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*PAUL'S FIRST LETTER
TO THE
CORINTHIANS*

A STUDY

*CURTIS BYERS
1998*

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LESSON 1

BACKGROUND TO 1 CORINTHIANS

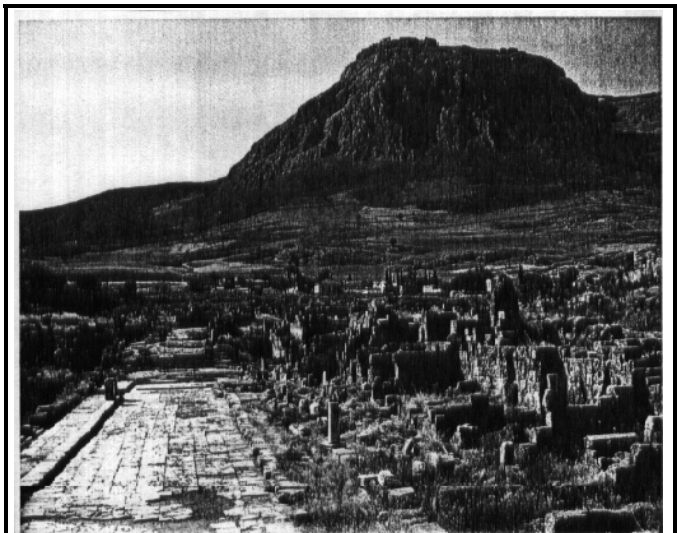
INTRODUCTION

A fundamental step in interpreting any ancient document is to gain an adequate understanding of the historical setting of the document. This lesson presents some basic information about the city of Corinth (it would be beneficial to supplement this information by reading a Bible dictionary, etc. about Corinth) along with a series of questions regarding the origin of the church in Corinth as reported in Acts 18. Together these will help start the process of understanding the circumstances of the church in Corinth and increase our appreciation of Paul's letter to them.



THE CITY OF CORINTH

Geography In Paul's day, Corinth was the leading city of Achaia located 50 miles west of Athens at the southwestern end of the 4-mile wide isthmus connecting central Greece and the Peloponnesus (the peninsula of southern Greece). Corinth was the "master" of two harbors: Lechaeum, 1.5 miles to the west on the Corinthian Gulf (an inlet of the Ionian Sea), and Cenchrea, 8.5 miles to the east on the Saronic Gulf (an inlet of the Aegean Sea). South of the city was the Acropolis of Corinth (Acrocorinth), a 1887-foot high, steep, flat-topped, limestone mountain. Besides being a natural citadel, it provided an "inexhaustible" water supply from the fountain of Peirene.

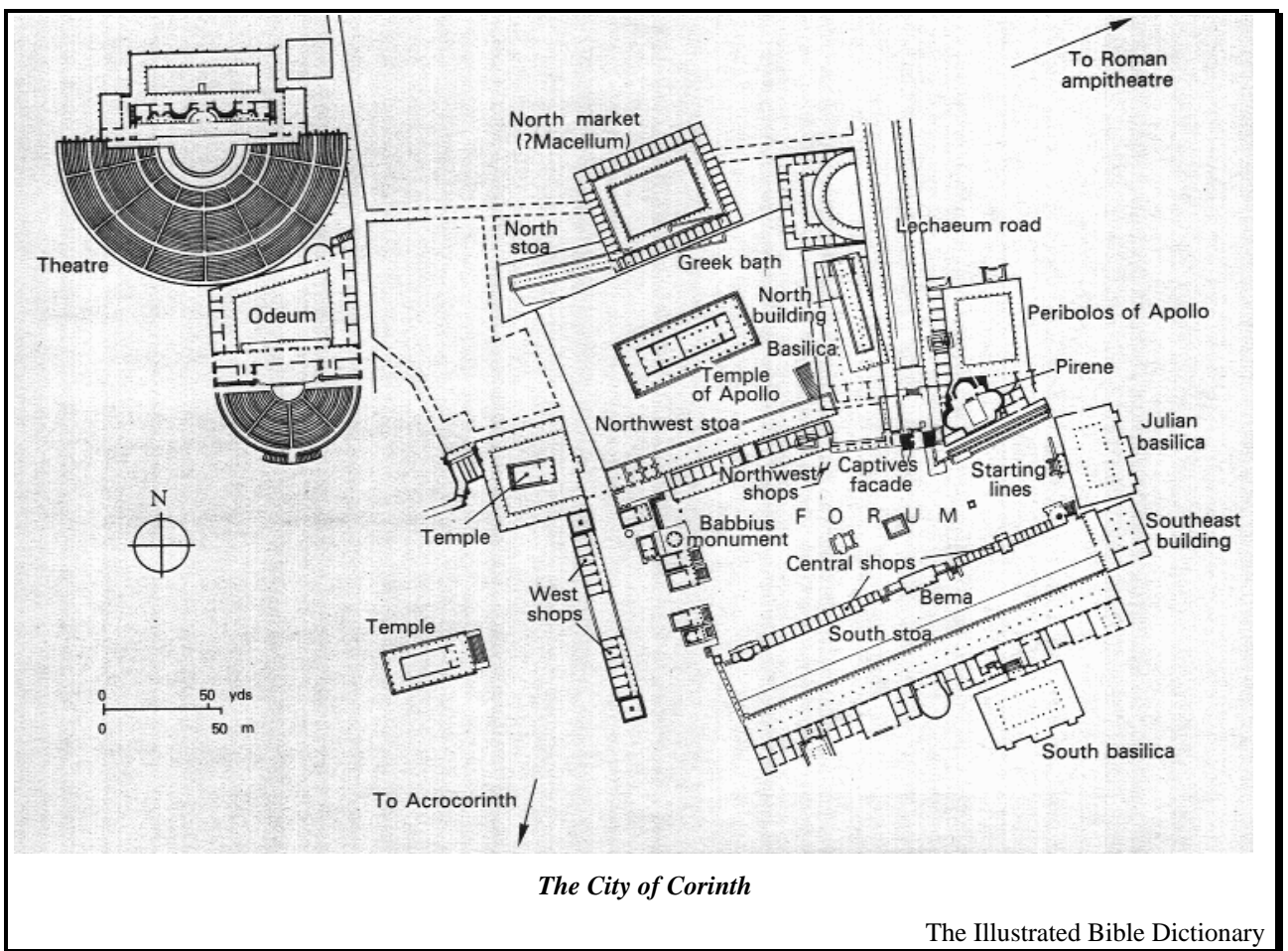


The Ruins of Corinth as Viewed from the North along the Lechaeum road toward the Acrocorinth

The Illustrated Bible Dictionary

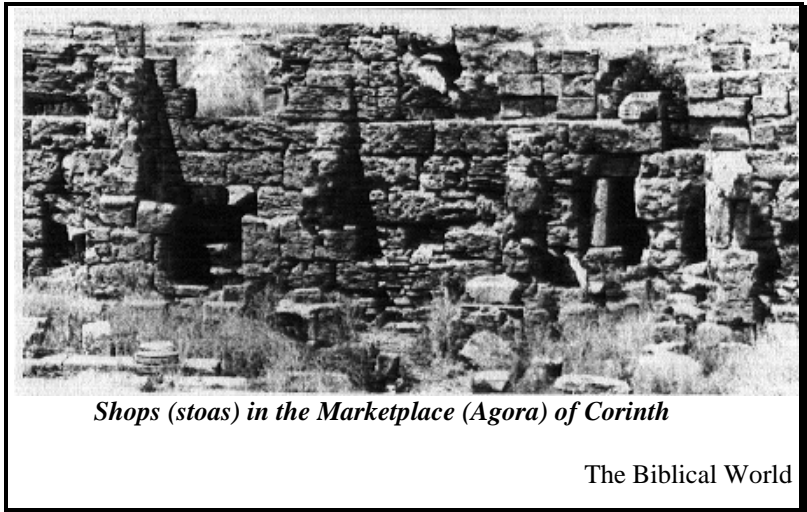
P*olitical History* Corinth was originally settled by the Phoenicians (Thucydides recorded that the first war ships were built in Corinth in 664 BC), but from the late 4th Century BC Corinth was held by the Macedonians. In 196 BC, Greece was liberated and joined the Achaean League. . The League was decisively defeated by the Romans in 146 BC and Corinth was completely destroyed by the Roman general Lucius Mummius. All of Greece was made the Roman province of Achaia.

Corinth laid in ruins until, in 46 BC, Julius Caesar recognizing the commercial and military potential of the region rebuilt the city giving it the status of a Roman colony under the name Julia Corinthiensis. It quickly regained its prominence and, in 27 BC, Augustus made it capital of the new senatorial province of Achaia. Macedonia was made a separate province until AD 15 when Tiberius reunited the two provinces; Claudius separated the two again in AD 44.

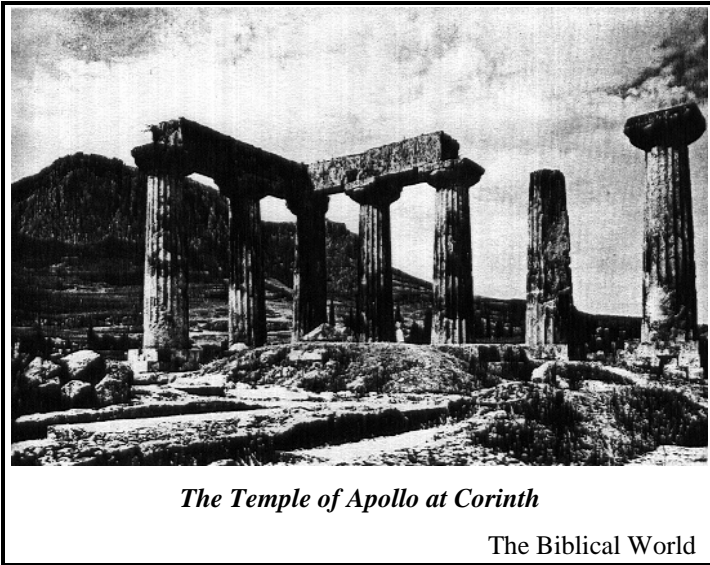


The city was one of the largest size in the Roman empire and perhaps the fourth largest city based on population (estimated to be anywhere between 100,000 and to over 500,00). Having the character of both Roman and Greek cities, the city was centered around the Agora. In Paul's day, Corinth was truly a cosmopolitan city comprised of Jews, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, etc.

Economy The wealth of Corinth was derived from its central location for trade passing from the east to the west. Ships avoided the treacherous 200-mile journey around the southern tip of the Peloponnese (Cape Maleae) by either being hauled across the isthmus or, in the case of larger ships, having the cargo transferred to another ship on the other side of the isthmus. In AD 66-67, Nero failed in his attempt to build a canal across the isthmus (although a canal was completed in 1893). In addition, Corinth served as the market center for the surrounding agricultural areas.



Religion Several pagan cults flourished in Corinth. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty (= Roman *Venus*), was worshipped in a small temple which stood on the top of



Acrocorinth. In Old Corinth (prior to its destruction in 146 BC), Strabo reported that 1000 female “priestesses” of Aphrodite sold their services to worshippers. Thus, the term “corinthianize” had the meaning “to fornicate.” This reputation carried over to the Roman Corinth, although it was probably no more morally corrupt than any large city of the Roman Empire.

At the Isthmian Games (athletic games held every two years and second only in prestige to the Olympic Games), the Greek sea-deities, Melecertes and Poseidon, were honored.

A Jewish community also existed in Corinth when Paul arrived in Corinth. An inscription has been found in Corinth that reads “Synagogue of the Hebrews”.

All these features together has prompted one modern commentator to suggest that Corinth in Paul’s day was “at once the New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world.”

THE ORIGINS OF THE CHURCH IN CORINTH (ACTS 18)

1. Paul visited Corinth for the first time on which missionary journey?
2. Paul associates with a Jewish couple Aquila and Priscilla and works with them in the trade of tentmaking (“leatherworking”). Why had Aquila and Priscilla recently moved to Corinth?

Do you think Aquila and Priscilla were Christians prior to meeting Paul? Why, or why not?

Is this the first time Paul worked to provide for himself on his journeys? (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9)

3. What co-workers of Paul rejoined him in Corinth?

[Incidentally, what does this tell us about when Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians? cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-7]

4. As was his custom, where and when does Paul preach the gospel in Corinth?

What was the general Jewish reaction to Paul’s preaching?

As an exception, what influential Jew was converted by the preaching of Paul?

5. As was not unusual, Gentile “God-fearers” would join the Jews in their Sabbath assemblies. Who was one Gentile that was converted by Paul?
6. At some point during his stay in Corinth, the Jews brought a charge against Paul and took him before the “judgment seat” (Gk. *bema*, see Map of Corinth; cf. Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10) of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia.
 - a. What was the charge brought against Paul?
 - b. Did Gallio have any interest in hearing this case? Why or why not?

7. Having not been convicted of any wrongdoing, Paul remains in Corinth for “a good while”.
 - a. Prior to leaving Achaia, Paul has his hair cut off at Cenchrea. Why?
 - b. Who leaves Corinth with Paul?
 - c. Where does Paul go after leaving Corinth?

8. Aquila and Priscilla remain in Ephesus while Paul returns to Antioch.
 - a. Who arrives in Ephesus that receives further instruction in the “way of God”?
 - b. How is Apollos described by Luke?
 - c. Where does Apollos travel after leaving Ephesus?

9. The date of Paul’s first visit can be deduced from two references given by Luke.
 - 1) In Acts 18:2, Luke says Aquila and Priscilla had recently arrived in Corinth “because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.” This expulsion is attested by Suetonius, a second century biographer of the Caesars (c.120): “...because the Jews of Rome were indulging in constant riots at the instigation of Chrestus he expelled them from the city.” It is generally believed that the Chrestus to whom Suetonius refers is Jesus. Orosius, a contemporary of Augustine, places this expulsion in Claudius’ ninth year (AD 49-50). Thus, Paul would have arrived in Corinth at some time after this event.
 - 2) At the instigation of the Jews, Paul was taken before the judgment seat of Gallio. Gallio was proconsul in Achaia from about the Spring, AD 51 to Spring, AD 52. This date is based upon an inscription found at Delphi, and is considered the most certain date of any New Testament event.

It is uncertain whether Luke’s statement “and he continued there a year and six months” (Acts 18:11) refers to the total length of Paul’s stay in Corinth, or to the length of his stay before being taken before Gallio’s judgment seat. In either case, Paul’s stay in Corinth should be dated within the period AD 50 to AD 52.

LESSON 2

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS

QUESTIONS OF INTRODUCTION

The immediate context of a letter is vital in understanding the message of the letter. How well did the author know his intended recipients? Did the author write the letter to instruct, to commend, or to condemn his readers? Was the letter written in response to certain events, or was the letter written with some future goal in mind? These sort of questions must be considered when approaching any letter, including Biblical letters.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>QUESTIONS TO ASK</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Who is the author?</i>◆ <i>Who is the recipient(s)?</i>◆ <i>What is the nature of the letter?</i>◆ <i>When was the letter written?</i>◆ <i>Where are the author and recipient at the time of writing?</i>◆ <i>Why was the letter written?</i>

This lesson will focus upon the events which gave rise to the letter of 1 Corinthians. These events dictated the nature of the letter that Paul was to write. Unfortunately, we do not know all the information we would like to know, but what we do have provides a very interesting picture of one group of first-century Christians.

Paul's Contacts with the Corinthians

After Paul's initial founding of the church in Corinth, Paul had three additional contacts with the Corinthians before he wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians.

1. Paul wrote an earlier letter to the Corinthians (Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-11). What instructions did Paul give the Corinthians in that letter?

Why was this instruction particularly appropriate for the Corinthian congregation?

Was Paul's instructions understood by the Corinthians?

2. Paul received reports about the affairs of the church from Chloe's household (Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-11). What had Paul heard that was disturbing to him?
3. Paul received a letter from the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 7:1 "*Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me...*"). The introductory phrase "*Now concerning...*" is repeated five additional times, and it is reasonable to believe that in each case Paul is responding to some question raised by the Corinthians in their letter. By surveying each of these occurrences, what are the areas of concern that the Corinthians raise in their letter?

7:1

7:25

8:1

12:1

16:1

16:12

These are not the only discernible areas of questions raised by the Corinthians, but they are sufficient at this time to understand the nature of their correspondence with Paul.

4. Who, very possibly, delivered the Corinthian letter to Paul? (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:17).

The Place and Time of Writing

5. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians? (1 Corinthians 16:9)
6. Paul visited Ephesus twice according to Luke's account in Acts: on the return portion of his 2nd Missionary Journey (when he left Aquila and Priscilla there; Acts 18:19) and on his Third Missionary Journey (when he stayed 2-3 years; Acts 19). On which of these visits did Paul write 1 Corinthians? [Consider (1) 1 Corinthians 16:5-8 - notice the direction in which Paul is traveling, and (2) compare Acts 19:22 with 1 Corinthians 4:17 and 16:10].
7. Presuming that Paul wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians toward the end of his 2- to 3-year stay in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) in the year AD 55, how much time had transpired from the time that Paul left Corinth until he wrote this letter? (Refer to Lesson 1) What does this say about the brethren in Corinth?

OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

The outline of Paul's letter flows from the type of contacts he had with the Corinthians. The first six chapters are written in response to the reports he heard from Chloe's household. The remaining portion of his letter deals with questions the Corinthians asked Paul in their letter to him.

SALUTATION AND GREETING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-3

- 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,
- 2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:
- 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Joining Paul in extending the greeting to the Corinthians is Sosthenes. Although it may appear that he is a co-author with Paul, the first person plural (“I”) is used throughout the book which suggests a single author is responsible for the letter. It is not uncommon in Paul’s letters for him to include others in the initial greeting. Why might Sosthenes be included in the greeting in this particular letter?

2. Paul’s description of himself highlights what two facts?
 - 1)
 - 2)Why might Paul emphasize his apostleship?

3. Just as Paul is “*called to be an apostle*” what are the Christians in Corinth “*called to be*”?

4. Using the language of Paul in verse 2, who are the “*saints*”? [Interesting note: The word “*saint*” never occurs in the singular in scripture; it is always plural.]
 - 1)
 - 2)

5. The greeting Paul extends (“*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*”) is the typical expression he uses in his letters. In your own words, what does Paul mean when he wishes “*grace*” and “*peace*” to the Corinthians from “*God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*”?

THANKSGIVING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9

- 4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,
5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance^a and all knowledge^b,
6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in^c you,
7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,
8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Notes a Gk. *logos*; NRSV, “speech”.
 b Gk. *gnosis*
 c or, NRSV “among”

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

6. As typical of his letters, Paul expresses thanksgiving *to* God and *for* the Corinthians. The reason for Paul’s thankfulness is for the gift that God has given to the Corinthians.
- a. In general, what was the “*gift*” that was given to the Corinthians? (v.4)
- b. In particular, what did God give the Corinthians? (v.5)
7. Verse 6 seems to provide the evidence of the Corinthians being enriched. How could the Corinthians know that they were enriched? (consider v.7a)
8. As recipients of God’s grace, the Corinthians were “*eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ*”.
- a. Using Paul’s language in verse 8, when would the revelation of Jesus take place?
- b. Throughout scripture, to what does the phrase “*day of the Lord*” have reference?
- c. What is the significance of Paul saying that “*God is faithful*”?

9. Many commentators have observed that the thanksgiving section of Paul's letter often foretell the contents of his letter. This observation has some merit in this letter. The first part of Paul's letter is going to explore the role of "speech" (i.e. preaching), then Paul will discuss the presumed nature of the Corinthian's "knowledge". Later in the letter, Paul takes up the use of spiritual "gifts", and he concludes the letter with a discussion of the resurrection.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-17

- 10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.
- 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."
- 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?
- 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.
- 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.
- 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom^a of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

Notes a Gk. *sophia*. The word group *sophia/sophos* ("wisdom/wise") occurs 45 times in the writings of Paul; 28 of these are in 1 Corinthians of which 26 are in chapters 1-3.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

10. Saints are those who "*call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (v.2). Paul appeals to the Corinthians "*by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*". In both instances what does the phrase mean?

11. Paul had received a report concerning the Corinthians.
 - a. What was reported to exist among the Corinthians?

 - b. What was the basis of their quarrels?

- c. Is there any indication in the text that either Paul, Apollos, or Cephas did anything to encourage or was in any way directly responsible for these divisions?
 - d. Why then did the Corinthians point these different men as their leaders?
12. What is the purpose of the rhetorical questions in v.13?
13. In responding to those who would say that they were “*of Paul*”, Paul focuses upon baptism. He notes that he did not personally baptize many, and that he was not sent to baptize, but preach the gospel. In making these statements, is Paul stating that baptism is not important? If not, then what is his point?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ In view of the problems among the Corinthians (as will become obvious as we study this letter), what significance can be attached to the fact that Paul express thanksgiving to God for them? What should be our attitude toward Christians who sin?
- ◆ How much importance should be placed upon the man who preaches? What dangers exist if we overstress who it is that preaches the gospel?
- ◆ It is easy to see how various denominations arose over undue allegiance to one man (e.g. Lutherans). Some have charged that those associated with the church of Christ are guilty of the same party-spirit evidenced by those in Corinth who said “*I am of Christ*”. Thus, they reason, to say that only those in the church of Christ are pleasing to God is to be guilty of the same divisiveness as those in Corinth. What do you think?

LESSON 4

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 - 2:5

INTRODUCTION: In arguing against the formation of parties within the church, Paul disparages the role he played in their conversion. He was simply a preacher of the gospel of Christ. This leads him into a discourse on the nature of the gospel. As he will demonstrate, the gospel originated in the wisdom of God, not of man.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25

- 18 For the message^a 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 bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."^b
- 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?
- 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached^c to save those who believe.
- 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;
- 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block^d and to the Greeks foolishness,
- 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Notes a Gk. *logos*

b Isaiah 29:14

c Not as the KJV, "foolishness of preaching". The emphasis is upon the *content* of message, not the *preaching* of the message.

d Gk. *skandalon* from which is derived the word "scandal".

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Verse 18 forms Paul's thesis as to the nature of the gospel. Paul envisions two groups of people who will have different responses to the gospel.
 - a. Using Paul's language, who are these two groups?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - b. It's significant that Paul does not divide mankind into the groups "Jews" and "Gentiles." Are there Jews and Gentiles in both groups?
 - c. What are two other expressions that Paul uses to describe those "who are being saved"?

2. Paul says that the “*message of the cross*” is considered either to be “*foolishness*” or “*the power of God*” depending upon which group you are in. Using Paul’s language, what is the message of the cross that brings about these different responses?

3. What does it mean that the “*Jews request a sign*”?

When the Jews asked Jesus for a sign, what answer did Jesus give them? (Matthew 16:1-4; Mark 8:11)

4. What does it mean that the “*Greeks seek after wisdom*”?

5. Explain, then, how “*Christ crucified*” was “*stumbling block*” to the Jews, and “*foolishness*” to the Greeks.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31

- 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise 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 the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,
- 29 that no flesh should glory^a in His presence.
- 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God; and righteousness and sanctification and redemption;
- 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."^b

- Notes*
- a NRSV, “boast”
 - b Jeremiah 9:23-24

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

6. Paul points to the experience of the Corinthians themselves to make his argument. As a group they were not wise, mighty, or noble. Why is that?

7. What are the three things that God chose?

1)

2)

3)

Now, the big question, why?

8. What does it mean to “*glory in the Lord*” (1:31)? [Read the text from which this is taken in Jeremiah 9:23-24.]

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech^a or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony^b of God.

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

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

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

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

Notes a NRSV, “lofty words”

b Other Gk. manuscripts, “mystery” (NRSV).

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

9. At least some of the Corinthians did not find Paul to be a ‘good speaker’ (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:10). Was this his “choice”, or was he just not a natural orator?

10. Paul refers back to the time he first went to Corinth. Was he fearful at that time? (cf. Acts 18:9-10)

11. What is the proper basis for our faith?

APPLICATIONS

◆ What does it mean to preach “Christ crucified”?

◆ It seems as if there are not many today who are being converted to Christ. Perhaps we can do things to make the gospel more palatable; i.e. easier for people to accept. What do you think?

◆ Should a preacher not try, even avoid, to persuade his hearers with all the communication skills he has? Where does one draw the line between being an effective communicator and presenting the gospel with “persuasive words of human wisdom”?

LESSON 5

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6 - 3:4

INTRODUCTION: Having discounted the efforts of men to know God through their wisdom, Paul explains the source of the true wisdom which he preached.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

- 2:6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.
- 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,
- 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
- 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."
- 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.
- 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.
- 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.
- 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.^b
- 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- 15 But he who is spiritual judges^c all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.
- 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?"^d But we have the mind of Christ.

Notes a Not an exact quotation of any known OT passage. Similar to Isaiah 64:4 and 65:17.

b Or, ASV "combining spiritual things with spiritual words"; NIV "expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words"; NRSV "interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual"; REB "interpreting spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit"

c NRSV, "discern"; same word as used in verse 14.

d Isaiah 40:13.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Paul says there is a wisdom which he preaches to the "mature". Who are the "mature"? All Christians, or a select group of Christians? [It may be easier to answer this question after the entire passage is studied.]

2. The New Testament often speaks of the gospel message as a “*mystery*” (2:7). [Consider Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3-5; Colossians 1:26.]
 - a. Why can the gospel be described as “*hidden*”, i.e. a “*mystery*”?
 - b. What two things are said about this “*hidden wisdom*”?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - c. Is the gospel still a mystery? Why, or why not?
3. Implied by the idea of the hidden wisdom of God, the rulers of this age did not know that they crucified the Lord of glory (compare Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17). Were the rulers excused of their act because of their ignorance?
4. Notice the process of revelation identified in this passage. Give the verse for each statement.
 - 1) God has prepared things for those that love him.
 - 2) God has revealed them through the Spirit.
 - 3) We have received the Spirit.
 - 4) We know things given to us by God.
 - 5) We speak the things taught by the Spirit.
5. Paul contrasts the “*natural*” man and the “*spiritual*” man.
 - a. Who is the “*natural*” man?
 - b. Who is the “*spiritual*” man?
6. Paul clearly states that the natural man ‘cannot’ know the things of the Spirit (2:14). Does this mean that the one can only understand if aided by the Spirit? Why, or why not?

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-4

- 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal^a, as to babes in Christ.
- 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;
- 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife^b, and divisions^c among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?
- 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal^d?

- Notes
- a NRSV, “people of the flesh”.
 - b Same word translated “contentions” in 1:11.
 - c Omitted in earlier manuscripts.
 - d NRSV, “merely human”; generally conceded that the better manuscripts have the word “men”. NRSV adds the adjective “merely” to emphasize the point (just as the NKJV does in verse 3).

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

7. Paul, in addressing the “*brethren*” at Corinth, says that he could not teach them as “*spiritual people*,” but as “*carnal*” (“men of the flesh”, “worldly”).
 - a. Is a “*carnal*” man the same as one that Paul calls a “*natural*” man in 2:14?
 - b. How can a Christian be carnal?
8. Compare Paul’s analogy to milk and solid food with that used by the Hebrew writer (Hebrews 5:11 - 6:2).
 - a. In both cases, what had the readers failed to do?
 - b. In the case of the Corinthians, what was the fundamental teaching they had failed to understand?
9. Paul focuses in on just Apollos and himself (excluding Peter and Christ). Is there any significance to this? Why Apollos?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Is there anything wrong with being a *babe in Christ*? If so, what? If not, then why is Paul faulting the Corinthians for being babes in Christ? What is our responsibility to babes in Christ?
- ◆ Our actions indicate the level of our maturity. On the basis of the context of this passage, who is a mature Christian?

LESSON 6

1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-23

INTRODUCTION: Paul is still arguing against the Corinthians' emphasis upon men. However, he shifts from explaining the nature of God's wisdom to concentrating upon the role of the men who proclaim that wisdom. By so doing, he demonstrates the incorrectness of the Corinthians in their partiality toward men.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-23

- 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers^a through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?
- 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
- 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
- 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
- 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.
- 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise^b master builder^c I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.
- 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,
- 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.
- 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.
- 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.
- 16 Do you not know that you are the temple^d of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
- 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.
- 18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.
- 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"^e;
- 20 and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."^f
- 21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:
- 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours.
- 23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Notes a NRSV, "servants".

b NRSV, "skilled" which is the proper translation for the immediate context, but to catch Paul's play on words the translation "wise" is to be preferred.

- c* Gk. *architekton* refers not primarily to the builder (contractor), but to the architect/engineer (JB “architect”), who plans and directs the work; hence the translation “master builder”.
- d* Gk. *naos*. “...refers to the actual sanctuary, the place of the deity’s dwelling, in contrast to the word *hieron*, which referred to the temple precincts as well as to the sanctuary” [Fee, p.146].
- e* Job 5:13
- f* Psalms 94:11

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. To illustrate the roles that he and Apollos had as servants of the gospel, Paul develops two analogies. What are they?
 - 1)
 - 2)
2. In his agricultural analogy, Paul says that he “*planted*” and that Apollos “*watered*”.
 - a. In what way is this a good analogy for the role each played in teaching the Corinthians?
 - b. Does Paul imply that one of these roles is superior to the other?
 - c. On whose work is the emphasis placed in this analogy?
3. In his building analogy, Paul says that he “*laid the foundation*” and that another “*builds on it.*”
 - a. What is the foundation that Paul laid? What does this mean?
 - b. In essence, Paul says that there are two groups of structures that can be built. How will one know what type of structure he built?
 - c. Depending upon whether one’s work “*endures*” or “*is burned*”, the builder will either “*receive a reward*” or “*suffer loss*”. What is the “*reward*” or the “*loss*” that is under consideration?
 - d. What is the emphasis in this analogy as compared to the previous analogy?

4. In verse 16, Paul extends his analogy of the building to describe the type of building that Christians comprise.
 - a. What type of building does Paul use to describe the church?
 - b. What three things about a “temple” are alluded to that makes it an appropriate metaphor for Paul to use to make his point?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
5. In Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul again uses the analogy of a temple to describe the church. What differences are there between the analogy in Ephesians 2 with that given in this text?
6. Verse 21 gives the conclusion to Paul’s argument: *“Therefore, let no one boast in men.”* He follows this statement with a three-tier logical relationship: *“For all things are yours ... And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.”*
 - a. Well then, whose are *“all things”*?
 - b. How does this relationship bolster Paul’s argument that *“no one boast in men”*?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Paul stresses that he and Apollos did *“as the Lord gave to each one”* (3:5), and that he labored *“according to the grace of God which was given to [him]”* (3:10). Think about these statements and the implications they hold, not only for the Corinthians, but also for us.

INTRODUCTION: With this section, Paul concludes his arguments against the Corinthian's desire to elevate certain men over others. Based on what Paul writes, there appears to have been a contingent of Corinthians who held Paul in low esteem. So Paul offers a defense of his apostleship.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-21

- 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants^a of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
- 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful^b.
- 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
- 4 For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.
- 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels^c of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.
- 6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written^d, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.
- 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?
- 8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us; and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!
- 9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.
- 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!
- 11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.
- 12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;
- 13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.
- 14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.
- 15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.
- 16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

- 17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.
- 18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.
- 19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.
- 20 For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.
- 21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

- Notes*
- a* Gk. *hyperetas* (not *diakonois* as in 3:5-9).
 - b* NRSV, “trustworthy”.
 - c* NRSV, “purposes”
 - d* NRSV, “so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, ‘Nothing beyond what is written’ ”.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. In what two roles did Paul want to be seen by others?

1)

2)

2. What is the primary duty of a “*steward*”?

Considering the context of the first three chapters, what is *not* required of a steward?

3. What does verse 3 imply about the actions of at least some Corinthians?

4. What two things will take place when the Lord comes? (or, is it two ways of saying the same thing?)

1)

2)

What does this have to do with the point Paul is making?

5. What other reason does Paul offer as to why one is not to boast? (4:7)
6. Is Paul being sarcastic in verse 8-10, or is he stating the truth about the Corinthians?
7. Paul asks the Corinthians to imitate him (4:16).
 - a. In particular, what does Paul want the Corinthians to imitate?
 - b. Why does Paul put himself up as the role model instead of someone else?
8. What was the reason Paul sent Timothy to Corinth?
9. Why would some become “*puffed up*” (i.e., “arrogant”) about Paul not going to Corinth?
10. What would determine whether Paul would come “*with a rod*” or “*in love and a spirit of gentleness*”?
11. Summarize the various arguments that Paul has made in the first four chapters against the Corinthian’s elevation of one man above another.

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ In these early chapters, Paul paints a picture of how those who would serve the church should conduct themselves. What lessons can be learned?

LESSON 8

1 CORINTHIANS 5

INTRODUCTION: Arrogance in one matter could imply arrogance in another. So it was with the Corinthians. In this chapter Paul deals with a case of sexual immorality reported to him (presumably by Chloe's people).

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

- 5:1 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles; that a man has his father's wife!
- 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.
- 3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.
- 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ^a, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ^b,
- 5 deliver^c such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
- 6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
- 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover^d, was sacrificed for us.
- 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.
- 9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.
- 10 Yet I certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.
- 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person.
- 12 For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?
- 13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."^e

Notes a Verses 3-5 form one sentence in the Greek. The phrase "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" can have referenced to:

- 1) Paul's authority to judge the man; NRSV, "...I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus, you..."
- 2) The assembling of the Corinthians; NIV, "When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus..."
- 3) The delivering of the man to Satan; NKJV.

- b* The phrase “with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ” could either refer to:
 - 1) The assembling; NIV, “...and the power of the Lord Jesus is present”
 - 2) The delivering of the man to Satan; REB, “through the power of the Lord Jesus you are to...”
- c* The subject of the verb “to deliver” can be:
 - 1) Paul; NASV, “I have decided to deliver...”
 - 2) the Corinthians; NRSV, “you are to hand...”
 - 3) both Paul and the Corinthians.
- d* NRSV, “paschal lamb”.
- e* Deuteronomy 13:5; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; 24:7. In all but the first of these references, death was the means of putting away the evil person.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Paul is dealing with two sins in this chapter. What are they?

1) (Verse 1)

2) (Verse 2)

Which is the focus of Paul’s comments?

2. The Corinthians “puffed up” attitude (v.2, 6) could mean either:

- 1) the Corinthians were somehow “proud” of the man who took his father’s wife (i.e. step-mother), or
- 2) that the Corinthians’ arrogance allowed them to overlook the sin.

In either case, the Corinthians must have conceived of the liberty they had in Christ to justify the action of the man. Such an attitude is seen in 1 Corinthians 6:12ff and Romans 6:1ff. Any preference for either of these two views?

3. Paul’s condemnation is directed at the man and not the woman (i.e. step-mother/wife). Why doesn’t Paul condemn the woman?

4. Paul had already pass judgment on the man and had determined the sentence to be passed. The particular expressions that Paul uses are subject to differing interpretations as seen in *Notes a, b, and c* above. Which interpretation do you believe is best for each phrase?

Note a:

Note b:

Note c:

5. The result of the sentence would be for “*the destruction of the flesh*” (v.5). Many commentators believe this either refers to suffering the man would have to endure, or that the man must actually die.
 - a. What arguments could be made for or against this view?

 - b. Any alternate way of interpreting this expression?

6. Paul makes an analogy between the Jewish observance of the Passover and the Christians following of Christ.
 - a. What did the Jews have to purge from their houses during the Passover feast?

What is the leaven that Christians must purge?

 - b. To what is Christ compared?

 - c. What is Paul’s point?

7. Paul had previously written to them about the need to avoid those who were immoral.
 - a. Was Paul primarily concerned about the immorality in the world or the immorality in the church? Why?

 - b. Does this discussion help explain what it means in verse 5 to “*deliver to Satan*”?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ In any case involving sin within the church, what is the dual purpose of any discipline that is to take place?

- ◆ The particular sin under consideration in this chapter was especially grievous. So much so that it was not even considered appropriate by the pagans. Is it only for such terrible sins that discipline is to take place? Why, or why not?

LESSON 9

1 CORINTHIANS 6

INTRODUCTION: In chapter 5, Paul was concerned over the Corinthians not exercising judgment over those who sinned within their midst. In a similar vein, Paul is now concerned that they would turn over their disputes to a secular judge. He then returns to the problem of sexual immorality.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11

- 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?
- 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy^a to judge the smallest matters^b?
- 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?
- 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed^c by the church to judge?^d
- 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?
- 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!
- 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure^e for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let *yourselves* be cheated?
- 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your* brethren!
- 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous^f will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,
- 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.
- 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- Notes
- a NRSV, “incompetent”
 - b Gk. *kriterion* possibly means “a court of justice” (Bruce, p.60), hence NASV, “smallest law courts”.
 - c NRSV, “have no standing”
 - d This sentence can be taken as a question as here in the NKJV (NRSV sim.), or as a statement “...life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church (KJV, NIV sim.).
 - e NRSV, “defeat”
 - f NRSV, “wrongdoers”. Same word used in verse 1 and verse 8 (verb form).

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. In verse 1, Paul speaks of going to court against “another”. Does he mean against anyone, or against a “brother” (cf. RSV)?

2. Paul sees two wrongs that the Corinthians are committing.
 - a. What is the wrong that Paul addresses in verses 1-6?
What is the solution to this wrong?
 - b. What is the wrong that Paul addresses in verses 6-8?
What is the solution to this wrong?
3. Paul argues from the “greater” to the “lesser”.
 - a. Christians are to exercise judgment in what two realms?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - b. If that is the case, then what should Christians be competent to do?
4. Carefully consider verse 4 in the light of *Note d* above.
 - a. Translated as a question (“do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?”), who is the appointed judge?
 - b. Translated as a statement (“set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.”), who is the judge?
 - c. Which do you prefer?
5. The Corinthians should have understood that their former practices were not acceptable now that they “were washed, ...were sanctified, ...were justified” [just like in chapter 5 where Paul made the point that there was to be no leaven among them now that the lamb has been slain].
 - a. What is alluded to when Paul says they “were washed”? Why?
 - b. In this context, what is significance of saying that the Corinthians “were sanctified”?
 - c. Similarly, what is the intended impact of saying that the Corinthians “were justified”?

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

- 12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful^a. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.
- 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.
- 14 And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.
- 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not!
- 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."^b
- 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.
- 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.
- 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
- 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.^c

Notes a KJV, "expedient"

b Genesis 2:24

c The phrase "and in your spirit, which are God's" is omitted in earlier manuscripts.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. It is generally believed that Paul is quoting the Corinthians (either directly, or indirectly) when he says "All things are lawful" (v.12) and "Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods" (v.13).
 - a. In the first place, does Paul say that these statements are *absolutely untrue*?

Well, then, are they *absolutely true*?
 - b. What is the point of the Corinthians statement "foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods"?
2. It appears that the Corinthians took the statement "all things are lawful" as an absolute, and just like they could say that "foods [are] for the stomach", they would argue the corollary that "fornication is for the body, and the body for fornication".

- a. Pretend you are a Corinthian. What argument would you advance to justify fornication?
 - b. What three related arguments does Paul make against this belief?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
3. Paul says that “every sin that a man does is outside the body”, except for sexual immorality which is “against his own body.”
- a. Why would Paul say that this sin, and this sin alone, is a sin against the body?
 - b. An alternate way of interpreting the statement in verse 18, is that Paul is quoting the Corinthians in saying “every sin that a man does is outside the body”, and that Paul points out the limitation of their statement by giving *one* example of a sin against the body. Thus, there may be other sins against the body. What do you think of this interpretation?
4. As noted in *Note c* above, the last phrase of verse 20 in the NKJV (“and in your spirit, which are God’s”) is not in any of the early Greek manuscripts. Presuming that this statement is not original, does this addition help clarify or confuse the argument that Paul is making?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Based on this passage, is it wrong for Christians to take other Christians to court for *any* reason? How about Christians taking unbelievers to court?
- ◆ Can Paul’s argument in this passage about sexual immorality being “against the body” be extended to other acts such as drunkenness, gluttony, or smoking?

CHURCH DISCIPLINE: New Testament References

Matthew 18:15-17

Situation: “If your brother sins against you...”

Action Required: First, “tell him his fault between you and him alone”
Second, “take with you one or two more...”
Third, “tell it to the church”
Fourth, “let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector”

Romans 16:17-18

Situation: Some “who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned.”

Action Required: 1. “note [them]”
2. “avoid them”

Reason: 1. They “do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.”
2. They “deceive the hearts of the simple.”

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Situation: 1. “There is sexual immorality among you...that a man has his father’s wife!” (v.1)
2. “Anyone named a brother, who is a fornicator, ...covetous, ...idolater, ...reviler, ...drunkard, ...extortioner” (v.11)

Action Required: 1. “deliver such a one to Satan”
2. “not to keep company”
3. “not even to eat with such a person”
4. “put away from yourselves that wicked person”

Reason: 1. “for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved”
2. “a little leaven leavens the whole lump”

Galatians 6:1-2

Situation: “If a man is overtaken in any trespass...”

Action Required: “restore such a one”

Attitude: “in a spirit of gentleness”

Reason: “considering yourself lest you also be tempted”

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

- Situation:*
1. Any “brother who walked disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”
 2. “Some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.”

- Action Required:*
1. “that you withdraw...”
 2. “note that person”
 3. “do not keep company with him”
 4. “admonish him”

Reason: “that he may be ashamed”

Attitude: “do not count him as an enemy, but ... as a brother”

Titus 3:10,11

Situation: “a divisive man”

Action Required: “Reject...after the first and second admonition”

Reason: “knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned”

Summary

- Situation:*
1. Personal, private sin.
 2. False doctrine taught.
 3. Immoral behavior.
 4. Responsibilities neglected.
 5. Factious actions.
- Hence, *any* sin committed needs to be disciplined.

Action Required: First, express disapproval and encourage repentance.
Second, publicly note the individual.
Third, withdraw, avoid, have no company, etc.

- Reason:*
1. To restore the erring brother or sister.
 2. To keep the church pure.

- Attitude:*
1. Must remember that he is our brother.
 2. In a spirit of gentleness.
 3. Must remember that we may also sin and need the encouragement and discipline of our brethren.

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Titus 3:10,11

Situation: “a divisive man”

Action Required: “Reject...after the first and second admonition”

Reason: “knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned”

Summary

Situation: 1. Personal, private sin.
2. False doctrine taught.
3. Immoral behavior.
4. Responsibilities neglected.
5. Factious actions.
Hence, *any* sin committed needs to be disciplined.

Action Required: First, express disapproval and encourage repentance.
Second, publicly note the individual.
Third, withdraw, avoid, have no company, etc.

Reason: 1. To restore the erring brother or sister.
2. To keep the church pure.

Attitude: 1. Must remember that he is our brother.
2. In a spirit of gentleness.
3. Must remember that we may also sin and need the encouragement and discipline of our brethren.

LESSON 10

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-16

INTRODUCTION: With this chapter, Paul begins to respond to a letter he received from the Corinthians. Presumably, they were seeking his advice to questions which arose. Unfortunately, we do not have a record of the precise questions; we can only surmise what the questions are based on the answers that Paul gives. The first series of questions involves the marriage relationship.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-16

- 7:1 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.
- 2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.
- 3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.
- 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*.
- 5 Do not deprive^a one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting^b and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
- 6 But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.
- 7 For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.
- 8 But I say to the unmarried^c and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;
- 9 but if they cannot exercise self-control^d, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*.
- 10 Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.
- 11 But even if she does depart^e, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.
- 12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.
- 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.
- 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.
- 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*. But God has called us to peace.
- 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?

Notes a Perhaps should be translated "Stop depriving" (NASV) which suggests that there were Corinthian mates who were practicing abstinence.

b "Fasting" is omitted in earlier Greek manuscripts (also Mark 9:29; Acts 10:30). Inclusion of "fasting" in later manuscripts shows the increasing emphasis placed on asceticism.

- c* The noun (Gk. *agamois*) is masculine and Fee argues that the reference is to “widowers”. Koine Greek did not have a word for “widower” and the word *agamois* was used to refer to widowers.
- d* Instead of “if they cannot exercise self-control” the verb should be translated as “if they are not practicing self-control” (NRSV, cf. ASV), thus implying that some were not exercising self-control.
- e* Some commentators would translate “if she has already separated herself” or “if she is left”. However, all major translations give the same rendering as the NKJV.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

The entire chapter is integrally connected; thus, understanding this section of the chapter may require an understanding of the remaining portion of the chapter. In particular, in verse 24, Paul states a general principle: “let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called”. Also, in verse 26, Paul refers to “the present distress”. Both the principle and the current circumstances may influence Paul’s comments.

1. How one understands the statement in verse 1b (“It is good for a man not to touch a woman”) will determine to a large extent how one views several of the instructions in this passage. This statement can be understood as any of the following:
 - 1) This is Paul’s statement. Paul was stating the general position that it is better for men (and women) to abstain from sexual contact.
 - 2) This is Paul’s statement. Paul, in response to a question concerning the legitimacy of celibacy, is simply stating that celibacy is acceptable, but not necessarily preferable.
 - 3) This is the Corinthian position that Paul restates. Some Corinthians believed (or questioned) that abstinence was morally superior. Paul, although conceding his preference for celibacy, argues that abstinence is not to take place among the married.

Carefully read the first seven verses.

- a. What are the pro’s and con’s of each view?
 - 1) Pro’s
Cons’
 - 2) Pro’s
Con’s
 - 3) Pro’s
Con’s
 - b. Which view do you think is correct?
2. What is Paul saying by way of “concession” and not as a “commandment” (v.6)?
 3. Paul gives instructions (commandments) to “the unmarried and widows” (v.8-9), to “the married” (v.10-11), and to “the rest” (v.12-16).

- a. Who are “the rest” as opposed to “the married”?
 - b. Briefly summarize his instructions in each case.
 - 1) “Unmarried and widows”
[Note the contrast with 1 Timothy 5:14. Why the difference?]
 - 2) “The married”
 - 3) “The rest”
 - c. Does the principle “let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called” (v.24) apply in each of these cases?
4. The commandments to the married were “not [Paul’s], but the Lord[‘s]”, but the commandments to the rest were “[Paul’s] and not the Lord[‘s]”.
 - a. Why the difference?
 - b. Does that mean that Paul is giving his opinion with regard to the rest? (cf. 7:25)
 5. Is the “exception” given in verse 11 to the married a contradiction to Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage?
 6. The phrase “not under bondage” in verse 15 has been understood both as:
 - 1) The Christian is not compelled to maintain the marriage if the unbeliever departs.
 - 2) The marriage bond is broken in this case, therefore the Christian is free to remarry.Weigh the pro’s and con’s of each position. Which do you think is correct?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Since Paul instructs the Christian within a “mixed” marriage (i.e., married to a non-Christian) to not leave the non-Christian, does that imply that Christians can marry non-Christians with God’s approval?

LESSON 11

1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-40

INTRODUCTION: Paul's discussion of marriage is arranged according to one's marital status. He has already discussed the unmarried and widows (7:8-9), the Christian married couple (7:10-11), and the "mixed" married couple (7:12-16). Paul now states a general principle (7:17-24) which presumably is the basis of his entire discussion. He then speaks about "virgins" (7:25-28) and widows again (7:39-40). In the midst of this section, he alludes to a "present distress" which certainly influences some his judgments in these matters although the exact extent is uncertain.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-40

- 17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.
- 18 Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised.
- 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God *is what matters*.
- 20 Let each one remain in the same calling^a in which he was called.
- 21 Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it*^b.
- 22 For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ's slave.
- 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.
- 24 Brethren, let each one remain with God in that *state* in which he was called.
- 25 Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment^c as one whom the Lord in His mercy *has made* trustworthy^d.
- 26 I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress; that *it is* good for a man to remain as he is:
- 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.
- 28 But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.
- 29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none,
- 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess,
- 31 and those who use this world as not misusing^e *it*. For the form of this world is passing away.
- 32 But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord; how he may please the Lord.
- 33 But he who is married cares about the things of the world; how he may please *his* wife.
- 34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin^f. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both

- in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world; how she may please *her* husband.
- 35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.
- 36 But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth^g, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry.
- 37 Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well.
- 38 So then he who gives *her* in marriage does well, but he who does not give *her* in marriage does better.
- 39 A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies^h, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.
- 40 But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment; and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

- Notes*
- a* NRSV, “condition”.
 - b* For two opposite interpretations, RSV “avail yourself of the opportunity”; NRSV “make use of your present condition now more than ever”.
 - c* NRSV, “opinion”. Same word used in 1:10; 2 Corinthians 8:10.
 - d* NRSV, “as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy”.
 - e* Literally “as not using it to the full” (ASV), possibly in the sense of not being engrossed or absorbed by the world.
 - f* Most translations punctuate v. 33-34 as “...how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and virgin are anxious about...”
 - g* The object of this clause (“if she is past the flower of her youth”) is ambiguous in Greek. The NKJV has it relating to the virgin; it could, however, relate to the man. If so, then it would be translated as “if his passions are strong” (cf. NRSV).
 - h* Literally “falls asleep”; a euphemism for death frequently used by Paul.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. The principle that Paul states is: “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.” He first directly applies this principle to the circumcised/uncircumcised and the freedman/slave.
 - a. To what two other groups does Paul directly apply this principle?
 - 1) (v.25ff)
 - 2) (v.39-40)
 - b. Is this an absolute principle, i.e., one that must be followed under all circumstances?
 - c. Does Paul teach this principle only because of the “present distress” (v.26)? Or is this a valid principle for all time?

- d. Is Paul using this principle in his responses earlier in the chapter? In other words, when Paul tells the married not to deprive one another, or when he tells the unmarried and widows to remain unmarried, or for the married not to depart from their mates, is Paul basing these commands on this principle?

2. Consider *Note b* above with regard to the proper interpretation of verse 21 (“but if you can be made free, rather use it.”) Most translations lean in the direction of Paul granting permission to slaves to accept an offer of freedom. Although there is a long list of scholars who have taken the position of the NRSV that Paul is telling slaves to decline freedom. What are the pros and cons of each position?

3. Based on the type of comments Paul is making in this chapter, what sort of distress was the “present distress” to which Paul alludes?

4. In verse 25, Paul addresses a particular question put to him by the Corinthians regarding “virgins” (“Now concerning...”). The term “virgin” is sometimes used to refer to young men, but almost always, and almost certainly in this context, refers to young women without sexual experience. Even so, there are still two major ways of understanding who this term is specifically referring to. The first view holds the term as referring to “virgin daughters”, thus the “man” referred to in verse 36 would be the virgin’s father (cf. ASV where the noun “daughter” is added in verses 36-38). The second view understands the term as referring to a betrothed young woman, i.e. a fiancée, thus the “man” is the husband to be (cf. NRSV). Read the passages in light of both views. Which do you think makes the most sense?

5. Paul grants the right for widows to remarry “only in the Lord” (v.39). This phrase has been understood to mean that (1) she must marry a Christian, or (2) “she must remember that she is a member of Christ’s body; and not forget her Christian duties and responsibilities” (Lightfoot). Which of these two views do you think is Paul’s meaning?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Is there any valid reason why Paul’s teaching to the widows in v.39 would or would not also apply to any unmarried person seeking marriage?

INTRODUCTION: Paul turns to another question apparently asked of him by the Corinthians. The question has to do with eating of meats offered to idols. Behind the question it appears that some Corinthians were justifying their eating of meats on the basis of their superior understanding of spiritual things. Paul grants that they properly understood the meaninglessness of idols, however, they did not understand what love required of them toward their “less knowledgeable” brethren.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13

- 8:1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge^a. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies^b.
- 2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.
- 3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him^c.
- 4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world^d, and that *there is* no other God but one.
- 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),
- 6 yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.
- 7 However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol^e, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.
- 8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.
- 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.
- 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?
- 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?
- 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.
- 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

- Notes
- a Gk. *gnosis*
 - b NRSV “builds up.”
 - c Fee suggests an alternate reading based on two early manuscripts which omits the references to God, thus, these texts read: “*but if anyone loves, this one truly knows*”.
 - d NRSV “...no idol in the world really exists”
 - e Earlier manuscripts read “being accustomed to” (Gk. *sunetheia*) instead of “with consciousness” (Gk. *suneidesei*), hence, NRSV “Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now”. The similar spelling suggests that the reading of the later manuscripts resulted from a copyist error.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. The “things offered to idols” was the excess, unused portions of the sacrifice that were sold in the marketplace. A portion of the offering was burned up in the sacrifice, a portion was given to the idol’s priests and to the worshippers. Sacrifices were not only offered during religious acts, but also at weddings, holidays, public celebrations, etc.
 - a. Assuming that Paul is responding to a question posed to him by the Corinthians, what do you think the question was?
 - b. Do you think the question was asked by those who were “more” knowledgeable or the “less” knowledgeable?
 - c. Do you think the question was raised by the Gentile Christians or the Jewish Christians?
2. Again, the expression “We know that we all have knowledge” could either directly or indirectly be attributable to the Corinthians.
 - a. Although Paul does not disagree with this statement, what does he have to say about knowledge?
 - b. Notice the contrast: Knowledge “puffs up”, but love “builds up”. What picture is Paul painting for us with these words?
3. Verse 3 presents a grammatical difficulty. Literally, the verse reads “but if any man loveth God, the same is known by him” (ASV). What is uncertain is to whom “the same” and “him” refers. Either: (1) “the same” = God / “him” = the one that loves God (Goodspeed), or (2) “the same” = the one that loves God / “him” = God (NKJV, NRSV, etc.)
 - a. Are both interpretations consistent with Biblical truths? Which do you think is preferable?
 - b. But with either interpretation, it is hard to see how verse 3 relates to verse 2, or, for that matter, with what follows. Possibly, the Corinthians were seeking to come to God through their “knowledge”, but Paul says that God knows (or is known by) the one who God. On the other hand, does the alternate reading in *Note c* above make better sense?
4. What two things does the man with knowledge know?
 - 1)
 - 2)

5. What is the relationship between “all things” and God and Christ, respectively? (v.6) Is this consistent with other Biblical statements?
6. What is the danger of the one who does not understand that idols are nothing in seeing the one who has that understanding eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols?

Thus, what responsibility does the one with knowledge have?

7. How is verse 8 the key to this chapter?
8. What three consequences result from the example of the “knowledgeable” man who acts without love for his brethren? (v.11-12)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

How does the knowledgeable man “sin against Christ”?

9. The KJV translates the word “stumble” (v.13) with the phrase “to offend”. Is this a good translation? Consider the different meanings of the word “offend”.
10. The principles of this chapter are also discussed by Paul in Romans 14-15.
 - a. Is the context the same or different (i.e., is Paul concerned with things offered to idols in Romans)?
 - b. In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul contrasts those who “have knowledge” with those who do “not have knowledge”. What corresponding terms does Paul use in Romans to make his contrasts?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Precisely state the principle of this chapter.
- ◆ What are areas of application where this principle would apply today?
- ◆ Equally important, what are areas in which it does not apply?

INTRODUCTION: In chapter 8, Paul said that he would forego his right to eat meat sacrificed to idols if it caused a brother to stumble. In this chapter, Paul argues for the right to be financially supported by the brethren for his work among them. However, he did not exercised that right “for the gospel’s sake.”

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-27

- 9:1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?
- 2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.
- 3 My defense to those who examine me is this:
- 4 Do we have no right^a to eat and drink?
- 5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?
- 6 Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working?
- 7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?
- 8 Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also?
- 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain."^b Is it oxen God is concerned about?
- 10 Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.
- 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things?
- 12 If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.
- 13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings* of the altar?
- 14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.
- 15 But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.
- 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!
- 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.
- 18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

- 19 For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;
- 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law^c, that I might win those *who are* under the law;
- 21 to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law;
- 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.
- 23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*.
- 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.
- 25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate^d in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown^e, but we *for* an imperishable crown^e.
- 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.
- 27 But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

- Notes
- a Gk. *exousia* (power, authority)
 - b Deuteronomy 25:4
 - c Early manuscripts include “(though I myself am not under law)”, NRSV.
 - d NRSV “exercises self-control”.
 - e NRSV “wreath”

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. This chapter is filled with rhetorical questions. What does that indicate about the nature of Paul's argument?
2. What two things demonstrated that Paul was an apostle?
 - 1)
 - 2)
3. In the course of his argument, Paul refers to Cephas (Peter) and Barnabas. Paul earlier mentioned Peter in his letter (1:12; 3:22), but this is the first time Barnabas is named.
 - a. Although we have no record of either having visited Corinth, what is suggested by the way Paul mentions them?
 - b. Does the wording of Paul's argument imply that Barnabas was an apostle? Was he? (cf. Acts 14:4, 14)

LESSON 14

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1 - 11:1

INTRODUCTION: At the end of chapter 9, Paul emphasized the importance of disciplining oneself. He now illustrates this necessity by pointing to the example of those Israelites who, although they were very blessed, nevertheless sinned. Using this as a stepping stone, Paul returns to his discussion of the propriety of eating those things sacrificed to idols.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1 - 11:1

- 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,
2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,
3 all ate the same spiritual food,
4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.
5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.
6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.
7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."^a
8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;
9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;
10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.
11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.
13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.
14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.
15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.
16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?
17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.
18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?
19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?
20 Rather, 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 the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table^b and of the table of demons.
- 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?
- 23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.
- 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.
- 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;
- 26 for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."^c
- 27 If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.
- 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."^d
- 29 "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?
- 30 But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?
- 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,
- 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.
- 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

- Notes*
- a* Exodus 32:6
 - b* Literally, "table of the Lord" (NRSV)
 - c* Psalms 24:1
 - d* The repetition of Psalms 24:1 is omitted in earlier manuscripts.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. In the first four verses of this section, Paul uses the term "all" five times.
 - a. To whom does the word "all" refer?
 - b. What five spiritual blessings did "all" receive?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
 - 5)
 - c. Yet, what happened to "most of them".

2. The experiences of the Israelites serve as examples to the Corinthians (and to us!) that we should not “lust after evil things as they also lusted”. Paul lists four specific examples where the Israelites sinned. List the sin and summarize the Old Testament account to which Paul refers.

<u>ISRAELITE SIN</u>	<u>OLD TESTAMENT EVENT</u>
1) (v.7)	
2) (v.8)	
3) (v.9)	
4) (v.10)	

Thus, what conclusion did Paul draw from these examples? (v.12)

3. In verse 13, Paul states two fundamental truths about temptations; the second of which has two true implications. What are these truths?
- 1)
 - 2)
 - a)
 - b)
4. In verse 14, Paul returns to the question of eating that which was offered to idols. Paul considers three situations where that which was offered to idols was eaten. List each situation along with Paul’s instruction as to what a Christian was to do in each case.

<u>SITUATION</u>	<u>PAUL’S INSTRUCTION</u>
1)	
2)	
3)	

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Paul repeats the admonition “all things are lawful, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify” (10:23) which he first stated in 6:12. How does this principle tie all the teaching in chapters 6 through 10 together? What applications can we make of this principle today?

LESSON 15

1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

INTRODUCTION: Paul changes topics in chapter 11, but since he does not use the phrase “Now concerning...” it may be that these topics were not raised in the letter from the Corinthians. Rather, Paul may have heard about the Corinthians practice in these matters from others.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

- 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you.
- 3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman^a *is* man^b, and the head of Christ *is* God.
- 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head.
- 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.
- 6 For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.
- 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.
- 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man.
- 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.
- 10 For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of authority* on *her* head, because of the angels.
- 11 Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.
- 12 For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God.
- 13 Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?
- 14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?
- 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering.
- 16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God.

Notes a NRSV, “wife”. The same Greek word can be translated *woman* or *wife*.
 b NRSV, “husband”. The same Greek word can be translated *man* or *husband*.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

The following views on this passage are at least some of those expressed:

1. The instructions given concerning the covering are a matter of divine law and are applicable to all men and women in all times and places.

2. The instructions given were based on the customary sense of modesty that existed then and is only applicable to cultures that have the same customs.
 3. The instructions given were for the purpose of regulating the use of spiritual gifts. Since spiritual gifts have ceased, then these regulations have ceased.
 4. A combination of views 2 and 3. The instructions were given because of custom, but the need for the instruction arose when women with spiritual gifts thought that their possession of gifts gave them permission to forego custom.
 5. The covering in this passage is the person's hair. Thus, men are to have short hair and women long hair. This view can be combined with any of the above. [A variation of this says that the source of shame was when women let their hair down.]
1. Paul praises the Corinthians for keeping the traditions that he delivered to them. The term "tradition" refers to things taught (i.e. doctrine) and not simply man-devised practices (compare 2 Thessalonians 2:15). A tradition is "delivered" and then "received". Note the use of these terms in 11:23. In that case, the tradition originated from the Lord. Similar language will be used later in 15:1.

It is uncertain to what particular tradition Paul is referring when he praises them. Since in 11:17, Paul discusses a matter for which he cannot praise them, it may be that the matter discussed in 11:2-16 is the subject of his praise. However, it seems that even with regard to the covering some in Corinth were practicing that which Paul could not condone. Thus, it may be that he simply does not discuss the traditions they were properly keeping. What do you think?

2. Paul begins his discussion by identifying the proper relationship of God, Christ, man, and woman. He uses the word "head" to signify these relationships (God is the "head" of Christ, etc.). It is debated whether the word "head" carries the meaning of "authority/ruler" or has the sense of "source/origin" (e.g. as we speak of the "head" of a river). Those who think the latter point to verse 8: "For man is not from woman, but woman from the man" which does clearly refer back to creation when the woman was formed from the rib of man; hence, man is the "source or origin" of woman. But,
 - a. Does verse 8 give the interpretation of what Paul says in verse 3 or is it given to support Paul statement in verse 3? (Understand the difference?)
 - b. How does Paul use "head" as a metaphor in Ephesians (1:22; 4:15; 5:23) or Colossians (1:18; 2:10; 2:19)? [Being consistent, those who argue that "head" means

“source/origin” in 1 Corinthians 11 often argue that it has the same meaning in these passages and point to Colossians 2:19 in particular.]

- c. The only other use of “head” as a metaphor in the New Testament is in those passages which quote Psalm 118:22: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone”. Literally, the text says “the head of the corner” (KJV) instead of “chief cornerstone”. Obviously, the sense of “source/origin” is not intended here, but rather in the sense of “authority/ruler”.
3. Verses 4 and 5 addresses “Every man praying or prophesying...” and “Every woman who prays or prophesies...”
 - a. Does the man or woman under consideration both pray *and* prophesy, or is the passage addressing men and women who either pray *or* prophesy?
 - b. Prophesying is inspired speech. Praying possibly can be an inspired utterance (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:14-15), but not necessarily. Does it make any difference to an understanding of this passage whether the prayer is inspired or not?
 - c. Is the head that is dishonored in these verses, the person’s own head or their metaphorical head?
 - d. Is this referring to public or private action? If public, does this exclude, include or exclusive to the worship assembly?
 4. Paul argues both that the man should not wear a covering and that the woman should. But considering the entire passage, where was the problem (or potential problem) more likely? In other words, does Paul’s comments seem to be directed more to the men or to the women?

5. In verses 5-10, Paul gives four reasons (by my reckoning) why it is improper for a woman to pray or prophesy with her head not covered. List them.
 - 1) Verse 5, 6 -
 - 2) Verse 7,8 -
 - 3) Verse 9 -
 - 4) Verse 10 -
6. Verses 11-12 seem to be parenthetical to the main thought of the passage, but it presents a great truth. The thrust of this passage is to show the distinction between men and women. But these verses show their similarity. Men and women are both interdependent in the Lord and both are from God. In particular, just as the woman originated from the man (which is one of the reasons why a woman should wear a covering), all men now originate from women. Thus, “there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). So, if this be the case, could the Corinthian women remove (or not put on) the covering when praying or prophesying?
7. Paul appeals to the Corinthians’ own sense of modesty: “Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?” (11:13). [Any significance that Paul uses prayer and not prophecy in this appeal?] Does this passage support the view that head covering among women was a current practice? Why, or why not?
8. Paul uses one other illustration to make his case: the length of hair. His appeal to “nature” is an appeal to their custom, not something inherently true about men and women. Some have suggested that hair is the covering to which Paul is referring throughout this entire passage. In other words, a woman with long hair has her head covered. Any arguments for or against this view? (Consider especially verses 5 and 6.)

After studying this passage, summarize the pro’s and con’s of any of the five views listed at the beginning.

INTRODUCTION: Paul is again required to address the divisions among the Corinthians. Although the source of the divisions discussed in chapters 1-4 was the party-spirit, the divisions now are the result of class distinctions; the rich were discriminating against the poor. Ironically, this was occurring in partaking of the Lord's Supper which should have been a time of mutual edification.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

- 17 Now in giving these instructions^a I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.
- 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.
- 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.
- 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's^b Supper.
- 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk.
- 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*.
- 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread;
- 24 and when He had given thanks^c, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken^d for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
- 25 In the same manner He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."
- 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.
- 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
- 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.
- 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner^e eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's^e body.
- 30 For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep^f.
- 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.
- 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.
- 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.
- 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Notes a NRSV, "Now in the following instructions..." The NRSV rendering is not the natural translation of the Greek. The instructions referred to are the *previous* (v.2-16) instructions, not those

following. However, a transition is clearly being made. Perhaps the rendering of the REV is best: “In giving you these instructions I come to something I cannot commend...”

- b* This is one of only two places the adjective “Lord’s” is used in the NT; the other is in Revelation 1:10 (“Lord’s day”).
- c* “Given thanks” is the translation of the Gk. *eucharistesas* from which is derived our word Eucharist.
- d* “Broken” is omitted in early manuscripts.
- e* Earlier manuscripts omit “in an unworthy manner” and “Lord’s”.
- f* NRSV, “and some have died.”

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. When the Corinthians assembled (“come together”) they did “more harm than good” (NIV).
 - a. In general, what was their problem? (v.18)
 - b. In particular, what were they divided over? (v.21)
 - c. How did Paul learn of these divisions?
2. Paul deduces that when the Corinthians came together “it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper”. This phrase is variously translated.
 - a. For each of the following translations, interpret the emphasis given by the translation:
 - 1) “it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper” (NKJV)
 - 2) “it is not really to eat the Lord’s supper” (NRSV)
 - 3) “it is not possible to eat the Lord’s supper” (ASV)
 - 4) “it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat” (REV)
 - b. Note that some translations capitalize “Supper” and others use the lowercase “supper”. Which is to be preferred? [Capitalization is a feature of English, not Greek.]
3. The precise problem among the Corinthians is described in v.21: “For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.”
 - a. Which of the following best describe the problem? Why?
 - 1) Emphasis is to be placed upon the phrase “*his own supper*”. Some of the Corinthians (wealthier ones?) brought their own provisions for supper and did not share with others (poorer ones?).
 - 2) Emphasis is to be placed upon the phrase “*ahead of others*”. Some of the Corinthians (wealthier ones?) gathered earlier than the others (poorer ones?) and went ahead and had supper without waiting.

- b. Was this a case of class distinctions, i.e. wealthier members vs. poorer members?
 - c. A more difficult question is whether the supper being spoken of is
 - 1) a common meal taken separately than the Lord's Supper,
 - 2) the Lord's Supper, or
 - 3) the Lord's Supper which was observed during a common meal?What is the evidence for or against each of these three views?
4. Paul gives the solution to their problem.
- a. What does he first remind them of? (v.23-25)
 - b. What principles and consequences does he then give? (v.26-29)
 - c. What specific instructions does he then give? (v.33-24).
5. In verse 23, Paul again uses the language associated with the passing along of a tradition (they "received" what he "delivered" to them); cf 11:2. Who was the source of this tradition?
6. What are the two purposes in observing the Lord's Supper? (v.24-26)
- 1)
 - 2)
7. The natural interpretation of verse 30 is in reference to physical sickness and death. Is this the case, or should we "spiritualize" the passage to refer to "spiritual sickness and death"?
8. Paul alluded to the Lord's Supper earlier in his discussion of eating meats (10:16-17, 21). There Paul says that partaking of the bread and the cup was "a communion of" (or "a sharing in", NRSV) the body and blood of Jesus. Does the 'communion' or 'sharing' take place among Christians, or between Christians and Jesus?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ In the context of 1 Corinthians 11, in what way were some of the Corinthians taking the Lord's Supper "in an unworthy manner"?

In what ways can we be guilty of taking the Lord's Supper unworthily?

INTRODUCTION: Chapters 12 through 14 form a unit. Based on Paul's comments in chapter 14, it appears that an undue emphasis was being placed by some in Corinth on the possession of the gift of tongues. In chapter 12, Paul establishes that God is giver of all gifts and that all Christians are equally important to the welfare of the church.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-31

- 12:1 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*^a, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:
- 2 You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.
- 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.
- 4 There are diversities of gifts^b, but the same Spirit.
- 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.
- 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all^c.
- 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*:
- 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,
- 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,
- 10 to another the working of miracles^d, 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 these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.
- 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ.
- 13 For by^e one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into^f one Spirit.
- 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.
- 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?
- 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?
- 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would* be the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling?
- 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.
- 19 And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*?
- 20 But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body.
- 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

- 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- 23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty,
- 24 but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it,
- 25 that there should be no schism 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 honored, all the members rejoice with *it*.
- 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.
- 29 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles?
- 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?
- 31 But earnestly desire the best^g gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Notes a NRSV mg., “spiritual persons”. The reference “may be either masculine (= “those who are spiritual”) or neuter (= “spiritual gifts”). What favors the former is the usage in 2:15, 3:1, and especially 14:37... On the other hand, the certain use of the neuter plural in 14:1...where it refers at least to prophecy and tongues, plus the overall argument...has caused most commentators to opt for ‘spiritual gifts’.” Fee, p.575.

b Gk. *charismata*. From which we get the term “charismatic”. A cognate of *charis* (“grace”).

c NRSV, “who activates all of them in everyone.”

d Lit. “power” (Gk. *dynameis*)

e NRSV, “in the one Spirit” (see Dictionary of NT Theology, Vol.3, p.1210).

f NRSV, “of”

g NRSV, “greater” (based on all the early manuscripts).

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Paul reminds the Corinthians that some of them were pagans who worshipped “dumb (i.e. mute) idols”. Why does Paul use the adjective “dumb” in this context? Is he simply using this expression because it was a common way of describing idols, or does it perhaps have some relevance to the point that Paul is going to make? If so, what?

2. In verses 4-6, there is a contrast between those things that are “diverse” or “different” and that which is the “same”.
 - a. What is “different”?

 - b. What is the point of Paul saying that it is the “same Spirit”, “Lord”, and “God”?

3. In verses 7-11, Paul catalogues some “gifts” of the Spirit.
 - a. Why does the Spirit give gifts? (v.7)
 - b. On what basis does the Spirit determine which gifts to give to any particular person? (v.11)
 - c. Did every Christian at Corinth have a gift given by the Spirit?
 - d. List the gifts. Is there any natural grouping that can be given to these gifts? Is there any hint that one gift is better than another?

4. Paul uses the human body as an metaphor of the church.
 - a. What lesson is he teaching in verses 15-17?
 - b. What is the lesson of verses 21-24a?
 - c. In both cases, what is the role that God plays? (v.18, 24b)
 - d. And why did God so arrange the body? (v.25)

5. Paul lists those that God appointed in the church. By saying, “first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...” is Paul ranking the gifts in order of *importance*? Why, or why not? If not, then what does he mean to imply? (Compare Ephesians 4:11f.)

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ In this context, is the church, the “body of Christ”, the “local church” or the “universal church”? Any significance to that?

LESSON 18

1 CORINTHIANS 13

INTRODUCTION: Paul concluded chapter 12 with the statement “And yet I show you a more excellent way.” That “way” was one of love. Paul would have the Corinthians to know that possession of spiritual gifts (and the speaking in tongues in particular) was not the most important thing. It is more important to have love for others.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

- 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
- 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
- 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned^a, but have not love, it profits me nothing.
- 4 Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself^b, is not puffed up;
- 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;
- 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;
- 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 8 Love never fails^c. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *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^d has come, then that which is in part will be done away.
- 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
- 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.
- 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- Notes *a* Some manuscripts read “so that I may boast” (NRSV) instead of “to be burned.”
 b NRSV, “boast”.
 c NRSV, “ends”.
 d NRSV, “complete”.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Should we be so surprised at the importance that Paul places on love? After all, what are the two “greatest” commandments? (Matthew 22:34ff)
 - 1)
 - 2)

2. Chapter 13 can be conveniently subdivided into three sections. For each section, write a brief summary statement:
 - 1) 13:1-3
 - 2) 13:4-7
 - 3) 13:8-13
3. In an effort to show the superiority of love over spiritual gifts, Paul contrasts the non-ending character of love versus the temporary status of the spiritual gifts.
 - a. Why will prophecy, tongues, etc. fail or cease? (v.9)
 - b. When will they “be done away?” (v.10)
4. The interpretations for “that which is perfect” are legion. Three of the most common interpretations are:
 - 1) The “perfect” refers to the completed revelation as given in the New Testament.
 - 2) The “perfect” refers to the complete knowledge that we will have in heaven (or, refers to Jesus at his second coming).
 - 3) The “perfect” refers to a mature church that has no need for things incomplete.

What are the pros and cons of each view? Paul gives two illustrations to help make his point. Which interpretation(s) above do they help support?

	Pro	Con
1)		
2)		
3)		

5. What else abides along with love after spiritual gifts have ceased? Why is love the greatest of these three?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ What other passages in the New Testament teach the importance of love between brethren?

LESSON 19

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-25

INTRODUCTION: Paul now gets to the heart of the matter. Having instructed them concerning the proper functioning of the “body of Christ” and the supreme importance of love, Paul now applies that to their exercise of spiritual gifts in the worship assemblies.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-25

- 14:1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.
- 2 For he who speaks in a tongue^a does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries^b.
- 3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.
- 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.
- 5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies *is* greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he^c interprets, that the church may receive edification.
- 6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?
- 7 Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played?
- 8 For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?
- 9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.
- 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages^d in the world, and none of them *is* without significance^e.
- 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language^d, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks *will be* a foreigner to me.
- 12 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, *let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel.
- 13 Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.
- 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.
- 15 What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.
- 16 Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?
- 17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.
- 18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;

- 19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.
- 20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, 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 hear Me,"^f*
- says the Lord.
- 22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.
- 23 Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?
- 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all^g.
- 25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

- Notes
- a Gk. *glossais lalein* ("to speak in tongues), from which is derived "glossolalia"
 - b NRSV, "mysteries in the Spirit."
 - c NRSV, "someone"
 - d NRSV, "sound(s)"
 - e NRSV, "and nothing is without sound."
 - f Isaiah 28:11,12
 - g NRSV, "is reproved by all, and called to account by all."

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Paul compares the prophet to the tongue speaker. Complete the chart below.

PROPHET

TONGUE SPEAKER

SPEAKS TO WHOM?

SPEAKS WHAT?

EDIFIES WHOM?

So why is prophecy "greater" than tongue speaking?

2. Does the tongue speaker understand what is being spoken?
3. What is the setting for Paul's instructions - in the church (assembly) or outside?

4. The nature of the tongue speaking is regularly debated. There are three views that are held:
 - 1) Both the tongue speaking in Acts 2 (and the rest of Acts) and in 1 Corinthians refers to actual human languages.
 - 2) The tongue speaking in Acts 2 refers to actual human languages, but in 1 Corinthians it refers to a special “Spirit language” that is unlike any human language.
 - 3) Neither the tongue speaking in Acts or in 1 Corinthians refers to actual human languages, but to a special “Spirit language.”
 - a. Review Acts 2. What evidence is there for or against the view that actual human languages are under discussion?
 - b. Is there any evidence in 1 Corinthians for or against the view that actual human languages are under discussion?
5. What are the three analogies that Paul gives to illustrate his point about tongue speaking?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
6. Would it be correct to say that: Tongues + Interpretation = Prophecy ?
7. Verse 22 seems to be at odds with verses 23 and 24. In verse 22, tongues are said to be a “sign” to unbelievers, but verse 23 states that an unbeliever would think that tongue speakers are “out of their mind”. Also, in verse 22, prophecy is said to be not for unbelievers, but in verse 24, unbelievers are “convinced” and “convicted” (i.e. converted?) by prophecy. So which is it?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Based on the teaching in this passage, what should be the result of our assembling together?

LESSON 20

1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

INTRODUCTION: Having established the relative merit of prophesy and the speaking in tongues, Paul now concentrates on the proper way in which the spiritual gifts are to be used in the assembly.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

- 26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.
- 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret.
- 28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.
- 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge^a.
- 30 But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.
- 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, 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 the churches of the saints^b.
- 34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says.
- 35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.^c
- 36 Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or was it you only that it reached?
- 37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual^d, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.
- 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.^e
- 39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.
- 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

- Notes
- a NRSV, “weigh what is said.”
 - b NRSV, “but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, women...”
 - c Western manuscripts place verses 34 and 35 after verse 40.
 - d NRSV, “or to have spiritual powers”
 - e NRSV, “Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized.”

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. The context of these instructions is “when [they] come together”, i.e. assemble as a church.
 - a. What is the *principle* that governs *what* is to take place in the assembly? (v.26)

- b. What is the *principle* that governs *how* things are to take place in the assembly? (v.40)

2. What three groups are told to keep “silent” in the assembly?
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)

3. What is the meaning and significance of the statement: “The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets”?

4. Now concerning women...
 - a. Some translations (e.g. NRSV) treat verses 33b-35 as a parenthetical expression, thus suggesting that this comment is not directly related to the theme of the passage, but that Paul made a “By the way...” sort of comment. Does this view have merit? And, by the way, what is the theme of this passage: the regulation of *spiritual gifts* in the assembly, or simply the regulation of the assembly?

 - b. One difficulty with this passage is that in chapter 11, Paul speaks, without rebuke, about women who “prayed or prophesied”, but now he is telling women to “keep silent” in the assembly which presumably means they could not pray or prophesy (or, at least, prophesy). How do you reconcile these two passages?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ It is becoming increasingly prevalent in the denominational world for people to see Paul’s instructions here and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 regarding the role of women as being culturally determined. In other words, they would contend that if Paul were to speak now, in our culture, his teaching would be different.
 - a. Is this a possibility? Could Paul make comments which were applicable for only one place in time?
 - b. How would one determine if this is the case?
 - c. So what are your thoughts about this?

INTRODUCTION: Having concluded his discussion of spiritual gifts, Paul now addresses another false teaching being circulated in Corinth: that there is no resurrection of the dead.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-28

- 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,
2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you; unless you believed in vain.
3 For I delivered to you first of all^a 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 over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.
7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.
8 Then 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, who 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 toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.
11 Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.
12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.
14 And if Christ *is* not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith *is* also empty.
15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up; if in fact the dead do not rise.
16 For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.
17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins!
18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.
20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
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 shall be made alive.
23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming^b.
24 Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

- 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet^c.
26 The last enemy *that* will be destroyed is death.
27 For "*He has put all things under His feet.*"^d But when He says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is* evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.
28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Notes *a* NRSV, "of first importance"
 b Gk. *parousia*
 c Psalms 110:1
 d Psalms 8:6

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. Paul has twice earlier spoken of the "traditions" which he had "delivered" to them and which they "received" (11:1,23).
 - a. What does Paul also say he had delivered to them?
 - b. What two roles does the gospel have in the life of a Christian?
 - 1)
 - 2)
2. What four things does the gospel include "of first importance"?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
3. List those to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection.
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
 - 5)
 - 6)

- a. Do we have knowledge of Jesus appearing personally to Peter? (Luke 24:34)
 - b. Do we have knowledge of Jesus appearing to “over five hundred brethren at once” or to James?
 - c. As Paul is using the terms, are “apostles” and “the twelve” the same group?
4. What exactly were some teaching among the Corinthians about the resurrection?
5. Paul counters their teaching with an argument designed to show the unacceptable implications of what they taught. By my count, there are at least seven implications that Paul identifies if it be true that there is no resurrection. List them.
- 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
 - 5)
 - 6)
 - 7)
6. From a positive perspective, Paul argues for the resurrection based on what fact?

LESSON 22

1 CORINTHIANS 15:29-58

INTRODUCTION: Paul argued for the resurrection of dead on the fact that Jesus had been raised. He now presents a couple of other practical arguments and deals with one objection. Paul concludes by giving additional teaching on the resurrection.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:29-58

- 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 jeopardy every hour?
- 31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.
- 32 If, in the manner of men^a, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage *is it* to me? If the dead do not rise, "*Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!*"^b
- 33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits^c."
- 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak *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, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain^d; perhaps wheat or some other *grain*.
- 38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.
- 39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but *there is one kind* of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, *and* another of birds.
- 40 *There are* also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the glory of the terrestrial *is* another.
- 41 *There is* one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.
- 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 dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.
- 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body^e.
- 45 And so it is written, "*The first man Adam became a living being.*"^f The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.
- 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.
- 47 The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.
- 48 As *was* the *man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *Man*, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly.
- 49 And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man*.
- 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

- 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall 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 shall be changed.
- 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.
- 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*"^g
- 55 "*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?*"^h
- 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 beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

- Notes*
- a* NRSV, "with merely human hopes"
 - b* Isaiah 22:13; 56:12
 - c* NRSV, "morals"
 - c* NRSV, "bare seed"
 - d* The majority of manuscripts make this sentence a conditional statement which gives the proper force to Paul's argument: "If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body."
 - e* Genesis 2:7
 - f* Isaiah 25:8
 - g* Hosea 13:14

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. In verses 29-32, what are the two arguments that Paul gives to support the fact that the dead are raised?
 - 1)
 - 2)
2. The first of these arguments about those being "baptized for the dead" is quite puzzling. The natural reading presents an idea which is not at all consistent with the teaching on baptism in the New Testament. Thus, many other ideas have been suggested. What do you think?
3. Verse 33 states a general truth. In fact, the phrase "Evil company corrupts good habits" was a common proverb in the first century. But what does it have to do with Paul's argument? The word "company" can also mean "conversation" (KJV, "communications"). Does this help make a connection with Paul's argument?

4. Paul's metaphor "Awake to righteousness" suggests one awaking from sleep. The expression can also be translated "Become sober-minded as you ought" which suggests one overcoming a drunken stupor. Whether asleep or drunk, there were those who were 'deceiving themselves' (v.33). He made these statements 'to shame them'. Compare 1 Corinthians 6:5. How was Paul shaming them?
5. Some objected to the teaching of the resurrection and thought they had a reasonable counter-argument based on the nature of the body. This is comparable to the objection posed to Jesus by the Sadducees about the woman who had been married to seven brothers (Matthew 22:23-33). What was the fundamental flaw in both objections?
6. Paul uses the illustration of a seed become a plant to teach about the differences between the "natural" body and the "spiritual" body. What are the essential lessons that can be learned from this illustration?
7. What three comparisons does Paul make between the natural body and the spiritual body? (v.42-43)

1)	
2)	
3)	
8. Twice in this chapter, Paul contrasts Adam with Christ. Earlier in the chapter the contrasts was between the result of each one's act: death vs. life. What is the contrast now that Paul is making between the two?
9. How does Paul's teaching about those who will be alive at Christ's coming tie into his arguments about the natural and spiritual bodies?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ Doctrine is often thought of as just "theoretical" ideas. Hence, many do not place much importance to doctrinal study. This chapter teaches us about the doctrine of the resurrection. How important is this teaching on how we live our lives?

INTRODUCTION: Paul concludes his letter by giving his travel plans (along with Timothy's and Apollos') and his instructions concerning the collection he was making for the saints in Jerusalem. Since Paul's travel plans were discussed in introducing this letter (see Lesson 2), this lesson will focus primarily on the instructions for the collection that Paul gives.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-24

- 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:
- 2 On the first *day* of the week^a let each one of you lay something aside^b, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.
- 3 And when I come, whomever you approve by *your*^c letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.
- 4 But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.
- 5 Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia).
- 6 And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go.
- 7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.
- 8 But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.
- 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are many* adversaries.
- 10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.
- 11 Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.
- 12 Now concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling^d to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.
- 13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.
- 14 Let all *that* you *do* 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 that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with *us*^e.
- 17 I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied^f.
- 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.
- 19 The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.
- 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

- 21 The salutation with my own hand; Paul's.
- 22 If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!^g
- 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.
- 24 My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

- Notes*
- a* More properly translated “first day of every week” (NRSV).
 - b* There is uncertainty as to how this expression should be translated. Literally, the phrase reads “let each one by himself”. Most commentators state that the term “by himself” means “by himself at home”, thus seeing this collection as a private affair. Some would translate the term “by himself” as “by itself” and would argue that this suggests a common public treasury (e.g. McGarvey).
 - c* As indicated by the italics, “yours” is not in the text. The Greek construction could imply that Paul wrote the letters (“I will give letters”, REB).
 - d* Or, “it was not at all God’s will for him” (NRSV mg.)
 - e* NRSV, “them”
 - f* NRSV, “because they have made up for your absence”
 - g* Aramaic “*Marana tha*”. Or, possibly, “*Maran atha*” meaning “Our Lord has come”.

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS

1. If the phrase “Now concerning...” is still an indication of questions posed by the Corinthians (see 7:1, etc.), what two additional questions does Paul deal with in this chapter? (16:1, 12)
 - 1)
 - 2)
2. Specifically, what was the purpose of the “collection”?
3. What was the purpose for the instructions that they were to “lay something aside” each first day of the week?

Why on the first day of the week?

Consider *Note b* above. Since the text can be translated to refer to either a private or public collection, are there any arguments from the context that would support either view?

4. What principle concerning one’s personal obligation to the collection is given in verse 2?
5. How was the collection to be sent? Why?

6. After Paul writes this letter, he makes two additional references to this collection in his writings. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 (which was written before his final visit to Corinth), he is still urging the brethren to follow through with the collection. In Romans 15:25-28 (which he writes during his final visit in Corinth), Paul speaks of the reason for the collection. Considering the passage in Romans:
 - a. Does the Corinthians heed Paul's instructions and make the collection?
 - b. Besides the Galatians, what other group of people did Paul receive funds from?
 - c. What is the reason that Paul gives for giving the command to the Corinthians to give to the Jerusalem saints?

7. Note the expression in verse 21: "The salutation with my own hand; Paul's." What does this imply about who actually penned the body of the letter?

APPLICATIONS

- ◆ What other examples can we find in the New Testament of Christians giving of their possessions for the benefit of others?

What do these examples have in common?

- ◆ For your consideration: Is the act of giving a part of our worship to God?

- ◆ And for your further consideration: Is the command that Paul gives here intended to be applicable to all Christians of all times?

LESSON 24

REVIEW OF 1 CORINTHIANS

Answer as many questions as possible before using your Bible.

THE CITY OF CORINTH

1. In what province was Corinth located?
2. Name two of its neighboring cities?
 - 1)
 - 2)

PAUL'S FIRST VISIT TO CORINTH

1. Where do we read of Paul's first visit to Corinth? (Book and Chapter)
2. a. On which missionary journey did this visit occur?
 - b. Who were Paul's two traveling companions on this journey who worked with him in Corinth?
3. What year (approximately) did Paul arrive in Corinth?
4. What Christian couple did Paul meet in Corinth for the first time?
5. How did Paul support himself while in Corinth?
6. Which Roman ruler did Paul appear before while in Corinth? (Name and title)
7. How long did Paul stay in Corinth?

THE COMPOSITION OF 1 CORINTHIANS

1. From what city did Paul write 1 Corinthians? How do we know?
2. On which journey did Paul write this letter?
3. In what year do we think Paul wrote this letter?
4. Who or what were Paul's sources of information about the work in Corinth?

IDENTIFY THE CHAPTER WHERE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE DISCUSSED:

- ___1. The right of a preacher to be supported financially.
- ___2. Paul's condemnation of the congregation for not disciplining the man who had taken his father's wife.
- ___3. The instruction concerning the covering.
- ___4. The use of the body as an analogy for the church.
- ___5. The importance of the resurrection.
- ___6. The proper observance of the Lord's Supper.
- ___7. The instructions concerning the collection for the saints in Jerusalem.
- ___8. The impropriety of Christians taking one another to court.
- ___9. The supreme role of love in relationships.
- ___10. The preference to be given to prophecy instead of tongue speaking.
- ___11. The relative merit of being single versus being married.

QUESTIONS ON THE TEXT

1. In chapters 1 and 11, we read of divisions in the church at Corinth. In each case, what was the cause of the divisions?

Chapter 1)
Chapter 2)
2. What did Paul say was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles?
3. Although Paul refused to use man's wisdom in preaching the gospel, he says he did speak wisdom. How does he describe this wisdom? From whom did Paul receive it? How did it come?
4. What are the two analogies Paul used in chapter 3 to describe Apollos' and his role in preaching the gospel?

1)
2)

5. Throughout the letter, there are several indications that some of the Corinthians were arrogant toward their brethren. List the circumstances where this displayed itself?
6. From chapter 7 towards the end of the epistle it appears that Paul is answering several questions that the Corinthians had asked him in their letter. List the topics that the Corinthians had asked about.
7. Paul writes the phrase “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful” with reference to two different problems among the Corinthians. What are these problems?
 - 1)
 - 2)
8. In Paul’s discussion of eating meats sacrificed to idols, what three possible situations does he address? What is the ‘strong’ Christian to do in each of these situations?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
9. To demonstrate that Christians cannot always exercise their rights in doing something because of the consequences it might have on other Christians, what personal example did Paul give in Chapter 9?
10.
 - a. What group of women at Corinth does Paul tell to have their heads covered?
 - b. What reasons does Paul give to show why they should be covered?
11. What two purposes should Christians have in observing the Lord’s Supper?
 - 1)
 - 2)
12.
 - a. Which of the spiritual gifts given by God through the Holy Spirit did the Corinthians give greater importance?
 - b. What did Paul say was more important than any of the miraculous gifts?
13. In chapter 15, some of the Corinthians apparently were denying the resurrection of the dead. List the implications that Paul mentioned if this belief were true?

LESSON 25

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH AFTER 1 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION: The New Testament contains letters of Paul to seven different churches. To the best of our knowledge, Paul only wrote one letter to five of those churches. Hence, there are issues and questions raised in those letters that are left unanswered. For example, we do not know how the Galatians responded to the criticism of Paul's about their going after a different gospel. In the case of the Thessalonians and the Corinthians, Paul wrote two letters to those churches that we have. Thus, we have a better picture of those churches, even though there still are lingering questions. This lesson simply seeks to set the stage for the events which took place in Paul's continuing relationship with the Corinthians after he had written 1 Corinthians.

THE OCCASION OF PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

1. Who does Paul include in his opening greeting? (2 Corinthians 1:1)

Where was Timothy when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians?

2. Where does Paul appear to be when he wrote his second letter to the Corinthians? (2 Corinthians 7:5; 8:1; 9:2-4)
3. But Paul visited Macedonia twice on his 3rd Missionary Journey: once after leaving Ephesus before going to Corinth and once after leaving Corinth. To determine which of these occasions he is writing to the Corinthians, consider Paul's comments about the collection he was making for the needy saints in Jerusalem. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Paul asks the Corinthians to take up a weekly collection so that when he arrived the collection would be ready. (Remember when he writes 1 Corinthians, he is in Ephesus.) In 2 Corinthians 9:1-5, Paul still speaks of his receiving their collection as future. Since Paul has not collected the money, which of the two visits to Macedonia is the one when Paul writes 2 Corinthians?
4. It is possible based upon some of Paul's statements in his second letter that Paul made a trip to Corinth between the two visits recorded in Acts. If so, the trip was probably made from Ephesus with Paul returning to Ephesus.
 - a. For the allusions to this trip read 2 Corinthians 2:1-2; 12:14; 13:1.

- b. What may have been the purpose of this visit?

5. Following the 'painful' visit, it appears that Paul wrote a letter to the church at Corinth that was severe in tone (hence, called the 'severe' letter) which Paul sent to Corinth by Titus. By the time Paul writes 2 Corinthians, Titus has returned with news of the Corinthians repentance. Read 2 Corinthians 2:4; 7:6-16.

Survey the attached chart which gives a possible chronology of the various contacts between Paul and the church at Corinth.

PAUL'S CONTACTS WITH THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

VISITS

**FIRST VISIT - 2ND MISSIONARY
JOURNEY (ACTS 18)**

SECOND ('PAINFUL') VISIT (?)
(2 CORINTHIANS 2:1; 12:14; 13:1)

**LAST (THIRD?) VISIT - 3RD
MISSIONARY JOURNEY (ACTS 20:2;
cf. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:14;13:1)**

CORRESPONDENCE

SENT

'PREVIOUS LETTER' (1 CORINTHIANS 5:9)

PAUL SENDS TIMOTHY TOWARD CORINTH
(ACTS 19:22; 1 CORINTHIANS 4:17; 16:10)
UNKNOWN IF HE GETS THERE OR NOT.

1 CORINTHIANS - SENT FROM EPHESUS
(1 CORINTHIANS 16:8, 19)

'SEVERE LETTER' (?) (2 CORINTHIANS 2:4; 7:8)
PROBABLY TAKEN BY TITUS FROM EPHESUS
(2 CORINTHIANS 2:12-13)

2 CORINTHIANS - SENT FROM MACEDONIA
(2 CORINTHIANS 7:5; 8:1; 9:2,4). TIMOTHY
IS WITH PAUL (2 CORINTHIANS 1:1).

RECEIVED

NEWS FROM CHLOE'S HOUSEHOLD
(1 CORINTHIANS 1:11)

LETTER FROM CHURCH AT CORINTH
(1 CORINTHIANS 7:1; POSSIBLY DELIVERED
BY STEPHANAS, ETC. - 1 CORINTHIANS 16:17)

**HEARD FROM TITUS OF GOOD
RESPONSE TO 'SEVERE LETTER'**
(2 CORINTHIANS 7:6ff)

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS

by St. Clement of Rome

The Church of God which resides as a stranger at Rome to the Church of God which is a stranger at Corinth; to those who are called and sanctified by the will of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. May grace and peace from Almighty God flow to you in rich profusion through Jesus Christ!

1. Owing to the suddenly bursting and rapidly succeeding calamities and untoward experiences that have befallen us, we have been somewhat tardy, we think, in giving our attention to the subjects of dispute in your community, beloved. We mean that execrable and godless schism so utterly foreign to the elect of God. And it is only a few rash and headstrong individuals that have inflamed it to such a degree of madness that your venerable, widely-renowned, and universally and deservedly cherished name has been greatly defamed. Indeed, was there ever a visitor in your midst that did not approve your excellent and steadfast faith? Or did not admire your discreet and thoughtful Christian piety? Or did not proclaim the magnificent character of your hospitality? Or did not congratulate you on your perfect and secure fund of knowledge? You certainly did everything without an eye to rank or station in life, and regulated your conduct by God's commandments. You were submissive to your officials and paid the older men among you the respect due to them. The young you trained to habits of self-restraint and sedateness. The wives you enjoined to discharge all their duties with a conscience pure and undefiled, and to cherish a dutiful affection for their husbands; you taught them also to stay within the established norm of obedience in managing the household with decency and consummate prudence.
 2. Moreover, you were all in a humble frame of mind, in no way arrogant, practicing obedience rather than demanding it, happier in giving than in receiving. Being content with, and intent upon, the provisions which Christ allowed you for your earthly pilgrimage, it was His words that you carefully locked up in your hearts, and His sufferings were ever before your eyes. Thus all were blessed with a profound and radiant peace of soul, and there was an insatiable longing to do good, as well as a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the whole community. Filled, moreover, with a desire for holiness, you stretched out your hands, with ready goodwill and devout confidence, to Almighty God, imploring Him to show mercy in case you had inadvertently failed in any way. Day and night you vied with one another in behalf of the entire brotherhood, to further the salvation of the full number of His elect by your compassion and conscientiousness. Guileless and sincere you were, and bore one another no malice. The very thought of insubordination and schism was an abomination to you. Over the failings of your neighbors you mourned; their shortcomings you judged to be your own. You had no regrets when you had been charitable, being ready for any good deed. Decked with the jewel of a virtuous life that commanded veneration, you fulfilled all your duties in the fear of the Lord, whose precepts and ordinances were engraved upon the tablets of your heart.
 3. All splendor and scope for expansion were bestowed upon you, and then the Scripture was fulfilled: The beloved ate and drank, and he waxed large and fat, and then he kicked out. From this sprang jealousy and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and anarchy, war and captivity. Then the dishonored rose up against the honored, the ignoble against the highly esteemed, the foolish against the wise, the young against their elders. For this reason piety and peace are far removed, because everyone has abandoned the fear of God and lost the clear vision which faith affords, and nobody regulates his conduct by the norms of His commandments, or tries to make his life worthy of Christ. On the contrary, everyone follows the appetites of his depraved heart, for they have absorbed that unjust and unholy jealousy through which death came into the world.
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45. You are given to wrangling, brethren, and are jealous in matters that bear-upon salvation. You have looked deep into the sacred writings, which tell the truth and proceed from the Holy Spirit. You

know that nothing unjust or fraudulent is written in them. You will not find that law-respecting men were ever repudiated by holy men. Law-respecting men were persecuted of course, but only by lawless men. They were put in prison, but only by unholy men. They were stoned to death by contemners of the law. They were killed by men animated by unjust and abominable jealousy. Under such ill-treatment they bore up gloriously. What shall we say, brethren? Was Daniel thrown into the lion's den by God-fearing men? Or, were Ananias, Azarias, and Misael shut up in the fiery furnace by men devoted to the glorious and exalted worship of the Most High? Let no such thing be said! Who, then, were those that committed such acts? Hateful men and the scum of the earth carried their love of strife to such a degree of fury that they subjected to indignities men who were serving God with holy and irreproachable steadfastness; they did not realize that the Most High is the champion and shield of those who in perfect good faith worship His most holy name. To Him be the glory forever and evermore. Amen. But those who confidently persevered, inherited honor and glory: they were exalted and had their names engraved by God in His memory forever and evermore. Amen.

46. It is our duty, then, my brethren, to follow examples such as these. For the Scripture says: Follow the saints for such as follow them shall be sanctified. And again, in another passage, it says: With an innocent man Thou wilt be innocent and with an elect Thou wilt be elect, and with one perverted Thou wilt deal perversely. Let us, therefore, associate with the innocent and law-abiding; these are God's elect. Why are quarrels and outbursts of passion and divisions and schisms and war in your midst? Or, do we not have one God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace, a Spirit that was poured out upon us? And is there not one calling in Christ? Why do we tear apart and disjoint the members of Christ and revolt against our own body, and go to such extremes of madness as to forget that we are mutually dependent members? Remember the words of Jesus our Lord. For He said: Utterly wretched is that man; it would be better for him not to have been born than to be an occasion of sin to one of my elect; it would be better for him to lie at the bottom of the sea with a millstone hung round his neck than to pervert one of my elect. Your schism has perverted many; many it has thrown into discouragement, many it has bewildered, and to all of us it has brought sorrow. And your schism persists!

47. Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What is the most important thing he wrote to you in the early days of gospel preaching? He was truly inspired when he wrote to you regarding himself and Cephas and Apollos, because already at that time you had engaged in factious agitation. But that display of factiousness involved you in less guilt, for you took the part of Apostles, men of attested merit, and of a man in good repute with the m. But now consider who those are that have perverted you and vilified the venerable character of your celebrated fraternal charity. Disgraceful, beloved, indeed, exceedingly disgraceful and unworthy of your training in Christ, is the report that the well-established and ancient Church of the Corinthians is, thanks to one or two individuals, in revolt against the presbyters. And this report has reached not only us, but also people that differ from us in religion, with the result that, owing to your folly, you heap blasphemy upon the name of the Lord and withal create a danger to yourselves.

65. As for our representatives Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito, accompanied by Fortunatus, send them back to us at an early convenience, full of peace and joy, that they may without delay bring tidings of peace and concord -- the object of our most ardent desires -- and that we in turn may without delay rejoice in your tranquility.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all that have anywhere in the world been called by God and through Him, through whom be to Him glory and honor and power and majesty and everlasting dominion, from eternity to eternity. Amen.