In this chapter he sets before believers his own example. He did not preach one thing and practice its opposite. Several times in this chapter he refers to his freedom and his rights – vs 1,4,5,12,19. But he did not use his freedom and rights to please himself, but thought only of how he could help others come to Christ and be built up in faith. He concludes by saying that self-denial is the only way any servant of Christ can win the rewards God promises His faithful servants.

9:1 "Free" – he speaks of spiritual liberty, freedom from any law regarding foods, etc.

"Apostle" – he means that an apostle should have as much freedom and as many rights as other believers.

"Seen. . . our Lord" – 15:8; Acts 9:3-5.

9:2 Some were denying that Paul was an apostle. But the believers at Corinth should not be so foolish. It was through him that they believed in Christ – 4:15.

9:3 His defense against those who denied he was an apostle is in vs 1,2.

9:4-14 In this portion he speaks of the "rights" of the apostles (or, for that matter, any others Christ sends into His work). These "rights" were to eat and drink whatever they wanted (v 4), to marry and take along their wives on their journeys (v 5), and to receive their full support from those they ministered to (vs 6-14).

9:4 Rom 14:14.

9:5 "Brothers of the Lord" – Acts 1:14.

"Cephas" – another name for Peter (John 1:42). He was married (Matt 8:14), and apparently his wife went with him on his travels.

9:6 Acts 18:3; 20:34.

working for a living ?

7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock, and does not drink of the milk from the flock? 8 Do I say these things *on my own* as a man? Does not the Law also say the same *thing*? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses,

You shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn.

Is it for oxen that God is concerned ? 10 Or does he say *this* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes in hope might share in his hope. 11 If we have sown spiritual *seed* in you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are taking part in *this* privilege among you, *should* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this privilege, but endure all things, so we would not hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do you not know that those who work among the holy things *of the temple* eat *of the offerings* of the temple? And those who serve at the altar share in *what is offered* on the altar?

9:7 He uses these illustrations to show how natural it is that churches should support those who work for Christ in them.

9:8,9 Deut 25:4; 1 Tim 5:17,18.

9:11 Here is the application of the illustrations.

"Spiritual seed" – apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers sow the Word of God (Luke 8:11).

"Reap material things" – that which was needed for their support.

9:12 See the principle which worked in Paul's heart. For the sake of Christ's gospel he was willing to renounce any rights, abstain from any action that might offend others, put up with anything. See 2 Tim 2:10. He is an example to us all (4:16; 11:1).

9:13 See Lev 7:6,8-10,14,28-36.

9:14 Verse 11; Matt 10:9,10; Luke 10:7,8. It is the solemn duty of all assemblies or groups of Christians to support to the best of their ability the servants of Christ who labor among them. Any group which will not do so is being disobedient to the Lord Himself.

9:15-18 Paul was entrusted with the secret truths of God (4:1,2), and Christ had sent him to proclaim them (Acts 20:24; Gal 2:7; Eph 3:8). Whether he wanted to do so or not, he still had to do it. If he did not, it meant "woe" (v 16. This word indicates some sort of punishment). So preaching the gospel was no reason for boasting. But he had a ground for boasting. It was this: he preached without pay. In this way he proved that his motives were good, that he was preaching "willingly", that he was not like a hired man. He was like a soldier who served

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

15 But I have used none of these things. Nor have I written these things that it should be done to me *like this*. For I *consider it* better to die than have anyone make this boast of mine void. 16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast about, for necessity presses on me. Yes, woe is me, if I do not preach the gospel! 17 Now if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but if against my will, *still* a stewardship *of the gospel* has been entrusted to me. 18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may set forth the gospel of Christ without charge, that I do not misuse my privilege in the gospel.

19 For though I am free from *bondage* to all, yet I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more *of them*. 20 And to the Jews I became like a Jew, that I might win the Jews; to those who are under the Law, like *one* under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those without the Law, like *one* without the Law (not being without law toward God, but under Christ's law) that I might win those who are without the Law. 22 To the weak I became like *one*

at his own expense (v 7), happy to serve so good a master as the Lord Jesus. In v 18 he speaks of his pay. His pay was to serve without pay and so prove his integrity and love.

9:19 Chapters 8 and 9 are about the proper use of Christian liberty, of spiritual freedom. Here Paul says he is willing to give it up altogether if it enabled him to bring others to Christ. In other words, he loved people more than his own freedom. His personal likes and dislikes were as nothing to him compared with his desire to do good to others. He wanted to win them more than he wanted to do what pleased him. In the next verses he shows what he meant by saying he made himself a "servant" (or "slave" – the Greek word means either) to all. He speaks of three kinds of people – the Jews, the Gentiles, and those weak in conscience and faith.

9:20 He did things that would make his teaching more acceptable to the Jews – if those things were not contrary to the Christian faith and way of life. Examples of this are recorded at Acts 16:3; 18:18; 21:20-26.

9:21 "Without the law" – Rom 2:12. Working among people who were not Jews he ignored Jewish laws and ceremonies. This does not mean he ignored the moral requirements of the law (see Rom 8:4). He knew he still must obey God and follow the spiritual laws Christ taught.

9:22 "Weak" – 8:7; Rom 14:1. He was careful not to offend or grieve them. He gave up his freedom and his rights so that he might win them to more spiritual views. Not the pleasing of self, but the good of others

weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. 23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might share in it with *you*.

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may get *the prize*. 25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* uses self-control in all things. Now they *do it* to get a perishable crown, but we an imperishable *one*. 26 Therefore I run accordingly, not uncertainly; I fight

was his aim among all kinds of people. See Rom 15:1-3.

9:23 The gospel was the important thing to Paul, not his preferences, his appetites, or his "rights." "Share" means partake with others in the blessings of the gospel and not simply to have them himself.

9:24-27 Do we wish to win the rewards God gives for faithful service? There is only one way, the way Paul took. It is the way of self-denial and discipline for the sake of the gospel. Compare Matt 10:38; 16:24; Luke 9:23.

9:24 Is service for Christ then, like running a race? In some respects, yes. See Acts 20:24; 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1. And not everyone who runs gets a prize. The prize Paul speaks of is not salvation (this is a gift and all believers have it, not just one among many - Eph 2:8,9). The prize is some reward for service to Christ.

9:25 "Crown" - note at 2 Tim 4:8. The New Testament speaks of several crowns which Christ's servants may win - 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4. Athletes take great pains and undergo rigid training and discipline to win the temporary rewards they get on earth. Should not Christ's servants be at least as wise and as dedicated as they? The rewards we can win are eternal.

9:26 Paul ran with a goal in mind - Phil 3:13,14. He did not make a pretense of fighting. He actually fought, and he fought to win - 2 Tim 4:7.

9:27 "Roughly discipline" - this is from a Greek word meaning literally "to strike under the eye" and is used figuratively as in the above translation. It has also been translated "buffet" or "bruise", but we should not think that he physically afflicted his body. He is speaking of self-control. He did not pamper his body, but forced it to obey him. It seems, then, he regarded his body as a possible danger, as something that could get the upper hand over him, as a strong fighter which had to be subdued (compare Rom 7:24). And he refused to be a slave to his body, but by discipline and self-denial he aimed to make his body his slave. He wanted that future eternal prize of God's approval. For that he was willing to renounce the present ease and pleasures of the body.

Evidently Paul knew no easy way to live a holy, spiritual, fruitful Christian life. For him the way involved real struggle and determination to subdue the flesh.

"Not be approved" - this is a more

accordingly, *and* not like someone who beats the air, 27 but I roughly discipline my body, and treat *it* like a slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be approved *for the prize*.

10 And, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized 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 of

accurate translation than "be a castaway" (which is actually misleading). Several versions of the Bible have "be disqualified." He is not saying here that he feared he might lose his salvation, but his rewards (compare 3:12-15; 2 Tim 2:5). The body is the home of the sinful nature in men. It wants nothing but the satisfaction of its desires and cravings. A body not kept under control will bring a person under its control. This can lead to gluttony, drunkenness, immorality, and other sins of the flesh.

10:1-11 "And" - in the closing verses of chapter 9 Paul speaks of the necessity of self-denial and discipline, and gives himself as an example of one who practiced them. Now he gives examples (vs 6,11) from the history of Israel of those who did not practice them, and he shows the terrible consequences of giving in to evil desires.

10:1 "Cloud" - Ex 13:21,22. "Sea" - Ex 14:21,22,29. Paul is saying they all - the whole nation of Israel - came out of Egypt and started the journey for Canaan.

10:2 "Baptized" - their passage through the sea was like a baptism. It was a picture of a complete break with the old life they had lived in Egypt. There were baptized "into Moses." The Greek word translated "into" (eis) also means "into", "for", "in", "on", "toward", "concerning." The meaning is they were brought under the leadership of Moses. He was to be the head of a united people on their journey to Canaan. Christian baptism has a similar meaning. It signifies a new life lived under the Lordship of Christ, united to Him as the Head of the Church.

10:3 This food was manna. See Ex 16:14,15.

10:4 See Ex 17:5,6. The manna and water are called "spiritual" because they were given miraculously by God's Spirit. The rock from which the water came was a type or picture of Christ who gives the "living water" (John 4:10,14; 7:38,39; 19:34). The Old Testament nowhere says that the literal rock went rolling through the desert with the Israelites as they journeyed (though it should not be thought impossible that water from the rock made a channel and followed them - Ps 105:41). But Christ Himself went with them and provided all they needed. Paul says the rock which accompanied them and provided for them was Christ.

In the Old Testament "Rock" is a symbol of the one true God, Jehovah (note at Deut 32:4). In this way Paul is saying that Christ

that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not pleased; their bodies were scattered in the desert.

6 Now these things *happened as* examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things, as they craved *them*. 7 And do not become idolaters, as some of them *were*. As it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 And let us not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell *dead*.

9 And let us not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10 And do not complain, as some of them complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

is Jehovah. (See also v 9; Gen 16:7; Ex 3:2; 32:34; John 8:24,58; 12:41; other references at Luke 2:11.)

10:5 In spite of all they experienced of God's grace, in spite of all their great privileges as the people of God, the vast majority of them never reached Canaan. They were "not approved for the prize" (9:27). God's punishment came upon them and they wandered aimlessly in the desert until they died.

10:6-10 Here are the reasons why they failed and fell in the desert. Paul speaks of five sins they were guilty of – setting their hearts on evil things, idolatry, immorality, testing God, and grumbling. These are all examples of common sins which all Christians must avoid. If we do not avoid them, have we any right to expect that our end will be better than theirs?

10:6 Setting the heart on evil things instead of on the Lord alone is a root cause of all other sin. Paul elsewhere tells believers to put all evil desires to death (Col 3:5). If we permit them to remain in our hearts we will find that eventually they will bite like poisonous snakes.

10:7 Ex 32:6. Afterwards Israel fell into idolatry again and again. In His Word God everywhere condemns idolatry (v 14; Ex 20:3,4; etc).

10:8 Num 25:1-9. Numbers tells us that 24,000 died in the plague God sent. Paul says 23,000 died "in one day." Evidently the other 1,000 died later. God detests adultery and forbids it in the clearest terms (Ex 20:14; etc).

10:9 Num 21:4-9. This is another very serious sin which is all too common among Christians.

10:10 Num 14:1-4,37; 16:41-49. The destroying angel brought the plague which killed them. Grumbling about one's lot may be the most common of all sins among Christians. God views it very seriously.

10:11 "Examples" – God wants us to see that what He hated among His people then He hates now, and that punishment will follow sin as surely as day follows night.

"Ends of the ages" – Heb 9:26. The first

11 Now all these things happened to them as examples. And they are written as a warning to us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands watch out that he does not fall.

13 No temptation has taken hold of you but such as is common to man. But God *is* faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to bear*; but with the temptation will also make a way to escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*.

14 Therefore, my dearly loved ones, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men. Judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing for which we give thanks, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it

coming of Christ brought to an end all previous ages and began a new one. We should learn the lessons God taught in previous ages.

10:12 In other words, self-confidence can be disastrous. No matter how great our privileges and how favorable our circumstances, no matter how much we know and have experienced, we may still fall into terrible sin. We must always recognize our weakness and find our strength in the Lord. And we must follow Paul's example in 9:27.

10:13 Temptations will "take hold of" believers as they do everyone else. But believers have a promise that others do not have, and a very great promise it is. God will never let any temptation be so powerful, so attractive that a believer cannot resist it. He will always provide a way out of it. He is absolutely faithful. Of course, we must want that way and look for it. Otherwise we may not see it. If we want to be overcome because the sin we are tempted to do is pleasing to us, then we are in grave danger of falling. And if we fall into sin we should never try to accuse God of allowing a temptation we could not resist. See also Matt 6:13.

10:14-22 Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper and also a feast before idols. Those who take part in the first must keep themselves far from the second. To attend a feast before an idol or in an idol temple is an act of idolatry; it is to get involved with demons.

10:14 Verse 7; 1 John 5:21. From some things believers should simply run and keep as far away as possible. Compare 6:18.

10:16 We must interpret this verse in the light of Matt 26:26-28. Compare also John 6:53-58,63. "Communion" does not mean a literal eating of the body and blood of Christ. It means spiritual participation, a partaking together. We take the literal bread and wine but partake in the Spirit with Christ. The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are symbols of the relationship believers have with the Lord (compare v 18). They are reminders of His death for them which they participate in by faith. The Lord's

not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For *though* we *are* many we are one bread, one body, for we all partake of that one bread.

18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Do not those who eat of the sacrifices partake of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? 20 *No*, but *I say* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink *both* the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons. You cannot take part in the Lord's table, and in the table of demons. 22 Are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, but not all things build up. 24 No one should seek his own *benefit*, but each one *the benefit* of others.

Supper is a ceremony of fellowship with Christ who died for us, a thanksgiving service to Him because He has redeemed us. **10:17** One loaf of bread was used in the usual observance of the Lord's Supper. When believers partake of the bread they show they are united as one body (12:12,13).

10:18 Lev 7:15; 8:31; Deut 12:18. To eat of the sacrifices is to "partake of the altar." These words give light on what is meant to partake in the blood and body of Christ (v 16). Partaking of the altar obviously did not mean a literal eating of the altar. It signified a close relationship with the altar and its sacrifices. It signified a fellowship with all others who partook of it and in all the altar stood for.

10:19-21 This is the point Paul was aiming at when he gave the two illustrations in vs 16-18. Participating in Christ signifies fellowship with all others who do so, and acceptance of all that the sacrifice of Christ means. In the same way, participating in a feast before an idol or in an idol temple is to become a part of that whole system of false worship. It is to take part with demons.

10:19 See 8:4.

10:20 Idols themselves are nothing. But behind the idols are demons (they are the "gods" and "lords" of 8:5). They who worship them may (or may not) think they are giving offerings to God, but they are not actually doing so. This is a very important statement concerning the worship of many people in the world. See also Deut 32:17. To share food offered to idols is like participating with the demons behind them. It is to show a measure of agreement with the worship offered them.

10:21 "The Lord's table" signifies the feast of the Lord's Supper. There He is the host, and believers who partake of it are guests. "The table of demons" means an idol feast. There demons are the hosts and those who partake are their guests. By using this

25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions, for conscience sake. 26 "For the earth and its fullness belongs to the Lord."

27 If any of those who are unbelievers ask you *to a feast*, and you have a mind to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question, for conscience' sake. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered in sacrifice to idols", do not eat *it*, for the sake of the one who pointed this out, and for conscience' sake; for the earth and its fullness belongs to the Lord. 29 "Conscience", I say, not *meaning* your own, but *that* of the other *person*. For why should my liberty be judged by another *man's* conscience? 30 For if I partake with thanksgiving, why am I slanderously accused for something I give thanks for?

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

language Paul shows how impossible it is for believers to join these two things, or to think that taking part in an idol feast means nothing.

10:22 See Ex 20:5; Deut 32:21; Ps 78:58. Dare we think we are strong to do what He forbids or stand when His anger is aroused?

10:23 See 6:12.

10:24 He returns to this important principle - 6:9,13; 8:1; Rom 14:19; 15:1-3. See John 13:34.

10:25 Much of the meat sold in the market had previously been offered to idols. But being in the market it may be bought and eaten at home.

10:26 Ps 24:1. Meat in the market even though offered to an idol, by creation, actually belongs to God, and His people may eat it.

10:27 This refers to a meal in a house, not a feast in a temple. Paul has already said Christ's believers must not partake of a feast in a temple (vs 20,21).

10:28 In such a case as this the believer who eats may give the impression that idolatry is unimportant, and this he should never do. And he is troubling the conscience of any other believer present who thinks that it is wrong to eat any meat anywhere that has been offered to an idol (8:7).

10:29,30 The believer who thinks it is wrong in any circumstance or in any place to eat meat offered to an idol may condemn the believer who is sure he has the freedom to eat it. Paul says it is better not to use this freedom if this is going to be the result.

10:31 Now Paul gives a great principle that should govern every act of a believer. Here is the highest motive possible to anyone. If all believers live according to this there will be no divisions and factions in the church and no immorality, no condemning of other believers, no actions which thoughtlessly offend others. If every action in our daily lives must pass under the scrutiny of this verse many things thought harmless or

32 Give offense to no one, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God, 33 just as I please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the *benefit* of many, that they may be saved.

11 Be imitators of me, just as I also *am* of Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and obey the instructions just as I gave *them* to you.

3 But I want you to know that the head of indifferent will have to go.

10:32 See 8:9,13; Rom 14:13,20,21. If we live according to v 31 we will fulfill this also. "Church" – note at Matt 16:18.

10:33 See 9:19-23; 2 Tim 2:10. He did not set before them a way of life that he himself was not willing to follow. Selfish and self-centered people think such a way totally undesirable. But it is the highest kind of life and leads to peace of heart and joy in God and eternal reward.

11:1 See 4:16; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6. Paul gives here the reason why it is good to follow his example – God had enabled him to live as Christ had lived. In fact, it was Christ in him doing the living (Gal 2:20). And that is the only way they or anyone would have the power to follow Paul's example.

11:2 "Instructions" – or "traditions" these were the teachings concerning the Christian faith which all the apostles had taught. Now Paul turns to the subject of public worship and shows how believers ought to behave at such times. He continues with this subject to the end of chapter 14.

11:3 "Head" here means the one in authority. A man is to be in subjection to Christ. The woman is to be subject to her husband (Eph 5:24; 1 Tim 2:11,12; 1 Pet 3:1,5,6). Any attempt by a wife to rule her husband by any means whatever is an attempt to overthrow God's order, and it will certainly have unhappy consequences. Paul does not state here how a husband should use his authority, but he does in Eph 5:25,28,33. When Paul says the authority over Christ is God, he is not saying Christ does not share God's nature (a woman subject to her husband still shares with him the same human nature. So Christ, though subject to the Father, shares God's nature). Paul is only saying what Christ Himself taught. See John 14:28; 5:19-23.

11:4-10 Paul is speaking of public worship. At such times all things should be done "properly and in order." Paul makes a distinction between what is proper for men and what is proper for women. He based this distinction not on the customs of the times, but on the basic relationship between men and women which God Himself has revealed (vs 3,7-9).

11:4 Some think the second use of "head" in this verse refers to Christ (v 3). This would mean that Paul used the word in two different senses in this verse. This seems

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 with *his* head covered dishonours his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonours her head, for that is just as if *her head* was shaved. 6 For if the woman's *head* is not covered, let her hair be cut off. But if it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, let her *head* be covered. 7 For a man indeed should not cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God. But

unlikely. To dishonor his head probably means to dishonor himself.

11:5,6 Is it fitting for women to pray or prophesy in public meetings when both men and women are present? Paul does not take up that question here. In 14:34 he says "women should remain silent in the churches." The subject there is prophesying, not praying. He never says specifically that a woman should not pray aloud in public meetings for worship. In the New Testament we see that some women also had the gift of prophesying – Acts 2:18; 21:9. It seems that Paul taught they should not use this gift in public meetings of both men and women, but that they might do so at other times (14:34,35; 1 Tim 2:11,12).

Here in v 5 Paul seems to be saying that if a woman prays (in public when men are present) or prophesies (at any other time) she should cover her head. A shaven head for a woman was a mark of dishonor. So is praying or prophesying without covering her head, Paul says. He does not say that covering the head is necessary even when not praying aloud or prophesying.

Some people may say that coverings for the head (or long or short hair – vs 14,15) are only symbols and not important. It is true that they are symbols, but symbols God has appointed have their importance, and those who are ready to get rid of the symbols may be showing also their readiness to get rid of that which the symbols signify. But, someone may say, isn't all this a comparatively small matter? What if it is? Believers are not to please themselves even in those things they think are small matters (10:29,33; 11:1). But don't Christians have freedom? They have freedom, but they should use their freedom to do what is fitting, and not to act contrary to what is fitting.

11:7-10 He does not base his views of what is honorable or dishonorable on local customs, but on God's purpose in creating men and women. He is speaking of the creation of the first man and woman (Genesis chapters 1 and 2).

11:7 Here is the reason a man should not cover his head in public worship. An uncovered head is a sign of authority and God gave to man authority over all other created things on earth, including woman. In this way a man reflects the glory of God who is the supreme Ruler over all. Women

the woman is the glory of the man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 For this reason a woman should have a *symbol of man's* authority on *her* head, because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless, in the Lord, man is not independent of woman, and woman is not independent of man. 12 For as woman *is* from man, even so man *is* through woman; but all things are from 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 disgrace to him? 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her. For *her* hair is given to her as a covering. 16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither *do* the churches of God.

17 In what I have to tell *you* now I do not praise *you*: your meeting together *does* not *produce* the

should cover their heads, Paul says, because it is a sign of submission to the God-given authority men have over them. By submitting to man's authority a woman is reflecting man's glory.

11:8,9 See Gen 2:20-23. He is saying that God put man first in creation to show woman's subordination (woman was "for man", not the reverse of this).

11:10 Here is another reason why women should cover their heads when praying or prophesying, and this reason too had nothing to do with customs at Corinth. Angels are watching the gatherings of believers and they know what is fitting and what is not fitting. Christian women should not behave in a way which is offensive to these messengers whom God has sent forth to serve believers (Heb 1:14).

11:11,12 Paul did not want his readers to think he is exalting men and putting women far below them in everything. In the matter of authority man is the head, but in everything else there is a mutual dependence. God has appointed it that a man and his wife form a unit.

11:13 Paul thinks the matter is so plain that believers should be able to see the truth without any instruction from him.

11:14,15 Paul says long hair is a disgrace to a man but a glory to a woman, and that they should know this without him saying it. What would he say in these days when many women (especially in western countries) cut off their "glory", and many men seem proud of their "disgrace"? Paul does not define "long", but plainly means that women should have longer hair than men. "Covering" in v 15 is not the same covering he speaks of in vs 5,6.

11:16 Paul was aware that some will want to dispute what he says. He will not argue. It is enough that he has presented the truth – truth followed by all the churches in his day.

11:17 Verses 22,34.

better, but the worse. 18 First of all, I hear that when you meet together as a church, that there are divisions among you; and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be dissensions among you, so that those who are approved *by God* may be revealed among you.

20 Therefore, when you meet together in one place, *it* is not to eat the Lord's supper, 21 for in eating, everyone begins his own supper ahead of *others*, and someone is hungry, and another is drunk. 22 What? Do you not have houses to eat and to drink in? Or do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? I will not praise *you*.

23 For I have received from the Lord that which I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke *it* and

11:18 See 1:10-12; 3:3,4. It seems they did not keep their divisions and quarrels private but brought them to church with them.

11:19 "Dissensions" – even the disputes and factions there were serving a purpose, strange as it may seem.

"Approved" – the Greek word suggests being approved after a test or trial of some kind or other. Evidently God permits divisions, sects, heresies, differences between Christians to occur for a good reason. Such things are a test. They help to reveal which ones are worthy of God's approval. They show who is spiritual, faithful to God's ways, and willing to put into practice the principles Paul has already given in this letter. Without a test there is no passing of a test and no clear revealing who would pass it if there were one.

11:20-22 They said they were observing the Lord's Supper. But they abused the occasion so badly that Paul says it should not even be considered the Lord's Supper. Some churches in those times had a common meal in connection with the Lord's Supper. Because the object of it was to show their love for one another it was called a "love-feast" (Jude 12). But at Corinth it could not rightly be called that, for the Christians there were not thinking of one another but only of themselves or their factions. Their behavior in the church was as if they despised the church (v 22). They forgot that the Lord's Supper spoke of union with Christ and with one another (10:16,17).

11:23 He now begins to show them again what the Lord's Supper means and how it should be observed. He had once passed this truth on to them but they had gotten away from it. What he had passed on he had received from the Lord Jesus. It agrees with the accounts given in the Gospels. See Matt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-22.

11:24 "My body" – the bread (v 28) in the

said, "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same manner also *he took* the cup after he had eaten, and said, "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 proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread and drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But a man should examine himself, and then eat

of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, not discerning the Lord's body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many have fallen asleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we will 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 your

Lord's Supper is a symbol of the body of Christ. On the use of symbols in the New Testament see notes on John 6:53-58,63.

"For you" - this means Christ gave His body to death on the cross as a sacrifice for believers.

"Do this" - this is a solemn command of the Lord Jesus Himself. So any believer who wishes to be obedient must partake of the Lord's Supper.

"In remembrance" - at the time of the Lord's Supper we are to look up and look back (and look within - v 28). Our thoughts should be on Christ above and what He did for us in His death on earth long ago.

11:25 The cup contained wine which, according to Matt 26:28, was a symbol of Christ's blood. It was shed to establish the new covenant (see notes there). Notice the wording here: "this cup is the new covenant." It is obvious that the cup was not literally the new covenant. The cup was simply a cup, but it was a symbol of the new covenant in Christ's blood. We should understand in the same way v 24 which speaks of the bread being Christ's body. It is not His literal body, but a symbol of it. Observe that Paul is teaching them to drink from the cup as well as eat the bread. A proper observance of the Lord's Supper requires both.

11:26 "Proclaim" - in the New Testament this word is usually used of preaching the gospel. Believers' keeping the Lord's Supper is like a gospel sermon, not in words but in action. The subject of this sermon is the death of Christ for sinners. God's purpose is that this proclamation should go on in this way until the second coming of Christ.

"As often" - Paul nowhere says how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper.

11:27 To whom is Paul giving this very serious warning? What is meant by "an unworthy manner"? It is not to think oneself unworthy of participating. It is not partaking with a sense of sinfulness or even a knowledge that one has sinned (if that sin has been confessed and forsaken before partaking of the Supper). Verses 18-22 reveal one unworthy manner. Taking part in the Lord's Supper carelessly, without reverence, without remembering its meaning and applying it to oneself, is to partake in an unworthy manner.

Participating while living in sin, of course,

is also in an unworthy manner. And participating in an unworthy manner is to sin (or be guilty) concerning the body and blood of Christ. That is, it shows disrespect for the symbols of His body and blood, and this is all the same as showing disrespect for His body and blood. And this is no small sin.

11:28 Taking part in a worthy manner requires preparation of heart and mind. So believers should look at their outward lives and their inner condition before partaking. All sin, all irreverence, all thoughtlessness should be renounced and forsaken. And each one should make sure he or she understands the meaning of the Lord's Supper and the reason for taking part in it.

11:29 "Judgment" here does not mean God's eternal condemnation. It means God's displeasure and His chastening hand, as v 30 makes clear.

"Not discerning the Lord's body" - has two possible meanings. It may mean recognizing the meaning of the Lord's Supper, failing to realize it is not a meal like any other (the Corinthians were failing in this). Or it may mean not recognizing that all real believers form the body of Christ (10:17; 12:12,13. The Corinthians with their factions and quarrels were failing in this also).

11:30 This is the judgment they were bringing on themselves. This is some of the harm their meetings were causing (v 17). God requires that His people behave in a fitting and orderly way (14:40). If they do not, what God intended to be a blessing to them will result in judgment and punishment.

"Fallen asleep" - see also 5:5 and note. Here "fallen asleep" means departed from this life (note at John 11:11-14).

11:31 Verse 28. We must examine ourselves, judge what is wrong in us or in our behavior and turn from it. Then God will bless us instead of punishing us.

11:32 Heb 12:5-13. We should welcome anything God does to keep us from being condemned with the fallen, sinful world. Notes on world at John 15:18,19; Rom 12:2; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:16.

11:33,34 These verses help us to understand what Paul meant in v 29. There must be a proper recognition of the purpose of the Lord's Supper and the unity of the Church.

meetings together *do* not *lead* to judgment. And when I come I will set the remaining matters in order.

12 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant. **2** You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to dumb idols, being led somehow. **3** Therefore I give you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and that no one can say that

12:1 Here begins three chapters on the same subject – “spiritual gifts.” These gifts are abilities to do things believers could not do otherwise. We should understand that possessing spiritual gifts does not in itself make believers spiritual. Believers at Corinth had spiritual gifts but they were behaving like unspiritual people and acting like people of the world (3:1-4). What an empty thing it is to boast of having some spiritual gift or gifts while living in a carnal, worldly way! In chapters 12-14 Paul teaches the following eleven things about these gifts.

God’s Spirit gives them (12:4,7,11).

They are given and should be used under the Lordship of Christ (12:3,5).

Each believer has some gift or other (12:7,11).

No particular gift is possessed by all believers (12:29,30).

All the gifts are for the good of all, not for personal benefit (12:7; 14:3-12,19; 10:33 – 11:1).

God gives the gifts to promote unity, not to divide believers (12:25).

God’s love working in believers is greater than any gift or all of them together (13:1-13).

Believers should desire spiritual gifts (12:31; 14:1).

Prophecy is the greatest of the gifts (14:1).

No one should think himself superior to others because he has some gift or other (4:7; 13:4; 12:21,25).

In using the gifts believers must behave in a fitting and orderly way (14:40).

If every believer had always taken all these truths to heart, there would not have been all the quarreling and divisions over spiritual gifts that have afflicted the churches.

12:2 Before they became Christians they went after idols in a blind, unreasoning way. They themselves hardly knew what they were doing, or why. There were influences and powers at work they did not know or resist.

“Dumb idols” – Ps 115:4-7; Hab 2:18,19.

12:3 “Accursed” – some Jews did this. They said Jesus was a blasphemer whose crucifixion was a proper punishment. Paul says such people cannot have God’s Spirit. Saying Jesus is “Lord” is saying He is the incarnation of Jehovah God. See Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11. No one can say this with faith

Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** And there are different kinds of ministries, but the same Lord. **6** And there are different kinds of working, but it is the same God who works all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the benefit *of all*. **8** For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit;

except by the working of God’s Spirit in him. Others will be able to say the words without meaning them.

12:4-6 Paul emphasizes the one source of all that believers have and can do in God’s work (compare Eph 4:3-7). The three persons of the Trinity are here (notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc).

12:7-11 Observe that any spiritual gift (and not just one, such as miraculous powers or tongues) is proof that God’s Spirit is working in a person.

12:7 The common good of all believers is a constant theme of Paul (10:24,33; 14:5,26; Rom 14:19; 2 Cor 8:13,14). “Manifestation” means that the Holy Spirit who is in the bodies of believers (6:19) reveals His presence through spiritual gifts.

12:8-10 Not all spiritual gifts are in this list. Paul mentions some others in v 28 and Rom 12:6-8.

12:8 “Word of wisdom” – this means the ability to speak to others in a wise and helpful way. We should understand the words “wisdom” and “knowledge” by Paul’s use of them in other places, especially other places in this Corinthian letter. Wisdom is not human wisdom, but Christ and His cross (1:17-24). It is God’s revelation of the gospel and the deep truths connected to it (2:6). God’s Spirit gives some people (the apostles had it in full measure) a special ability to understand this wisdom and communicate it to others.

“Knowledge” is similar, but not exactly the same. Here it may include the ability to understand people and circumstances and speak fitting words to lead others to a fuller knowledge of Christ and His truth. Doubtless there is such a gift, but whether it is this that is here called “the message of knowledge” is not certain. Certainly we should not think this is an ability (that some people these days claim to have) to get a revelation from God regarding what other people should do in their personal lives. In the matter of decisions that need to be taken in life, each believer should try to understand the principles given in the Word of God, depend on the Lord alone for guidance, and go directly to the Lord for that guidance (after listening to the advice of wise friends, if he wants).

On “knowledge” see 1:5; 13:2,8; 14:6; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 4:13; Phil 1:9; 3:8; Col 1:9,10; 2:3; 3:10; 2 Pet 3:18.

9 to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *different* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all of these, distributing to each one individually as he wills.

12 For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body,

12:9 The faith that any believer has is a gift of God (Eph 2:8,9; Phil 1:29). But the Holy Spirit gives special faith, or a larger measure of faith to some believers (compare Rom 12:3). This enables them to serve in ways not possible to those without it.

"Gifts of healing" are abilities to heal people by God's power. Notice the plural – "gifts." It would seem that not all diseases can be healed by using the same "gift."

12:10 "Working of miracles" must mean an ability to do miracles other than healing the sick, for these powers are given to "another." Paul does not explain what miracles they may be. But we may be sure they were for the common good of all believers (v 7), not for the fame of the individual who had this gift.

"Prophecy" is the ability to receive a message from God and deliver it by the Holy Spirit. The message may or may not have to do with the future. The gift of discerning spirits is the ability to know whether someone speaking or prophesying is doing so by God's help or not. Not everyone who seems inspired by God really is. He or she may be inspired by an evil spirit or by his or her own aroused spirit. See 14:29; 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess 5:20,21; Jer 14:14.

"Tongues" – or "languages" the Greek word (*glossai*) appears 50 times in the Greek NT (21 times here in chapters 12-14). Eighteen times it refers to the physical tongue. The other times it means some language or other. In Acts chapter 2 when the apostles spoke in tongues they spoke ordinary human languages which they did not know themselves but which their hearers did know (Acts 2:4,6,8,11. See also the note at Acts 10:46). Is Paul using the word "tongues" here in chapters 12-14 with a different meaning? Some think so and some think not. The matter has not been proved either way to the satisfaction of all believers (there are obscure expressions in Paul's language in chapter 14 which have tended to keep the matter in doubt). But would it not be strange for the word "tongues" to be used in one way everywhere else in the Bible and in a different sense only here in 1 Corinthians?

But whatever Paul means by the gift of tongues, here he clearly teaches that not all believers have it any more than they all have gifts of healing or miraculous powers or any of the other gifts. The words "to another" indicates this. See also v 28. This gift is not the sign that a believer has been baptized

being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13 For with one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slave or free, and have all been given to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not the hand, I do not belong to the body", does it therefore not belong to the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not the eye, I do not

or filled with God's Spirit, and it is not more a manifestation of the Spirit in a person than any other spiritual gift. The "interpretation of tongues" is the ability given by God to understand the meaning of what is said in "tongues" and put it in words understood by the hearers.

12:11 Verse 7. God's Spirit fully knows each person and what spiritual gift or gifts each should have. He gives these gifts (or withholds them) according to His own wise and loving will. We cannot force Him to give any particular gift to us. We may try to do so, and even persuade ourselves that He has given it. But this does not mean we actually have it. We should earnestly desire the best gifts (v 31), but accept without complaint what He decides to give us.

12:12,13 John 17:21-23; Eph 1:22,23; 4:4; 5:28-30. Here Paul speaks of the true church made up of all believers wherever or whatever they may be, and whatever spiritual gift they may or may not have. "We" in v 13 means believers in Christ, born of God's Spirit (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8).

"With one Spirit we were all baptized" – the Greek word translated "with" here (*en*) is the same word used in Matt 3:11 and Acts 1:5. It is important to recognize this. The word means "in", "with", or "by." Without this Spirit baptism, which, Paul says, every believer has, people may have water baptism and call themselves Christians and be members of local churches, but they are not in Christ's one true Church, His Body. Paul is not speaking of an organization, but about a living body in which God's Spirit lives and works. And the only way to get into it is by God's Spirit.

Everyone who by faith has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour can say and should say "I have been baptized with (in, by) the Holy Spirit." And the aim of each one should be to have the fullness of the Spirit continually (Eph 5:18). See also Luke 11:13.

"Spirit to drink" – see John 7:37-39; 4:10,13,14. Not only does God's Spirit bring believers into Christ's body, He comes into them and lives in them (6:19). He is in them as "living water" springing up to eternal life. **12:14-26** Paul uses this illustration of a literal human body to teach two principal lessons to those at Corinth. We today need very much to learn these same lessons.

First, just as there is much variety and diversity in the human body so there is also in Christ's body the Church (vs 14-20). Not

belong to the body", does it therefore not belong to the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would* the hearing *be*? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would* the smelling *be*? 18 But now God has set each member in the body as it pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be*? 20 But now *they are* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; again, the head *cannot say* to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 Not *at all*. Those members of the body which seem to be weaker are much more necessary, 23 And those *members* of the body which we think are less honourable, to them we give more honour, and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty. 24 For our presentable parts have no need *of it*. But God has joined the body together, giving the greater honour to that *part* which lacked *it*; 25 so

all parts are the same and God never intended they should be. Remember Paul is speaking about spiritual gifts (v 1). He has said that not everyone has the same gift or gifts (vs 7-11). He emphasizes this truth by this illustration of the body. If some in Christ's body cannot prophesy are they then not a part of the body? If they cannot do miracles or speak in tongues are they not a part of the body? Paul is saying that no one should think they are not. Neither the tongue, nor any other body part, is the whole body.

Second, just as the human body is one body in spite of the variety in its many parts, so is Christ's body one body. There is a dependence of each part on the others (vs 21-26).

12:18 Here is a truth applicable both to the human body and to Christ's body the Church. Let each believer be content in the place God put him or her and in being the "part" God wanted him or her to be. If he is an "eye" let him function as an eye; if a "tongue" as a tongue; if a "foot" as a foot.

12:21 He is speaking of believers with different spiritual gifts. No one should try to exclude another believer from fellowship in the body. No one should exalt himself over others. No one should be arrogant and conceited enough to think others are not needed in Christ's body.

12:25 "No division. . . same care" – words that should be written on the hearts of all believers (1:10,13; John 13:34; Acts 4:32; Rom 12:10; 14:19; 15:1-3; Eph 4:2,3). The results of failure here are sad indeed, and appear everywhere today.

12:27-30 Paul now applies the illustration of vs 14-26 to the matter of spiritual gifts.

12:28 "God has placed" – v 18. It is not the business of anyone in the Church to quarrel with God's appointments, or to try for the place of another, or to insist that God give him a particular spiritual gift. The use in this verse of the words "first", "second", "third", and "then" suggests Paul was making a list

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 members suffer with it, or *if* one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, individual members *of it*. 28 And God has placed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, different kinds of tongues. 29 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

13 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I have become sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

in the order of importance. It cannot mean the order in which they were given in time. The apostles were given the ability to heal and work miracles at the same time they were called to be apostles (Matt 10:1,2).

Apostles were the infallible teachers and guardians of the gospel of Christ, those who laid the foundation of the Church.

Prophets were inspired communicators (v 10).

"Help others" – every believer should try to help others but some have a special spiritual ability to do so – 16:15.

12:29,30 It is perfectly clear that the answer to each of these questions is "no." All he has said in this chapter demands this answer. God will give spiritual gifts to His people, or not give them, as He pleases, and when He pleases, and it is wrong for anyone to insist that every believer have any one of these particular gifts or any other particular gift or manifestation of God's Spirit. If anyone insists that everyone who has received Spirit baptism must receive any one particular gift he is going contrary to the teaching of the Word of God and is being divisive.

12:31 See 14:1. Why should a believer want spiritual gifts? Not for his personal satisfaction, not so others will accept him, not to make a name for himself, but to fulfill the words of 14:12. Each believer should be thinking of the good of others, not his own (10:24). What are the greater gifts? Those that enable us to do the most good to others (14:3,5,12).

"Earnestly desire the best gifts" – 14:1. It seems clear that some Christians are desiring gifts which Paul placed low in his list in v 28, rather than the greater ones.

"Excellent way" – now Paul turns to something far more important than any spiritual gift we may have – love, love like God's love, the greatest gift of all. Without this all our other gifts are as nothing.

13:1 "Love" is the translation of a Greek

2 And though I have *the gift* of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the*

word (agape) not in common use before the writing of the New Testament. It indicates a higher kind of love than any other Greek word, and a higher kind than most Greek speakers (or almost anyone else in the world) ever considered. The noun "agape" is used 116 times in the Greek NT. The verb related to it is used about 137 times. The words are used of God's love and of the love believers should have for one another and for God. It is unselfish love, love that always seeks the good of others. It has nothing to do with lust, selfish desire or love between the sexes. These references give something of the meaning of the word as found in the NT – Matt 5:44; 22:37; John 3:16; 13:1,34; 14:15; 17:24,26; Rom 5:5-8; Eph 5:25; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:8,9. Agape is divine love.

In this great chapter Paul speaks of the necessity of love (vs 1-3), love's nature (vs 4-7), and love's permanence (vs 8-13). He begins by saying that love is superior to any language on earth or in heaven. Without love the gift of tongues, or any speaking a person might do is nothing but noise. The tongues of angels are the languages angels speak. So the tongues of men are the languages men speak.

In this verse Paul is not stating that he spoke in any language of angels any more than he is stating that he does not have love. The obvious meaning is this: Even supposing that he did speak in a language of angels, it would do no good to anyone, if he did not have love. There is no example in the whole Bible of anyone speaking in any language of angels. When angels came to earth they spoke in the languages of men, because they wanted to be understood.

13:2 Paul now speaks of greater gifts than that of tongues, the greater gifts he told believers to desire (12:31). But without love all of them together do not make a person anything of real worth. Love (and not some spiritual gift or other) is the greatest evidence that we are God's people, and that we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Love is the one manifestation of the Spirit that should appear in every believer's life.

13:3 Is it possible without love to give away all one possesses or sacrifice oneself? Yes. One may do it thinking to gain merit with God, or from fear of hell, or from dedication to one's religion or ideals. Many are deceived about all this. They think that by what they call good works or works of merit they can earn salvation. But it is all quite useless. In God's eyes so-called good works done without divine love, without this unselfish love for God and man, are not good works at all, and may even be very bad works because

poor; and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient *and* is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not promote itself, is not puffed up, 5 does not behave rudely, is not self-

of bad motives.

13:4-7 What Paul gives us in words about the nature of love we can see perfectly lived out in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is love (1 John 4:8), and Christ is God incarnate and therefore love incarnate. In His life of love He is the great example for all believers.

13:4 "Patient" – the Greek word here means longsuffering. It indicates the ability, the mind, to endure injuries, wrongs, and harsh words and actions from others without resentment or striking back. This was seen throughout Christ's life and most clearly at the time of His trial and execution – Isa 53:7; Matt 27:14; Luke 23:34; 1 Pet 2:21-23. This is a quality His followers should have – compare Matt 18:22; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:2; Col 1:11; 3:12.

"Kind" – this means active helpfulness to others, even to those who do not deserve it. This quality compels us to a life of usefulness and service. It is a virtue very prominent in Christ's life – Matt 4:23,24; 20:28; Acts 10:38. And it is a virtue Christ demands in His followers – Matt 25:31-40; Luke 6:35; Eph 4:32; Col 3:12.

"Envy" – on this deadly sin see Prov 14:30; 27:4; Matt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5. Envy is to experience pain or resentment at the success or popularity or possessions of others. This feeling is completely foreign to love and Christ was never guilty of it. Christ's followers must endeavor to keep themselves from it – Rom 13:13; Jam 3:14-16.

"Not promote itself" – or "boast." Love much prefers to promote others or to boast about others.

"Puffed up" – or "proud" – love never seeks for applause from others. It is not conceited, but humble and modest. This humble love is seen to perfection in Christ's life. His believers must follow Him in this also (Matt 11:29). Love practices self-denial, not self-assertion (Matt 10:38,39; Luke 9:23).

13:5 "Does not behave rudely" – or "improperly" or "disgracefully." Love will never act in a way that brings disgrace or dishonor to anyone; will never behave in a way it could ever be ashamed of.

"Self-seeking" – love is not after anything the world values highly, not money, or possessions, or fame, or power, or applause. It is not greedy. It seeks only the good of others. We see this in Christ; we should see it also in His followers (10:24; Rom 15:1,2).

"Not easily provoked" means not swift to take offense, is not quick-tempered. This does not mean that love is inconsistent with deep and terrible anger against sin (God, who is love, is continually angry with the wickedness of men – Rom 1:18; John 3:36; Ps 7:11). See also Mark 3:5. But that is a

seeking, is not easily provoked, does not impute 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 if *there are* prophecies, they will fail; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then

different matter and a different word is used in Greek.

"Not impute evil" – love covers wrongs, forgives them, and does not plot revenge (see Matt 5:38-48; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:59,60; 1 Pet 4:8). It does not naturally think others are acting from bad motives; it prefers not to impute sin to them. Christians who love as they ought, prefer to think others are better than themselves (Phil 2:3), and will not wish to judge and condemn anyone (Rom 14:4,10,13).

13:6 Love, divine love, is not weak, wishy-washy, or sentimental about wrongdoing. It does not compromise with evil. It cannot smile when wickedness appears. "Does not rejoice" suggests the opposite – love grieves at all wrongdoing. It's greatest joy comes when truth triumphs. Love and truth are great companions. Here truth is put as the opposite of evil. Evil has to do with darkness, lies, deceit, and suppression of God's truth (John 3:19,20; Rom 1:18; 2 Thess 10,12). The truth Paul here speaks of has to do with light, with reality, with God. It is the truth of which Christ is the embodiment (John 14:6). If we do not rejoice in this truth we should not vainly imagine that we have the sort of love Paul describes. And without it what are we?

13:7 "Bears" – the Greek word also means to "protect" or to "preserve by covering." Love bears anything that might come; it is a shield to cover and protect.

"Believes" – love does not believe every lie and tall story men tell. It does not believe the heresies of false teachers. It does not believe what the devil says. This is not the meaning. Love rejoices in the truth (v 6), so can recognize the truth. It is not senseless, naive, or blind. But by nature it is not suspicious and cynical but trusting. It is ready to give the benefit of the doubt to people.

"Hopes" – love is not easily discouraged. Failure does not crush it. It can hope when there seems no ground for hope. It believes the grace of God can reach any person, transform any situation.

"Endures" – or "perseveres" – the Greek word comes from a military use. It means to endure every attack of the enemy (compare Eph 6:10-17; 2 Tim 2:10). "Agape", the unselfish love for God and man, goes on in the face of all difficulties, persecutions, sufferings and attacks of Satan and men. It makes believers more than conquerors.

13:8-12 The meaning is that love, "agape",

that which is in part will be ended. 11 When I was a child I spoke like a child, I understood like a child, I thought like a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know even as also I am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

will go on forever. God is love and only those who love will be with Him in eternity. Some other things which were good and useful as Paul wrote will pass away. By tongues, prophecies and knowledge he seems to be referring to the spiritual gifts seen in 12:8-10, but his meaning may possibly be wider.

Some scholars think he means those gifts will pass away at the completion of the New Testament ("that which is perfect") – until then the gifts (the imperfect) were needed because the Church did not have God's full revelation of truth. Afterwards the gifts were not needed and so passed away. They think the gifts were useful only during the childhood of the Church (v 11), but not now during the times of its maturity.

This interpretation seems unlikely to the author of these notes. Verse 12 seems to put the time of "what is perfect" at the end of this age, or when believers are face to face with Christ in heaven, and not at the completion of the New Testament. The time of "perfection" is a time when they shall "know" even as Christ now knows them. This did not take place at the completion of the New Testament.

13:8 "Knowledge. . . shall vanish away" – judging from the context here, Paul's meaning may be that the ability to give a word of knowledge (12:8) will pass away. Or knowledge here may mean imperfect knowledge, or even knowledge in general which is acquired by the process of reasoning and investigation. All that will be unnecessary, for perfect knowledge will come (v 12).

13:11 Perhaps he means the whole life of believers on earth is like a childhood. Only after Christ's return will they be fully mature. But there seems to be at least a hint that even now we should not act childishly in the matter of love and spiritual gifts – see 14:20.

13:12 "Darkly" – most mirrors in those days were of poor quality and the reflection seen in them would have been distorted. This is the way things are at present in the matter of our knowledge.

13:13 These three are pre-eminent in the life of the Church and the individual believer – more important than any spiritual gift. Is it surprising that Paul says love is greater than faith or hope? Faith is necessary for our very salvation (John 3:36). Hope is the expectation that God will fulfill His promises and it is a vital part of the Christian life (Rom 8:24,25).

How is love greater than these? Faith

14 Follow after love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For he who speaks in an *unknown* tongue does not speak to men, but to God, for no man understands him. However in the spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But he who prophesies speaks to men *for their* edification, and encouragement, and comfort. 4 He who speaks in an *unknown* tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but would prefer that you prophesied. For he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church

may be edified.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking in tongues, what benefit will I be to you, unless I speak to you either by *way of* revelation, or knowledge, or prophesying, or doctrine? 7 Even lifeless things making a sound, whether a flute or a harp, unless they give out a distinction in the notes how will it be known what is being played on either flute or harp? 8 And if a trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the battle? 9 Just so with you. Unless you speak easily understandable words with *your* tongue, how shall it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking

takes, love gives, and it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Faith is like a hand that receives, love is the great thing it receives. Hope is similar to faith and expects good for oneself, love seeks the good of others. Faith and hope are means to an end, love is the end. That which does most for the common good is the greatest and best, and love does this (8:1). Love and love alone causes believers to do what Paul said they should do in 10:24 and 10:31.

After studying this chapter one important question remains – how do we get this “agape”, this unselfish love for God and people? See the answer in Gal 5:22; 1 John 4:7,19; Rom 5:5. Though this love comes from God, believers must yield to it, obey it, and put it into practice (14:1).

14:1 “Follow after love” – Paul wrote the great words of chapter 13 that we might follow the way of love, not that we might marvel at the nature of love, or admire his skill in writing.

“Desire” – 12:31.

“Prophecy” – 12:10. It seems from this that Paul regarded this gift the greatest of the spiritual gifts that the Corinthian believers could receive. Much of this chapter shows how prophecy is greater than the gift of tongues (except when someone is bringing a message from God in a language unknown to those present and there is interpretation along with it; except, that is, when he is actually exercising the gift of prophecy in a different way – v 5).

14:2 This seems to some people to be fully convincing evidence that speaking in tongues as practiced in Corinth was not exactly the same as the spiritual ability seen in Acts 2:4-11. At Pentecost the apostles spoke in languages they had not learned and did not know, and the people present understood them without translation. At Corinth people did not understand those who spoke in a tongue unless there was interpretation (vs 5, 13). But what reason is there for thinking that “tongue” does not mean some language spoken on earth?

“Unknown tongue” – the word “unknown” is not in the Greek here. Adding it seems justified because of the words “no one understands him” and because of the necessity for translation if the church is to

be edified (v 5, etc). But “unknown” does not necessarily mean a language that no one on earth knows and uses, only a language that is not known to people where it is being spoken.

“But to God” – this means that no one there in the meeting understood the language but God and (possibly) the person who was speaking it (vs 4,28).

“Mysteries” – 4:1; Matt 13:11; Rom 16:25.

14:3,4 This is why “prophecy” was greater than “tongues” – it was for the benefit of others. See 10:24,33.

“Edifies himself” – to edify means to build up. Here it means spiritual strengthening. See also 8:1; 10:23; 1 Thess 5:11. Can speaking in a language which the speaker himself does not understand edify him? It seems unlikely. Does Paul mean the speaker is edified because he understands what he is saying even if others do not? Very probably. Usually we think that being edified is a result of hearing and understanding the truth – see the next verse.

14:5 Paul is not at all belittling the gift of tongues. He himself taught that it was a manifestation of God’s Spirit for the good of the Church (12:7,10). But Paul is speaking against the misuse of this gift. He says they should not use the gift unless there was translation (vs 13,27,28).

“Unless he interprets” – this suggests that “tongues” were meaningful languages which the speakers might be able to translate into other languages, and that what was said in an unknown language, if explained, would edify the church. Paul emphasizes that edification comes by understanding what is said.

14:6 See 12:8-10. “Benefit” – again we see that Paul always thought of the good he could do others and wanted all believers to have the same purpose (vs 12,19,26).

“Revelation” – v 26. Here this means a message that God reveals to someone to deliver to others in the assembly. This is very like the gift of prophecy, and a revelation might come suddenly to one sitting in a meeting (vs 29-31).

14:7-11 His whole point here is that speaking an unknown language without translation is useless for those who hear it. Verses

into the air. 10 If there are many kinds of languages to be met with in the world, not even one of them *is* without meaning. 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the one speaking, and the one speaking *will be* a foreigner to me. 12 Just so *with* you. Since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, seek to excel *in gifts that will* edify the church.

13 Therefore the one who speaks in an *unknown* tongue should pray that he may interpret *what he says*. 14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is *the way* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16 Otherwise when you praise with the spirit, how will he who has his place among the uninstructed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you are saying? 17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other *person* is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, so that I might teach others, than ten thousand words in an

unknown tongue.

20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding. *In regard* to evil be children, but in understanding be mature. 21 In the Law it is written,

With *men of* other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet for all that they will not listen to me, says the Lord.

22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers. But prophesying *is* not for unbelievers, but for believers. 23 Therefore if the whole church has met together in one place, and all speak in *unknown* tongues, and *some who are* uninstructed or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are insane? 24 But if everyone prophesies, and an unbeliever or uninstructed *person* comes in, he is *going to be* convicted by everything, he *is going to be* judged by everything, 25 and so the secrets of his heart are *going to be* laid bare. And so, *prostrating himself*, he will worship God, and declare that God is really in you.

26 How is it then, brethren? When you meet together, each one of you has a psalm, *or* has a teaching, *or* has a tongue, *or* has a revelation, *or*

10,11 seem to indicate that the tongues Paul refers to were nothing else than ordinary foreign languages.

14:12 Verses 3,4,6,19,26,31; 10:24.

14:13 Only with translation would it edify others.

14:14,15 Observe the importance Paul gives here to the mind and understanding. What does Paul mean by the difficult phrase "my mind is unfruitful"? Possibly it means that if someone prays in a language he does not himself understand his inner being may be praying, but his mind is not a part of it. He himself does not understand what he is saying and so there is not even the fullest edification to himself that there would be if he understood. Or it may possibly mean that though he himself understands what he is saying, this understanding, this mental activity, bears no fruit in others because he is not communicating to them. In any case, it is clear from v 15 that Paul wanted his worship to be understood. He wanted his mind as well as his spirit to be engaged in it.

14:17 "Edified" – notice again this constant theme of Paul (vs 3, 4, 19, 26).

14:18 "Tongues" – or "languages". Paul was not writing as he did because he did not have this gift. He had it and thanked God for it.

14:19 "Teach others" – Paul (our example) was always thinking of others and how to edify them, instruct them, encourage, strengthen and comfort them.

14:20 See 13:11.

14:21,22 Isa 28:11,12. The people of Israel had fallen into unbelief and would not

listen to their prophets who spoke in a language they could understand. So in judgment God would send them people speaking a language they could not understand. Paul draws a lesson from this for Christians. He says tongues are a "sign" – they pointed to the presence of God's Spirit (12:7). He says this "sign" is not to convince believers, or the person speaking in a tongue that God's Spirit is in him (there is far greater and more necessary evidence than that). Tongues are a sign to unbelievers (compare Acts 2:4-13). Prophecy, however, was given for the edification of believers (vs 3,4).

We should notice that in v 21 "tongues" certainly refer to languages spoken in foreign countries. Can it be otherwise in v 22? **14:23** In v 22 Paul speaks of the gift of tongues properly used. Here he speaks of it being improperly used – everyone speaking in tongues and no translation.

14:24,25 "Uninstructed person" (v 24) – here means someone who does not yet understand the message of the gospel and the teachings of Christ. He will be able to understand the words of the prophecies being spoken. And they may well convince him of his sin and make him a believer in Christ.

"Convicted" – compare John 16:8-11.

14:26-40 Paul here speaks of the proper use of spiritual gifts in the meetings of believers. His emphasis is on orderliness (vs 26,31,33,40).

14:26 "Revelation" – v 6. "Edify" – vs 3,4, 12,31. The Greek word translated "edify" literally means "to build a house." Figuratively, it means to build up, to promote spiritual

has an interpretation. All things should be done to edify. 27 If anyone speaks in an *unknown* tongue, *it should be done* by two, or, at the most, *by three*, and *that* by turn, and someone should interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, *the speaker* should keep quiet in the church, and speak to himself and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak, two or three *of them*, and let the others judge *what is said*. 30 If *anything* is revealed to someone else sitting there, the first *speaker* should be silent. 31 For you may all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn, and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

growth.

14:27 "By turn" – it seems that several were trying to speak at the same time and creating confusion.

14:27 "Interpret" – vs 5,13.

14:28 "To himself" – v 2. This may mean that those who had the gift of tongues could understand the tongue they spoke and could exercise the gift without speaking aloud.

14:29 "Judge" – 1 Thess 5:20,21. They must weigh what was said because of the possibility of false prophets and false prophecies. What should they weigh those spoken "prophecies" against? God's truth as revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures and through Christ and His apostles. Anything not in agreement with this truth was false and dangerous.

14:30 Verses 6,26.

14:31 See how often in this chapter Paul says everything must be done for the good of everybody.

14:32,33 Using spiritual gifts did not mean losing control of oneself. There was no sweeping away of the will and mind of the individual in whom they were at work. Those who had the gift of prophecy and tongues (and doubtless any other spiritual gift) could keep silent if they chose (vs 28,30). Otherwise there would have been disorder, and disorder and confusion are contrary to God's very nature.

14:34 The subject of this chapter is using certain spiritual gifts in public meetings of the church – gifts which involve speaking. Paul says women must not do this. They may have these gifts but they must be used at other times. Note at 11:5,6; 1 Tim 2:11-14. Some think that Paul is forbidding women even to pray in public meetings, but this is very doubtful indeed. The context is prophesying and speaking in tongues and translating tongues (vs 26-31). The Greek word translated "speak" in these verses is the same as in vs 5,6,9,19, etc.

"Submission" – 11:3,8,9; Eph 5:24; 1 Tim 2:11,12; 1 Pet 3:1,5,6.

14:35 "Ask their husbands" – this means, of course, that they can ask them if their

34 Your women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but *are commanded* to be in submission, as the law also says. 35 And if they wish to learn something, they should ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for women to speak in the church.

36 What? Did the word of God come from you? Or did it reach only you? 37 If any man thinks he is a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Therefore, brethren, have an earnest desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

husbands are believers in Christ. If not, (though Paul does not think it necessary to say so) they could ask the pastors and teachers in the church, or other women with more knowledge than themselves.

"Shameful" – 11:6. The Greek word means "base", "shameful", "contrary to modesty or purity", "opposed to what is fitting". It seems that Christians in Corinth thought they could do as they pleased regardless of what other churches did or what the apostles taught.

14:37 Some Christians there thought they were spiritually very able people. If this was really the case they should have been able to discern a command of the Lord Jesus Himself given through Paul.

14:38 This seems to mean that if any such person ignores the Lord's command he is not worthy of being heard himself.

14:39 "Tongues" – or unknown languages.

14:40 Verse 33. In chapters 12-14 Paul has written of a number of spiritual gifts believers had during the early days of the Church. Have these gifts passed away? Certainly we should not think there are now any apostles of Christ like the original apostles – those who saw the Lord Jesus and heard Him, those whose inspired teachings are infallible. It is a huge mistake to say that any man now has the same authority and infallibility that Christ's apostles had. The Bible was completed in the first century and it contains all the inspired, infallible writings and teachings God wanted men to have. The Bible alone must be the final authority for all of us, and it is the only infallible teaching we need or have or should want to have.

But some of the other gifts spoken of in these chapters (for example, helps and teaching) have certainly not passed away. Have any of the others passed away? The author of these notes does not believe the Bible anywhere indicates that they would either pass away or not pass away in this present age of the Church.

We should understand that God has freedom to do what He wants to do. And if it is His good pleasure to give those gifts to

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and in which you stand, *2 and* by which also you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you; unless you believed in vain.

3 For I passed on 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 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 more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom the majority remains to this present *day*, but some

anyone today, or to withhold them from anyone, He will do so (12:11).

Another thought that comes to many believers is this: if these gifts passed away in the first century it seems strange that the Holy Spirit would include Paul's instructions about them in this portion of the Word of God which is surely for all churches throughout this whole age.

15:1 "The gospel" – 1:17; 4:15; 9:16,17; Rom 1:1,9,15,16; 16:25; 2 Cor 4:3,4; Gal 1:6-9; Eph 6:19; Phil 1:17,27; 1 Tim 1:11; 2 Tim 1:10.

15:2 "By which you are saved" – this is why God gave the gospel of Christ (Mark 1:10,16; Rom 1:16). Receiving it in faith means salvation, disobedience to it means eternal punishment (2 Thess 1:8,9). Knowing its vast importance Paul wanted those at Corinth (and everyone else) to understand and believe it.

"If" – Col 1:23; Heb 3:6; 6:6; 10:38. Perseverance in the faith of the gospel is the proof that faith is genuine. See Col 1:23; Heb 3:5,6; 10:39. Some at Corinth were denying that God raises the dead (v 12). But the resurrection of Christ is a vital part of the gospel. Those who denied it were revealing a very defective faith (vs 14,17).

"Believed in vain" may mean believed without knowing what they believed or without understanding the proper basis of belief. Or it could mean that anything that seems to be faith but which does not go on to the end is a vain, worthless thing which cannot save.

15:3-8 Four important things are associated with the gospel – Christ's death, His burial, His rising from the dead, and His appearances to His disciples. Christ's death was "for our sins" – Matt 26:28; John 1:29; Rom 3:24,25; 4:25; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 1:4; Heb 1:3; 9:28; 10:12; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Rev 1:5. Anyone who denies that Christ really died is denying the one sacrifice for sins God has provided for mankind, and rejects the one way God has appointed for men to be saved from their sins. Christ's burial was also of great importance. It was the final and needed proof that He was dead (Matt 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-46; John 19:38-40). Christ's resurrection (His spirit entering again

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 by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, and am 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, and his grace which *was granted* to me was not in vain, for I laboured far more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. *11* Therefore, whether I or they, so we preach, and so you believed.

12 Now if Christ is preached that he rose from the dead, how do some among you say that there

His dead body and making it alive again and enabling it to leave the tomb) is also of the utmost importance (vs 13,14,17,18; Rom 4:25; Matt 28:6).

Both the death and resurrection of Christ were "according to the Scriptures" (the Old Testament). See Matt 5:17; Luke 24:25-27,45,46. Christ's appearances to His disciples were also of "first importance." They were the proof that He had risen from the dead. Paul does not list all of His appearances. On Christ's appearances after His resurrection see note at Matt 28:6.

15:3 "Received" – Gal 1:11,12.

15:6 "Five hundred" – the law says that facts can be established by two or three witnesses (Deut 17:6; Matt 18:16). Those who saw Christ after His resurrection were in excess of 500, and among them some of the best people the world ever had. There is far more evidence for the death, burial and resurrection of Christ than for any event in the secular histories of the world that deal with olden times.

"Fallen asleep" – departed this life (John 11:11-14).

15:7 "James" here probably means the Lord's brother (Acts 1:13,14), not either of the apostles of that name.

15:8 "Seen by me" – Acts 9:3-7.

"One born out of due time" – Paul means he was not one of the original apostles or disciples, that he was still in sin when Christ rose from the dead, and that he became an apostle later on, in an extraordinary way.

15:9 Acts 8:3; 9:1,2; Eph 3:9; 1 Tim 1:12-15. Paul was happy to do what he told others to do in Phil 2:3.

15:10 Paul understood that for him to be a servant of God, an apostle, was sheer mercy, indescribable grace (Eph 3:7,8; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:3,4). When he says he worked harder than all, he is exalting the grace of God working in him, not himself.

15:11 The gospel Paul preached was the same gospel the other apostles preached. There is only one way to salvation. They all knew and preached this one way.

15:12-19 Some in the church at Corinth (just like the Sadducees – Acts 23:8) were saying that there was no such thing as dead bodies coming to life again. Paul points out

is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not risen. 14 And if Christ has not risen, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is also in vain. 15 Yes, and we are found *to be* false witnesses about God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ up, whom he did not raise up, if so be that the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ has not been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is in* vain, you are still in your sins. 18 Then, also, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 But now Christ has risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of those who slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive.

that if there is no such thing then there are some very sad results – Christ could not have risen (vs 13,16); the preaching of the apostles would be both “useless” and false (vs 15); the faith of Christians would also be useless (vs 14,17); and they would still be in their sins and lost forever (vs 17,18); and all of them would be in a state to be pitied (v 19). In this way Paul shows the absolute necessity of the bodily resurrection of Christ for the salvation of men. It is at the very heart of the gospel. To deny it is to pervert the gospel. It is an attempt to rob the gospel of its truthfulness and power. **15:14** “Preaching” here means the message they preached, not the act of preaching. Without the resurrection of Christ Christians would have no message and their faith would be worthless and without a valid foundation.

15:17,18 If Christ did not rise from the dead it would mean that He sank condemned under our sins, that His sacrifice was not acceptable to God, and that no one is justified or forgiven (Rom 4:24,25). And if no one is counted righteous or forgiven, everyone is lost forever.

15:19 The Christian’s hope must reach far beyond this present life. See Rom 5:2-5; 8:23-25. If there is no resurrection any such hope would be in vain. In such case Christians would be deluded and should be objects of pity. And all their hardships, trials, and persecutions (John 15:18-20; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12) would be for nothing.

15:20 But Christ’s believers are not to be pitied. Why? Because Christ’s resurrection is a fact. There was not the slightest doubt about it.

“Firstfruits” – He was the first of a great many in the future.

15:21,22 Compare Rom 5:12-21. On the resurrection of the dead see John 5:28,29; etc.

15:23 “Those who belong to Christ” – see John 6:37-40; 17:6,10. Paul here says nothing about the resurrection of unbelievers at

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. 24 After that *comes* the end, when he will have handed over the kingdom to God the Father, when he will have put down 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 that all things are put under *him*, *it is* evident that he who put all things under him is not included. 28 And when all things have been made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, so that God may be all in all.

29 Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why, then, are they baptized for the dead? 30 And why do we stand in danger every hour?

the return of Christ. In fact, he never teaches there will be a general resurrection of all men at the same time. Compare Rev 20:5.

15:24 “Then” – the Greek word thus translated does not necessarily mean “immediately.” It can mean and here (in the view of the author of these notes) surely does mean “at some time after”, the amount of time not being specified.

“The end” – judging from v 25 this means the end of Christ’s reign. Some teach that this means Christ’s reign in heaven at this present time. The author of these notes believes it means Christ’s reign on earth for a thousand years (see Rev 20:1-6). Certainly Christ has not yet “destroyed all dominion, authority and power.” In fact, He will not do so until His second coming. See Rev 19:11-16. Now, and until the end of this age, human kingdoms and authorities and powers will continue. Christ will destroy them at His coming and during the millennium and then hand over to God the Father the kingdom He has ruled.

15:25 “All enemies” means all human enemies, Satan and all evil spirits, and death itself. It means all that can hurt His people, resist God’s rule, or be opposed to His kingdom.

15:26 “The last enemy. . . death” – 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 20:14; Luke 20:36.

15:27 Ps 8:6; Heb 2:8,9.

15:28 Note on “Son” at Matt 3:17; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

“Subject” – compare John 14:28. See also notes at John 5:19-23.

“All in all” – Rom 11:36.

15:29 “Baptized for the dead” – no one now knows what this meant then or why people did it. There is no mention of it in any other place in the Bible. Paul does not say that he did it himself, or that the Corinthians did it, and he does not say he approved of it.

15:30-32 Verse 19. If there is no hope of a better future after death, it may seem to

31 I declare by the boasting I have about you in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what does it benefit me, if the dead do not rise? *In that case* let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

33 Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good character. 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin. For some do not have the knowledge of God. I say *this* to your shame.

35 But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? 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 is only seed; you do not sow the body that will be, but perhaps *seeds* of wheat or of some other *grain*. 38 But God gives it a body as it pleases him, and to every seed its own body. 39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there is* one *kind* of flesh for men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and 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. *The body* is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonour; 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 was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a life-giving spirit." 46 However, that which is spiritual *did* not *come* first, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man *was* of the earth, earthly; the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. 48 As *was* the earthly man, so also *are* those who are earthly; and as the heavenly *man is*, so also *are* those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the likeness of the earthly, so we will also bear the likeness of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does

make some kind of sense to enjoy this life as much as one can. It was because Paul was sure of the resurrection that he was willing to face danger and death every day for the sake of the gospel. 2 Cor 11:23-27 gives a list of some of those dangers. "I die daily" probably means here that every day he was facing persecutions or dangers which could result in his death.

15:32 "With beasts" – Paul could have meant this either literally or figuratively. There is no record of this literally happening to him but he faced other dangers at Ephesus. See 2 Cor 1:8. He probably means wicked persecutors who seemed like wild beasts (compare Ps 22:12,13; Luke 13:32; Acts 20:29).

15:33 There is great danger in believers having the wrong kind of people for friends. Here "bad company" means the company of those who deny the resurrection. But is it necessary to say that other kinds of friends also can be bad company?

15:34 False teaching leads to a false way of living and to sin. The denial of the resurrection produced this result among the Christians in Corinth.

15:35-49 Paul here answers questions some Christians were asking. It seems they were asking in unbelief and possibly even ridiculing the idea of resurrection, for he says to those who would ask such questions, "Foolish one" (v 36). He says the human body (he is speaking here only of the bodies of believers) is like a seed. After it dies it will be changed into something quite different from what it appears to be now. There are different kinds of bodies and different kinds of glory, and God can take the physical elements and make of them what He pleases. So can He do with the bodies of

believers. And so He will do.

15:42-44 Believers after the resurrection will have bodies of glory and power which can never die. They will be perfectly fitted for a spiritual existence. In short, they will be like Christ's resurrected body (v 49; Phil 3:21; Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2. See Luke 24:31,36,51; John 20:19,26).

15:45 Gen 2:7. "The last Adam" means Christ the Head, the Representative and the Progenitor of a new kind of people. Adam had life. Christ gives life (John 5:21-29; 11:25,26; 14:6). "Life-giving spirit" does not mean Christ did not have a real body (see Heb 2:14). But He was spirit before He became a man (John 4:24).

15:46 He means only that the first Adam came first in time.

15:47 Gen 2:7; 3:19; Luke 2:11; John 1:14; 3:13; 6:38,51; Phil 2:6,7.

15:48 What men receive from Adam are bodies which die and return to dust. What those who are "heavenly" will receive from Christ is something far superior. Observe that believers in Christ are "heavenly" or "of heaven" –

their life is there (Eph 2:6; Col 3:1-3),
their hope is there (Heb 6:19,20),
their Head is there (Eph 1:22),
their inheritance is there (1 Pet 1:4),
their home is there (John 14:2),
their citizenship is there (Phil 3:20).

15:49 In vs 47-49 thrice Christ is called the man from heaven. This does not mean He was a man in heaven before He came to earth, but that He was in heaven before He became a man on earth.

"Likeness" – vs 42-44.

15:50 Believers now are in the kingdom of God (Col 1:13). But Paul here speaks of "inheriting" it. See Rom 8:17-23; Eph 1:14;

corruption inherit *the* incorruptible. 51 See, I show 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on *the* incorruptible, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on *the* incorruptible, and this mortal has put on immortality, then will take place the word that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

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

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. 57 But thanks *be* to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my dear brethren, be firm, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labour is not in vain in

1 Pet 1:4. We cannot inherit it with these bodies of death.

15:51,52 1 Thess 4:13-18; John 14:3. Not all believers will "sleep" (die). Some will be alive when Christ returns and will be instantly changed.

"Mystery" – means a revelation from God which men could not know in any other way.

"Last trumpet" – see Matt 24:30,31 (the only trumpet Jesus mentioned) and Rev 11:15 (the last trumpet in the book of Revelation) – it is hard to see how the resurrection of believers could take place before the events of these verses in Matthew and Revelation, and still be at the "last" trumpet. We should take seriously Paul's placing of the rapture of the saints (1 Thess 4:16,17) at this time – it is the only place he plainly tells us when it will occur. (The Greek words signifying trumpet – noun and verb – are used 23 times in the NT – 1 Cor 14:8; twice here in 15:52; Matt 6:2; 24:31; 1 Thess 4:16; Heb 12:19; Rev 1:10; 4:1; 8:2; twice in 8:6; 8:7, 8, 10, 12; twice in 8:13; 9:1, 13, 14; 10:7; 11:15.)

15:53 Verses 42-44,49.

15:54 Isa 25:8.

15:55 Hos 13:14.

15:56 Death has no sting itself. Its sting is sin (Rom 5:12; 6:23), and to die in sin is to be lost forever. Christ has removed this sting for believers by removing their sins, and so death to them is only a door to life with Christ (Phil 1:21-23).

"The law" – this means God's law revealed through Moses. The law condemns us all (Rom 3:19,20), makes transgression possible (Rom 4:15), and causes our sinful nature to rebel against it and so sin even more (Rom 7:5-11).

15:57 "Victory" – the victory He gives is over sin and death and everything else that could bring eternal harm to us (Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 2:14; 1 John 5:4). Death and sin will not

the Lord.

16 Now concerning the collection for the saints, just as I gave instructions to the churches of Galatia, so you should do also. 2 On the first *day* of the week each one of you should put *some money* aside, as *God* has prospered him, so that there will be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, I will send whomever you approve by *your* letters, to take your gift to Jerusalem. 4 And if it is suitable that I go also, they will go with me.

5 Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia; for I will pass through Macedonia.

6 And it may be that I will stay, *yes*, and *spend the* winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now on the way, but I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will remain at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and an

have the victory over believers. This is because Christ gained the victory over death and sin and because He shares that victory with them. It is Christ's resurrection which is the proof of all this.

15:58 "Therefore" – Paul taught great doctrines and revelations of truth from God. And he always wanted people to apply those truths to their lives, and to be better people because of them. Compare Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:1; Eph 4:1; Col 3:5.

"Be firm, unmovable" – v 1; 16:13; Rom 5:2; 2 Cor 1:24; Gal 5:1; Eph 6:11,13,14; Ps 15:5; 16:8.

"Abounding in the work" – v 10; Matt 21:28; 24:45,46; Luke 19:11,24; John 4:34-36; 2 Cor 9:8; Col 1:10; Heb 6:10; 13:21; Rev 22:12; Eccl 9:10. Because the dead will rise, our labor is not in vain. Then every person shall receive the proper reward for his or her labors. But observe what sort of work is not in vain – work "of the Lord" and "in the Lord." We must do the Lord's work in the strength of the Lord, under the Lord's direction.

16:1-4 Rom 15:26; 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9; Acts 24:17. Evidently believers living in Jerusalem were poor and in need. So Paul arranged for other churches to help them financially.

16:2 "First day" – Sunday. See also Acts 20:7; Rev 1:10. It seems that very soon after Christ's resurrection believers began to meet on Sunday for worship rather than on Saturday the Jewish Sabbath.

16:3 Observe the great care Paul was taking about this money. He wanted there to be no possibility of wrong use of it, or any suspicion of wrong use – 2 Cor 8:20,21.

16:5 "Macedonia" – Acts 19:21; 20:1,2.

16:6 "Send me on my journey" – compare Rom 15:24.

16:9 "Door" – Acts 14:27; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3; Rev 3:7,8. When the Lord opens a door of service for us He means for us to enter

effective *one* has opened to me, and *there are* many opponents.

10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he can be with you without fear, for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. 11 Therefore no one should look down on him. But send him on his journey in peace, so he can come to me. For I am expecting him with the brethren.

12 Concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was not at all willing to come at this time. But he will come when he has a convenient time. 13 Watch, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. 14 All you do should be done with love.

15 I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints), 16 to submit yourselves to

such *persons*, and to everyone who works and labours with *us*. 17 I am glad about the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, for they have supplied what was lacking on your part. 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 warmly in the Lord, together with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 *I*, Paul, *write* this greeting with my own hand.

22 If any man 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.

it. But the enemies of the gospel will try to see that we do not.

16:10,11 "Timothy" - Acts 16:1; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 2:2.

"Without fear" - 1 Tim 4:12. Timothy was young, and probably timid, and the Corinthians were not always as helpful as they might have been (4:1,8-13).

16:12 "Apollos" - 1:12; 3:4-9; Acts 18:24-28.

16:13 "Watch" - Acts 20:28; Rom 16:17; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 2 Tim 4:5.

"Firm" - 15:58. "Strong" - Eph 6:10; 2 Tim 2:3; Isa 40:31.

16:14 "Love" - 10:24; 13:1-13; John 13:34.

16:15 Achaia was the region in which Corinth lay.

"Devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints" - here was a spiritual gift they continually and wholeheartedly used (12:28) - helping fellow believers. Such people are an example to all others who may not have any of the more public or well-known gifts.

16:16 This means to accept their leadership in their work of serving believers and assist them.

16:17 "Lacking on your part" - he is not reminding them that they had not helped him financially (see 9:12-18). He means that he misses them and their fellowship and news about them.

16:18 It is good to be the kind of people

whose presence refreshes others.

16:19 Paul was writing from Ephesus the chief city in the Province of Asia.

"Aquila and Priscilla" - Acts 18:1-3,26; Rom 16:3,4.

"In their house" - Rom 16:5.

16:20 "Kiss" - Rom 16:16.

16:21 Paul sometimes dictated his letters and they were written down by someone else (Rom 16:22). But he always added a greeting in his own hand (2 Thess 3:17).

16:22 Love for the Lord Jesus Christ is the evidence of spiritual life (1 John 3:14; 4:7,8,16). Absence of love for Him is proof of spiritual death. If we cannot, or do not, love Christ, we show ourselves depraved, still in our sins, and worthy of a curse from God. Nothing is more important than the state of our hearts in regard to the Lord Jesus.

"Come, O Lord" - Rev 22:20. In the Aramaic language the expression is "Marana tha".

16:23 See 1:3; Rom 1:7; 16:20.

16:24 Paul had opponents at Corinth, and others there were carnal, proud, divisive, abused spiritual gifts, and complained against him. He had to say some rather harsh things in this letter to correct them. But he sent love to them *all*. Compare what he wrote in 13:4-7 - Paul was happy to practice what he taught to others.