The First Epistle of Paul to the CORINTHIANS

Opening Considerations

Greeting

1 [1]Paul, a called apostle[1] of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and brother Sosthenes,[2] [2]to the church[3] of God that is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus,[4] called saints,[5] along with all those everywhere[6] who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—yes, theirs and yours:[7] [3]Grace and peace to you from God our Father and Sovereign Jesus Christ.[8]

A word of thanksgiving

[4]Concerning you, I always thank my God because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus; [5]for in Him you were enriched in every way, in all speech and all knowledge, [6]even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,[9] [7]so that you lack no spiritual gift as you expectantly await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,[10] [8]who will also confirm you until the end, blameless in the Day of our Lord, Jesus Christ.[11] [9]God is faithful, by whom you were called into fellowship[12] with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.[13]

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[1] Apostles are not ordained by man; they are designated by God, who has a reason for doing so. In the case of Paul, it was "to promote obedience of faith among all ethnic nations" (Romans 1:5). Paul gives the signs of an apostle in 2 Corinthians 12:12. Please see `When is an apostle?` on my website: www.prunch.org.

[2] He acknowledges a junior partner.

[3] Since there were probably several local congregations meeting in homes in Corinth, not to mention "everywhere", I have rendered 'church'. Note that Paul obviously intended that his letter have a wide circulation, very wide.

[4] If your lifestyle is still that of the world, you have not been 'sanctified'.

[5] Called by God.

[6] Clearly Paul knows that he is not writing just for the Corinthians. But just how is this letter going to get to believers "everywhere"? If Paul himself did not make copies, presumably the congregation that received the 'original' would set about making certified copies.

[7] "Yours" is the reading of the best line of transmission, as I see it, being part of 25% of the total of manuscripts. But the idea is a bit awkward, and the change of one letter solved the 'problem', as in the 75%—'theirs and ours' is straightforward.

[8] Where 'Lord' occurs without the definite article, as here, I usually render 'Sovereign'; with either 'the' or 'our' I usually render 'Lord'.

[9] As the Message was progressively confirmed in them, they were progressively enriched with the things mentioned.

[10] It appears that the early Christians expected the Lord to return at any time, which would tend to have a sobering effect upon one's style of living.

[11] The "Day of our Lord Jesus Christ" includes the accounting for all those who are in Him. So the promise here is major, and verse 9 starts with 'God is faithful'.

[12] "Called into fellowship" sounds like an ongoing exchange.

[13] To the 'Western' mind it may seem like Paul was being a bit repetitious; but Paul was a Jew—he is making very sure that they know where he is coming from, and where he wants to take them.

A word of exhortation

10 Now I appeal to you, brothers, by the name[1] of our Lord Jesus
Christ, that you all speak the same thing[2] and that there be no divisions
among you, but that you be restored[3] to the same mind and to the same
purpose. 11 You see, my brothers, it has been reported to me concerning
you, by some from Chloe's household,[4] that there are contentions among
you. 12 What I mean is that you are individually saying: "I am of Paul,"
or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ!" 13 Has Christ
been divided? It was not Paul who was crucified for you, was it? You
were not baptized into the name of Paul, were you?

A disclaimer about baptism

14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and
Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized into my own name.
16 O yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanus; besides them I do
not remember if I baptized anyone else. 17 Because Christ did not send
me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel[5]—not with eloquent 'wisdom',
lest the cross of Christ be emptied of power.[6]

The nature of the Gospel

Foolishness to the lost

18 The message of the cross, you see, is foolishness to those who are
being wasted,[7] 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 confound the
shrewdness of the intelligent."[8] 20 Where is the wise one? Where is the
scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the
wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world
through its 'wisdom' did not get to know God, it pleased God to save the
believing ones through the 'foolishness' of what was preached—22 since

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1 The name represents the person.

2 They are not being told to repeat things like parrots, but to be in essential agreement about important points.

3 They have drifted.

4 Paul cites his source.

5 If water baptism were essential to salvation, I fail to see how Paul could have expressed himself in this way—he is clearly implying that water baptism is not an essential part of the Gospel. In the early Church people were baptized immediately, not after weeks of 'preparation', because the convert was publicly breaking with Satan and his kingdom and formally placing himself under Christ's protection. Such baptism is an important procedure, and its value should be explained to any new convert.

6 Dear me, is eloquence the enemy of power? Does not eloquence give glory to the speaker rather than to Christ? Perhaps not inescapably, but the tendency is definitely there.

7 We are accustomed to 'perishing'. The verb here has a considerable semantic area and can be rendered—destroy, kill, deprive, void, lose, perish—depending on the context, but I believe the root idea is 'waste'. The only way to fulfill the purpose for which you were created, to realize your potential, is to turn your life over to Jesus. The alternative is to waste your life, both now and forever. Of course the enemy works to make people think the opposite.

8 See Isaiah 29:14.

Jews request a sign while Greeks seek after wisdom, 23but we proclaim
a crucified Christ: an offense to Jews, foolishness to Greeks.[1] 24Now to
those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God
and the wisdom of God, 25because the 'foolishness' of God is wiser than
men, and the 'weakness' of God is stronger than men.[2]

God uses 'nothings'

26Just look at your calling, brothers: not many are wise, not many
are powerful, not many are of noble birth, by human standards; 27but
God has chosen the foolish things of the world that He might put the
wise to shame, and God has chosen the weak things of the world that He
might put the strong things to shame; 28and God has chosen the lowly
things of the world and the despised things—even the 'nothings'—that
He might nullify the 'somethings'; 29so that no flesh should boast in
God's presence.[3] 30It is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who was
made to us wisdom from God—also righteousness and sanctification and
redemption[4]—31so that, as it is written: "He who boasts, let him boast in
the LORD."[5]

Not with human wisdom but with God's power

2 1So when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming God's
testimony[6] to you with a 'superior' speech or wisdom. 2For I deter-
mined to 'know' nothing while among you except Jesus Christ and Him
crucified. 3Also, I was with you in weakness, in fear, and with much
trembling. 4Yes, my message and my preaching were not with
persuasive words of human wisdom, but with a demonstration of the
Spirit and of power, 5so that your faith not be in men's wisdom, but in
God's power.[7]

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[1] To the Jews, their Messiah would be a conquering king, and since death on a cross was viewed as a curse (Deuteronomy 21:23, Galatians 3:13), a crucified Messiah was simply unthinkable. What did the Greeks want with someone else's Messiah, especially a dead one—sheer nonsense!

[2] We like to forget this, but it is best not to do so. Arrogant servants of Satan often use stronger terms than 'foolishness'—they will use 'repugnant', 'ridiculous', 'intolerable', etc.

[3] This is the bottom line. Several times the Text declares that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. "Flesh" here refers to human beings.

[4] We receive Christ's righteousness to get started; the sanctification is to keep us clean along the road; the redemption is the final victory. Now really, isn't that a wonderful salvation? Thank you, Jesus!

[5] See Jeremiah 9:24. Since God has given us all we have, to glory in self is wrong.

[6] Instead of "testimony", less than 5% of the Greek manuscripts have 'mystery', to be followed by the eclectic Greek text currently in vogue (as in some versions).

[7] How many missionaries and pastors today are following Paul's example? How many of us know how to demonstrate God's power? Faith is to be based on power, not human wisdom. If we don't know how to use God's power, we had better cry out to Him until we learn how. Certain theological systems virtually condemn their adherents to never use God's power.

Wisdom for the mature

6However, we do speak wisdom among the mature,[1] albeit not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are being set aside;[2] **7**but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden[3] wisdom that God ordained before the ages for our glory, **8**that none of the rulers of this age have understood (because if they had understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of the glory). **9**However, as it is written: "Things no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and no heart of man has imagined, such things has God prepared for those who love Him."[4] **10**But to <u>us</u> God has revealed them by His Spirit;[5] because the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

11Now who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. **12**We have not received the spirit of the world[6] but the Spirit who is from God, so that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God;[7] **13**which things we also expound, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Holy Spirit,[8] interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people.

14Now a soulish[9] man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; indeed, he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. **15**But he who is spiritual evaluates everything, while not being himself subject to anyone's judgment.[10]

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1 This is important. Paul is not championing ignorance or stupidity. In teaching Christians he certainly used God's wisdom. It was in his evangelizing that he avoided 'human wisdom'.

2 'Being set aside' how, and when? If God's people would really be 'salt' and 'light' (Matthew 5:13-14) they could transform any culture.

3 In the Bible a 'mystery' is something hidden, something yet to be revealed, not something 'mysterious'.

4 Wonderful! Thank you, God! See Isaiah 64:4.

5 To us has been granted the privilege of having a fuller understanding of God's purposes than was granted to O.T. saints.

6 'The spirit of the world' evidently must exist. If the reference is not to Satan directly, he is certainly behind it.

7 Evidently one of the things the Holy Spirit wants to do is to illumine us on the subject of God's free gifts—if we would only listen!

8 Note that Paul is plainly stating that he receives instruction from the Holy Spirit. If he could do it, we can too. Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Holy", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

9 That is what the Text says. A 'soulish' person <u>cannot</u> understand spiritual things, which sounds rather like a congenital defect, no spirit—the reference might be to humanoids *à la* Genesis 6 (Matthew 24:37). (I would say that the correct translation of Jude 19 is: "they are 'soulish', not having a spirit". See the footnote at that point.) Or see "As were the days of Noah" on my website: www.prunch.org, or in my book, *Essays on Discipleship, Missions and Spiritual Warfare*.

10 The same verb is used three times, to which I have given different renderings—'discerned', 'evaluates', 'subject to judgment' (the middle one is in the active voice, the other two in the passive). The king of interpretation is the context, and the verb (*ανακρινω*) covers a considerable semantic area.

16For "who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him?"[1]
But we have the mind of Christ.[2]

The nature of the ministry

It is not to be sectarian

3 1Brothers, I was not able to address you as spiritual, but as fleshly,
as infants in Christ. 2I gave you milk and not solid food, because you
were not ready yet. Alas, you are still not ready, 3because you are still
fleshly! For since there is envy, strife and divisions[3] among you, are you
not carnal and acting like ordinary people? 4For when one says, "I am of
Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

God's coworkers

5Who then is Paul, who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you
believed, as the Lord has given to each one? 6I planted, Apollos watered,
but God keeps making it grow. 7So then neither he who plants is any-
thing, nor he who waters, but God who makes it grow.[4] 8Now he who
plants and he who waters are at one, but each will receive his own
reward according to his own labor.[5] 9Yes, we are God's coworkers; you
are God's 'field', God's 'building'.

There will be an Accounting

10According to the grace of God that was given to me, as a wise mas-
ter builder I have laid a foundation, while another builds on it. But let
each one be careful how he builds; 11for no one can lay any foundation
other than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ.[6] 12Now if anyone builds
on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,
13the work of each will become evident; because the Day will make it
clear, because it will be revealed by fire. Yes, the fire will test each one's
work, of what sort it is. 14If the work that anyone built endures, he will
receive a reward. 15If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but
he himself will be saved, albeit so as through fire.[7]

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1 See Isaiah 40:13. Compare John 3:8, where the Lord Jesus says that the Spirit controlled person is like the wind, unpredictable—other people will have trouble figuring him out; when they expect him to 'zig', he will 'zag'.

2 Well now, do we, or don't we? How many people do you know who think like Jesus did?

3 Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "and divisions", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

4 God is the One who makes things grow. No farmer should call himself an atheist.

5 This is a point worth remembering. The lazy will not get much.

6 I would say that the primary reference here is to leaders of local congregations, who need to be careful how they 'build' God's 'house'. But I believe it also clearly applies to anyone whose personal life is based on Jesus Christ. Each of us will give an account of how we built our lives on that foundation. Note that we are not offered the option of changing the foundation. Anyone who attempts to do so does not belong to God.

7 Paul is talking about the Day of Christ wherein those in Christ will be called to account. The Text plainly states that what we have done will be tested by fire. Someone who spent most of his time living for himself rather than for Christ's Kingdom will be surrounded by nice, dry straw (all that any fire could ask for!). So the angel aims the

blowtorch at the straw—the fire is high, hot, but short-lived. The person is left standing in a pile of fine ash, somewhat the worse for the wear.

The price you pay for not living for Christ's kingdom is to lose your life. That is all it costs, just your life! Consider the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in Luke 9:24-25. Let us begin with verse 23. "If anyone desires to come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross each day and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what will it profit a man to gain the whole world but waste or forfeit himself?" What does the Lord mean when He speaks of losing one's "life"? One does not lose one's soul for love of Christ. Nor is the reference to being killed. Rather, Jesus has in mind the life we live, the accumulated results of our living. All that I have done up to this moment plus all that I will yet do until overtaken by death or the rapture of the Church, whichever happens first—that is the "life" that is at risk (in my own case).

Let us look at our Lord's words a little more closely. There seems to be a contradiction here—if you lose, you save; if you want to save, you lose. How can it work? The following context helps us out. In verse 26 Jesus explains verses 24-25 in terms of His second coming. The parallel passage, Matthew 16:27, is clearer. "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he will repay each according to his deeds." Christ was thinking of the day of reckoning. In other words, "we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10) and "each of us will give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive his due according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). I understand that 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 is referring to the same occasion, the day of reckoning. After declaring that Jesus Christ is the only foundation, Paul speaks of different materials that one might use in building on it: "gold, silver, precious stones" or "wood, hay, straw". The point is, our deeds will be tested by fire. If fire has any effect upon gold or silver it is only to purify them, but its effect on hay and straw is devastating! Okay, so what?

Let us go back to the beginning. God created the human being for His glory; to reflect it and contribute to it. I suppose we may understand Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 43:7 in this way, at least by extension. But Adam lost this capacity when he rebelled against God. For this reason the sentence that weighs against our race is that we "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But the Son came into the world to restore our lost potential. Ephesians 1:12 and 14 tell us that the object of the plan of salvation is "the praise of His glory" (see also 2 Corinthians 1:20). And 1 Corinthians 10:31 puts it into a **command**: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Now then, the point of all this is not to 'ruin' our lives, to take all the 'fun' out of them (as many seem to think). God is not being arrogant, unreasonable, too demanding. Quite the contrary—He is just trying to save us from throwing away our lives. Surely, because the glory of God is eternal (Psalm 104:31), and when I do something for His glory that something is transformed and acquires eternal value—it becomes "gold, silver, precious stones". Works done for the glory of God will go through the fire without harm. On the other hand, what is done with a view to our own ambitions and ideas is "straw". We all know what fire does to straw!

So there it is. To be a slave of Christ means to live with reference to the Kingdom; it means to do everything for the glory of God. In this way the slave "saves" his life because he will be building it with "gold and silver", which will pass through the fire at the judgment seat of Christ without loss. In contrast, the believer who refuses to be a slave of Jesus builds his life with "hay and straw", which will be consumed by the fire—and so he "loses" his life; he lived in vain; the potential that his life represented was wasted, thrown away. What a tragedy!

We are a temple of God

16 Do you (pl) not know that you are a temple of God and the Spirit
of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy
him; because God's temple, which you are, is holy.[1]

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise
in this age, let him become 'foolish' so that he may become wise.
19 Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is
written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness";[2] 20 and again, "The
LORD knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are futile."[3] 21 So then,
let no one boast in men, for all things are yours: 22 whether Paul or
Apollos or Cephas, whether the world or life or death, whether things
present or things to come—all are yours,[4] 23 and you are Christ's, and
Christ is God's.

As stewards we must be faithful

4 1 Let a man consider us like this: as Christ's subordinates and
stewards of God's mysteries.[5] 2 Moreover, what is required of
stewards is that each be found faithful.[6] 3 So to me it is a very small thing
that I should be judged by you or by a human court; in fact, I do not even
judge myself. 4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, although I
am not justified by this; it is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge
nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to
light the hidden things of darkness and expose the motives of the
hearts.[7] At that time the praise that comes to each will be from God.[8]

No room for boasting

6 I have illustrated these things using myself and Apollos, brothers,
for your sakes, so that you may learn from us not to think beyond what
is written,[9] that no one of you be puffed up in favor of the one against
the other. 7 Now who is distinguishing you? Or what do you have that

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1 This passage contrasts with 6:19; there each individual believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit, while here the local congregation is stated to be God's temple, with the Holy Spirit indwelling the members. Note that God does not take kindly to any effort to damage His temple.

2 See Job 5:13.

3 See Psalm 94:11.

4 In what sense? I suppose this refers to potential use, not ownership.

5 What does a steward of God's mysteries do? He explains them to others. The function of a teacher is similar.

6 By the owner; see the last clause of verse 4, below.

7 Part of judging correctly is knowing why the accused did it. Since 'knowing the motives of the hearts' is generally beyond us [even our own at times], we had better leave the judging up to the Judge.

8 I was brought up on the AV that says: "then shall every man have praise of God", which led me to believe that everyone would get some praise. However, I believe the Text says something different, as indicated in my rendering. Paul is not affirming that all will get praise (of what use is 'praise' to someone in the Lake of fire?), but that the Judge will distribute whatever praise is merited.

9 Written where? By whom? I suppose the reference is to principles in the Scriptures.

you did not receive?[1] So if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as
though you did not? 8You are already stuffed! You are already rich! You
have become 'kings' without us! I could wish that you really did reign,
so that we might be kings with you too![2]

The cost of being an apostle

9For I keep thinking that God has displayed us, the apostles, at the
end of the line, like men sentenced to death;[3] because we have been
made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10We are fools
for Christ while you are wise in Christ! We are weak but you are strong!
You are esteemed, we are despised! 11To this very hour we go hungry
and thirsty; we are poorly dressed, brutally treated, and wander
homeless; 12yes, we labor, working with our own hands. Upon being
reviled, we bless; upon being persecuted, we endure it; 13upon being
slandered, we exhort. We have been made as the refuse of the world, the
off-scouring of whatever, to this moment.[4]

Children imitate fathers

14I am not writing these things to shame you; I am admonishing
you as my dear children. 15Because even if you were to have thousands
of tutors in Christ, you would not have many fathers, because I am the
one who begot you in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel. 16Therefore I am
urging you, become my imitators.[5] 17That is why I sent you Timothy,
who is my beloved and faithful son in Sovereign, who will remind you of
my ways in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every congregation.

Not in word but in power

18Now some have been puffed up, as though I were not coming to
you. 19But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know,

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[1] Here is the fundamental recipe against boasting. None of us chose who our parents would be, where we would be born, what language would be our native tongue. But these circumstances dictate the opportunities that a person will have, quite apart from talents and abilities. Things that were given to us do not form a proper basis for boasting.

[2] Presumably a bit of sarcasm.

[3] The reference seems to be to a returning Roman commander's victory march, where some of the conquered enemy soldiers would be displayed at the end of the line, and be executed later.

[4] Wow, what a 'job description'! Any applicants? How many of the plague of self-styled 'apostles' in our day meet these qualifications? We need to understand what Paul is saying here. To be looked down on and criticized by believers among whom one has labored is one thing. Local people with personal ambition know how to do that. For God to make us "as the refuse of the world" is something very different. How should we understand this? If we insist on proclaiming a 'gospel' that the world considers to be stupid, abject foolishness, we will certainly be ridiculed. But if we insist on biblical values that the world has declared to be 'hate crimes', we will certainly be hated and persecuted, treated as refuse. The choice of Hebrews 13:13 is upon us: "So then, let us go out to Him, outside the camp, bearing His disgrace."

[5] Our spiritual children will naturally look to us for example. If people imitate us, how badly will they be damaged?

not the word of those who have been puffed up, but the power. **20**Because the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power.[1] **21**What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a gentle spirit?

The nature of the Christian life

Immorality must be punished

5 **1**It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as not even pagans talk about[2]—that someone has his father's wife! **2**And you are puffed up and not even grieved, so as to exclude the one who has done this deed from your fellowship. **3**For I indeed, as present in spirit[3] though absent in body, have already judged

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[1] Here is a plain statement. On this basis, how many churches and ministries that you know of are part of God's Kingdom? Notice that I did not capitalize 'word'; the reference is presumably to human speech, not the Sword.

[2] It was reported that a man had his father's wife, a type of fornication such that not even the pagans talked about it. However, the eclectic Greek text currently in vogue (following 3.2% of the Greek manuscripts—this includes the earliest ones, that are of objectively inferior quality) affirms that this type of incest does not even exist among the pagans, a plain falsehood. Every conceivable type of sexual perversion has existed throughout human history. Strangely, such evangelical versions as NIV, NASB, LB and Berkley propagate this error.

[3] Interpreters have generally spiritualized 'present in spirit', but I suspect that it may be literal. A number of people who converted out of Spiritism have told me personally that they used to project their spirits away from their bodies (with demonic assistance), something that Spiritists and Satanists openly avow (they call it 'astral projection'). When I lived among an indigenous people in the Amazon jungle, the shamans claimed the same thing. At first I resisted the idea, but the accumulated evidence became too strong.

Then I began to think of possible cases in the Bible. In 2 Kings 5:26 Elisha tells Jehazi that his 'heart' went along and witnessed what he did. According to 2 Kings 6:12 apparently Elisha projected his spirit over to the Syrian king's bedroom! How about the Lord Jesus? In Mark 6:47-48 the boat was in 'the middle of the sea', or several miles from land (John 6:19), and it was night; yet Jesus 'saw them straining at the rowing' (He perceived by the eye). In John 1:48 Jesus tells Nathanael that He saw him 'under the fig tree' (perceived by the eye), something that was physically impossible; so much so that Nathanael immediately declares Him to be God. (See also Matthew 17:25, and so on.) How about Paul? In Colossians 2:5 Paul says that he 'observes' their orderliness. The basic meaning of the verb rendered 'observe' is to observe with the physical eye, which implies being within range and with no obstacles. But Paul obviously was not there as he wrote, in fact had never been there. He affirms that it is his spirit that is doing the seeing and rejoicing.

The Protestant Reformation was a result, in part, of the Renaissance, with its emphasis on reason, so Protestants in general have had trouble understanding the spirit world. So the tendency of commentators has been to 'spiritualize' Paul's statement, rather than take it literally. Of course they have done the same with 2 Kings 5:26 and 6:12, not to mention John 1:48. Here in Brazil we have many former Spiritists and Satanists who have been converted and they affirm that they used to project their spirits outside their bodies and go all over the place—several of my former students, now genuinely converted, have told me they used to do it—but they could do so only with the assistance of a fallen angel (demon). Satan's 'thing' is to be like the Most-High, so he is always trying to imitate Him; perhaps God's servants used to know how to do this, only without such assistance [I have heard of a few in our day who still do].

the one who created this situation, as though I were present: 4in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,[1] you and my spirit being together, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,[2] 5we must hand such a one over to Satan for a destruction of the 'flesh', that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.[3]

Down with moral 'yeast'

6Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7Therefore purge out the old leaven, so that you can be a new batch, like you are, without yeast. Especially since Christ our Passover has been sacrificed in our place.[4] 8So then let us observe the feast,[5] not with old leaven, nor with the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened loaves of sincerity and truth.

Avoid contaminators

9I wrote to you in my letter[6] not to associate with fornicators—10not of course the fornicators of this world, or the greedy, or the swindlers, or the idolaters; since then you would have to exit the world! 11But now I write you not to associate with anyone who calls himself a brother who is a fornicator, or greedy, or an idolater, or abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such.[7]

12Now just why should it be up to me to judge those who are outside? Will you not judge those who are inside? 13Those who are outside God

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Returning to 1 Corinthians 5, notice that in verse 4 Paul says, "you and my spirit being together", which sounds sort of literal to me.

1 Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

2 Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

3 I do not understand this. If while in the group the man fell into such sin, how can excommunicating him (verse 13) and turning him over to Satan bring about an improvement? I would expect Satan to lock him up tight. Unless it be that the shock treatment would somehow wake the man up. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Jesus", to be followed by NIV, LB, TEV, etc.

4 Some 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "in our place", to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.

5 Presumably the Passover (our Easter)—having mentioned Christ as our Passover lamb, he applies the idea to their daily life. The Passover lamb did not solve the problem of sin; it saved any firstborn in the house from physical death.

6 Evidently this was a prior missive, so this present letter is really number two. Not everything that Paul wrote was inspired; anything not inspired would not be included in the N.T. Canon.

7 Since we cannot exit the world, we are obliged to deal with the sinners in it; but we do so without identifying with them and their life style. But within the circle of believers there is identification, communion, mutual commitment, and a life style very different from that of the world [well, at least it is supposed to be]. What is at stake is not only the spiritual power of the congregation, but also its testimony before the world—someone who wants to keep on sinning like the world has not been transformed and does not belong in the circle, and this should be made very clear to one and all. Paul is saying that they should not do anything that could be construed as an acceptance of his conduct.

will judge, and you must exclude the wicked one from among you.

Down with lawsuits!

6 [1]How can anyone of you who has a dispute with another dare to have it judged before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? [2]Do you not know that the saints are to be judging the world?[1] So if the world is to be judged by you, are you not competent to judge the smallest matters? [3]Do you not know that we will judge angels?[2] How much more the things of this life![3] [4]Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint those who are least esteemed in the congregation to judge![4] [5]I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is not a single wise man among you who would be competent to judge between a man and his brother? [6]Instead, brother goes to law against brother, and this before unbelievers! [7]Actually, the very fact that you have lawsuits among you already represents a defeat for you.[5] Why do you not rather accept

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[1] The question, "Do you not know?" indicates that if the person addressed does not know, he should, and his ignorance is culpable. For Paul to write in this way, his addressees had to have had a reasonable opportunity of knowing, or it would be an unfair gambit on Paul's part. On such a topic the information should be available in God's written revelation, and I believe it is. Consider Psalm 149:5-9. "Let the saints exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the written judgment. This honor is for all His saints."

Note that the saints are in their beds! So the activity that is described in the following verses must take place in the spiritual realm. I assume that the 'kings' and 'nobles' includes both men and fallen angels. It seems clear to me that the intent of the Text is that we be doing this right now, in this life. There is no lack of 'written judgments' to be imposed: Zechariah 5:2-4, against thieves and liars; Proverbs 20:10, against those who use diverse weights and measures; Isaiah 10:1-2, against those who make unjust laws; Romans 1:26-32, against homosexuals and a variety of others (note that verse 32 says that "those who practice such things **are** deserving of death", 'are' not 'were'—since Romans was written after Pentecost, within the Age of Grace and of the Church, this judgment still applies). God's moral character cannot change; Psalm 34:16 says: "The face of Jehovah is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Presumably before wiping out the remembrance He will have to cut off the evil people themselves.

Returning to 1 Corinthians 6:2, the only difference between present and future tense for 'judge' is the accent, and since the earliest Greek manuscripts generally do not have accents, in them the verb is ambiguous as to tense. Most, but not all, later manuscripts accent the verb as future and every version that I have seen follows suit. But if Paul is thinking of Psalm 149, then the present tense is correct—in fact, the immediately following passive form of the verb is present tense. I take Paul's point to be: if we are supposed to be judging the world, how can we possibly ask the world to judge us? To do so is illogical.

[2] When will this happen? I do not know, but see the note above. In any case, the implication is clear that we are superior to them.

[3] Obviously, if we are to judge the things of this life, it has to be during this life!

[4] This is almost cute. In effect Paul is saying that the humblest believer will be a more competent judge than whatever is in the world! Of course, a genuine believer will have the Holy Spirit, who makes the difference.

[5] They are allowing themselves to be controlled by the world's values—clearly a defeat!

wrong? Why not rather accept being cheated? 8No, you yourselves do the wronging and cheating, and to brothers!

How to avoid inheriting the Kingdom

9Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,[1] nor catamites,[2] nor sodomites, 10nor the greedy, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor the abusive, nor swindlers can inherit the Kingdom of God, absolutely. 11And that is what some of you were;[3] but you were bathed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.[4]

*Fornication is **bad**!*

12All things are 'permissible' for me, but not all things are expedient. All things are 'permissible' for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 13Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them.[5] Now the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.[6] 14Further, God both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by His power. 15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Not ever! 16Can you not know that the one who joins himself with a prostitute is one body *with her*? For "the two," He says, "will become one flesh."[7] 17But he who is joined with the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

18Flee from fornication! Every sin that a man may commit is outside the body, but he who fornicates sins against his own body.[8] 19Do you not

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[1] Note that 'fornicators' and 'adulterers' receive separate mention, so they cannot refer to the same thing. 'Adultery' does not include 'fornication', nor vice versa.

[2] 'Catamites' refers to those who fulfill the role of 'female' in anal sex, the 'passive' partner. 'Sodomites' refers to those who fulfill the 'male' role in anal sex. A catamite is someone who participates voluntarily; a victim of rape is altogether different. Please note that the Holy Spirit, through Paul, is emphatic: practicing homosexuals absolutely will not inherit the Kingdom of God—period!

[3] Paul makes clear that it is possible to be saved out of any of the practices mentioned, but anyone who dies while still practicing is out, 'absolutely'.

[4] The Spirit is the agent.

[5] We have to eat to live, but anyone who lives to eat will face an angry Creator.

[6] At first glance this seems awkward; however, that the body is not for fornication is obvious—that is not why the Creator gives us bodies. And we are to consecrate our bodies to the Lord's service, but how is "the Lord for the body"? I don't know, unless it be that 'body' is used with two different meanings, first referring to our physical body, next referring to the Church.

[7] See Genesis 2:24.

[8] Precisely. Verse 16 above states plainly that whoever joins himself to a prostitute becomes one flesh with her. "The two will become one flesh" is not a poetic expression; it is a medical fact. During coitus there is an exchange of enzymes, such that the participants are affected in their bodies, literally. It follows that a promiscuous person is damaging his body, progressively. But it may be worse even than that. Proverbs 6:32 says: "Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul." Verses 33-35 describe the social consequences, but I believe the participants suffer consequences within themselves as well. I suspect that along with

know that your[1] body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? **20**Because you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.[2]

About marriage

7 **1**Now concerning the things about which you wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. **2**But because of the fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.[3] **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; similarly also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. **5**Do not deprive one another except by mutual consent for a season, so that you may devote yourselves to fasting[4] and to prayer, and come together again so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.[5]

6Now I say this[6] as a concession, not as a command **7**(though I wish that all men were even as I myself; but each has his own gift from God, one like this and one like that). **8**Yes I say to the unmarried and the widows: it is good for them if they should remain even as I;[7] **9**but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry; since it is better to marry than to burn.[8]

Mixed marriages

10Now to the married I command (not I but the Lord): a wife is not to be separated from her husband **11**(but if she does separate herself,[9] 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 an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. **13**And a woman who has an unbelieving husband

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the enzymes goes a bit of the soul, so a professional prostitute has a seriously weakened soul, and a promiscuous male keeps on lousing up his soul, quite apart from the physical consequences. No wonder the Text says to flee!!

1 In 3:16 the pronoun was plural, here it is also plural, but since 'body' is singular, the reference appears to be to each person's body.

2 The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits, "and in your spirit, which are God's", following 3.7% of the Greek manuscripts—this includes the earliest ones, that are of objectively inferior quality (it is followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

3 Observe that it is just one wife, and just one husband.

4 Less than 7% of the Greek manuscripts omit "to fasting and", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. (It is a simple case of 'like ending'.)

5 The whole paragraph is talking about sexual intercourse.

6 I take the pronoun to be cataphoric, referring to what follows (most are anaphoric, referring to something in the prior context).

7 As a practicing Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus would almost certainly have been married, so at this point he is presumably a widower.

8 This is usually understood as 'burn with passion', but if practicing fornicators do not enter the Kingdom, the more literal meaning may obtain.

9 Note that it is the woman taking the initiative, for whatever reason.

and he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14For 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 consecrated.[1] 15But if the unbeliever separates, let him separate—in such cases the brother or the sister is not enslaved, but God has called us to peace.[2] 16For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?[3]

About other situations

17Otherwise, as God has distributed to each, as the Lord has called each one, so let him live (this is what I command in all the congregations). 18Was anyone already circumcised when called? Let him not reverse it.[4] Was anyone uncircumcised when called? Let him not be circumcised.[5] 19Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, compared to keeping God's commandments. 20Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. 21Were you called while a slave? Do not let it bother you, but if you can really become free, do so. 22For the one in the Lord who was called while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Similarly, the one who was called while free is Christ's slave. 23You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24Brothers, let each one remain with God in the social condition in which he was called.[6]

About virgins

25Now about the virgins I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who has obtained mercy from the Lord to be trustworthy. 26I consider therefore that this is good because of the current distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: 27Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek release. Have you been released from a

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[1] The believing parent consecrates the child to God.

[2] In verses 10 and 11, where both are believers (evidently), the Lord forbids divorce and re-marriage. Here in verse 15 the subject is a mixed marriage where the unbeliever wants out (verses 12-14 make clear that the believer is not to take the initiative in a separation). There are those who argue that if the unbeliever leaves, the believer is free to re-marry, but how can that be true? If re-marriage is not allowed if a believing partner leaves (verses 10-11), with what logic can it be argued that the rule changes if the partner is an unbeliever? It simply does not follow. On the contrary, the believer is called upon to make a special effort to win the other. However, if the unbeliever is determined to leave, an effort by the believer to go along at any cost will only prolong a climate of strife, and God has called us to peace. The point of marriage is not to make one's life a hell on earth—it is better to live alone than in unrelenting strife.

[3] In any place where the Gospel arrives for the first time, it is predictable that at first only one partner in a marriage will convert. This causes a strained atmosphere in the home, but if they can stick it out, the second partner stands a good chance of converting as well.

[4] Attempting to reverse a circumcision was a known surgical procedure at that time, but would be totally unnecessary for a Christian.

[5] Dear me, Paul, so why did you circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3)?

[6] We are not to fret, but if the Lord opens the opportunity to improve our situation, I take it that we may (and should) do so, as with the slave.

wife? Do not seek a wife. 28However, should you marry, you have not sinned;[1] and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Still, such will have trouble in the flesh, and I want to spare you.[2]

A sense of urgency

29Now I say this, brothers, the time has been shortened, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30and those who weep as though not weeping, and those who rejoice as though not rejoicing, and those who buy as though not possessing, 31and those who use this world as though not abusing it; because this world's mode is passing away.[3]

Marriage again

32Now I want you to be without anxiety. He who is unmarried cares about the things of the Lord: how he will please the Lord. 33While he who is married cares about the things of the world: how he will please his wife.[4] 34The wife and the virgin are also different. She who is unmarried cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; while she who is married cares about the things of the world: how she will please her husband. 35I am saying this for your own profit, not to put a leash on you, but for what is appropriate, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.[5]

36Now if anyone thinks he is behaving inappropriately toward his virgin, if she is past her prime and thus it should be, let him do what he desires; he does not sin; let them marry. 37But he who stands steadfast in his heart, not having necessity, but has control over his own will, and has determined in his heart to preserve his own virginity, does well. 38So then, he who gives *himself* in marriage does well, but he who does not give *himself* in marriage does better.[6]

39A woman is bound by law for as long as her husband lives, but if the man should die, she is free to be married to whom she wishes—only

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[1] Verses 26-28[a] are addressed to males.

[2] Since we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, we should ask His specific direction before taking on such a serious responsibility.

[3] If the time was short two thousand years ago, it is now that much shorter. The point is that our lives should revolve around Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, not around our own desires and ambitions. There is no lack of marriage seminars that teach how to make each other happy, as if that were the major purpose in life. Not so. Everything in our lives should be subordinated to the interests of Christ's Kingdom, not stroking each other's ego. We like to forget 1 John 2:15-17, but to do so is not smart.

[4] Paul is not being sarcastic; he is just stating a plain fact (as we who are married know).

[5] The level of our commitment to Christ and His Kingdom has a direct bearing upon the 'strength' of physical distractions.

[6] Verse 38 is difficult, because the verb here (to give in marriage) seems to occur only in the NT, and not many times there. But the verb is transitive, and no direct object is given in the Text. In the context, 'himself' should be supplied, since an unknown father giving an unknown daughter does not fit.

in the Lord. 40But she is more blessed if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have God's Spirit.

About things offered to idols

8 1Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 2And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he has come to know nothing yet as he ought to know.[1] 3But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.[2]

Idols are really nothing

4Therefore, concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and no one else is God except the One. 5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on the earth (since there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'), 6yet for us there is one God, the Father, out of whom are all things and we into Him, and one Sovereign Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through Him.[3]

Respect the other's conscience

7However, this knowledge is not in everyone; but some, with consciousness[4] of the idol, still eat it as offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we better off, nor if we do not eat are we worse off.[5]

9But take care lest somehow this 'right' of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10For if someone who is weak sees you with your knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not his conscience be emboldened to eat things offered to idols? 11And so the weak brother, for whom Christ died, will be wasted because of your knowledge. 12But when you thus sin against the brothers and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13So then, if food causes my brother to fall, I will never eat meat again, lest I cause my brother to fall.[6]

The 'rights' of an apostle

9 1Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our

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[1] It is probably true that none of us has complete knowledge on any subject. It follows that we should refrain from acting as if we did!

[2] That is one way to make sure God knows who you are!

[3] Everything starts with the Father, including the possibility that we become His children. Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:10 and John 1:10 make clear that the Son was the principal agent in the Creation (although the Trinity was doubtless involved), which includes our own existence.

[4] Instead of "with consciousness of", less than 5% of the Greek manuscripts have 'accustomed to', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.—clearly an inferior proceeding.

[5] Spiritually speaking.

[6] The 'fall' here is serious, including the possibility that he may not get up again. This is sometimes called the 'law of love', giving up a right for the sake of a brother.

Lord?[1] Are you not my work in the Lord? 2If I am not an apostle to others,
yet at least I am to you, because you are the seal of my apostleship in
the Lord. 3My defense to those who are judging me is this: 4Do we have
no right to eat and drink? 5Do we have no right to take along a believing
wife, just as the rest of the apostles and the Lord's brothers[2] and Ceph-
as? 6Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to forego working?
7Who ever serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard
and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink[3] of
its milk? 8I am not saying these things as a mere man, am I? Does not
the Law also say the same? 9For it stands written in the Law of Moses:
"You shall not muzzle an ox that is threshing."[4] Is it really about the
oxen that God is concerned,[5] 10or does He surely say it for our sakes?
Yes, it was written for us, that he who plows should plow in hope, and
he who threshes in hope should partake of his hope.

To live from the Gospel

11Since we planted spiritual things in you, is it a big deal if we reap
material things from you? 12If others have a share in this right from you,
do not we even more? Nevertheless, we have not used this right, but we
put up with everything so as not to cause any hindrance to the Gospel
of Christ. 13Do you not know that those who minister the sacred things
eat from the temple, and those who serve at the altar have a share in
the altar? 14So also the Lord has instructed those who proclaim the
Gospel to live from the Gospel.[6]

To forego a right

15Now I have not used any of these rights, nor have I written these
things that it should be done so in my case; for it would be better for me
to die than that anyone should make my boasting void—16I cannot boast
because I preach the Gospel, because I am compelled to do so; indeed,
woe is me if I do not preach it! 17(If I do this of my own volition, I have a
reward; but if otherwise, I have been entrusted with a commission.) 18So
what is my reward? That when I evangelize I may present the Gospel of

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[1] One of the requirements for a replacement for Judas Iscariot was to have seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:22). Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

[2] This refers to the sons that Mary had with Joseph after Jesus was born. 'Cephas' was another name for Peter.

[3] Actually the Text says 'eat', but milk is a liquid; unless it be that Paul is thinking of cheese, that is derived from milk.

[4] See Deuteronomy 25:4.

[5] Obviously human beings are more important to God than are the animals, but God is telling us to treat the animals with some consideration.

[6] When was that? When Jesus sent out the twelve and later the seventy, He told them not to take money but to depend on the hospitality of those to whom they ministered. Later on, however, He reversed that instruction, but "to live" refers to basic needs, not luxury.

Christ[1] without charge, so as not to use my rights in the Gospel.[2]

All things to all men

19 Though being free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all,
in order that I might win the more: 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew,
that I might win Jews; to those under law as under law, that I might
win those under law; 21 to those without law as without law (not being
without law toward God but under law toward Christ), that I might win
those 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 I do this for the sake of the Gospel, so as to become its
partner.[3]

Even an apostle can be rejected

24 Do you not know that in a stadium race all the runners run, but
one gets the prize? Run like that, so that you may win. 25 All athletic
competitors exercise general self-control—they do it in order to receive
a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. 26 So that is how I 'run',
with a definite goal; that is how I fight, with well-aimed blows. 27 Yes, I
discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, having preached to
others, I myself should be rejected.[4]

Learn from Israel

10 1 Now I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that our fathers
were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea—2 all were
baptized into Moses by the cloud and by the sea—3 and all ate the same
spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; because they kept
drinking from a spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that Rock
was the Christ.[5] 5 For all that, God was not pleased with most of them—
their *carcasses* were scattered around the desert![6]

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1 Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "of Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

2 If you only do something because you are compelled, because you can't get out of it, you get no credit for it. Paul preaches the Gospel because he has to, he is compelled, so gets no credit. But Paul wants some credit, some reward! So how can he get it? Not by preaching, since that is obligatory—by preaching without charge! Paul has the right to charge but foregoes it so as to get some credit/reward. Evidently this was rather important to him (verse 15)—I confess that I don't understand why he said it would be better to die. (Perhaps it was a bit of hyperbole.)

3 If you are a partner, you get a share of the profits; evidently Paul's share was being deposited in the Bank of Heaven.

4 This is a strong term. If Paul was concerned, we had better be too! Note that this has to do with disciplining the body.

5 I would say that wherever Jehovah appears in the Old Testament it is Jehovah the Son, who became the Christ at His incarnation. But in what sense did they keep "drinking from a spiritual rock that accompanied them"? The physical rock did not move around, presumably, but the "spiritual rock" did.

6 The apostle is not concerned to spare our sensibilities; quite the contrary. He is issuing a very strong warning. God's blessing does not necessarily indicate His approval.

Examples

6Now these things became examples for us, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. **7**And do not become idolaters, just like some of them; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to amuse themselves."[1] **8**And let us not fornicate, just as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand died![2] **9**Neither let us test the Christ, just as also some of them did—and were destroyed by the snakes![3] **10**And do not grumble, just as also some of them did—and were executed by the destroyer![4]

11Now all these things happened to them as examples and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends[5] of the ages have come. **12**So then, let him who thinks he stands be careful that he does not fall! **13**No testing[6] has overtaken you except what is common to man, and God is competent,[7] who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you can stand, but with the testing will also provide the way out, that you may be able to endure it.[8]

Eschew idolatry!

14Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry! **15**I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.[9] **16**The cup of blessing that we bless,[10] is it not a sharing of the blood of Christ?[11] The bread that we break, is it not a sharing of the body of Christ?[12] **17**Since the loaf is one, we, the many,

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1 See Exodus 32:6.

2 See Numbers 25:1-9. Another thousand died after the first day, giving a total of twenty-four thousand deaths.

3 See Numbers 21:6-9.

4 See Numbers 14:37 and 16:49. Just because God is no longer striking us down like that, people think they are getting away with doing the same things. They are in for an unpleasant surprise. If the examples were written "for our admonition", it is because they are still relevant to us.

5 One would expect the singular here, but the Text is plainly plural. Well, I suppose each of the ages (plural) would have a distinct end, and the effect could be cumulative. Further, at the Rapture of the Church, this age of grace will end, which for us will be the end of the ages.

6 The Greek word here can mean either 'test' or 'tempt' (test with a moral nuance), depending on the context. James 1:13 states plainly that God does not tempt us, and since in this context God is clearly involved, the correct choice is 'test'.

7 The best line of transmission (albeit representing only a third of the manuscripts) has 'competent' rather than 'faithful'; that fits very well with the idea of testing, especially if it is God who is doing it.

8 This is an important declaration, although I suppose we have all had moments when we wondered if we would continue to 'stand'. The Text affirms that there will always be a way out—not always easy to 'see'.

9 This is cataphoric; they are to judge what follows.

10 Those officiating bless the 'cup', which then blesses those who partake. Yes, to partake worthily brings blessing.

11 Although one finds it difficult to agree with the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, that the words of the one officiating transform the wine into literal blood, Paul evidently takes a very serious view of the 'Lord's Table'. It is not a mere symbolism.

12 "The body of Christ" here refers to His physical body on the cross, just as "the blood of Christ" refers to His blood shed on the cross.

are one body, because we all partake of that single loaf.[1] 18Consider the physical Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

Idol = demon

19So what am I getting at? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20Rather, that the things pagans sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to become participants with the demons.[2] 21You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22Are we going to provoke the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

About conscience

23All things are 'permissible' for me,[3] but not all things are expedient. All things are 'permissible' for me, but not all things edify. 24Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*. 25Eat whatever is being sold in the meat market, asking no question for the sake of conscience; 26since "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."[4] 27If some unbeliever invites you and you decide to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no questions for the sake of conscience. 28But if anyone says, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the speaker and of the conscience; since "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."[5] 29'Conscience' I say, not your own, but that of the other.

Do all to the glory of God

Now just why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? 30If I partake with thanks, why be slandered over something I give thanks for?[6] 31Therefore, whether you eat or you drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.[7] 32Give no offense, either to Jews or to

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[1] Evidently they did not cut/break the bread up into little pieces beforehand—there was a whole loaf on the table.

[2] Obviously demons exist. The visible idols represent invisible demons. When you worship an idol you subordinate yourself to its demon. There are 'idols' that are not physical images.

[3] Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "for me" (both times in this verse), to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. The difference in meaning is significant.

[4] See Psalm 24:1.

[5] At first blush this repetition of the quote seems out of place. I suppose Paul's point to be that the stated truth cuts both ways: it allows me to eat or to refrain. Indeed, some 8% of the Greek manuscripts omit the repetition, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

[6] Paul wants to avoid being slandered, even if it is for doing something good and legitimate.

[7] Here is a basic principle that furnishes us with the key for deciding about doubtful things, and things produced by modern technology that are not mentioned in the Bible. If I want to go watch a movie, I should ask myself, "Why do I want to do this? Is it for the glory of God?" If I want to buy a new, super-duper cell phone, I should ask the same questions. If we really want to please God, we will give an honest answer and act accordingly.

Greeks or to the Church of God[1]—[33]even as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own profit but that of the many, that they may be saved.

11 [1]Become my imitators, just as I am Christ's.[2]

The nature of Church life

About women

[2]Now I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in all things and hold the traditions just as I delivered them to you. [3]But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, while a wife's head is the man and Christ's head is God. [4]Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. [5]But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her own head—it is one and the same as if it had been shaved. [6]So if a woman does not cover herself, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.[3]

[7]Indeed, a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and pride-and-joy of God;[4] but woman is the pride-and-joy of man.[5] [8]For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; [9]and neither was

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[1] This text makes clear that during the Church Age there are three categories of people: Jews, non-Jews and the Church (made up of both Jews and non-Jews who are in Christ). Before Pentecost there were two categories: Jews and non-Jews. There are those who think that after Pentecost there were still just two: Church and non-Church, wherein the Church replaced Israel. But it is not so; Israel still exists as a separate entity in God's plan. Chapters nine, ten and eleven of Romans go into some detail on this point.

[2] Well now, how many of us would have the nerve to say that to someone? It is a good goal to aim for.

[3] This does not make for very popular teaching nowadays, but there it is. But is it "shameful" before God, or before men? If only before men, it is not sin.

[4] Verses 7 to 9 hark back to the first two chapters of Genesis. Verse 7 says that the male (*ανηρ*) is the image of God. Paul cited Genesis 1:27 with precision: "God created the man in His own image; in the image of God He created him"—the pronoun "him" is masculine and singular. So then, the man, Adam, was created in the image of God. When the Text refers to the creation of the woman, the image is not mentioned, and Paul followed that example. Genesis 2:7 and 18-23 make clear that the man was created first, with an interval before the woman was created.

[5] The vocabulary item that I rendered as 'pride-and-joy' is usually translated as 'glory', but this context is not referring to brightness. In just what sense could the man be the 'glory' of God? The Text makes clear that God attributes a special importance to the man. We may understand that our planet was created precisely to serve as a habitat for him. Genesis 3:8 says that Jehovah would walk in the garden in the cool of the day, and in verse 9 He called the man, "Adan, where are you?" We many understand that Jehovah was in the habit of walking and talking with Adam—it was something He enjoyed doing. Calamitously, the Fall deprived the Creator of that pleasure. But 2 Chronicles 16:9, and especially John 4:23, make clear that God still misses that communion. Indeed, the whole plan of salvation emphasizes the importance that God attributes to mankind. For all of that, I chose 'pride-and-joy'. As for the woman, the simple fact that Adam chose to accompany the woman in the Fall shows how important she was to him. Throughout the history of this planet, there have been wars fought over a woman, and so on.

man created for the woman, but woman for the man[1]—10for this reason the woman needs to have authority upon her head, because of the angels[2]—11neverthe-less, in the Lord neither is man independent of woman nor woman independent of man. 12Because as the woman came from the man, so also the man comes through the woman;[3] but all things are from God.

13Judge among yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God uncovered? 14Does not nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? 15But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her, because that hair has been given for a covering.

16But if anyone decides to be contentious, neither we nor the congregations of God have any other practice.[4]

About the Lord's Supper

Some local abuses

17Now in giving the following instruction I do not praise you, since you are not coming together for the better but for the worse. 18Because, to begin, I hear that when you come together in an assembly there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it. 19For there would really need to be factions among you so that the 'approved' ones may be recognized among you.[5]

20So when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21Because in eating, each one tries to get his meal first,[6] and one goes hungry while another gets drunk! 22Now really, do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise God's congregation, and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? Indeed not!

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[1] The Creator's purpose in making the woman was to give the man an appropriate helper, which means that it is the man who is supposed to have a project, to which his wife is supposed to contribute.

[2] I believe verse ten constitutes an aside that derives from verse nine, not from verses five and six. The general practice in the versions of adding 'symbol of' before 'authority' is unwarranted and does damage to the Text. The woman was created for the man, but since there are no female angels, the angels are very fascinated by the female of our species (remember Genesis 6). For this reason, women need the protection of male authority. (Those feminists who peremptorily reject any semblance of male authority are just asking for a demon, and what little demon is going to object?)

[3] That is to say, every man since Adam receives birth through a woman. It is obvious that the continued existence of our race requires both sexes.

[4] Back in verse 2 above Paul mentions 'traditions', and traditions are not the same as commandments. To disobey God's commands is sin, but what of disobeying a tradition? The impression I gain is that disobeying a tradition is not sin, although it does have consequences.

[5] I take it that Paul is using a bit of irony here, but maybe not—to have levels of society in a congregation there must be criteria to define such levels. But does God want levels of society in a congregation?

[6] Compare verses 33-34 below.

How the Lord inaugurated it

23For I received from the Lord that which I also transmitted to you:
The Lord Jesus, during the night in which He was betrayed, took bread;
24and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said: "Take, eat; this
is my body that is being broken[1] on your behalf; do this in remembrance
of me." 25In the same way, after they had dined, He took the cup, saying:
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink
it, in remembrance of me." 26For whenever you eat this bread and drink
this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death,[2] until He comes.

Be careful to partake worthily

27So then whoever eats this bread or drinks the Lord's cup unwor-
thily will be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. 28But let a
man examine himself, and then let him eat of the bread and drink of the
cup. 29Because he who eats and drinks unworthily[3] eats and drinks judg-
ment to himself, not distinguishing the Lord's[4] body. 30Because of this
many among you are weak and sick, and a good many have died.[5]

31If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32But when
we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we may not be
condemned with the world.[6]

33So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one

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1 The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'take, eat' (following 8.3% of the Greek manuscripts) and 'broken' (following some 2% of the manuscripts); and so NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. do the same.

2 The bread and the cup have to do with the physical body that died on the cross, not with the Church.

3 About 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "unworthily", to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.

4 The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'Lord's' (following just 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, to be followed in turn by such versions as NASB and LB). Here in Brazil there are many who claim, based on this variant, that 'the body' here is the church, not Jesus' physical body. So they walk around, trading bread and wine with each other, laughing, talking, slapping each other on the back, having a general good time [their way of distinguishing the church]. Surely the appropriate way to 'remember the Lord's death' is to be in an attitude of penitent thanksgiving, confessing any sin, renewing one's commitment—this is something you do alone with God. Those who party instead of examine may well discover that they were partaking unworthily.

5 Ever since the Flood the Creator has imposed and exacted the death penalty for those who shed innocent blood (Genesis 9:5-6). There are dozens of passages in the Old Testament that deal with the theme of blood guiltiness. Here are a few: Exodus 21:12, "shall surely be put to death"; Exodus 21:14, a murderer was even to be dragged away from the altar and killed; Numbers 35:31, "you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer, …he shall surely be put to death"; 2 Kings 24:4, "he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD **would not pardon**". Here in verses 27 and 30 Paul says that God had killed 'a good many' because they were 'guilty of the blood of the Lord'. Romans 1:32, written decades after Pentecost, affirms that murderers are still deserving of death. We all need the shed blood of God's Lamb for cleansing from sin, but please do not take it lightly!

6 Remember Hebrews 12:6.

another. 34But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together into judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

About spiritual gifts

12 1Now concerning the spiritual things, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. 2You know that when you were pagans you were always led toward the mute idols,[1] being carried away. 3Therefore I inform you that no one speaking by God's Spirit calls Jesus accursed, and no one can declare Jesus to be Lord[2] except by the Holy Spirit.

4Now there are allotments of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. 5And there are allotments of ministries, and the same Lord. 6And there are allotments of activities, but the same God is He who works them all, in all.[3] 7But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the common good.[4]

A list of gifts

8So to one a word of wisdom is given, by the Spirit; to another a word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; 9to a different one faith, by the same Spirit; to another presents of healings,[5] by the same Spirit; 10to another workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discernings of spirits;[6] to a different one kinds[7] of languages, to another interpretation of languages. 11However, the one and the same Spirit produces all of these things, distributing to each one individually just as

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1 By whom or what? I would say that it was by Satan's emissaries, in one way or another.

2 Of course anyone, including demons, can mouth the phrase, 'Jesus is Lord'; Paul is talking about personal commitment.

3 If gifts, ministries and activities are all allotted by God, then the life of any congregation is supposed to be under His direct control.

4 Nothing that God gives is with the intent of feeding our ego.

5 There is no such thing as 'the gift of healing', at least not in the Text. 'healings' is always a noun, not a verb, and is always plural; 'gifts' is also always plural, never singular. So the Spirit distributes gifts or presents of healings. That said, it also appears to be true that certain people receive an unusual number of such presents, giving rise to a 'ministry of healing'.

6 Why 'discernings' (pl), which is what the Text says? I suppose one could say it was discerning at different times, but if a gift is used more than once, that meaning is automatic. Could it refer to the different kinds of spirit beings? I can think of five: the Holy Spirit, good angels, demons (fallen angels), a normal human spirit, and a projected human spirit (all of which are usually invisible to us, which is why special discernment is needed). I would now say that humanoids (demon with woman) should be added to the list.

7 The Text plainly says 'kinds' (plural) of languages. I never understood this until I heard a student of mine using more than one language. I am a linguist (PhD) and I know when I am listening to a real language (it has structure). This student had (and presumably still has) one language for worship, another for intercession, another for warfare, and I think there was at least one more—they were very different, but were clearly real languages. Later I got to know a competent surgeon who has at least four languages. Whoever claims to have the gift of tongues should have more than one; after all, in all Bibles 'tongues' is plural, and plural means more than one.

He wills.[1]

An analogy from the body

12 Now just as the body is one and has many members, and all the
members of that one body, though being many, are one body, so also is
the Christ. 13 For we also were all baptized into one body by one Spirit[2]—
whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and were all given to
drink into one Spirit.[3] 14 For in fact the body is not one part but many.
15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,"
it would not therefore cease to be of the body. 16 And if the ear should
say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," it would not there-
fore cease to be of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would
be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would the smelling be?
18 But God has really placed the members in the body, each one of them,
just as He pleased.[4] 19 (If the whole were just one member, where would
the body be? 20 But in fact the parts are many but the body one.)[5]

21 Further, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you"; nor
again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." 22 Much to the contrary,
those members of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And
the parts of the body that we consider to be less honorable, on these we
bestow greater honor; and our unpresentables have special modesty,
24 while our presentables do not need it. Yes, God has blended the body,
giving greater honor to the part that lacks it, 25 so that there should be
no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care
for one another; 26 and if one member suffers, all the members should
suffer along, or if one member is honored, all the members should rejoice
along.[6]

Functions in the Church

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And
those whom God has appointed in the Church are: first apostles, second

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1 No one gets a gift just because he wants it; the Holy Spirit has His own criteria for distributing them. However, in verse 31 below we are commanded to desire the best gifts. We are to ask, and the Holy Spirit takes it from there.

2 It is the Holy Spirit who places us into the Body of Christ.

3 The imagery here seems awkward; but if you drink something, it is then inside you, and once regenerate we have the Holy Spirit inside us. But He is much, much bigger than we are, so we wind up inside Him (perhaps a little like swallowing water while swimming).

4 This is true of our physical bodies, but it is also true of any congregation.

5 To the 'Western' mind this may seem redundant, but recall that Paul was a Jew. Can you imagine a body that is nothing more than a huge, monstrous tongue?

6 Since both the *Textus Receptus* and the eclectic Greek text currently in vogue have 'suffer' and 'rejoice' in the Indicative (following 60% of the Greek manuscripts), most versions do too. But the 40% includes the best line of transmission and has the verbs in the Subjunctive. Since Paul is applying the figure of a body to people, it is obvious that although we should share, we are not obliged to do so, and often do not.

prophets, third teachers; after that miracles, then[1] presents of healings, helps, administrations, kinds of languages. **29**All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not miracle workers, are they? **30**All do not have presents of healings, do they? All do not speak languages, do they? All do not interpret, do they?[2] **31**But earnestly desire the best gifts.

About agape love

13 And now I show you a most excellent way.[3] **1**If I speak the languages of men, even of angels,[4] but have not love, I have become a

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[1] It should be observed that the terminology here is clearly hierarchical: '1st, 2nd, 3rd, then, then…' (similar lists in other places lack this terminology) [the Kingdom of God is not a democracy]. Next, if God has appointed these functions, there must be a good reason for them, and to deliberately exclude any of them is to go against God. Here in Brazil, with a few exceptions, the churches have no place for teachers; they simply are not allowed. The consequences are not pretty.

Presumably even the most ardent 'cessationist' will grant that "teachers", "helps" and "administrations" are still around. But this letter was written around 55 AD, well into the Church Age, therefore. Why would God "appoint in the Church" things that would be extinguished in a few decades. If miracles come "after" teachers, how can miracles be gone if teachers are still here? We have the command to "earnestly desire the best gifts", so which ones are the best? Presumably those at the top of the hierarchical list. Why would God command us to earnestly desire a gift like apostleship, if He was going to extinguish it before the end of the first century? In such an event the command would be meaningless for the last 1900 years!

[2] The Greek grammar of verses 29 and 30 is plain: no gift is given to everybody—not everyone is an apostle and not everyone speaks languages. Those churches that teach that speaking in tongues is the necessary sign of being 'baptized in the Spirit' (and until you are 'baptized' you are a 2nd class citizen, if a citizen at all), have done untold damage to their people. Since the Holy Spirit simply does not give 'tongues' to everybody, those who do not get it are out in the cold. But the social pressure is intolerable, so many end up faking it. Since many of the leaders are also faking it, the social problem is solved; the person is 'in'. But since Satan is the source of all lies, someone who fakes it is living a lie and invites Satan into his life. I have been in many Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, charismatic, whatever churches and have heard thousands of people 'speaking in tongues'—a large majority were faking it, while a few were speaking a real language, but under demonic control. A church that teaches a lie invites Satan into the church, and he does not hesitate. Of course some had the genuine gift.

[3] Most versions oppose love to the gifts, either by calling it 'more excellent' or by adding the definite article (that is not in the Text) 'the most excellent'. I seriously doubt that the author had that in mind. The term *huperbolê* refers to an extraordinarily high level of quality, but is not inherently exclusive. Had Paul put the definite article it would be exclusive, but he did not. Since God is not the author of confusion, and since He gives both gifts and love, I would say that they are supposed to work together. See 14:1 below.

[4] I would say that this is an argument *a fortiori*, which being freely translated would be, "If I speak the languages of men, or even of angels (if there were such a thing)." Since angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:13-14) and do not normally have physical bodies (although they can materialize in our world), they do not have literal tongues and ears, and consequently do not use sound to communicate among themselves—I suppose they use some sort of thought transference (something we cannot do, at least not yet). The claim of any group that calls the gibberish they speak an angelic language I consider to be a plain falsehood, besides being a pitiful insult to the angels.

sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains,[1] but have not love, I am nothing. 3Even if I give away all my possessions and hand over my body to be burned,[2] but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Love described

4Love is patient and kind; love does not envy; love does not brag, is not proud, 5is not indecent, is not self-seeking, is not 'short-fused', is not malicious;[3] 6it does not take pleasure in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7it bears all, believes all, hopes all, endures all;[4] 8love never fails.

Love contrasted

Now as for prophecies, they will be set aside; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will be superseded; 9since we know in part and prophesy in part. 10But whenever the complete should come, then the 'in part' will be done away with. 11(When I was a small child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; but when I became a man, I put away the things of the child.) 12Because now we see blurred images as in a metal mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I also am fully known.[5]

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[1] Evidently it takes a special level or quality of faith to actually move a mountain, a level to which I myself have yet to attain.

[2] We have here a rather bothersome set of textual variants. For those who can handle Greek I reproduce the statement of evidence from my Greek Text:
καυθησομαι f^{35} (50.6%) OC || *καυθησωμαι* C (44.7%) HF,RP,TR,CP ||
καυθησεται (1%) || *καυθη* (0.8%) || *καυχησωμαι* P^{46}ℵA,B (1.5%) NU ||
καυχησομαι 048 (0.5%) || four further variants (0.8%).
Until 1991, when the collations for select variant sets done by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster, Germany appeared, statements of evidence presented the Future Subjunctive form (that of the *Textus Receptus*) as being attested by the heavy Byzantine majority. Since Greek grammar does not have a Future Subjunctive, there were those who made sport of the *Textus Receptus* for reproducing a non-existent form—usually they were partisans of the Aorist Subjunctive form, that changes the verb and is attested by only 1.5% of the manuscripts (of objectively inferior quality). We now know that the real majority form is the Future Indicative, but since it immediately follows *ινα*, that usually takes the Subjunctive, many scribes may have made the change virtually without thinking. The verb 'to boast', as in the eclectic Greek text, is totally out of place here—how can you boast with love?

[3] All the negative qualities mentioned derive from self.

[4] Wow! But presumably *agape* love is not blind; it starts out by bearing, believing, hoping and enduring, until confronted with objective contrary evidence. God is love, but He is not blind, and neither is He deceived.

[5] Verses 8b-10 have received more than their fair share of mistreatment, partly because commentators have not linked verse 12 to them (seeing verse 11 as parenthetical). Consider verse 10: "But whenever the complete should come, then the 'in part' will be done away with." If we can pinpoint the 'then', we will have also pinpointed the 'when'; and verse 12 pinpoints the 'then'. When will we see 'face to face', when will we know as we are known? 1 John 3:2 has the answer: "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." It is at the return of Christ that we

13For now these three obtain: faith, hope, love; and the greatest of these is love.[1]

Prophecy is better than Tongues

14 1Pursue love, and desire the spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2Because he who speaks in a 'language' is not speaking to people but to God, since no one understands; in spirit he speaks mysteries. 3But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to people.[2] 4The one speaking in a 'language' edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the congregation. 5I could wish[3] that you all spoke in 'languages', but even more that you might prophesy; because the one prophesying is greater than the one speaking in 'languages'[4] (unless he interprets),[5] so that the congregation may receive edification.

Messages need to be intelligible

6Now then, brothers, what good will I do you if I come to you speaking in 'languages' instead of addressing you with revelation, or with knowledge, or with prophecy, or with teaching? 7Take lifeless things like a flute or a harp; if they make no distinction in the notes when they produce sound, how will it be known what is being piped or harped? 8Also a trumpet; if it gives an indistinct sound, who will prepare for battle? 9So it is with you: if you do not deliver an intelligible message with the 'language', how will it be known what is being said? You will just be speaking into the air. 10There are probably a great many kinds

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will see 'face to face', so "whenever the complete should come" refers to Christ at His second coming.

The problem with 'prophecy', 'tongues' and our present 'knowledge' is that they are 'in part', but after the return of Christ we will have no further need for them. Since Christ has not returned yet, these 'in part' things are still certainly with us. The claim that 'the complete' refers to the completed New Testament canon and that the miraculous gifts ceased when the last shovel of dirt fell on the Apostle John's grave is an historical falsehood, besides doing violence to the Text. Christians who lived during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries, whose writings have come down to us, affirm that the gifts were still in use in their day. No 20th or 21st century Christian, **who was not there**, is competent to contradict them. If it had really been the Holy Spirit's purpose to tell us that the *charismata* would disappear in a few decades, He presumably could have done a much better job of it.

1 We will not need faith and hope in Heaven, but love will continue.

2 Prophecy is not only for foretelling the future, but all true prophecy comes directly from God. Many churches today give 'prophesy/prophecy' an unbiblical meaning, wherein the people tell each other all the good things they hope will happen to them. That is just wishful thinking, not true prophecy.

3 The verb here is ambiguous as to mode; it could be either Indicative or Subjunctive. Since Paul has already stated that not everyone receives 'languages', and that the Holy Spirit distributes as He chooses, the Subjunctive is the correct choice.

4 For someone to argue that he is being humble in seeking and using the lesser gift will not pass muster, because in 12:31 we are <u>commanded</u> to seek the best gifts.

5 According to verse 27 below, only one interpreter should perform his function during a given meeting. So if someone says he is going to interpret his own language, he must have the genuine gift and be able to interpret any other languages. (I have witnessed no end of people faking a language and then faking its interpretation.)

of sounds in the world, and none of them is without significance. 11But if I do not know the force of the sound, I will be a foreigner to the speaker, and he will be a foreigner to me.

12And you too: since you are zealous for spiritual things, aim at the edification of the congregation, that you may *all* grow. 13Therefore the one speaking in a 'language' should pray that someone interpret.[1] 14For if I pray in a 'language', my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15So what then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, but I will also sing with the mind. 16Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the outsider say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? 17You, of course, give thanks quite well, but the other is not edified.

Paul's example

18I thank my God speaking in 'languages' more than you all,[2] 19but in the congregation I would rather speak five words with my understanding, precisely so as to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a 'language'.

20Brothers, stop thinking like children—well, in malice be 'infants', but in thinking be adults. 21In the law it stands written: "I will speak to this people in foreign languages and with different 'lips', but not even then will they listen to me,"[3] says the LORD.

22Therefore the 'languages' are for a sign, not to believers but to unbelievers;[4] while prophesying[5] is not for unbelievers but for believers. 23So if the whole congregation comes together and all are speaking in 'languages', but outsiders or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are raving? 24But if everyone is prophesying, and an unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is reproved by all, he is examined by all. 25And thus the secrets of his heart are exposed, and so, falling on his face he will worship God, affirming, "Truly God is among you!"

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1 The verb, 'to interpret', is in the 3rd person singular. One's first impression is that it refers to the one speaking in a 'language', but someone who has the gift does not need to ask. Verse 28 below says that if no interpreter is present, then those with the gift of 'languages' should keep quiet. On that basis, I conclude that here in verse 13 such a person should ask that an interpreter be present.

2 Since Paul obviously would not use a 'language' in public, he made heavy use of them when alone with God. People who follow Paul's example have told me that it recharges their spiritual 'battery' in short order. No wonder Paul did it!

3 See Isaiah 28:11-12 and Deuteronomy 28:49.

4 Like on the day of Pentecost, to be a 'sign' a 'language' would have to be one that the unbeliever knew, but that the speaker would have no way of knowing. If the unbeliever thinks you are raving (verse 23), where is the 'sign'? To argue that 'tongues' is the sign that you have been 'baptized in the Spirit' does not follow from this verse, since that would be for believers.

5 The term here can mean either 'prophecy' or 'prophesying'; the context calls for the second option. God normally speaks through believers, not unbelievers.

There are limits

[26]So what goes on, brothers? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a 'language', has a revelation, has an interpretation.[1] Let all things be done for edification. [27]If anyone speaks in a 'language', let it be two—at the most three—and in turn, and let one interpret.[2] [28]But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church; let him speak to himself and to God. [29]Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others evaluate.[3] [30]But if another who is sitting by receives a revelation, the first should stop speaking. [31]For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be encouraged. [32]Yes, spirits of prophets are subordinate to prophets.[4] [33]Further, God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Wives are not to speak

As in all the congregations of the saints, [34]your wives[5] should keep silent in the assemblies, for they are not permitted to speak, but to be in subordination, as the law also says. [35]If they want to learn about something, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for women to speak in church.[6] [36]Or was it from you that the Word of God went forth? Or was it only to you that it came?[7]

Paul gets 'authoritative'

[37]If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are the Lord's commands.[8] [38]But if someone knows nothing *about all that*, let him remain so.[9]

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[1] Can it be that there was a little competition going on?

[2] Since someone with the gift of interpreting can interpret any and all such utterances, there should be only one interpreter at work during a particular session.

[3] Prophecy must always be evaluated.

[4] A prophet cannot control what messages he receives from God, but he can control when and how he delivers them (and may even decide not to).

[5] The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'your' (following some 3% of the Greek manuscripts), which allows the translation 'women' rather than 'wives', as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. Since 'wives' excludes single women, the difference is significant.

[6] The crucial factor here is authority, and the underlying need is to protect the structure of the home, the foundational unit of society, including the church. If a woman teaches her husband in church, crossing the street to their house will not make her want to submit to him; the human being just does not work that way. That is why the Text does not allow for female pastors or teachers, since to teach is to exercise authority. But here in verses 34 and 35 Paul goes even further; to protect the husbands' authority, wives should not publicly request an explanation from pastor or teacher, since that could allow a wife to play the teacher against her husband in the home. If a wife requests an explanation from her husband, and he does not know the answer, he can consult the pastor and then transmit the explanation—this preserves the authority structure in the home (which goes back to Genesis 3:16).

[7] Either of these situations would constitute a special privilege, which could give rise to a little spiritual pride.

[8] Was Paul on an ego trip, or was he aware that he was writing under inspiration? Since he says something similar in a number of his letters, it is clear that he believed he was writing Scripture.

[9] I suppose the point to be that someone to whom none of the above is relevant should be left alone. The verb here is transitive, so to translate as 'be ignorant' does not fit. I take

39So then, brothers, seek to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in
'languages'.[1] 40Let all things be done properly and in order.

About resurrection

A review

15 1Now, brothers, I want to add information to the Gospel that I proclaimed to you, that you also received, and in which you stand;
2through which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word that I proclaimed to you—unless you believed in vain.[2] 3Because I transmitted to you at first that which I also received:[3] that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,[4] 5and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the Twelve.[5] 6After that He was seen by over five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, while some have fallen asleep.[6] 7After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8And last of all He was seen by me also, like one born out of season. 9For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. 10But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; in fact, I have worked harder than all of them—well, not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11So whether it was I or they, thus we preached and thus you believed.

Resurrection is a fact

12Now since Christ is being proclaimed as having been raised from among the dead, how can some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. 14And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is empty, and so is your faith! 15Further, we are even discovered to be

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it that the verse refers to widowers and single men who do not have to deal with woman problems. We have already seen 7:27 above that says: "Have you been released from a wife? Do not seek a wife."

[1] Here is the inspired conclusion to the extended discussion of the charismatic gifts. Isn't it strange that most churches disobey this verse, in one way or another? 'Traditional' churches tend to forbid not only tongues but also prophecy (to 'seek' it is totally out of the question). 'Pentecostal' churches generally elevate tongues above prophecy, which is plainly contrary to the Text.

[2] Is this just a 'scarecrow'? No, since this verse is not alone.

[3] Received from whom? From God, either directly, or indirectly (through people like Peter).

[4] So far as I can tell, there is no reference to rising the third day in the OT. So why does Paul say "according to the Scriptures"? When Paul wrote this, Matthew, Mark and Luke were already circulating as 'Scripture', and they all record Jesus repeatedly affirming that He would die and rise the third day. Recall that in 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul quotes Luke as 'Scripture'.

[5] Evidently 'the Twelve' became like a technical term to refer to the recognized group of apostles. When Jesus first appeared to that group during the evening of Resurrection Day, there were actually only ten present—the Iscariot was no longer a member and Thomas was absent.

[6] A euphemism for death used mainly of believers in the New Testament.

false witnesses of God, because we have testified about God that He raised the Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. **16**For if no dead are raised, neither has Christ been raised. **17**And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is useless; you are still in your sins. **18**Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. **19**If it is only for this life that we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.[1]

The sequence of events

20But indeed, Christ has been raised from the dead; He became the firstfruits[2] of those who have fallen asleep. **21**For since death came through a man, resurrection of the dead also came through a man.[3] **22**For as all in Adam are dying, so also all in the Christ will be made alive.[4] **23**But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then those who belong to Christ at His coming; **24**then the end,[5] when He hands over the Kingdom to the God and Father, whenever He puts an end to every ruler and all authority and power. **25**Because it is necessary that He reign until He has put all the enemies under His feet. **26**The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.[6] **27**For "He has put all things under His feet."[7] But when it says that all things have been subordinated, it is obvious that He who put all things under Him is excepted. **28**Now whenever all things have been subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Consequences of denial

29Otherwise, what will they do who are being baptized in place of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, just why are they being baptized in the place of the dead?[8] **30**And why do we face danger every hour?

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[1] We would be 'pitiable' because of contrast between reality and our expectations—our high hopes would be dashed; the higher the hopes, the greater the disappointment. The Christian lifestyle is the best available, even without a resurrection. Paul comes at the question from several angles precisely because the resurrection of Christ is the center piece of our faith. Without it there is no Gospel.

[2] Here "firstfruits" functions as a synonym for 'firstborn'; He was the first one to conquer death.

[3] Although Jesus was God, it was as a man that He defeated Satan.

[4] Since all human beings are in Adam, all are dying; but it is only those who are in Christ who will be made alive.

[5] The 'first' resurrection refers to that of the saved (the 'second' being that of the lost), and apparently occurs in three stages: 1) Christ, the firstfruits, and those He took with Him at that time; 2) the Rapture; 3) after the Millennium.

[6] Death is definitely our enemy, having been introduced into human experience by sin.

[7] See Psalm 8:6.

[8] To be 'dead', they were once alive, and will be judged on the basis of what they did while alive; once dead their account is closed. So Paul is here presumably referring to those who are replacing the dead in the ranks of believers by being baptized. If there is no resurrection, what is the point of doing so, especially if all you are going to get is persecution?

31I die every day[1]—so I affirm by the boasting about you that I have in
Christ Jesus our Lord. 32If I fought human 'animals' in Ephesus,[2] what
did I gain? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow
we die!"[3] 33Stop kidding yourselves: evil associations corrupt good
habits. 34Sober up righteously, and stop sinning, for some have no know-
ledge of God. I say this to your shame.[4]

A philosophical objection

35But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? With what kind
of body do they come?" 36Ignorant, what you plant is not brought to life
unless it dies. 37And what you plant is a bare seed (perhaps of wheat or
some one of the others); you do not plant the body that it will become.
38But God gives it a body just as He determined, to each of the seeds its
own body. 39All flesh is not the same flesh: that of humans is one kind,
and the flesh of animals is another,[5] that of fish is another, that of birds
is yet another. 40There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies;
but the glory of the heavenly is one, while that of the earthly is another.
41There is one splendor of the sun, another splendor of the moon, and
another splendor of the stars; and star differs from star in brightness.

42The resurrection of the dead is like that: the body is 'planted' in
deterioration and it is raised in incorruptibility; 43it is 'planted' in dis-
honor and it is raised in glory; it is 'planted' in weakness and it is raised
in power; 44it is 'planted' a natural body and it is raised a spiritual body.
There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.[6]

45So also it is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living be-
ing";[7] the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46However, the spiritual
is not first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47The first man was

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1 Paul could not have been referring to actual physical death, obviously, since Hebrews 9:27 affirms that it is appointed to men to die only once (no re-incarnation). He may well have faced possible death often enough, but I suppose he is referring to dying to himself, to his own ambitions, ideas and wishes, so as to embrace God's will.

2 Many versions have Paul actually fighting wild animals, but had he done so as a punishment in an arena, he would have lost his Roman citizenship, which he claimed to have until the end. (And presumably the only place in the city of Ephesus where you could fight with wild animals would be in the arena.) The Text has 'against man', that the above-mentioned versions give as 'for human purposes' or 'in the manner of men'. But 16:9 refers to many adversaries in Ephesus, and if their tactics were especially nasty, Paul may have felt it appropriate to liken them to animals.

3 See Isaiah 22:13.

4 Dear me, what is Paul saying? As long as anyone around us does not know about God, we should be ashamed. Since he speaks of 'evil associations' and 'sobering up', I suppose that they had not made a clean break with their surrounding culture, and their former associates were not seeing all that much difference in their lifestyle. A clean break would require an explanation.

5 Human meat is not the same as animal meat! If all living things are the result of evolution, how come their meats are different?

6 The spiritual body is still a body. Verses 42-44 are describing the saved, not the lost.

7 See Genesis 2:7.

of the earth, of soil; the second man was the Lord[1] from heaven. 48As was the earth-man, just so are the earth-people; and as was the heaven-man, just so are the heaven-people. 49And just as we have borne the image of the earth-man, we should also bear the image of the heaven-man.[2]

Our turn is coming

50Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither will deterioration inherit incorruptibility. 51And now, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—52in a split second, in an eye twinkle, at the last trumpet—the trumpet will blast and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 53Because this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. 54So whenever this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality, then this written word will happen: "Death has been swallowed down into victory."[3] 55"Where, O Death, is your sting? Where, O Hades, is your victory?"[4] 56The stinger of death is sin, and the adjunct of sin is the law.

57Now thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! 58So then, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Concluding topics

About a special collection

16 1Now concerning the collection for the saints, you must do just as I instructed the congregations in Galatia. 2On the first day of the week, each of you should set something aside, saving up as he is being prospered, that there be no collections when I come. 3And when I arrive, I will send whomever you approve by letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem. 4But should it be fitting that I go as well, they will go with me.[5]

Personal plans

5Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am coming through Macedonia). 6And perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even winter, that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. 7I do not wish to see you now just in passing, since I hope to spend some time

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[1] The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'the Lord' (following 2.4% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality); and so NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. do the same—now really, to omit 'the Lord' is clearly an inferior reading, and to do so on such slender evidence is irresponsible and reprehensible.

[2] Since both the *Textus Receptus* and the eclectic Greek text currently in vogue have the Indicative here ('we will bear'), almost all versions so read. But over 80% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, have the Subjunctive, which I have followed. It is not automatic; it is up to us.

[3] See Isaiah 25:8. This whole paragraph is addressed to "brothers" (verse 50).

[4] See Hosea 13:14. Hades is not the Lake of fire. Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'death', instead of "Hades", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

[5] Paul clearly considers that he is in charge.

with you, if the Lord permits. 8So I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9because a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

This and that

10Now if Timothy should come, see to it that he may be with you without fear,[1] because he does the Lord's work just as I do. 11Therefore no one should despise him;[2] but send him on his way in peace, that he may come to me; I am expecting him along with the brothers.[3]

12Now about brother Apollos: I repeatedly urged him to go to you with the brothers, but he just did not want to go at this time; he will go whenever he has an opportunity.

13Watch! Stand firm in the faith! Be courageous! Be strong! 14Do all you do in love.

15Now brothers, you know that the household of Stephanas is the firstfruits of Achaia and that they have really devoted themselves to ministering to the saints, 16so I urge you to submit to such people, to all the fellow-workers and laborers. 17I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they have supplied; 18for they refreshed my spirit and yours; so give recognition to such men.

Final greetings

19The congregations of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla, with the congregation in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. 20All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21I, Paul, personally sign this greeting.[4] 22If anyone does not love[5] our Lord Jesus Christ,[6] let him be accursed. The Lord is coming![7]

23The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 24My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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1 Presumably about having his physical needs supplied.

2 I suppose it could be because he was young.

3 In passing we may note that there was evidently quite a bit of traffic between the congregations in different places.

4 The letter was dictated to a scribe or secretary, but Paul wrote the last bit himself; this was his signature, authenticating the letter.

5 The verb here is *φιλεω*, not *αγαπαω*. We must be fond of the Lord, or be 'accursed'. How many sermons have you heard on that subject? (People who think of God as an angry old 'man' are not going to be fond of Him, but if they think in such terms, they do not really know Him.)

6 The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'Jesus Christ' (following some 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality); and so NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. do the same—ho hum. I have supplied 'our' on the basis of 58% of the manuscripts, including the best line of transmission.

7 All commentators appear to be in agreement that *Maranatha* is a transliteration of an Aramaic expression [although I would have expected Paul to use Hebrew] made up of two words, but there is disagreement over how to make the division. It could be 'maran atha', meaning 'the Lord has come', or 'marana tha', meaning either 'the Lord is coming' or 'O Lord, come'. All three make good sense, so take your pick.