

# Paul's First Letter to the CORINTHIANS

A letter from Christ's messenger, Paul, to the Christians at Corinth, in Greece.

*Dear Friends at Corinth:*

**T**his is from Paul, whom God singled out and called to be a messenger<sup>a</sup> of Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup>Together with our brother Sosthenes, I am writing to those of you in Corinth who have been rescued from lives of sin and made holy by means of<sup>a</sup> Jesus Christ, and who gather together there now as God's people. You have been called by God<sup>b</sup> to this total separation from sin; and the same is true of everyone everywhere who is worshiping Jesus Christ our Lord. He is now to be honored and obeyed as their Lord, and He's our Lord too.

<sup>3</sup>My prayer is that God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord will be most compassionate and merciful toward you and give you great peace of mind and heart.

<sup>4</sup>I continually thank God for the many ways He has blessed you thru Christ Jesus.

<sup>5</sup>You have been enriched by Him in every way—in all phases of knowledge about God, and in your courage and willingness to speak out and share that knowledge with others.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>6</sup>And because your testimony for Christ has been so constant and unwavering,

<sup>7</sup>you are not lacking in even one gift of the Spirit, while you eagerly and patiently wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed from Heaven.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>And He will continue to strengthen you to the very end, so that you may be blameless on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns.

<sup>9</sup>You can indeed depend upon God, who has called you into this wonderful companionship

with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to be altogether faithful.<sup>a</sup>

*Divisions in the Church*

<sup>10</sup>Now I beg you, my brothers and sisters, on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all work at being in agreement with one another, not allowing anything to divide you. May you be closely knit together in all your reasonings and conclusions.

<sup>11</sup>But, my dear friends, some of the members of Chloe's household have told me that you are quarreling among yourselves.

<sup>12</sup>I'm told that some of you are saying, "I follow Paul"; others, "I follow Apollos"; and others, "I follow Peter"; and still others, "I follow Christ."

<sup>13</sup>Has Christ been split apart? Paul wasn't nailed to the cross for you, was he? Or were you baptized as a follower of Paul?

<sup>14</sup>I thank God now that I didn't baptize any of you, except Crispus and Gaius.

<sup>15</sup>So no one can say that I baptized you as my followers.

<sup>16</sup>Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. But I don't know that I baptized anyone else.

<sup>17</sup>Because Christ didn't send me to baptize,<sup>a</sup> but to tell the Great News. And I don't rely on complicated arguments in telling it, so that the simple message about Christ dying on the cross to save us from our sins is not robbed of its effectiveness.

*God's Wisdom and Power Revealed*

<sup>18</sup>Many of those dying in their sins believe that the message about Christ dying on the cross to make amends for our sins and save us is utter nonsense. But those of us who are being saved know

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**1:1a** Or *apostle*, which means *messenger*.

**1:2a** ... *the suffering, death, and resurrection of* ...

**1:2b** Romans 8:28-30.

**1:5a** The Corinthians were eager both to gain all the knowledge God would give them, and to share that knowledge with others. Romans 10:9-10.

**1:7a** Matthew 24:29-31; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

**1:9a** God can be fully relied upon to always do what He has said He will do. He does not deceive

anyone. You can count on Him to do His part in helping you to make it all the way home to Heaven. John 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 12:13; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Jude 1.

**1:17a** Paul did not say this to downgrade baptism. He exalts it in Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12. He baptized some of the first converts, and then left the rest of the baptizing to his co-workers and the new converts whom he had already baptized. But his main work was to preach and to look after the churches.

that it is indeed Christ's death for us that now empowers God with the moral and legal authority to save us.

<sup>19</sup> Because God has said:

**I will bring to absolute nothingness the wisdom of the wise. And the intelligence of the intellectual giants will be shown to be utterly worthless.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>20</sup> Just what has the wisdom of even the world's wisest men accomplished in saving us from ultimate destruction under God's judgment? The brightest scholars and the most elite philosophers don't have any solutions at all. God looks upon all their "wisdom" as thick-headed foolishness.

<sup>21</sup> So in His wisdom, God made it impossible for people of the world to get a true knowledge and understanding of Him and His ways of dealing with mankind by means of their own wisdom and reasonings. Instead, it pleased Him to save those who believe the so-called "foolish" message we preach.

<sup>22</sup> The Jews want proof by a miracle, and everyone else wants a logical solution.

<sup>23</sup> But we continue to preach, simply, that Christ was crucified in order to enable God to forgive our sins. Most Jews have a big problem with this, and most Gentiles<sup>a</sup> call it nonsense.

<sup>24</sup> But for those of us whom God has called<sup>a</sup> to salvation (both Jews and all others), Christ has become for us both God's power to save and God's wisdom in the way He is saving us.

<sup>25</sup> Because that which seems to some to be stupidity on God's part,<sup>a</sup> is greater wisdom by far than the wisest plans that any men could ever come up with. And that which appears to be weakness on God's part,<sup>a</sup> is able to do far more than anything that the greatest powers of men could ever do.

<sup>26</sup> Just look back on what you were, brothers and sisters, when God called you. By the standards of the world, not many of you were considered wise, nor financially powerful, nor high in social standing.

<sup>27</sup> But God purposely chose people whom the world considers dull and stupid, to put to shame those whom they consider so very wise. And He chose those whom the world considers weak, to put to shame those whom they consider so very powerful.

<sup>28</sup> Those whom the world looked down on and despised, and those whom they considered as even less than nothing, God chose, to bring to nothing those who are held in such high regard,

<sup>29</sup> so that no one could stand before God and brag about what he did to save himself.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Your right standing with God, your freedom from compulsion to continue living in sin,<sup>a</sup> and your ultimate salvation, have all become yours thru Jesus Christ by means of God's great wisdom.

<sup>31</sup> So, as the Scripture says,

**Let the one who wants to brag, brag about what the Lord has done!<sup>a</sup>**

### *The Message Paul Preached*

**2** When I came to you dear friends to tell you what God has done, I did not come with carefully chosen words packed full of human wisdom.

<sup>2</sup> Because I had made up my mind that while I was with you I wouldn't talk to you about anything except Jesus Christ, and about how He had died on the cross for you.

<sup>3</sup> I was with you in weakness, and trembling with great fear that I might fail.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Neither in my private talks with you nor in my

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**1:19a** ... *when it comes to creating an effective plan to save mankind.* Isaiah 29:14. God's ways totally confound the wise people of this world. His ways are so much higher than ours. See Isaiah 55:8-9.

**1:23a** All who are not Jews.

**1:24a** Romans 8:28-30.

**1:25a** ... *allowing men to nail Christ to the cross to die* ...

**1:29a** See Ephesians 2:8-9.

**1:30a** See Acts 20:32, and the note.

**1:31a** Jeremiah 9:24.

**2:3a** Paul was fearful and concerned about the results of his preaching. When a preacher or teacher has little or no real concern about results, he has little or no results!

**2:5a** O Lord, do it again! Give us humble and faithful men who will preach only to please You,

under the powerful anointing of Your Holy Spirit.

**2:7a** Proverbs 3:35; Romans 8:30; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Hebrews 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10.

**2:9a** Isaiah 64:4. See 2 Corinthians 4:17; 12:4; Ephesians 3:8.

Nothing is as good as we had expected or hoped for in this brief life. But what God has prepared for us in His presence in Heaven will so far surpass anything you had expected or could have even imagined, that you will continually glory in His greatness and goodness thruout eternity.

But notice that this great promise is to *those who love Him*. Do your actions, ambitions, and words to others tell God that you truly love Him? What does all of the above say about your future? See 2 Peter 1:5-10.

**2:12a** Not only is God's gift of life thru Christ Jesus necessary, but it is also necessary that He grant us

preaching did I ever rely on convincing words of human wisdom, but on the demonstration of the work of the Holy Spirit and the power of God,

<sup>5</sup>so that you would not place your faith in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>6</sup>But we do use words of wisdom when speaking to those who are mature in the faith. But not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are all coming to nothing.

<sup>7</sup>Instead, we speak about God's wisdom, about how He drafted a plan before the beginning of time that would result in our glory,<sup>a</sup> and how He wisely hid His intentions.

<sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age knew anything about this plan. If they had, they never would have nailed our glorious Lord to a cross.

<sup>9</sup>But as the Scripture says:

**"No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no person has ever even begun to imagine the amazing and wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love Him."<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>10</sup>But by His Spirit God has revealed them to us. Because the Spirit probes into everything, even into the deepest depths of God's divine thoughts and plans.

<sup>11</sup>Because what man knows what's in the mind of another man? Only the spirit of that other man knows what his thoughts and plans are. The same is true with God: Only the Spirit of God knows what's in the mind of God.

<sup>12</sup>And we haven't received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, which He gave us so that we might fully understand and appreciate the things that God has so freely given us.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>13</sup>So this is what we talk about, not using information that human wisdom would use, but telling

what the Holy Spirit has revealed, explaining spiritual truths by means of the things God's Spirit has revealed to us.

<sup>14</sup>But the person who is not a follower of the Lord, who doesn't have the Holy Spirit living within him, doesn't accept the amazing revelations made by the Spirit of God. They're foolishness to him. In fact, he can't understand them, because only the Holy Spirit makes them understandable.

<sup>15</sup>But those of us who have the Holy Spirit are able to closely examine and make judgments on all these matters, while others can't understand how we arrived at our conclusions.

<sup>16</sup>Because as the Scripture says:

**"Who has ever understood the thinking processes of the mind of the Lord, so that he could teach Him?"<sup>a</sup>**

But we understand what Christ is thinking, and what He desires from us.<sup>b</sup>

### *Divisions in the Church*

**3** So, my dear friends, I haven't been able to speak to you as I would to those who are spiritually mature, but as to those who still strongly tend toward selfishness and pride—as to mere babes in Christ.

<sup>2</sup>I've had to feed you milk, not solid food, because until now you couldn't receive anything solid. In fact, you still can't!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>You still think and act like people of the world. When you are envious and bitterly quarrel, and divide into cliques, aren't you immature and worldly, behaving like people who have never been converted to be like Christ?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Because when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just

the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), so that we might fully appreciate that gift of life, and also see and understand everything else that now becomes ours thru Christ.

**2:16a** Isaiah 40:13.

**2:16b** The true Christian is vitally influenced by God. He has His Spirit. He has the mind of Christ, who has the mind of God. He sympathizes with Christ; he shares His feelings, desires, purposes, and plans.

**3:1-2a** Paul had been the first pastor of these people in Corinth. Many had been converted to Christ under his teaching, but he charges them here with still behaving as babes in Christ. It's a pastor's duty to lead his people into deeper truths as fast as they can take it in Christian growth.

But it is also the duty of Christians themselves to learn these truths as rapidly as possible and to put

to work what they've learned. Some people seem to want to be spoon-fed spiritually all their lives. They seldom read or study the Bible themselves.

It is especially vital in these days of the end time to know by your own personal research the true teachings of the Lord, and to act upon them! Also, how can you know your pastor is preaching the truth, unless you seriously study God's word yourself?

**3:3a** Paul implies here that they must under no excuse remain like the world. The sharpness of some of his rebukes and warnings show his intense concern for them. They are on dangerous ground if they imagine they can continue in this degenerate state.

If they don't repent and correct the situation in their lives, they are in danger of being condemned with the godless world. See 11:31-32.

like the people of the world?

<sup>5</sup> So who is Paul? And who is Apollos? Only servants of God thru whom you came to believe, each of us doing the job the Lord gave us.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>6</sup> I planted the seeds. Then Apollos came along and watered them. But it was God who made them sprout and grow!

<sup>7</sup> So then, the one who plants isn't anyone special; neither is the one who does the watering. Only God is really important, because He's the One who makes things grow.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The one who plants and the one who waters are working together in harmony, and each will

receive his own reward, depending on how diligently and wisely he has worked.

<sup>9</sup> So because both Apollos and I are employed by God, we are working together to accomplish what He wants done. You are God's field that has already been cultivated. You are also God's building under construction.

### *The Foundation and Superstructure*

<sup>10</sup> Thru kindness and mercy from God that I certainly don't deserve, I have been given the privilege of being the wise master builder who laid the foundation for your Christian lives. Now someone

**3:4-5a** Paul's great concern for their spiritual welfare sprang from the many signs of disagreement among them, causing them to take sides in the church. Some called themselves by the name of *Paul*—maybe calling themselves Paulists. Others took the side of *Apollos*, claiming he was the better preacher.

Paul scolds them for dividing the church in this way. He shows them that both he and Apollos are simply ministers to them from the Lord, having received various gifts and abilities from God to do the work of the ministry.

**3:6-7a** Paul compares the hearts of the Corinthian Christians to a field. He says that he *planted* the word of God in that field of their hearts. Then Apollos, by his preaching, came along and *watered* the seed that Paul had sown. But it was *God who made it grow!* It was God who gave life to that word in their hearts and gave them opportunity to be converted and to grow in the faith. *So then, the one who plants isn't anyone special; neither is the one who does the watering. Only God is special, because He's the One who makes things grow.* Arguments over personalities are absolutely fruitless. God was the One who should receive all of their praise. He is the One to be followed.

**3:9-11a** The Greek indicates a field that is already cultivated. Some work had already been done in each life. Paul had already compared the hearts of the Corinthians to a fertile field—both Apollos and himself being the *laborers* in that field. Now he likens their lives to a *building*.

He states that he *had been the wise master builder who had laid the foundation for their Christian lives*. He had been faithful in teaching them that Christ and the new birth experience is the *only foundation* on which they can build. He also states here that there is *no other* lasting *foundation* that any man can lay, except *the foundation* he had laid — which is who Jesus Christ is, what He taught, and what He accomplished.

Notice that the last sentence of v 10 warns every

minister to be very careful *how he builds* upon any good foundation that has been laid in any life. And also he must be careful and sure that when he is laying the foundation that he lays the *right foundation*, and the *full foundation*.

**TO PREACH THAT CHRIST IS NECESSARY AS SAVIOR BUT NOT AS LORD FOR SALVATION, IS FALSE TEACHING! SUCH A FOUNDATION IN THE LIFE OF A SOUL WILL NOT HOLD THE SUPERSTRUCTURE!** There cannot be salvation without *the full foundation* being laid. Our rewards will be given to us by the Lord in accordance with how solidly we have laid the foundation in lives, and as to the materials used in the later building upon that foundation. vss 12-15.

**3:12-13a** We are all to faithfully minister God's message to others (Romans 10:9-10), and Paul warns here about the judgment which all Christians will face concerning their labors for God, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11. No unsaved people will be included in this judgment. They will appear at another judgment. Revelation 20:5, 11-15.

Paul speaks of the various types of building materials which can be built into lives. Then he states that these works for the Lord will be *tested by fire* at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Sermons, Sunday school lessons, etc., which have been ill-prepared, or have not been intended to really encourage, warn, teach, or cut, as the word of God ("the sword of the Spirit") should, are likened to *wood, hay, and straw*.

But work for the Lord that has been truly thoughtful, where the full truth has been presented without fear or favor, and where the warnings have been given as well as the promises, with sufficient time having been given to study and prayer—this is the kind of work that Paul likens to *gold, silver, and precious stones*.

Notice that Paul is not speaking here about whether a Christian has lived a life of sin or a life of righteousness, or whether he has lived partly in sin

else is building on that foundation. But let each builder be intensely concerned as to how he builds on it.

<sup>11</sup> God will accept no other foundation than the one which has already been laid, which is Jesus Christ.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Now the various materials that can be used in building upon that foundation are either gold, silver, and precious stones; or wood, hay, and straw.

### ***God's Test by Fire***

<sup>13</sup> When the fire hits on Judgment Day it will become very easy to tell what quality of materials

and partly for the Lord. Other Scriptures warn about the so-called "Christian" who lives in sin and will not be numbered among true Christians, even if he is a preacher. Matthew 7:21-29. Paul is not speaking about deeds of sin being burned up. He is dealing strictly with the matter of service to the Lord, making mention of both his and Apollos' labor in the Lord's work.

This applies to every servant of the Lord. Since the Lord's call and command to service is to every Christian (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:9-10, etc.), all true Christians will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Each Christian has capabilities and opportunities. The Lord expects us to make the very best use of every one of these gifts so that others may also make it to Heaven. Even Paul's works for the Lord will be *tested by fire*. He states that *every man's work will be tested by fire*. The works and service for the Lord of all true Christians will be *tested by fire*, to show whether that work will be rewarded, or whether it will be considered worthless.

**3:14-15a** Those who have labored faithfully will *receive a reward*. But notice that there will be true Christians who will find that all of their works for the Lord have been in vain. Their *work will be burned up!* Paul says that this person *will suffer great loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one barely escaping thru the flames*. It is not our salvation that will be tested by fire. Rather, the fire will test the true Christians' works and service for the Lord.

However, notice that these will barely escape the flames themselves. If that's the case, what about those who refuse to even make a real effort to faithfully serve the Lord? Romans 10:9-10.

Preacher, you had better beef up those sermons of yours with some Scriptures that will bring real conviction in the hearts of your people. And Sunday school teacher, you had better prepare for the lesson as well as you expect your pastor to prepare—and don't pull any punches.

each builder used, because every man's work will be tested by fire, to reveal just what quality of work it was.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup> If anyone's work on these buildings is still standing after the fire, he will receive a reward.

<sup>15</sup> But if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer great loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one barely escaping thru the flames.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Don't you know that each of you are a house of God, and that the Spirit of God is living within you?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>17</sup> If anyone corrupts and destroys God's house,<sup>a</sup> God will destroy him! Because God's house is

Time is short. The unsaved need to hear the full truth so they may be truly born again. Christians need to be given a clear challenge to faithful service, so they may live lives of service that will truly count toward a rich and sure eternal reward.

It would appear that the line between the person whose *works will be burned up* and the person who has never actually been converted to the Lord, (or has not *continued in the faith*—Colossians 1:23), is a fine one, indeed. Only the Lord will be able to define that line.

Certainly every person who names the name of Christ as Lord needs to take heed to himself, making sure that his life is dedicated to Christ and to righteousness, and to faithful, uncompromising, and effective service for Him. See also 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11.

**3:16a** John 14:23.

**3:17a** Paul issues a most severe warning here concerning corrupting and destroying God's house. He makes it clear that *each Christian is a house of God*. It is possible, of course, to *destroy the house of God*. Paul makes that very plain here. It is possible to promote false teaching, to leave out important truths, and to give false hope. It's also possible to avoid the complete story, or to try to please some person—or all the people—instead of God, and to thereby *corrupt and destroy* those lives and souls to whom you are ministering.

If a student of the word of God decides to live in sin, or regard obedience to any of Christ's commands as optional because of your teaching, the charge against you, the teacher or preacher, is serious indeed! *If anyone corrupts and destroys God's house*, Paul warns, *God will destroy him!* No longer is Paul talking about the fire that destroys works. He speaks now of the destruction of *the soul* of the deceitful worker or teacher who has caused the soul of some Christian to be destroyed.

The Greek word translated *destroy* here means *to corrupt, to deprave, to destroy, to shrivel or wither, to spoil or ruin*. We dare not try to explain these

sacred and has been dedicated to Him, and you are that house.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Don't fool yourself! If you consider yourself to be wise, don't hesitate to be a fool in the opinion of the people of this age, in order that you may be truly wise.

<sup>19</sup> Because God looks at the "wisdom" of this world<sup>a</sup> as utter nonsense. As the Scripture says,

**God catches these men in their own clever schemes.<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>20</sup> The Scriptures also state,

**The Lord knows how the wise reason, and how wrong and worthless that reasoning is.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>21</sup> So stop your bragging about certain men, because everything belongs to all of you.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>22</sup> That includes Paul, Apollos, Peter, the world, life, death, the present, the future—it all belongs to all of you.

<sup>23</sup> And you all belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.<sup>a</sup>

### ***We Are All Servants of Christ To Whom We Are Accountable***

**4** So you should think of Apollos and me as servants of Christ, who've been entrusted with revealing God's secret truths.

<sup>2</sup> Now the supreme qualification for those given such a trust is that we are found to be faithful to our Lord.

<sup>3</sup> It's of little concern to me if you, or even a court of law, examines or judges how faithful I am. In fact, I don't even judge myself.

<sup>4</sup> I don't know of any area where I have failed to faithfully teach the truth. But that doesn't make me innocent, because the Lord is the One who is constantly and closely examining my every word, thought, deed, and motive.

<sup>5</sup> So don't judge the motives of anyone before the proper time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will then turn on the searchlight and bring out into the

open the things that have been hidden in darkness, and will reveal the true motives of every person's heart. Then whatever praise each deserves will come from God.

<sup>6</sup> For your benefit, my brothers and sisters, I have used Apollos and myself as examples in regard to these matters, so that you may learn from our example not to think more highly of men than the Scriptures teach that you should. Then you won't be comparing one man with another, and admiring one teacher more than another.

<sup>7</sup> Because who made you the different and special person you are? And what do you have that you didn't receive from God? So if you received everything, why do you think so highly of yourself, as if you hadn't received all that you are and have?

<sup>8</sup> Do you already have everything you need or want? Are you already rich? Do you already reign as kings, without any need of us?<sup>a</sup> I could wish that you did indeed reign, because then we would be reigning with you.

<sup>9</sup> But it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display out there at the end of the victor's parade, like men marked for death<sup>a</sup> in the arena. We have become a spectacle to the entire universe, both to angels and to men.

<sup>10</sup> We are fools for the way we live and preach Christ. But you, of course, are so very wise in the way you serve Him. We are timid and feeble. But you are so daring, bold, and fearless. You receive honor and praise, but we—only condemnation.

<sup>11</sup> Right up to the present moment we are both hungry and thirsty, and without proper clothing. We are often beaten, and wander about with no place we can call home.

<sup>12</sup> We work hard for our living, working with our own hands. When we are hatefully treated with verbal abuse, we bless and help those who curse us.<sup>a</sup> When we are persecuted, we accept it without seeking revenge of any kind.<sup>b</sup>

verses away. They are here for your warning! They are here for my warning! See also Mark 9:42. This is future prophecy, indeed—a most solemn prophecy of both promise and warning. See also Colossians 1:23 note.

**3:19a** ... *in matters of religion* ...

**3:19b** Job 5:13 ... *when they try to outsmart Him.*

**3:18-20a** Psalm 94:11. Some people believe their reasoning is superior to the simple truths presented in the Bible, so they twist and turn Scripture to make it conform to their own system of theology. It is to such people that God is giving this warning.

Anyone who thinks he is so *wise* that he can modify and soften the warnings that God has given to Christians faces frightful judgment. Likely, such a one will not even appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ. God warns in the preceding verses that such people will be *destroyed*. Matthew 15:14b.

**3:21a** Referring back now to v 4. Everything, including teachers and preachers, are a gift to you from God. As an heir of God (Romans 8:17), owning everything, you shouldn't be kissing the boots of men.

**3:23a** 1 Corinthians 15:28.

**4:8a** Paul is speaking here in irony and indignant

<sup>13</sup>When we are denounced and cursed, we continue to plead kindly with our accusers to recognize the truth. Even to the present moment we are looked upon as the scum of society, as garbage.

<sup>14</sup>I'm not writing these things to shame you; but because you are my dear children, I want to help, encourage, and challenge you.

<sup>15</sup>Even if you should have ten thousand who teach you about Christ, you still don't have many fathers. Because I became your spiritual father when I brought you the Great News about Christ Jesus.

<sup>16</sup>For that reason I urge you to follow my example.

<sup>17</sup>That's why I've sent Timothy to you, as my faithful and much loved son in the Lord. He will remind you of what I teach and how I live for Christ, which are the very things I teach everywhere in every church.

<sup>18</sup>Now some of you are proud and boastful, thinking I wouldn't dare to come and deal with you personally.

<sup>19</sup>But I definitely will be coming your way, and soon, if the Lord is willing. Then I'll find out not only what these proud people have to say, but what kind of power they have.

<sup>20</sup>Because the sign that God is ruling in and working thru a minister, is demonstrated not only by how well he speaks, but by clear evidence of the power of God working in and thru him.

<sup>21</sup>Which do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or with love and in a spirit of gentleness?

### ***Immorality in the Church Must Be Judged***

**5** But now, another matter: It is widely reported that there is sexual immorality among you—and sexual immorality so foul and sickening that it's not even tolerated among the pagans—that a man is living in sin with his stepmother!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup>And yet you are boasting and proud of your

“patience and fairness” toward this man! Why haven't you instead cried over this sin and expelled this grievous sinner from your fellowship?

<sup>3</sup>Now I may not be with you in person, but I'm right there with you in spirit. And I have already pronounced judgment upon this one who has sinned, just as I would if I were there.

<sup>4</sup>When you gather together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you must severely deal with this matter. I'll be with you in spirit.

<sup>5</sup>With the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, you must hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the health of his body, in the hope that his soul may be saved<sup>a</sup> in the Day of our Lord Jesus.

<sup>6</sup>There's not one thing good about your boasting!<sup>a</sup> Don't you know that even a small amount of yeast soon works its way thru the whole batch of dough?

<sup>7</sup>Get rid of that old yeast, so you may continue to be a truly new batch that's without yeast, which you really are! Because we also have a Passover Lamb, our Messiah, who has been sacrificed for us.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Then there won't be any old yeast among us, including any yeast of hate or other wickedness, when we celebrate the true Passover Feast. There will be only sincerity and truth, the bread that has no yeast.

<sup>9</sup>In my previous letter, I told you not to associate with people who are living sexually immoral lives.

<sup>10</sup>But I wasn't talking about the pagans, who live only for what they can get out of this brief life, and who are sexually immoral, or covetous, or blackmailers, or idol worshippers. In that case, you would have to leave this world.

<sup>11</sup>I meant you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a follower of the Lord, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, an idol worshiper, a drunkard, a swindler, or who runs others down with his ravings and gossip. Don't even eat with

sarcasm against the false and self-confident teachers in Corinth.

**4:9a** ... *to be fed to the lions* ...

**4:12a** Romans 12:14.

**4:12b** Romans 12:17-21.

**5:1a** Even the pagans abhorred such a crime, and always treated it as an abominable wickedness, and never allowed it to continue.

**5:5a** Even then, his salvation is not certain. The subjunctive mood here denotes a probability, dependent upon his true repentance and turning from his sin to obedience to Christ, as a result of God's judgment upon his body.

**5:6a** ... *about your own achievements and those of your favorite teachers, while at the same time you are allowing such sin in your midst!*

**5:7a** Previous to Passover, the Jews are to throw out all leavened bread (bread made with yeast, Exodus 12:1-20), which pictures sin being judged and thrown out of their lives. Christians also have a Passover Lamb (Christ), and we also are to rid ourselves of all sin. God will judge us if we allow sin to remain in our lives or in our churches.

Will God's judgment upon His people and Church today be any less severe than His judgment upon Israel for failure in this regard? See Exodus 12:19;

such a person!

<sup>12</sup> It is not our business to judge those outside the church. God will deal with them.

<sup>13</sup> But it certainly is our business to judge and discipline those within the church. You must expel that wicked man from your fellowship!<sup>a</sup>

### **Lawsuits Among Believers**

**6** And how can any of you dare to sue a Christian brother in a non-Christian court, and ask the ungodly there to settle your problem, instead of asking God's people to settle the matter for you?

<sup>2</sup> Don't you know that God's people are destined to judge the world? And if you're to judge the world, shouldn't you even now be able to judge these small matters?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Don't you know that we will even judge angels? So surely you should be able to judge matters having to do with this life.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup> When things come up that need a wise decision, do you really need to go for settlement to those whom the church regards as having low standards of righteousness and justice?

<sup>5</sup> I say this to your shame! Is it possible that you don't have a wise man among you, not even one, who is capable of settling matters between one follower of the Lord and another?

<sup>6</sup> Instead, one follower sues another, so that their problem is settled by unbelievers!

<sup>7</sup> The very fact that you are suing each other means that you already have a serious failure

among yourselves. Why don't you rather allow yourselves to be wronged and cheated?

<sup>8</sup> Instead, you keep doing wrong and cheating. And you're doing this to other followers of Christ!

<sup>9</sup> Don't you know that those who persist in doing wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't allow yourselves to be fooled! Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor homosexual perverts,<sup>a</sup> will inherit the Kingdom of God.

<sup>10</sup> But neither will thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor swindlers, nor those who run others down with their ravings and gossip.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup> And that's the kind of people some of you were. But you've been washed, you've been purified and dedicated to God, and you've been made right with God by your acceptance of what the Lord Jesus accomplished by suffering and dying for you. All of this was done by the work of the Holy Spirit in your lives.

### **Honor God With Your Body**

<sup>12</sup> "God made everything for our use, so I'm not committing evil if I make use of them," some say. But not everything results in good for you or for others when indulged in. And even if all things should be lawful for me, I will not allow myself to become a slave to the use or indulgence of anything!

<sup>13</sup> Others say, "Food is for the purpose of being put into the stomach, and the purpose of the stom-

1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 Peter 4:17-18.

**5:13a** Deuteronomy 17:7; 19:19; 22:21,24; 24:7.

**6:1-2a** Christians will rule and reign with Christ in His Kingdom. Daniel 7:18,27. It will be in this coming Kingdom that *God's people are destined to judge the world.*

**6:3a** Whether this reference is to fallen *angels* or to all *angels* is not clear. Hebrews 2:5 tells us, *For God has not put the world to come ... under the rule of angels.* It is we who will reign.

**6:9a** See Romans 1:26-27 note.

**6:9-10a** Much could be said about these two verses of warning. People guilty of one or more of the sins listed here may believe with all their heart that they will gain Heaven. If they refuse to repent and turn from their sin, however, the prospects are dim, indeed, for their future.

Such people seem to feel that mental belief in the fact that Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world is enough to make up for their continued sinning. These words of the apostle Paul testify clearly that he agrees with our Lord's words to Nicodemus, *Unless you are born again, you will*

*never be able to see or experience the Kingdom of God.* John 3:1-17.

If salvation by good works is not possible, neither is it possible to drag salvation thru the mire of continued sinfulness. The truth is a simple deduction. Therefore there is no salvation apart from good works. 2 Corinthians 5:17. If you are indulging in any of these sins you *will not inherit the Kingdom of God!* Your only hope is to repent and turn from your sin and live to please God!

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The word *fornication* means voluntary sexual intercourse between persons of the opposite sex who are not lawfully married to each other. This word has been translated *sexually immoral* in most cases in this translation.

An actual carved idol was a real threat to the early Christian. But an *idolater* today is any person who loves and worships any thing, experience, or person, more than he loves, obeys, and worships God.

An *adulterer* is one who does not obey the word of God in regard to God's instructions concerning marriage after a divorce. See Matthew 5:31-32;



ach is to receive food.” But just remember that God will soon destroy both.<sup>a</sup> It is also true that our bodies have not been given us for the purpose of indulging in sexual immorality, but to please and honor the Lord. The Lord is very concerned about our bodies, providing for them and preserving them.

<sup>14</sup>And God will raise these bodies back to life again by the same power with which He raised the Lord Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>Don’t you realize that your bodies are members that make up the body of Christ? Should you then take a part of Christ’s body and unite it with a whore? Never!

<sup>16</sup>Don’t you know that the man who joins his body to that of an immoral woman is closely and intimately united with her as one body? Because the Scripture plainly states,

**The two will become as one body.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>17</sup>But the one who unites himself to the Lord becomes one with Him in spirit.

<sup>18</sup>So always run from immoral sex temptations as fast as you can and with all your might!<sup>a</sup> Every other sin that a person commits has to do with things outside his body, but the one who commits fornication sins against his own body.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Or don’t you yet know that your body is a house where the Holy Spirit lives? He is a gift to you from God, and lives within you!

<sup>20</sup>You no longer belong to yourself, because you were bought by God at an extremely high price.<sup>a</sup>

So, glorify God in your body and spirit, which both belong to God.

### Questions About Marriage

**7** Now for the things you wrote about: A man does well if he doesn’t marry.

<sup>2</sup>But because of all the temptations to give in to fornication,<sup>a</sup> each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.

<sup>3</sup>The husband should give his wife the loving marital affection due her, and the wife should do the same for her husband.

<sup>4</sup>Because the wife’s body no longer belongs to her alone, but also to her husband. And likewise, the husband’s body no longer belongs to him alone, but also to his wife.

<sup>5</sup>So don’t refuse sex to each other, except by mutual agreement for a set time, in order that you may both be free to devote yourselves to fasting and prayer. Then come together again so that Satan doesn’t tempt you because of your lack of self control.

<sup>6</sup>I’m not saying you must marry, but you certainly may if you wish.

<sup>7</sup>But I wish all men could remain unmarried, as I am. But each person has his own gift from God. To some He gives the gift of being a good husband or wife, and to others the gift of staying happily unmarried.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>But I do say this to the unmarried and to widows: It will be best for you if you remain unmar-

19:3-9; Mark 10:1-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. Unfaithfulness in marriage is also adultery.

In regard to the sin of being *effeminate*, applied to morals, as it is here, it denotes those who give themselves up to a soft, luxurious, lazy and easygoing way of living; who make self-indulgence the grand object of life; who can endure no hardship, and practice no self-denial in the cause of Christ and their duty to Him. It also applies to those who give themselves over to sensuous pleasures, or allow themselves to be prostituted by others.

\* \* \*

None who commit any of these sins, or the others listed here, will *inherit the Kingdom of God!* Their inheritance will be to be cast from God, even as He has warned, into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:15.

No matter what claim a person indulging in these sins might make to being a converted, good Christian, etc.—their claims and excuses will be in vain. Yes, you can find preachers who will gladly explain why and how this Scripture doesn’t really mean what it appears to say, or that it surely doesn’t apply to you. But you will be in Hell with them if you fol-

low such corrupt teachers or preachers.

*How shall we escape God’s judgment if we neglect a salvation that is so great?* Hebrews 2:3.

**6:13a** The great concern of the masses is the satisfying of the various appetites of their bodies in any way they wish. This is so foolish. Their bodies will soon be in the grave, and they will be facing the Great Judgment Day, and eternity away from God.

**6:16a** Genesis 2:24.

**6:18a** Present tense here denotes need for continual vigilance.

**6:18b** See 7:2 note, and Galatians 6:7-8, and the notes.

**6:20a** ... *by the death of His incomparable Son.*

**7:2a** Voluntary sexual intercourse between persons of the opposite sex who are not lawfully married to each other. The meaning of the Greek word also includes homosexuality, bestiality, and all other sexual immorality.

**7:7a** Paul likely said this because of the distress and persecution the Church was experiencing at that time. See vs 25-26.

ried, even as I am.

<sup>9</sup>But if you can't control yourself, go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with wrongful passionate desires.

<sup>10</sup>Now to the married I command (yet this is not my command, but the Lord's): A wife must not separate herself from her husband.

<sup>11</sup>But if she does, she must remain unmarried or be reunited to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

<sup>12</sup>In regard to the other problems you wrote about, I say this (I, not the Lord): If your wife is not a follower of the Lord, but she is willing to live with you, you must not leave or divorce her.

<sup>13</sup>And if your husband is not a follower, but he is willing to live with you, you must not leave or divorce him.

<sup>14</sup>Because the unbelieving husband is set apart for special attention from God by means of the living witness of his Christian wife; and the unbelieving wife is set apart for special attention from God by means of the living witness of her Christian husband. Otherwise, if the family separates, the children may never be converted to the Lord; whereas in a united family they may come to know Him.

<sup>15</sup>But if the unbelieving mate is determined to leave, let him go. A Christian husband or wife is under no obligation to insist on keeping the family together under such conditions, because God has called us to live in peace.

<sup>16</sup>And besides, how can you wives or husbands be absolutely sure that you could save your mate even if they did stay?

### ***Serve the Lord Wherever You Are***

<sup>17</sup>So accept your present situation as having been given you by the Lord, and keep living for the Lord in whatever situation you find yourself at the time of your conversion to Christ. These are the instructions I give in all the churches.

<sup>18</sup>If a circumcised man becomes a follower, he should not take any steps to reverse the situation. And there is no need for anyone converted while still uncircumcised, to now be circumcised.

<sup>19</sup>It doesn't matter at all whether you are circumcised or not. What is important is that you do what God has told you to do, and refrain from doing what He has told you not to do.

<sup>20</sup>Usually a person should remain in the same employment situation he was in when Christ called him.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Have you been called to live for the Lord and serve Him, and you're a slave? Don't let your bondage give you deep concern. Of course, if you can gain your freedom, use that freedom to serve the Lord in a greater way.

<sup>22</sup>Because the slave who is called by the Lord is now the Lord's free man, and the free man who belongs to Christ is now His slave.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>23</sup>You were bought by God at enormous cost, so don't become slaves of anyone else!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>24</sup>So, my brothers and sisters, each of you should continue in the same situation you were in when God called you, and begin serving God right there.

### ***Questions About Getting Married***

<sup>25</sup>Now, about young people who are unmarried: I have no command from the Lord, but as one whom the Lord has made trustworthy, I will tell you what I think.

<sup>26</sup>Because of these unsettled times of stress and persecution, I believe it best for these young people to remain unmarried.

<sup>27</sup>If you are married, stay married. If you are not married, don't try to get married.

<sup>28</sup>But if you do marry, you haven't sinned. And if the young people marry, they haven't sinned either. But I wish I could spare you the many problems you will face if you marry during these difficult days.

<sup>29</sup>What I'm saying is, the remaining time for each of us is short.<sup>a</sup> Because of that, from now on those who have wives should live as devotedly for the Lord as though they weren't married.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Those who cry should still have such confidence, that they will act and think as though they were not crying. Those who have reason to rejoice must not forget that all joy concerning things and situations of earth are so temporary.<sup>a</sup> And those

**7:20a** Unless you are employed in something that is not pleasing to God.

**7:22a** And it is his duty to obey and serve Him.

**7:23a** Your primary duty is to God.

**7:29a** Life for all of us is very short. But this will have special meaning as we see the end of this age drawing ever closer.

**7:29b** That is, we must not allow our attachment

to our wives to interfere with any duty that we owe to God.

**7:30a** Only that which is eternal is worth really rejoicing over.

**7:30b** We must soon release them to others. Only what is eternal is lasting.

**8:1a** ... and then sold in the markets or their temple restaurant:

who buy must realize that these material things don't really belong to us at all.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>31</sup>As we use the things of this world, we must not abuse the privilege and go after them as our chief aim, because this world in its present form will soon be a thing of the past.

<sup>32</sup>Also I want you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is free to be concerned about faithfully serving the Lord, and doing what will please Him.

<sup>33</sup>But the married man will be necessarily concerned with his duties to provide for his family, and with doing what will please his wife. So he is pulled in two directions.

<sup>34</sup>The same is true of a wife and an unmarried woman. The unmarried woman can be wholly concerned about the Lord's work, and can devote herself both body and spirit in living for the Lord; while the married woman is burdened with many cares of the world, and must be concerned about how she can please her husband.

<sup>35</sup>I'm saying all of this for your own good, not to control you, but to point out the best and most effective way that you can serve the Lord with undivided interest and attention.

<sup>36</sup>But if any man thinks he is not acting properly toward the girl he is engaged to, by putting off marrying her, and she is getting along in years, he should be allowed to do as he thinks best. He won't be sinning. Let them get married.

<sup>37</sup>But the man who stands firm in his decision, who sees no need to change his mind, has also done well if he decides not to marry the girl.

<sup>38</sup>So then, the man who marries the girl does well, but the man who does not get married does even better.

<sup>39</sup>A wife is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. But if he dies, she is free to marry whoever she wishes—but only if he is a follower of the Lord.

<sup>40</sup>In my opinion, however, she'll be happier if she remains single—and I believe I have the witness of God's Spirit in this.

### *About Food Offered to Idols*

**8**Now about eating food that's been offered as a sacrifice to idols:<sup>a</sup> We all know, of course, that an idol is nothing. But be careful; knowledge is not always the only safe guide. It can often cause you to be puffed up with pride. If you truly love others, you will have real concern for them, and seek by every means to build them up in their faith and obedience.

<sup>2</sup>If anyone thinks he fully understands the situation, he still doesn't understand anything to the degree that he ought to.

<sup>3</sup>But it's the person who truly loves God who is approved by Him.

<sup>4</sup>Now then, about eating food offered to idols: We know there is no such thing as a real heathen god in all the universe. There is only one God, and no other.

<sup>5</sup>Yes, there are these so-called gods—some said to be in Heaven and some on earth (and indeed there are many of these gods and lords).

<sup>6</sup>But it has been revealed to us that there is only one God, and that's the Father,<sup>a</sup> who is the Fountain and Source of all things. It is He who has brought us into existence for His own purposes, plans, and pleasure. And there is only one Person whom the Father has made Lord and Ruler over all,<sup>b</sup> and that One is Jesus Christ. Thru Him God created all things,<sup>c</sup> and it's also thru Him that we have come into existence!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>7</sup>But not everyone knows this. Even some who are now followers of the Lord have been so used to thinking of idols as real, live gods, that even now, if they eat this food, they believe they are eating food that has been offered to a real heathen god. And they are guilty of sinning if they go against their erroneous and weak conscience and eat that food!

<sup>8</sup>But food doesn't have anything to do with our gaining God's approval. Because we are no better if we eat, nor are we worse if we don't.

<sup>9</sup>But be careful, so that this freedom of yours doesn't in some way become a stumbling block to

**8:6a** Deuteronomy 4:35; 2 Samuel 7:22; Isaiah 44:6,8; 45:21; 64:4; Mark 12:29; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; 6:16; v 4 above.

**8:6b** Matthew 28:18; Luke 10:22; Acts 2:29-36; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 19:16.

**8:6c** John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2.

**8:6d** The inference here is that there's nothing

wrong with eating food that has been offered to idols if one wishes to do so. Jesus is the One who made all these things, and they have all come to us thru Him. However, the inference in the following verses is that because of those who might be encouraged by your liberty to do what their weak conscience tells them not to do, you should not eat this food. This is true of whatever will cause others to stumble.

those who are not fully informed.

<sup>10</sup>Because if someone who doesn't understand sees you eating in the restaurant of an idol temple because of your knowledge, won't it be possible that this uninformed person may be encouraged to ignore his conscience and eat this food anyway?

<sup>11</sup>In that case, this weak follower of the Lord for whom Christ died, would be destroyed because of your knowledge!

<sup>12</sup>When you sin in this way against your fellow followers, by undercutting their weak conscience, causing them to do what they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ!

<sup>13</sup>For that reason, if by eating certain food, I might cause one of the Lord's followers to sin, I will never again eat such food, so that I won't cause one of them to fall.

### *Rights and Duties of an Apostle*

**9**Am I not an apostle? Am I not free<sup>a</sup>? Haven't I seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Haven't your minds and hearts been changed as the result of my work for the Lord?

<sup>2</sup>Even though I may not be an apostle<sup>a</sup> to others, surely I'm an apostle<sup>a</sup> to you, because your conversion to the Lord is proof that I've been sent to you.

<sup>3</sup>That's the answer I give those who question my claims.

<sup>4</sup>Don't Barnabas and I have the right to expect food and drink for the work we do?

<sup>5</sup>Don't we each have the right to marry one of

the Lord's followers and bring her along with us, the same as the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Peter do?

<sup>6</sup>Or are we the only ones who must support ourselves by working at another job?

<sup>7</sup>Did you ever hear of a soldier serving in the army at his own expense? What farmer plants a vineyard but never eats any of the grapes? Or what shepherd takes care of a flock but never drinks any of the milk?

<sup>8</sup>But I don't say this only from a human point of view, because God's Law says the same thing.

<sup>9</sup>In the Law, Moses wrote,

**You shall not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating while it is treading out the grain.<sup>a</sup>**

Do you think God is concerned only about oxen?

<sup>10</sup>Didn't He really have us in mind when He said that? Of course He did, because the man who plows and the man who threshes should work in the hope of sharing in the harvest.

<sup>11</sup>If we have worked to plant spiritual seed in your hearts, is it too much to expect a share of your material harvest?

<sup>12</sup>If others receive this benefit from you, shouldn't we have an even greater right to it? But we haven't made use of this right. Instead, we continue to endure every kind of deprivation so that we won't hinder you from listening to the Great News about Christ.

<sup>13</sup>Don't you know that those who work in the Temple eat the food offered at the Temple, and that those ministering at the altar are given a share of

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**9:1a** ... from any obligation to work at secular work to support myself?

**9:2a** One who has been sent with a message—a messenger.

**9:9a** Deuteronomy 25:4.

**9:11-14a** See Galatians 6:6.

**9:16a** Paul would have been living in rebellion against Christ—living in sin—if he had chosen to ignore, refuse, or resist Christ's call to him. But for Paul, nothing was too much to do, to suffer, to give up, if only people might be saved. And every Christian is called to faithfully sound the same warning and give the same message of hope.

Two passages where God's command and warning are given to believers about this are Matthew 28:18-20 and Ezekiel 33:1-20. A good question to ask yourself as a Christian is, "What would Jesus be doing and saying if He were now where I am, in my circumstances?" Do it! 1 John 2:6.

**9:18a** The inference is, *And by doing so I'm able to be of greater effect in the service of Christ.*

**9:21a** See Hebrews 5:9, and the note there.

**9:22a** Paul refers to those who are weak in faith regarding the right and wrong of eating certain food. He went along with them to make sure he didn't cause any of them to stumble.

**9:23a** The reason Paul gives here for his concern to reach everyone with the message, is that he might give evidence that he was indeed a Christian, so that he might be admitted into Heaven to share in the happiness of all who will be admitted there. Paul knew that he was morally bound to share the Great News with others.

If our whole nation was faced with a deadly disease that threatened to kill everyone, what would a person deserve who had discovered the cure but kept it for himself and his family and a few close friends, and for selfish or fearful reasons refused to share it with others? He would deserve the worst judgment possible!

God warns that judgment awaits those who refuse to obey Him by giving the warning and sharing the Great News. Read Ezekiel 33:1-20. Those who will not speak out for Christ because they are cowardly,

the sacrifices offered there for their own needs?

<sup>14</sup>The Lord has likewise given instructions that those who preach the Great News are to receive their living from those to whom they minister that News.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>15</sup>But I have never asked for any such support for myself, and I'm not writing about these matters now in the hope of obtaining support. I would rather die than lose my boast that I'm only interested in you, not your money.

<sup>16</sup>But the truth is, I don't have anything to brag about when I've preached the Great News, because the necessity of preaching it rests upon me so heavily. Yes, I would be in terrifying trouble if I didn't preach it.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>17</sup>If I preach it because my heart is in it, I do have a reward. But even if I'd rather be doing something else, I would still preach it because of my duty and my desire to please Christ who has called me to preach it.

<sup>18</sup>What's my reward then? It's the great privilege of preaching the Great News without being concerned about the money I'll get, when I don't demand my rights when I bring it to you.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>19</sup>But even though I'm free and am obligated to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, so that I might win as many as possible to Christ.

<sup>20</sup>When I'm with the Jews, I live like one of them, in order to win them to Christ. In other words, I conform myself to the Law of Moses in order to win those who are under the Law.

<sup>21</sup>When I'm with Gentiles, who are not living

under Jewish Law, I live as one who is not under the Law, in order to win them. That doesn't mean I have no obligation to obey God, because I am definitely under obligation to obey Christ.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>22</sup>When I'm with those who are weak in faith, I become as one of them in order to win them.<sup>a</sup> I conform myself to everyone in every possible way so that by every means possible, I may save some of them.

<sup>23</sup>I do all this so that the Great News may go forth in the greatest way possible, and so that I may give positive evidence that I too am a Christian and will be admitted to Heaven with you, to all the happiness there.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Don't you know that in a race there are many runners, but only one wins the prize? You too must run in such a way that you will win!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>25</sup>All who compete in the games<sup>a</sup> practice total self control in order to thoroughly prepare themselves for the race. Now they do all this merely for a blue ribbon or a gold medal that will give only temporary satisfaction. But we're contending for a fabulous crown that will bring us unimaginable, rapturous joy, forever!

<sup>26</sup>That's why I run to win! In my fight, I don't just smash my fists into the air and go thru the motions, or pull my punches.<sup>a</sup> I make every blow count!

<sup>27</sup>I severely discipline my body and make it my slave, to do what I want it to do, so that after preaching to others, I won't find myself thrown out as worthless.<sup>a</sup>

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and fear what people will think or say, more than what God will think or say (Romans 10:9-10; Revelation 21:8), and who refuse to spend themselves in sharing the Great News, don't deserve the benefits of Heaven! Mark 8:34-38; 1 Timothy 4:16. See v 27.

**9:24a** We're all in the race, and the finish line is at the end of this life. Matthew 24:12-13; Hebrews 3:6,14; Revelation 2:26. We must run according to the rules (Hebrews 5:9), and we must run with determination to win. Luke 13:24. Not everyone who runs wins. Only those who give convincing evidence of a life that has been changed by Jesus Christ, and who continue to sincerely obey Him (Hebrews 5:9; Colossians 1:21-23) will win the race and gain eternal life.

You don't have to lose. Run to win! With God's help you can do it. Philippians 2:13. Accept His love and forgiveness thru Jesus Christ, and run the race with purpose and determination to win, and you will!

**9:25a** The Olympic Games, or any athletic event.

**9:26a** Paul wasn't a fake servant of God, one who

softened or tailored his message to please certain people. His only concern was to both live and preach the full truth, and thereby faithfully serve and obey his Lord. What will the evidence reveal about you on Judgment Day?

**9:27a** Robert Shank in *Life in The Son*, writes: "Many claim that Paul's fear was not that he might fail to be saved, but rather that he might find himself disqualified for further service as an apostle and that he might fail to receive the full reward which was assured him if he continued faithful ... But the immediate context (9:23—10:14) establishes the fact that Paul's fear was the possibility of losing, not opportunities of rewards for service, but the salvation of his soul!"

"A. T. Robertson, former professor of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of Louisville, Kentucky, in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 150, writes: "Most writers take Paul to refer here to the possibility of his rejection in his personal salvation at the end of the race. He does not claim absolute perfec-

*Warnings from Israel's Past*

**10** Also, dear friends, I don't want you to forget that our ancestors were all under the blessing and protection of the cloud that led them thru the wilderness,<sup>a</sup> and they all passed safely thru the Red Sea.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup>They were all baptized as followers of Moses in the cloud and in the sea.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>They all ate the same spiritual food.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>They all drank the same spiritual drink, because they drank from the spiritual Rock that went with them; and that Rock was Christ.

<sup>5</sup>But in spite of all that, God was not pleased with most of them, and as a result, their dead bodies were scattered over the desert.

<sup>6</sup>What happened to them should be a brutally grim warning to all of us not to crave evil things, as they did.

<sup>7</sup>Don't become idol worshipers, as some of them were. The record states, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and then got up to revel in song and dance in honor of an idol."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>And we must not indulge in sexual immorality, as some of them did. Judgment from God fell upon 23,000 of them in one day because of such sinning, and they all died!

<sup>9</sup>We must not see how much we can get away with before Christ judges us, as some of them did. As a result, He sent poisonous snakes which destroyed many of them.

<sup>10</sup>Nor should we grumble and complain about God's dealings with us, as some of them did, resulting in God sending His death angel who also destroyed many of them.

<sup>11</sup>All of these things happened to them as powerful warnings to us.<sup>a</sup> They were written down so that those of us living in this end time would learn from what happened to them.

<sup>12</sup>So even if you are absolutely sure that you are standing firm and would never sin in these ways, you must always be alert and on guard to make doubly sure that you don't fall.

<sup>13</sup>Know this: Any temptation that comes your way

is one that has already come to everyone else. But God is faithful to watch over you, and He won't allow you to be tempted beyond your power to stand firm against it. Because along with the temptation, He will also make a way for you to escape, so that you can stand firm in the face of it.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>So, my dear friends, keep running from every kind of idol worship.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>15</sup>I wish to speak to you now as to intelligent people. Judge for yourselves whether or not what I'm about to say is true.

<sup>16</sup>As we drink at the communion service from the sacred cup that we ask God to bless, are we not sharing together the assurance that Christ's blood was shed for us that we might live? And as we break the bread, are we not recognizing anew that Christ's body was broken for us?

<sup>17</sup>Because although there are many of us, we are one loaf—one body. And we all partake of the one loaf.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Consider the people of Israel: Are not those who eat the food sacrificed on the altar of God having a vital part in that sacrifice to God?

<sup>19</sup>Am I saying, then, that an idol is a real god, or that the food sacrificed to an idol changes in some way when it is sacrificed to it?

<sup>20</sup>No! Because the sacrifices of the heathen are actually made to demons, not to God. And I certainly don't want you involved with anything that has anything to do with demons!

<sup>21</sup>You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and also from the cup of demons! You cannot eat at the Lord's table and also at the table of demons!

<sup>22</sup>Do you really intend to provoke God to jealousy? Do you think you are stronger than God, and can risk a battle with Him?

*How to Use Christian Freedom*

<sup>23</sup>You may claim, "It is now permissible for me to eat anything."<sup>a</sup> But not everything is beneficial. It may be permissible, but not everything builds one up.

<sup>24</sup>You shouldn't be concerned only with what will

tion (Philippians 3:12) and so he presses on. At the end of his life he has serene confidence (as he states in 2 Timothy 4:7) with the race run and won. It is a humbling thought for us to see this wholesome fear instead of smug complacency in this greatest of all preachers of Christ.<sup>c</sup>

Paul recognized that the various desires of his body could be his downfall. We need to recognize this too. Fighting life's temptations is not an easy

battle, but with God's help you can win. You don't need to settle for Hell when God most earnestly wants to do everything you will let Him do to bring you to Heaven.

**10:1a** Exodus 13:21-22.

**10:1b** Exodus 14:1-31.

**10:2a** This is not referring to a religious ceremony of baptism. It refers to these people being immersed in dedication to Moses their leader, as a

benefit you, but how you can benefit others.

<sup>25</sup> However, buy and eat whatever is sold in the meat market. Don't bother your conscience by asking whether it had been sacrificed to idols.

<sup>26</sup> Because, "The whole earth belongs to the Lord, and everything in it."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>27</sup> If an unbeliever invites you to dinner, and you decide to go, eat whatever he serves you. Don't cause a problem for someone's conscience by asking where the food came from.

<sup>28</sup> But if a fellow guest tells you, "This meat was offered in sacrifice to idols," then, for his sake, and for the sake of conscience—not your conscience, but his—don't eat it, even though the earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord.

<sup>29</sup> "But," you may ask, "why must my liberty be muzzled because of what someone else believes?"

<sup>30</sup> "If I'm thankful to God for the food He's provided, why do you condemn me for eating food for which I'm truly thankful?"

<sup>31</sup> Yes, I'll tell you why. Whether you're eating or drinking or doing anything else, you should do everything in a way that will both glorify God and lead others to honor and obey Him.

<sup>32</sup> Don't do anything that may cause a Jew, a follower of Christ, or anyone else to sin by acting against his conscience.

<sup>33</sup> Do as I do. I try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't do what will satisfy my own desires, but what will be for the good of many, so that they may be saved.

**11** Follow my example, in the same way that I follow the example of Christ.

### **Rules for Worship**

<sup>2</sup> I indeed praise you, dear friends, that you have remembered all that I taught you, and that you continue to obey those teachings.

<sup>3</sup> But now I want you to know that every man is under the authority of Christ, and a woman is under the authority of her husband, and Christ is under the authority of God.

<sup>4</sup> Every man who prays or prophesies in public worship with his hat on disgraces Christ, under whose authority he is.

<sup>5</sup> But every woman who prays or prophesies in public worship with her head uncovered disgraces her authority, which is her husband. To have her head uncovered is just as disgraceful as if she'd had her head shaved.

<sup>6</sup> If a woman doesn't cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off. But if it's shameful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, she should cover her head.

<sup>7</sup> A man should certainly not wear a hat in public worship, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.

<sup>8</sup> Because the first man did not come from woman, but the first woman came from man.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Nor was man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For this reason, and because of the angels,<sup>a</sup> the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head.

<sup>11</sup> But in God's scheme of things, men and women both need each other.

<sup>12</sup> Because even as the first woman was made from man, now all men are born thru women. But it is God who created everything and everyone.

<sup>13</sup> Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God in public worship with her head uncovered?

<sup>14</sup> Aren't you naturally repulsed deep within yourself, and feel it's a disgrace to him, when you see a man with long hair?

<sup>15</sup> But when you see a woman with long hair, she is enhanced by it, because her hair has been given to her by God as a covering.

<sup>16</sup> But if anyone still disagrees, I can only say that this is the only practice that we or any of the other churches follow.

### **Rules for the Lord's Supper**

<sup>17</sup> Now, in giving the following instructions, I have no words of praise for you, since your coming

result of the miraculous cloud above them as they journeyed, and because of the miraculous way God opened the Red Sea for them to pass thru.

**10:3a** Manna. Exodus 16:14-36.

**10:7a** Exodus 32:6.

**10:11a** ... warning us of the severity of God's judgments upon those who sin.

**10:13a** Philippians 2:13.

**10:14a** Anything you love, revere, and desire more than you love God, is an idol! All unsaved people

are idol worshipers in one way or another. But this must not be true of one who claims to be a follower of Christ!

**10:17a** ... which is Christ, the Bread of Life. John 6:31-58.

**10:23a** ... because that food hasn't changed any after being offered to idols.

**10:26a** Psalm 24:1.

**11:8-9a** Genesis 1 and 2.

**11:10a** ... who are watching, ...

together for “fellowship” does more harm than good.

<sup>18</sup>First of all, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are cliques and divisions among you. And to some degree I believe it.

<sup>19</sup>But I suppose that divisions are bound to arise among you, so it may become clear as to who are, and who are not, the true friends of God.

<sup>20</sup>It certainly is not the Lord’s supper you are eating when you come together.

<sup>21</sup>Because when eating, each one thinks only of himself, so that some are still left hungry. And some of you even get drunk!

<sup>22</sup>What? Don’t you have your own homes in which to eat and drink? Or do you so despise the church of God that you must humiliate the poor members, who have little or nothing they can bring.<sup>a</sup> What shall I say to you about all this? Shall I praise you? I certainly will not!

### *The Lord’s Supper*

<sup>23</sup>Now this is the message I received from the Lord, as I previously told you: On the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed, He took some unleavened bread in His hands.

<sup>24</sup>And after He had given thanks to God for it, He broke it into pieces<sup>a</sup> and said, “Take this and eat it. This pictures My body<sup>b</sup> which is being broken for you. Make a practice of doing this in remembrance of Me.”

<sup>25</sup>In the same way, after supper He also took the cup, and said, “The contents of this cup represent the new agreement God has made with you, which has been sealed and made valid by My blood. Continue to share this cup, and whenever you drink it, drink it in remembrance of Me.”

<sup>26</sup>So until He comes again, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the power of the Lord’s death.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>27</sup>So whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy or careless manner will be guilty of the same crime as those who killed the body and spilled the blood of the Lord.

<sup>28</sup>So you must carefully examine yourselves before you eat that bread and drink from that cup.

<sup>29</sup>Because anyone who eats and drinks of it

unworthily is eating and drinking God’s judgment upon himself.

<sup>30</sup>That’s why so many are weak and sickly among you, and many have even died.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>31</sup>If we would carefully examine ourselves, we wouldn’t be judged by God.

<sup>32</sup>But when God judges us, He is disciplining us in order to save us from being finally condemned with the people of the world.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>33</sup>So then, my dear friends, when you come together to eat, always make a practice of allowing everyone to have an equal share of the food.

<sup>34</sup>If anyone is still hungry, let him finish his eating at home, so that your coming together doesn’t result in God’s judgment upon you. I’ll straighten out the other matters when I visit you.

### *Gifts from the Holy Spirit*

**12** Now concerning your questions about the gifts from the Holy Spirit. I want you, dear friends, to understand the truth about them.

<sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans, you were tricked and somehow led astray to worship idols that couldn’t even speak.

<sup>3</sup>For that reason, I want you to know that no one who speaks under the influence of the Holy Spirit ever denounces Jesus in any way. And no one will be disposed to say, “Jesus is my Lord,” unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it’s the same Holy Spirit who gives them.

<sup>5</sup>There are different ways we can serve the Lord, but we all serve the same Lord.

<sup>6</sup>And the Lord has different work for each of us to do, but it’s the same God who works in each of us and helps us in everything we do.

<sup>7</sup>Now the Spirit actively works thru each person for the benefit of everyone.

<sup>8</sup>To one person, He gives the intelligence to speak wise words of advice and direction. To another, the same Spirit gives a clear view and insight into knowledge, and the ability to instruct others in that knowledge.

<sup>9</sup>The same Spirit gives special faith to another; and to still another, gifts of power to heal the sick.

<sup>10</sup>He enables another to work miracles, another

**11:22a** ... and cannot bring the good food to the supper that you can.

**11:24a** In this writer’s opinion, we greatly displease the Lord if we use wafers in the communion service instead of broken bread. And in my spirit the Lord agrees. Christ broke the bread as an illustration of His body being broken for us. Unleavened

bread (bread without yeast) can be obtained in almost any food store. It can then be broken before the service, with a few pieces left for the minister to break during the service to illustrate the suffering Christ endured for us. Wafers tell us nothing!

What would Christ do about the matter if He were in your church to conduct the communion service?



to prophesy, and another to know whether the prophecy was from God. To another, He gives the ability to speak in languages he never learned,<sup>a</sup> and to another, who doesn't know the languages either, the ability to interpret what was said in those languages.

<sup>11</sup> But it's the one and only Holy Spirit who works thru these various gifts He has given, and He distributes them to each person according to His own will and wisdom.

### ***One Body with Many Parts***

<sup>12</sup> And just as your physical body is a single unit, having many parts, and all those parts (even though so many) when joined together form a single body—the same is true of the body of Christ, the Church.

<sup>13</sup> Because whether we're Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, the one Spirit has immersed each of us into our appropriate place into one body. And He has caused each of us to drink<sup>a</sup> of the one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> Now the human body isn't made up of only one part, but of many.

<sup>15</sup> So if the foot should say, "Because I'm not a hand, I'm not part of the body," that wouldn't make it any less a part of the body.

<sup>16</sup> Or if the ear should say, "Because I'm not an eye, I'm not part of the body," that wouldn't cause it to cease being a part of the body.

<sup>17</sup> After all, if the whole body were an eye, how could we hear? Or if the whole body were an ear, how could we smell?

<sup>18</sup> But as it is, God has placed every part of the body in exactly the place where He wants it to be.

<sup>19</sup> If every part had the same function and served the same purpose, what kind of a body would that be?

<sup>20</sup> But though the body indeed has many different parts, it is still only one body.

<sup>21</sup> So the eyes can't say to the hands, "We don't need you!" Nor can the head say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

<sup>22</sup> No, on the contrary, those parts that may seem unimportant are all so very necessary to the proper functioning of the body.

<sup>23</sup> What's more, we take special care of those parts which may be considered less honorable. And we are careful to cover those parts we consider unrepresentable, while our presentable parts don't need such care.

<sup>24</sup> Also, when God put our bodies together, He made them in such a way that the weaker parts are protected by the stronger parts.

<sup>25</sup> So there's no discord among the parts of the body, as they work together for the common good of the whole body.

<sup>26</sup> If one part of our body hurts, we hurt all over. If one part is honored, all the other parts rejoice with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now all of you together are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a very important part of it.

<sup>28</sup> In creating Christ's body, the Church, God has put these parts into it:

First, apostles,

Second, prophets,

Third, teachers,

Then those who can perform miracles,

Those with various gifts of healing, to

enable them to heal various diseases,

Those with special ability to help others,

Those with ability to lead and direct God's various workers,

And those who can speak in languages they never learned.

<sup>29</sup> Is everyone an apostle? Is everyone a prophet? Is everyone a teacher? Does everyone perform miracles?

<sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in languages they never learned? Do all interpret what has been spoken in those various languages?

<sup>31</sup> No, but all of you should continue to strive earnestly in prayer before God to obtain the best gifts. But, as desirable as these gifts are, let me show you a means to use in the Lord's service that is even far more excellent and needful than any gift.

### ***Love***

**13** Even if I could speak in all the languages of Heaven and earth, but lacked love, I

Go thou and do likewise. Ask the people in your church that question

**11:24b** Meaning *this represents or is a picture of or will bring to your remembrance* My body.

**11:26a** ... *to save you from sin and its consequences.*

**11:30a** Literally *have fallen asleep.*

**11:32a** People who live for the pleasures and

achievements of this life, with little or no real interest in living to please God.

**12:3a** Paul is evidently referring to instances when a spirit speaks thru a person. Only the Holy Spirit can glorify God by acknowledging that Jesus is Lord.

**12:10a** Acts 2:1-42; 10:1-48; 19:1-7.

**12:13a** John 7:37-39.

would be no more effective than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

<sup>2</sup>And even if I had the gift of prophecy, and understood all hidden truths and had unlimited knowledge, and if I had the kind of faith that could cause mountains to move, but lacked love, I wouldn't amount to anything.

<sup>3</sup>Even if I sold everything I owned in order to buy food to feed the poor, and even died in the flames as a martyr for preaching God's truths, but lacked love, I would gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love is always patient and kind. It is never envious, boastful, nor puffed up with pride.

<sup>5</sup>It is never rude, nor self-seeking. It is not quick tempered. It doesn't continue to talk about the wrong that was done.

<sup>6</sup>Love never rejoices when evil wins, but it always rejoices when truth triumphs.

<sup>7</sup>It is always supportive, trusting, hoping, enduring.

<sup>8</sup>Love will continue to be a powerful force forever. But the time will come when gifts of prophecy and speaking in unknown languages will be things of the past. And the gift of knowledge will no longer be needed.

<sup>9</sup>Because now we know so little, and even when we are prophesying, we are given only part of the truth.

<sup>10</sup>But when perfect truth is finally revealed to us, we will have no further need of that which now serves us in an imperfect way.

<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I talked like a child, I reasoned like a child, I thought like a child. But when I became a man, I put childish things aside.

<sup>12</sup>At the present time, we see God and His truth as though we were looking thru a glass that is extremely blurred. But then we will be face to face with Him.<sup>a</sup> Now I have only partial knowledge, but then I will have complete understanding of the truth, in the same way that God now knows all about me.

<sup>13</sup>Meanwhile we have these three things: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.<sup>a</sup>

### *About Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues*

**14** So make it your highest aim to love God, and others<sup>a</sup>; but still strive most earnestly

in prayer to obtain spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit—especially that you may prophesy.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup>If you speak in tongues (in languages you never learned), you are not speaking to men but to God. And even though the Holy Spirit is speaking thru you about spiritual mysteries, only God can understand you.

<sup>3</sup>But the one who prophesies builds up, advises, and comforts those who hear him.

<sup>4</sup>The one who speaks in tongues is himself built up spiritually, but the one who prophesies builds up the whole church.

<sup>5</sup>I wish all of you spoke in tongues, but I wish even more that you prophesied. Because the one who prophesies is of greater value to others than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets what he says, so that everyone can understand and be built up by his message.

<sup>6</sup>So when I come to you, dear friends, what good will I do you if I speak to you in tongues, unless I, or someone else, interpret that message and bring you some special revelation or word of knowledge from God, or some prophecy or message of instruction?

<sup>7</sup>Even in the case of a lifeless flute or harp, how will one ever know what tune is being played unless the melody of the piece is played clearly?

<sup>8</sup>And if the army bugler plays a tune the soldiers don't understand, how will they know they are being called to battle?

<sup>9</sup>It's the same with you. Unless you use your tongue to speak words that can be understood, how will anyone know what you're saying? You'll just be talking to the air.

<sup>10</sup>I suppose that of the many different languages in the world, none of them are hard to understand for those who speak them.

<sup>11</sup>But if I don't understand the language, I'll be a foreigner to the one speaking, and the speaker will be a foreigner to me.

<sup>12</sup>It's the same with you. Since you are so zealous for spiritual gifts, be zealous to excel in those gifts that will enable you to build up the faith of those who listen to you.

<sup>13</sup>So let the one who speaks in tongues pray that he may be enabled to interpret what he's saying.

<sup>14</sup>Because if I pray in tongues, my spirit is indeed

13:12a 1 John 3:2.

13:13a When we are finally with the Lord, our faith and hope will have been fulfilled. But forever there will be the need to love and be loved.

Paul does not belittle the gifts of God here, but they must be used in true and tender love, or they

will not be effective.

14:1a Mark 12:30-31.

14:1b See Romans 12:6 note.

14:19a ... *unless the message is interpreted.*

14:21a Isaiah 28:11-12.

14:22a It's a miracle designed to convince them of

praying, but my mind has no part in it.

<sup>15</sup>So what should I do? I will indeed pray in tongues given me by the Holy Spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing in tongues given me by the Holy Spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.

<sup>16</sup>Otherwise, if you praise God only with your spirit in tongues in the assembly, how will the others there who don't know the language be able to join you in praise, since they don't understand a word of what you're saying?

<sup>17</sup>You would indeed be praising God acceptably, but those with you wouldn't be helped.

<sup>18</sup>I thank my God that in private I speak to Him in unknown languages more than all of you.

<sup>19</sup>But when I am together with others in church, I would rather speak just five words they can understand, in order to teach them, than 10,000 words in a language they don't understand.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>20</sup>My dear friends, stop acting like little children in regard to things that fascinate you. You indeed need to be like infants when it comes to doing evil, but be mature adults when it comes to seeking real results!

<sup>21</sup>In the Scriptures the Lord has said:

**“With other languages and with other lips I will speak to this people; but even then, after all of that, they will still not listen to Me.”<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>22</sup>So speaking in a language you never learned is a miraculous sign, not for the Lord's followers, but for the benefit of unbelievers.<sup>a</sup> But prophecy is mainly for followers, not for unbelievers.

<sup>23</sup>So if everyone were to speak in tongues when you are all assembled, and some unbelievers or people who didn't know the purpose of the languages were to come in, wouldn't they say you're all insane?

<sup>24</sup>But if you are all prophesying when an unbeliever or uninformed person comes in, the more he hears, the more convinced and convicted of his sins he will become.

<sup>25</sup>And by that means he will come to realize that God knows even the darkest secrets of his heart. So he will finally fall down on his knees and worship God, and declare, “O God, You are surely here among these people!”

### ***Worship Must Be Orderly***

<sup>26</sup>What should we conclude then, dear friends? Yes, each of you should come together for the purpose of sharing. One may have a song, another a word of instruction, or a truth the Lord has revealed to him. Another may have a message in tongues, another the interpretation. But let everything be done for the purpose of building one another up.

<sup>27</sup>If anyone speaks in tongues, only two people, or at the most three, should speak, and one at a time. And there must be someone to interpret what was said.

<sup>28</sup>But if there is no interpreter, the one with a message in tongues must keep silent in the church, and speak only to himself and to God.

<sup>29</sup>Two or three prophets may speak, and everyone else must listen carefully, to determine whether the message is really from God.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>30</sup>And if someone sitting there receives a revelation from God, the one speaking must stop and let the other person speak.

<sup>31</sup>In that way you can all<sup>a</sup> prophesy, one at a time, and you can all receive instruction and encouragement.

<sup>32</sup>The prophet can speak or stop speaking at any time, because each prophet is a free agent and is in control of his own spirit.

<sup>33</sup>Because God is not a God of confusion and turmoil; He is a God of peace. This is something that is emphasized in all the churches.

<sup>34</sup>Your women are to keep silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Jewish Law also says.

<sup>35</sup>If they have a question, let them ask their husbands at home; because it's a disgrace for a woman to speak up in church.

<sup>36</sup>Or did the word of God originate with you?<sup>a</sup> Or are you the only ones to whom it came?<sup>b</sup>

<sup>37</sup>Let those of you who have the gift of prophecy, and others who are living close to the Lord, check this out, and acknowledge that what I'm writing you here are commands from the Lord.

<sup>38</sup>But if anyone continues to ignore this truth, let him continue in his ignorance.<sup>a</sup>

the truth of the Christian religion.

**14:29a** The audience, or at least the other prophets, should listen carefully to judge whether the message is from God and is in harmony with God's previously revealed truth. We each have the same responsibility today.

**14:31a** That is, all who have the gift of prophecy.

**14:36a** ... so that you are the ones who have the right to dictate policy?

**14:36b** Or have you no respect for what others have determined?

**14:38a** Meaning I'm not going to pursue the matter further. Let him suffer the consequences.

<sup>39</sup> So, my dear friends, strive with earnest desire to prophecy, but don't forbid anyone to speak in tongues.

<sup>40</sup> But let everything be done properly, in an orderly way.

### *The Great News About Christ*

**15** Now I wish to remind you dear friends about the Great News that I preached to you, which you also received, and on which you now base all your hopes for time and eternity.

<sup>2</sup> It's by means of this Great News that you are being saved,<sup>a</sup> but only if you are continuing to hold firmly to the message I preached to you. Otherwise, all your previous following of the Lord has been of no value to you at all.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Because I gave you those truths which are of prime importance, which I had myself also received<sup>a</sup>:

That the Messiah died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said He would;<sup>b</sup>

<sup>4</sup> that He was buried, but that three days later He was raised back to life again, just as the Scriptures had predicted;<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup> and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the rest of the Twelve.

<sup>6</sup> After that, He was seen by more than 500 of His followers at one time, most of whom are still alive today, although some have now died.

<sup>7</sup> Later still, He was seen by James, and then again by all the apostles.

<sup>8</sup> Last of all, He was also seen by me, by one who was caused to live in spite of the fact that I tried to commit spiritual abortion.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>9</sup> I'm the least worthy of any of the apostles. I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

<sup>10</sup> But because of kindness and mercy from God

that I certainly don't deserve, I am what I am. And the mercy God showed me hasn't been without results, because I've worked harder than anyone else. Still, it wasn't I, it was God in His mercy working thru me.

<sup>11</sup> The message I preached to you is the message we continue to preach, whether it is I or others who do the preaching. And this was the message you believed.

### *We Will Also Be Raised from the Dead*

<sup>12</sup> Now then, if the message we preach includes both the declaration and the proof that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you keep insisting there won't be any resurrection of those who are dead?

<sup>13</sup> If that's true, then even Christ hasn't been raised from the dead!

<sup>14</sup> And if Christ hasn't been raised, then our preaching is utterly worthless and your faith is just as worthless.

<sup>15</sup> If that's true, then we've been lying about what God did. Because what we've been telling you is that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did no such thing, if the truth is that the dead will not be raised.

<sup>16</sup> Because if the dead will not be raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith in Him is utterly worthless, and you are still lost and under condemnation by God because of your sins.

<sup>18</sup> The same is then true of all who have died trusting in Jesus. They are hopelessly lost!

<sup>19</sup> If the hope we have in Christ is good only for this life, and no more, we are the most miserable and the most deserving of scornful pity of all people on the face of the whole earth.

**15:2a** Present indicative passive—meaning; *present, continuous, definite action, by means of a power outside yourself.*

**15:2b** See Colossians 1:23, and note.

**15:3a** ... *and had gladly accepted as my hope.*

**15:3b** Psalm 22:1,6-18; Isaiah 52:14; 53:1-12; Daniel 9:26; Zechariah 12:10; Luke 24:25-27,45-47.

**15:4a** Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 12:40.

**15:8a** ... *by killing all Christians in order to rid the earth of Christianity before it had a chance to really be born.* The actual Greek word means *an abortion, an untimely birth.* The word does not mean *born late.* It's a compilation of two Greek words meaning *from* and *to wound.*

**15:20a** ... *after living for God and trusting in His promises of eternal life.*

**15:21a** Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24; 5:1-5.

**15:22a** John 5:24-29.

**15:22-23a** Every child of *Adam* (which includes all of us) *will die*, but every true follower of Christ *will be made to live again.* Christ first arose, victor over death. At His second coming, *the dead who belong to Christ will be the first to rise. Then we who are still alive will be caught up with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.* 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. See also vss 51-52 and Matthew 24:29-31.

**15:25a** Matthew 22:44 et al.

**15:24-25b** *The end* will not occur until after Christ has reigned on earth at least a thousand years. Every person on earth during that time will have had a chance to accept Him as Lord and Sav-

<sup>20</sup>But the truth of the matter is, **CHRIST HAS INDEED BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD!** And He's become the first of countless millions, now dead, who will one day be raised to live again!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>21</sup>And since death has become a certainty for all of us because of what one man—Adam—did,<sup>a</sup> now the resurrection from death has also become a certainty because of what one Man—Christ—did.

<sup>22</sup>Because all of us who are related to Adam will die, but all who are rightly related to Christ will be made to live again!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>23</sup>But each will be raised in his proper order: Christ was the first to be raised; then all who belong to Christ will be raised to live again when He returns.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Then the end will come, when Christ will hand the Kingdom over to God the Father, after He has destroyed every opposing ruler, authority, and power.

<sup>25</sup>Because God had destined<sup>a</sup> that Christ must reign until He has thoroughly conquered every enemy, and they all lie subdued under His power.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>26</sup>The last enemy to be destroyed will be death.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>27</sup>This will fulfill the prophecy that states,  
**God has put everything under His control and authority.<sup>a</sup>**

But it is clear that the “everything” does not include God Himself, who is the One who put everything under Christ.

<sup>28</sup>Because when all things have finally been put under Him, then the Son will turn the Kingdom over to the Father and be under the One who had put all things under Him. He will do this so that in regard to all matters, God may become totally and completely everything in the heart of everyone.

<sup>29</sup>And what about those people who are being baptized for the dead? If there is no such thing as a resurrection from the dead, what is their reason

for being baptized for the dead?

<sup>30</sup>If there's no resurrection to look forward to, why should we then continue to expose ourselves to constant danger?

<sup>31</sup>I face the threat of death every day because of my boasting of the hope I have thru Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>32</sup>If I fought those beasts here in Ephesus<sup>a</sup> for mere human glory, what have I gained? If the dead are not going to be resurrected, we might as well “eat, drink, and be merry, because we'll all soon be dead!”<sup>b</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Don't be fooled by people who talk like that! If you associate with folks who believe like that, they'll soon lead you into corrupt living!

<sup>34</sup>Wake up to what the truth really is, and stop your sinning! Because some of you evidently don't know God at all. I say this to your shame.

### *What Kind of Body Will We Have?*

<sup>35</sup>But someone may ask, “How is it possible for the dead to rise up? What kind of body will they have?”

<sup>36</sup>What foolish questions! Whatever you sow in the ground must first of all die before it can come alive.

<sup>37</sup>And what you plant is a mere seed, such as a kernel of wheat, or whatever, not the fully developed plant that will come up later.

<sup>38</sup>Then God gives it the kind of body He has determined it shall have, and each seed is given its own body.

<sup>39</sup>All flesh is not the same kind either. People have one kind of flesh, animals another, fish another, and birds another.

<sup>40</sup>While beings on earth have bodies, beings in Heaven also have bodies. But the magnificence of the heavenly bodies is of one kind, and the magnificence of earthly bodies is another.<sup>a</sup>

ior. Still it will seemingly take a thousand years to bring the people on earth under Christ. He will no doubt seek to win the rebellious by love, but He will also use force in many cases to bring about this submission. Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.

At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed again (Revelation 20:1-3) and will be allowed by God to stir up all remaining rebels to attack Jerusalem, the world capital. All rebels who join Satan in this last great assault against Jerusalem (Revelation 20:7-10) will be consumed by fire. If any rebels exist elsewhere, they will no doubt be destroyed in similar fashion.

**15:26a** When all of Christ's enemies have been either won over to Him or conquered, then *the last*

*enemy, death*, will also *be destroyed*. So it will not be until after the Millennium that God will abolish death.

**15:27a** Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:29-36.

**15:31a** It was the preaching about Jesus and the resurrection that so angered the Jews.

**15:32a** Acts 19:1-41.

**15:32b** Isaiah 22:13.

**15:40a** *Heavenly bodies* are spiritual bodies, and spiritual bodies are just as real as physical bodies. Our physical bodies are made up of atoms, which many scientists believe are mostly, if not completely, made up of electrical charges. So what is generally considered solid matter is simply energy in a different form. The spiritual bodies are no doubt

<sup>41</sup>The sun has one kind of grandeur, the moon another, and the stars another. And each star is different than all other stars in its grandeur.

<sup>42</sup>The same is true of the body that will be resurrected from death. The body that's being buried was perishable, but the resurrected body will never die!

<sup>43</sup>The perishable body is buried as a discarded, useless thing, but when it rises up it will be beautiful. It is buried because all of its feeble strength has finally left it, but the body that will come forth in the resurrection will be powerful!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>44</sup>The body that is buried is a physical one, but the body that will rise up will be a superamazing spiritual one. Just as there are physical bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>45</sup>That's why the Scriptures tell us,

**The first man, Adam, became a being with the breath of life,<sup>a</sup>**

whereas Jesus, the last Adam, is a life-giving spirit.

<sup>46</sup>But we're not given a spiritual body first; we first receive a physical body, then a spiritual one.

<sup>47</sup>The first man came out of the earth, made by God from the soil. The second Man was the Lord, who came from Heaven.

<sup>48</sup>So all who belong to earth are like the first man whom God made from the soil. And all who reach the heavenly realm will be like the One who came from Heaven.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>49</sup>So, as we now have a body like the man who was made from the earth, we will then have a body like Christ, the Man from Heaven.

<sup>50</sup>Now what I'm saying, dear friends, is that bodies made of flesh and blood will not be able to

enter the Kingdom of God.<sup>a</sup> Nothing perishable will be allowed there, where everything is imperishable.

<sup>51</sup>Now listen to me, and I will tell you something that has been kept secret: Not all of us will die, but we will all be changed.

<sup>52</sup>It will happen in a fraction of a second, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sounding of the last trumpet.<sup>a</sup> Because when that trumpet sounds, all the dead who belong to Christ will be resurrected back to life with bodies that will never die. And we who are still alive will also be changed.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>53</sup>Because it is absolutely necessary that these decaying, dying bodies be exchanged for bodies that will never decay or die; that these temporary bodies be exchanged for bodies that are everlasting.

<sup>54</sup>So when this perishable body has been transformed into an imperishable one, and this which is temporary has become everlasting and never-dying, then the Scriptures will come true that state:

**"Death has been swallowed up! The victory<sup>a</sup> is won!<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>55</sup>**"O death, where now is your sting? And grave, what happened to your victory?"<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>56</sup>Death is able to fatally sting us because of our sin. And God's pure and holy law gives death the authority to carry out this judgment against sin.

<sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God who has given us the victory over sin and death thru our Lord Jesus Christ!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>58</sup>So because of the great resurrection to everlasting life that is now positively assured us, my dear brothers and sisters, be ever so firm in your

just as *wonderfully made*. The inference is that the *heavenly bodies* far outweigh the *earthly bodies* in grandeur.

**15:43a** Ephesians 1:18.

**15:44a** The existence of the one kind of body is no more impossible than the existence of the other. The spiritual body won't be a mere spirit, because then it wouldn't be a body. It will be our spirit clothed with substance that at present is unknown to us. Those bodies will not be dependent upon the various functions and needs of our present bodies. They will have an economy of their own; living without the need of nourishment; not subject to decay; not liable to sickness, pain, or death. Jesus Christ had a spiritual body when He arose from the grave. But still His spiritual body could do anything His physical body could do, plus much more. It will be the same with us.

**15:45a** Genesis 2:7.

**15:48a** Philippians 3:21.

**15:50a** In our present bodies, we evidently wouldn't be able to enjoy the intensified and pure enjoyments of Heaven. And they would keep us from reaching our full eternal potential. A natural body like ours, subject to decay, is unfit for Heaven. It just cannot enter into the *inheritance that is immortal, that will never perish nor spoil nor fade away*. 1 Peter 1:4.

**15:52a** According to Matthew 24:29-31, the last trumpet will not sound until after the Great Tribulation. That's when the resurrection and rapture and all this change in our bodies will take place.

**15:52b** Matthew 24:29-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

**15:54a** The victory Christ gained for us on the cross.

**15:54b** Isaiah 25:8.

**15:55a** Hosea 13:14.

**15:57a** Romans 8:1-17.

**15:58a** Seek diligently to know and do God's will

resolve to live only to please God!<sup>a</sup> Don't let anything move you to do otherwise. Always put yourself into the Lord's work with all your heart, soul, and energy!<sup>b</sup> Because you can have complete confidence that the diligent work you do in obedience to the Lord's command is pleasing to Him and will accomplish His purposes, with great results.

### ***A Collection for God's People***

**16** Now about the collection of money to help God's people in Judea: Do the same as I told the Galatian churches to do.

<sup>2</sup>Every Sunday each of you should set aside funds in proportion to your income, and save it up, so that no offerings will need to be taken when I come.

<sup>3</sup>When I arrive, I will send your gift on to Jerusalem by means of whichever men you approve, together with letters of introduction.

<sup>4</sup>And if it seems good that I go too, then they can accompany me.

### ***Paul's Travel Plans***

<sup>5</sup>I will be coming your way after going thru northern Greece. I will definitely go there first.

<sup>6</sup>It may be that I will stay with you for some time, perhaps even thru the winter. Then you could send me on my way, wherever that will be.

<sup>7</sup>Because I don't want to come right now and just pass thru on my way up north. When I come, I want to stay awhile, if the Lord is willing.

<sup>8</sup>But I'll be staying here in Ephesus until Pentecost,

<sup>9</sup>because a door has opened here that's wide open for me to serve the Lord effectively, in spite of the many who oppose me.

<sup>10</sup>If Timothy comes your way, make sure you don't intimidate him. He's faithfully serving the Lord, just as I am.

<sup>11</sup>So no one should despise him.<sup>a</sup> Send him on to me in a happy frame of mind. I'm expecting him here, along with some of the other evangelists.

<sup>12</sup>Now in regard to our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to visit you along with the others, but he didn't feel at all that he should at this time. But he does plan to be with you later, when he has opportunity.

### ***Final Words***

<sup>13</sup>In the meantime, continue to be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>And whatever you do, do it in love.

<sup>15</sup>Let me remind you, dear friends, that the members of the household of Stephanas were the first converts to Christ in southern Greece. And they have been so zealous in giving of themselves in service to God's people.

<sup>16</sup>I urge you, dear friends, to accept the leadership of people like that, and of everyone who works and labors with us.

<sup>17</sup>I was so glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were able to visit me, because they were able to supply what you have not been able to give.

<sup>18</sup>They truly refreshed and encouraged me, even as they have done for you. Be sure to honor such men.

<sup>19</sup>The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla send you their most hearty Christian greetings. And those meeting as a church in their home do the same.

<sup>20</sup>All the followers of the Lord here send you their greetings. Greet one another with genuine love in Christ.

<sup>21</sup>And here's my greeting in my own handwriting:

***Warmest greetings—Paul.***

<sup>22</sup>If anyone does not truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, he must remain under a curse.

Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>23</sup>May the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ rest upon each of you.

<sup>24</sup>My love goes out to all of you who are in Christ Jesus. So be it.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Paul and Sosthenes

in everything! See Luke 16:9 and the note.

**15:58b** But always realize that you must work under His direction and blessing, for without Him you can do nothing of real worth.

**16:11a** ... *because of his youth and inexperience.*

**16:13a** Compare Ephesians 6:10-18.

Thru kindness and mercy from God that I certainly don't deserve, I have been given the privilege of being the wise master builder who laid the foundation for your Christian lives. Now someone else is building on that foundation. But let each builder be intensely concerned as to how he builds on it.

<sup>11</sup>God will accept no other foundation than the one which has already been laid, which is Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup>Now the various materials that can be used in building upon that foundation are either gold, silver, and precious stones; or wood, hay, and straw.

<sup>13</sup>When the fire hits on Judgment Day it will become very easy to tell what quality of materials each builder used, because every man's work will be tested by fire, to reveal just what quality of work it was.

<sup>14</sup>If anyone's work on these buildings is still standing after the fire, he will receive a reward.

<sup>15</sup>But if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer great loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one barely escaping thru the flames.

<sup>16</sup>Don't you know that each of you are a house of God, and that the Spirit of God is living within you?

<sup>17</sup>If anyone corrupts and destroys God's house, God will destroy him! Because God's house is sacred and has been dedicated to Him, and you are that house.

—I Corinthians 3:10-17