

I CORINTHIANS

You, God, and a KJV Bible

By Eric Neumann

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Quotations

The only material quoted in this book is the Word of God in the King James Version. No commentaries or scholars are quoted, because God's Word is important, not man's word. As such, I encourage all readers to be good Bereans by searching the scriptures to see if what I have said is true (Acts 17:11). It is okay if you do not agree with what I say, but it is not okay if your disagreement is not based upon the Word of God in its proper context, which involves "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Goal

The goal of this Bible study guide is to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5) so that members of the body of Christ may "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

Contact the author

Therefore, the author encourages any disagreements be brought to his attention so that future versions of this Bible study guide can be changed if deemed necessary.

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Books by Eric Neumann

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I Corinthians Introduction

The book of **I Corinthians** is written to a bunch of carnal Christians (3:1-3), who are carnal because they do not believe Romans doctrine. Thus, I Corinthians corrects a failure by the Corinthians to have the practical application of Romans 6-8 doctrine demonstrated in their lives. Chapter 1 says that God's wisdom is foolish to man. Chapter 2 says that, what Paul is saying, was kept secret until revealed to Him, and that the doctrine for today is revealed to members of the body of Christ today, as they allow the Holy Ghost to teach it to them as they read God's Word. Chapter 3 covers the carnality of the Corinthians and teaches them that they will only be rewarded for allowing the Holy Ghost to work through them. Chapter 4 shows that serving the Lord will subject the Corinthians to persecution by the world.

The rest of I Corinthians covers specific issues the Corinthians are having because they do not have sound, Romans doctrine built into their souls. Chapter 5 covers fornication. Chapter 6 covers sins done against each other, and how they are to separate themselves from believers not walking in the Spirit. Chapter 7 covers how a saint should view marriage. Chapter 8 teaches them not to offend those weaker in sound doctrine, so that they can grow up in the doctrine over time. Chapter 9 is Paul's example to them of catering to the weak so that others may be saved and edified in the doctrine. Chapter 10 shows the bad, spiritual example of Israel and how to act around religious folks. Chapters 11-14 deal with godly conduct within church services, showing that charity (chapter 13) and the edification of others (chapter 14) are to be made a priority. Chapter 15 gives proper doctrine regarding resurrection. Chapter 16 covers proper conduct to other local assemblies of the body of Christ.

Summary: This book is written to correct the carnal lifestyles (3:1-4) of the Corinthians, because they do not have faith in the Romans doctrine of salvation and sanctification by the cross work of Christ (15:1-4).

Key passage: 15:16-20 (16) For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: (17) And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. (18) Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. (19) If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (20) But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

I Corinthians 1 – Carnal Disputes Overcome by God's Foolishness

1 The Corinthians are "saints" (v. 2) not because of how they act (3:3), but because they have believed the gospel (15:3-4). Therefore, Paul thanks God for them (vs. 3-8), because "God is faithful" (v. 9) to give them eternal life, in spite of their carnality. Because they have fellowship in "Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 9), Paul calls them to use the mind of Christ (v. 10) in order to overcome the carnal divisions among them (vs. 11-16).

Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel (v. 17), which is foolishness to the world. In the cross, God destroys man's wisdom (v. 18). God even uses the foolishness of preaching (v. 21) to convey His wisdom to man so that man only believes the gospel if he is looking for the truth, not because it was presented in a way that is pleasing to the flesh.

In Paul's day, there were two groups of people: Jews and Gentiles. However, God sees three groups. The first group is the Jews. They look for a sign, and the cross is a stumblingblock to them. The second group is the Gentiles. They look for wisdom, and the cross is foolishness to them (vs. 22-23). The third group is "them which are called" (v. 24). They are comprised of both Jew and Gentile. To them, the preaching of the cross is the power of God (v. 24). The way you join the latter group is by recognizing your sin. Both the Jew and the Gentile, who do not recognize their sin, reject the cross. However, the one, Jew or Gentile, who recognizes his sin, will see the cross as the power of God to overcome their sin for them and give them the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

The cross seems "foolish" to the Gentile and "weak" to the Jew (v. 25). But, God's foolishness and weakness are "wiser" and "stronger" than man, respectively (v. 25), because the cross is powerful enough to overcome man's sin and give him eternal life. God overcomes man's wisdom with the cross (vs. 26-28) so that "no flesh should glory in His presence" (v. 29). In other words, no Jew can say that his strength and no Gentile can say that his wisdom got him into God's kingdom. He only gets there by the foolishness of the cross.

When we believe the gospel, we are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. Therefore, everything we have, spiritually speaking, is of the Lord (v. 30), and so we should only glory in Him (v. 31).

1:1 Sosthenes is mentioned in Acts 18:17 as being the chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. Perhaps this man believed the gospel, went with Paul on his apostolic journeys, and then Paul had him write down the words of this epistle, since he would have known the Corinthians personally. Alternatively, this is a different Sosthenes not mentioned elsewhere.

1:2 "Both theirs and ours" probably means that Jesus Christ is Lord both of Israel's program (Acts 2:36) and of the Body of Christ's program. Only those, who rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), would pick up on this. Churchianity says that Paul is just referring to all Christians, both Jew and Gentile. However, that is covered by the statement: "All that in every place." "Both" refers to two groups. It cannot refer to Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ, because God is no respecter of persons there (Romans 2:10-11). Therefore, it must refer to the two dispensations that were ongoing at the time—prophecy and mystery.

1:3-6 These verses are a good proof of our eternal security in Christ. The reason I say this is that the Corinthians were carnal (3:3), gloried in sexual sin (5:1-2), took each other to court (6:6), fought over food and alcohol (11:21), spoke over each

other with tongues (14:27), and thought there was no rapture (15:12). If you ask people in Churchianity if a church like that is saved, they would say, “No.” However, here, Paul says that he always thanks God for the Corinthians because they are saved and are enriched by Jesus Christ. The reason Paul can say this, in spite of their problems, is because they are eternally secure in Christ. Therefore, Paul knows them, based upon who they are in Christ, and not based upon their many sins (II Corinthians 5:16).

Note that “the testimony of Christ was confirmed in” them (1:6). Paul will start chapter 2 by saying that, when he came to them, he “determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (2:1-2). Once he confirmed they were saved, he began thanking God for them, because they have the gift of eternal life, even if they act like unbelievers.

1:7-8 Although Paul will talk about spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12-14, he is probably more concerned with them building up the gift of sound doctrine in the inner man, as he was with the Romans, so they may be established (Romans 1:11-12), especially in light of the Corinthians’ carnality. Therefore, it is faith in sound doctrine that Paul wants the Corinthians not to come behind in.

This is true in light of 1:8. Sanctification comes in two parts: 1) Being sanctified or set apart by Christ as holy at the moment of salvation, and 2) A progressive sanctification as sound doctrine is built up in your inner man. Paul said, in 1:2, that the Corinthians “are sanctified in Christ Jesus.” Now, he refers to their progressive sanctification. Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church “with the washing of water by the Word” (Ephesians 5:26), and Christ will be faithful to complete this sanctification work by the time of the rapture of the church (Philippians 1:6). Since this is all about Christ’s work in them, Paul can be confident that Christ will “confirm [the Corinthians] unto the end” (1:8). This means that, in spite of the Corinthians’ carnality, they will “be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8).

1:9 This is because “God is faithful” (1:9). Even “if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny himself” (II Timothy 2:13). In other words, even if the Corinthians do not allow Christ to build up sound doctrine in their inner man, they will still have eternal life in heavenly places. The reason for this is because they are “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6), meaning their lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). Therefore, in order to throw the saved Corinthians into hell, God would have to throw Christ into hell. The justice of God would never let this happen, which means that the Corinthians are guaranteed to have eternal life in heavenly places because “God is faithful” (1:9).

1:10 There should be no divisions among brethren because we all “have the mind of Christ” (2:16). Therefore, there should be unity among the brethren (Ephesians 4:5-7). However, the unity must be in Christ. When church denominations today talk about unity, they are trying to do it in the flesh. This results in them not talking about doctrine at all, because each denomination has their own carnal ordinances that match the fleshly desires of their congregants. Therefore, unity,

among men, results in the absence of sound doctrine, while unity, in the body of Christ, results in unity around sound doctrine.

1:11-13 The Corinthians' problem was that they, like Churchianity today, had carnal divisions (3:3). They were following people, rather than following God's Word. There are four divisions listed, and these same divisions can be seen today in Churchianity, which shows that "there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

1) **Grace as a license to sin.** "I am of Paul." It may sound like a good thing to follow Paul. After all, he is "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). Just three chapters later, Paul says, "I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (4:16). However, here, he asks the questions, "Was Paul crucified for you?" and "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1:13). These questions lead me to believe that the Corinthians were putting Paul on a pedestal. As the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul magnified his office, not himself (Romans 11:13). Given that the Corinthians were carnal, those, who said they were of Paul, probably were using the eternal security that Paul taught as their license to sin. Today, this would be the seeker-friendly, megachurches.

2) **Old-Testament law keepers.** "I of Apollos." Acts 18:24 describes Apollos as a Jew, who was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures." "Aquila and Priscilla...took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26), which I take to mean that he knew the Old Testament really well, but did not know the mystery. "Apollos was at Corinth" (19:1) for a time, and so those, who say they are of Apollos, were probably Old-Testament law keepers. Today, this is the legalistic churches, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Church of Christ, and others, who require you to do works to maintain your salvation.

3) **Tongues and miracles.** "I of Cephas." Cephas is Peter. The Lord Jesus Christ placed Peter in charge of the little flock of Israel upon His ascension to heaven (John 21:15-17). 10 days later, the Holy Ghost was given, and the little flock all spoke with other tongues (Acts 2:4). They also had the power to perform physical miracles (Mark 16:17-18). Since Peter was over the little flock, those, who say they are of Cephas, probably got into the tongue talking and miracles (I Corinthians 12-14 tells us there was a lot of tongue talking going on in the Corinthian church.). Today, these people are known as the Pentecostals.

4) **Red-letter adherents.** "I of Christ." As with Paul, this group seems like a good thing. After all, Paul later will tell the Corinthians to "be...followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (11:1). Yet, Paul asks, "Is Christ divided?" (1:13), indicating that these people have different ideas of what following Christ means. They are probably following Christ's instructions, as seen in Matthew – John. The problem is that, because those instructions are to Israel during the at-hand phase of the kingdom and that kingdom has now been put on hold, Christ's instructions in the gospels do not agree with Paul's instructions today. Moreover, there are instructions that Christ gave, such as "sell that ye have" (Luke 12:33), that the

carnal Corinthians would not want to follow. Therefore, they were picking and choosing which of Christ's commandments in Matthew – John that they wanted to follow, which had created divisions. This group today are the major "Christian" denominations, such as Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans. They follow the red letters of Jesus, but only those commandments that each of them like, which results in different denominations.

Instead, we should be Bible believers, following God's Word rightly divided. First, we consider what Paul says. Then, the Lord will give us the understanding of how the rest of the Bible applies to us (II Timothy 2:7). As such, we are following God's Word, rather than following man's interpretation of God's Word, because it is God we answer to on judgment day, not man.

1:14-17 From 1:17, we learn that water baptism is not part of today's gospel, as it was in Acts 2:38. Later on in the epistle, we learn that the Corinthians were "all baptized into one body" "by one Spirit" (12:13). This tells us that it is the Spirit of God, not man, Who baptizes believers today. This must be a dry baptism into Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, as Romans 6:3-5 and Colossians 2:11-12 also tell us. Ephesians 4:5 says there is "one baptism," which means that God does not even recognize water baptism today.

Churchianity does not want to hear this, because water baptism is their sacred cow. They want to water baptize you so they can get you to try to serve Christ in the flesh, when God wants you to serve Christ in the spirit. Churchianity either teaches that water baptism is required for salvation, or they believe it should be done as an outward manifestation of an inward work of grace. The latter is found nowhere in scripture, while the former is found only during the at-hand phase of the kingdom for Israel's program.

In the Old Testament, water baptism was done as part of ordaining a Levite to be a priest (Exodus 29:4). When John the Baptist came on the scene, he said, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). The reason they needed to repent was, due to the apostasy of Israel, God was forming His own nation of Israel. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [Jewish religious leaders] and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" [Israel's believers] (Matthew 21:43). The ones, aligned with the religious leaders, are called the "generation of vipers" that cannot "escape the damnation of hell" (Matthew 23:33). The new "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16) ends up being the little flock who believe the gospel (Luke 12:32). They must also be water baptized both to save themselves from the untoward generation of vipers (Acts 2:40) and to be ordained as priests to reach the Gentiles for God during the millennial reign. This is why both Jesus (Mark 16:16) and Peter (Acts 2:38) said that water baptism was required for salvation. Once Israel is saved (Romans 11:26) in their kingdom program, they are to go out to the Gentiles as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6) during the millennial reign of Christ. (Gentile salvation is the whole purpose of the millennial reign. Otherwise, eternity would begin at Jesus' second coming.)

However, when Israel did not believe the gospel, God set that program aside and started the dispensation of grace with Paul in Acts 9:23. The things of Israel's program were "a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17). Therefore, water baptism was a shadow of the dry baptism the Spirit performs on you today into Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Just like you are spiritually circumcised today, not physically circumcised (Colossians 2:11), you are also spiritually baptized today, not water baptized (Colossians 2:12).

You may say, "Why, then, did Paul water baptize some people?" The reason is because "through [Israel's] fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Romans 11:11). Just like speaking in tongues was a gift to Israel (Acts 2) but the body of Christ spoke in tongues before God's Word was completed (I Corinthians 12-14), water baptism also relates specifically to Israel's program, but some members of the body of Christ were water baptized before God's Word was completed.

In the case of the Corinthians, their church was "joined hard to the [Jewish] synagogue" (Acts 18:7). This is why they had speaking in tongues and also why Paul water baptized some of them, so he might save Jews. (Paul says later in this epistle: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (9:22).) Note that Paul remembers baptizing Crispus and Gaius (1:14). Crispus was saved while he was the chief ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:8). Paul stayed at Gaius' house while he was in Corinth (Romans 16:23). Therefore, he remembered those two baptisms because those two people stood out in his mind. He also remembered one more household that he baptized, but he could not remember baptizing anyone else. Why? Because Christ sent him to preach the gospel, not to water baptize (1:17). Therefore, there was no spiritual significance behind water baptisms for Paul.

The bottom line is that, if water baptism had any spiritual significance today whatsoever, why would Paul "thank God" that he only baptized a few of the Corinthians. (Can you imagine Paul saying, "I thank God I only got a few of you saved by my preaching the gospel to you"?!) Since Spirit baptism is required in order to be saved, if this were accomplished with water, Paul would have dunked or sprinkled all of them, especially since they were so carnal that he could not tell by their lives if they were saved or not (2:2; 3:3). So, just to make absolute sure, he would have water baptized them all at least once. Instead, he thanks God that he only baptized a few of them, because he wants them to rust in the spiritual, not the physical.

The reason is "Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name" (1:15). The Corinthians put a great deal of stock in who they followed, as seen in 1:12. Therefore, if Paul had baptized most of the Corinthians, they would have been following him because they liked him more. Paul was only interested in them following him for the doctrine's sake, and so he was glad that he did not baptize many of them. This shows that water baptism, in the dispensation of grace, is only a fleshly ordinance. It is not of God.

Finally, we should note, from 1:17, that God does not save people by wisdom of words. He saves them by the preaching of the cross. Why, then, do churches insist that only seminary graduates become their pastors? Or, why will people listen to pastors over lay people in a church, e.g., I do not know if a person is really saved, unless a pastor talks to him and confirms it? The reason is because “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (I Samuel 16:7).

1:18 The cross is what divides the world today between heaven and hell. If you trust in Jesus’ death on the cross for atonement of your sins, you go to heaven. If you do not, you go to hell. The cross offends the unbeliever (Galatians 5:11), because it says that you are a sinner bound for hell and there is absolutely nothing you can do about it. God had to send His Son to die on a cross to pay for your sins. Your flesh does not want to let go of its religious pride, thinking that it can do something to save itself. This is why there are world religions. People usually fall into one of two categories: 1) Sin and don’t care, thinking that there is no God (knowledge of evil), and 2) Sin and think religion will save them (knowledge of good). The cross shows man that you must be in category 3, which is to trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sin (15:3-4), in order to go to heaven. For all those in the first two categories, the preaching of the cross is foolishness. For all those in the third category, it is the power of God to save them from hell (1:18).

We should note that most modern versions change “us which are saved” to “us who are being saved”; thereby, introducing Satan’s lie of conditional salvation. CSB, ESV, HCSB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NIV, NKJV, NLT, and RSV are some of the versions that make this Satanic change.

1:19 This is a quote of Isaiah 29:14. The context in Isaiah is of apostate Israel not being able to learn the things of God because of their unbelief. Therefore, as applied here in I Corinthians, the verse means that those, who reject the cross as the gospel to save them, will not be able to understand anything of God. Even the wisest of unbelievers have no understanding of the things of God. This is why the scholars of this world are atheists, while a little child, who believes God, can know for sure that he is going to heaven, because God has revealed it unto him.

1:20 When this verse asks, “Where is the wise?” it is asking where is his wisdom when God is speaking? This is like when God asked Job, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding” (Job 38:4). Job’s answer was “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth” (Job 40:4). In other words, when God gives His wisdom, man cannot speak, because he knows nothing of the things of God. Therefore, by giving His Word to man, God hath “made foolish the wisdom of this world” (1:20).

This means that, if the Corinthians trust in God’s Word, their carnal divisions of “I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ” (1:12) will melt away. This is why there are no denominations in heaven. “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

1:21 Because God's wisdom is far above man's wisdom, the world cannot know God by wisdom. This means that God, not only has to provide wisdom, but He also has to provide the method by which man obtains God's wisdom. This method is "the foolishness of preaching" (1:21). Preaching is foolish because it takes no thinking on your part. All you have to do is listen to the message and believe it. This is not to say that you are to believe everything a preacher tells you. We should "prove all things" by comparing it with scripture and only "hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). It means that you cannot use your wisdom to search out the wisdom of God. God's ways are past you finding them out (Romans 11:33). God Himself has to provide His wisdom and the method of obtaining that wisdom.

1:22-23 Just like God made men and women with different minds, God also made Jews and Greeks with different minds. Jews are the "show me" people. When someone speaks, Jews look for a sign from that person that they are true. (Matthew 12:38 "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.") If the sign verifies they are true, then the Jew believes the person's message. Gentiles seek after wisdom. They evaluate what a person has said and compare it with what they think to see if what the person has said lines up with their thinking. If it does, then they believe the message of that person. (For example, the Athenians always wanted to hear something new (Acts 17:21). When Paul spoke to them "of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts 17:32).)

This is why Jesus did physical miracles and said that believing Israel would do the same (Mark 16:17-18). Physical miracles continued in the Body of Christ to provoke Israel to jealousy so that the Jews might be saved (Romans 11:11). Once Israel made their final rejection of the gospel of grace at the end of Acts (Acts 28:26-29), physical miracles ceased, because Greeks seek after wisdom, not signs.

Note that there are three groups in these verses, not two. Group 1 are the Jews that require a sign. Group 2 are the Greeks that seek after wisdom. Group 3 are those who believe Christ crucified. The Jews looked for a sign, and God gave them the biggest sign of all, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Yet, they stumbled at Christ crucified, because that sign went against their religious pride. Therefore, they did not believe. Then, God created the mystery gospel and gave it to Paul, in which we trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for atonement of sins. In other words, when God started the dispensation of grace, He gave the Greeks the highest wisdom ever, which is God dealing with our sin through Christ crucified. However, this wisdom goes against man's wisdom of how to get to heaven. Therefore, the Greeks call this "foolishness."

By the way, note that, when the Jews rejected the gospel of grace, they "had great reasoning among themselves" (Acts 28:29). So, they used their wisdom to reject the signs that the gospel is true. Today, many Gentiles use feelings to reject today's gospel, as seen in today's Churchianity, whether it be the New Age and mysticism of mainstream Churchianity or the feelings associated with Pentecostalism. So, Gentiles use man's signs (Feeling God's presence, feeling good

inside, etc.) to reject the wisdom of the gospel. This shows that God, knowing how man's brain works, gears His gospel toward the brain of the people He is trying to save (Jews in the prophecy program and Gentiles in the mystery program). However, unbelieving man is so steeped in his pride against God that he goes against his own brain (Jews used reasoning to reject the gospel in the prophecy program, and Gentiles use emotions to reject the gospel in the mystery program.) in order to reject God's gospel to him! Therefore, when unbelieving man is sentenced to hell, he is without a valid excuse as to why he should not go there (Romans 1:20; 3:19).

1:24 Regardless of dispensation, if people allow God's gospel to them to overcome their own religious pride, believing that gospel, they are saved by Christ crucified and are now the "called" of God. To believing Jews, Christ is the power of God through the sign of His death, burial, and resurrection. To believing Gentiles, He is the wisdom of God by paying the full price for sin through His death. Note how both the power and the wisdom are "of God." God caters His gospel to man's mind so that man will be more likely to overcome his own pride and accept God's answer to the problem of sin that is in his mind. This shows that there MUST be different gospels in Israel's program and in the body of Christ's programs. A one-gospel-fits-all-people gospel simply will not work, because God created a Jew's mind to be different from a Gentile's mind. However, both receive salvation through Christ crucified, just in different ways. (Jews overcome the "sign," and the Gentiles overcome the "wisdom" of the cross, because both the sign and the wisdom of the cross go against man's flesh.)

1:25 God's foolishness is wiser than man's wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than man's strength. This tells us two things. First, God had to do the work to get us saved, and God had to give us the gospel to believe in order to be saved. This means that our own "righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Our only part in salvation is to believe the gospel. Second, once we believe the gospel, we are taken out of being in Adam (man) and placed into Christ (God) (Romans 5:17). Since we are saved by God's foolishness (preaching of the cross) and by God's weakness (Christ crucified), this means that, once we are placed into Christ, we now have a limitless ability to grow in God's grace.

Christ gave Himself for the church "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" so that we might be glorious and holy (Ephesians 5:25-27). In other words, God used His foolishness and weakness to save us. Once we are saved, we can grow in God's wisdom and strength in order to be glorious and holy for God throughout all eternity.

1:26 This verse is not saying that if you have a high IQ or are a college graduate, God cannot save you. It is saying that the wise after the flesh, noble, and mighty of this world usually will never believe the gospel. Why? Because, when presented with the gospel, they probably will not believe it because they trust in their wisdom, nobility, and might of the flesh. They had to work in order to get those things, which means those things are important to them, and they are probably more important to them than the things of the Spirit. Otherwise, they never would

have pursued those things in the first place. Therefore, they will remain in their flesh. This is why Paul says, “when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:10).

There is a “simplicity that is in Christ” (II Corinthians 11:3) that the wise of this world miss, while children can understand it perfectly, because they walk by faith, while the wise, noble, and mighty walk by sight (II Corinthians 5:7).

1:27-29 The world says that, if we are to get into heaven, we must work our way there. That is what the world did at the Tower of Babel. They said, “Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven” (Genesis 11:4). God says that no work is necessary. He will do all the work for you. You just need to believe what He tells you (Galatians 2:16).

Why does God do things this way? “That no flesh should glory in His presence” (1:29). If there was something I could do to get to heaven, then I could boast in my accomplishment to get me there. Also, if I have to work my way to heaven, people, who could not do the work, would never get there. God’s will is for all to be saved (I Timothy 2:3-4), not just those who can do the job. Therefore, God did the work so that all people have the opportunity to be saved, and so no one can glory in His presence.

Now, you may think this is selfishness on the part of God. However, God is not the only one who is glorified when He saves us. Remember Ephesians 5:27 that says that, when Christ saves us and sanctifies us, it results in us being a glorious church. In other words, by God getting the glory and our lives being hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3), we receive glory, as well. Think of heaven as being like a college. The person, who created the college, receives glory when people graduate from the college and do much better in the real world. At the same time, those, who do much better in the real world, also receive glory as a result of going through that program. Similarly, when God does all the work for your salvation and you believe the gospel and allow Christ to sanctify you by the Word, God is glorified for being “the Father of glory” (Ephesians 1:17) and you receive glory because you are now a vessel through which God can share His love for all eternity. Therefore, not glorying in God’s presence, maximizes the glory that everyone can receive. This means that God is giving of Himself when He brings glory to Himself through us. In fact, God is “longsuffering to us-ward” (II Peter 3:9). That does not sound like God is being selfish when He suffers so that we might be glorified with Him. “Whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Romans 8:30).

1:30 By being placed into Christ, we receive wisdom and sanctification by reading and believing God’s Word. We receive redemption and righteousness by believing the gospel.

1:31 This is a quote of Jeremiah 9:24. Actually, Jeremiah 9:24 says, “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.” But, Paul says, “It is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1:31). What this tells us is that glorying in the Lord is not just someone saying, “Praise the Lord!

Glory to God!” Rather, the way that you glory in the Lord is by understanding and knowing the Lord. In other words, the way, that we glory in the Lord, is by reading and believing God’s Word. Paul also says in another place, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14). This means that, when we read and believe God’s Word, our glorying in the Lord really means that we glory in Christ crucified, which is why Paul preached “Christ crucified” (1:23).

I Corinthians 2 – God’s Secret for Believers only

2 When Paul came to the Corinthians in Acts 18, they behaved like unbelievers (3:3). Therefore, his goal was to find out if they had believed the gospel or not (v. 2). He did not give a convincing argument in the flesh (vs. 1,3-4), but he presented the clear gospel of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin, so that they stood by faith and not by intellect (v. 5).

Once he found out that they were saved (v. 6), he shared the mystery with them (v. 7), so that they could grow in sound doctrine. If they were not saved, they could not understand mystery doctrine (v. 14), because it takes the Holy Ghost, speaking to your alive spirit in Christ, in order to teach you the things of God (vs. 9-13). Once you are saved, you have God’s perfect Word in a King James Bible, you have the Holy Ghost to teach it to you, and you have the mind of Christ (v. 16) to apply it. All you have to do is read and believe it, and the Godhead takes care of the rest.

2:1 Churchianity’s leaders like to give their titles, dress up, use big words, and show off their knowledge of the Greek/Hebrew of the Bible. Paul did not use “excellency of speech or of wisdom” (2:1), even though he could have. After all, Paul was brought up “at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers” (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel was “a doctor of the law” (Acts 5:34). However, the Lord Jesus Christ called Paul out of Churchianity, and Paul said that “what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” He counted “them but dung” in order to win Christ (Philippians 3:7-8).

2:2 Therefore, when Paul came to the Corinthians, he did so for their sakes, not for his. He knew that they were carnal, walking like unsaved men (3:3). Paul could not tell a difference between how the Corinthians acted and how unbelievers acted. Therefore, Paul determined to find out “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (2:2). In other words, because the natural man cannot receive the things of God (2:14), there was no need for Paul to address the problems that the Corinthians were having if they were not saved, because Christ would not be in them to work those problems out. Therefore, Paul had to find out if they were saved or not before he could address their problems.

2:3-5 These verses show the concern that Paul had for the Corinthians. If Paul came to the Corinthians as Churchianity does, his preaching would have enticed their flesh, due to his great wisdom. Instead, he came “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (2:3). In other words, he did not puff himself up to them, nor did he try to impress them. He simply preached the gospel so that, if they

believed, it was a result of the power of the Spirit working in them to give them eternal life, rather than them being impressed by Paul's wisdom, which would have resulted in them not being saved. Sadly, the vast majority of today's churchgoers are there because of man, rather than because of the leading of the Spirit of God.

2:6 Although Paul came to the Corinthians in the power of the Spirit, he still speaks wisdom. This is a valuable lesson for Pentecostals and others, who based their relationship with God on feelings, to grasp. With unbelievers, we are to use the simplicity of the gospel so that the power of Christ to give them eternal life is what they accept, rather than accepting man's wisdom. Then, once a person is saved, his spirit is alive in Christ. Now, he has the mind of Christ to judge all things (2:15-16). Therefore, we can now speak God's wisdom to them so that they may come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). In other words, God's wisdom is only to be spoken "among them that are perfect" (2:6), not to unbelievers, because unbelievers, if they do accept God's wisdom, accept it as "the wisdom of this world" (2:6). This is why Churchianity follows the health-and-wealth gospel. They accept God's Word as the wisdom of this world that will make them healthy and wealthy in this world, while they remain bound for hell in the next world, due to still being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). This makes it hard for people to recognize their sin, because no one is talking about it. Even if they do recognize their sin, they will not come to Churchianity for answers, because churches do not deal with someone's soul any more. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we only share God's wisdom with believers, lest Satan twist it around for his purposes.

2:7-8 This is why God kept this wisdom hidden. "Before the foundation of the world," God chose to put us into the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:4). However, if God revealed this secret before He told it to Paul, beginning in Acts 9:23, Satan and his forces "would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (2:8).

You see, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Satan and 1/3 of the angels rebelled against God (Revelation 12:3-4), resulting in the heavens being unclean in God's sight (Job 15:15). Then, Satan became "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4) when Adam sinned. Until Acts 9, God's focus was entirely on the earth. It is as if God gave up on reconciling heavenly places back to Himself and was only focused on the earth. Therefore, Satan offered the kingdoms of this world, not heaven, to Jesus if He would bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:8-9). When Jesus would not do this, Satan planned to have Jesus killed on a cross, rather than on the altar in the temple, where God told Israel to sacrifice Jesus (Psalm 118:24-28). Satan did not know that, by being killed on a cross, the Lord Jesus Christ would reconcile both heaven and earth back to God (Ephesians 1:10), and that this was God's plan all along (Acts 2:23). (This is why, in reference to the cross, Jesus said "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32). Therefore, God kept the cross plan a secret from Satan, and Satan played right into God's hands. Then, God revealed this mystery to man, starting with Paul in Acts 9:23. It is this mystery or hidden wisdom that Paul is speaking to the Corinthians.

Based on an incorrect interpretation of Ephesians 3:6, Churchianity says that the mystery is not a different gospel with different doctrine for today. They say the mystery is that the Gentiles are saved today like the Jews were saved when Jesus was on earth. However, this was not a secret. Isaiah 42:6 says that the Messiah would be given, “for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.” Therefore, Gentile salvation is NOT the mystery.

By saying that he is speaking the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery (2:7), Paul makes it clear that that there is WISDOM that was hidden. This wisdom is Paul’s gospel that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again as atonement for our sin (15:3-4), and it is the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revealed mystery, meaning we learn sound doctrine of who we are in Christ by reading and believing what we find in Paul’s epistles, and nowhere else in scripture. This is “the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25-26). By contrast, Peter preached what “God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). These two passages (Romans 16:25-26 and Acts 3:21), then, make it clear that Paul’s message is different from Peter’s message.

2:9 This is a quote of Isaiah 64:4. The context of that verse is Jesus’ second coming, when He destroys the wicked and sets up God’s kingdom on earth. Therefore, by quoting this verse, the Holy Ghost is saying through Paul that by revealing mystery doctrine to us, Jesus Christ is effectively setting up God’s kingdom in heaven through us being able to take positions of power in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:20-23) due to the sound doctrine now built up in our inner man (Ephesians 3:14-19). This may seem far-fetched, but God created the earth by speaking everything into existence (Genesis 1) and Jesus Christ is the Word (John 1:1). Therefore, God also reconciles the heavenly places back to Himself by His Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:10 Ephesians 5:25-26 says that Christ gave Himself for the church that He might “sanctify and cleanse [us] with the washing of water by the Word.” Because Christ defeated hell and death through His death, burial, and resurrection, He has given us the victory over death (15:54-57). This means that God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:13). Therefore, Christ can reveal the deep things of God to us. Before we were saved, we were on Satan’s losing team. Now, that we are saved, we are on Christ’s winning team, and so we can learn the secrets of our new team, as the Holy Ghost teaches them to us.

2:11 God is a Spirit (John 4:24). His Word is spirit and life (John 6:63). All unbelievers have spirits that are dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). Therefore, unbelieving man cannot understand the things of God. It takes the Spirit of God to reveal them to us. For example, the Old Testament prophets were believers, and they wrote down prophecies concerning Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. They searched the scriptures “diligently” to figure out the details of these prophecies. God would not reveal the details to them, because they were to

remain a mystery (I Peter 1:10-12). However, today, we can read the same words that they read, and see Jesus' death prophesied in Isaiah 53, for example. The only reason we see this is because God's Spirit has revealed it to us.

This is why you cannot teach sound doctrine to unbelievers. They can learn historical facts from the Bible, but they cannot learn the spiritual things of the Word of God, because only the Spirit of God knows these things, and He will not reveal them to unbelievers. This is why right division can be "as plain as day" to you, while others think you are a heretic for being a right divider. They have chosen not to believe God's Word; therefore, they cannot understand. However, if we choose to believe God's Word, God will reveal it to us in deep, wonderful ways, regardless of how "smart" we are by the world's standards.

2:12 Note that the things of God are "FREELY given to us of God" (2:12). Just like our salvation is "the gift of God" (Romans 6:23), our sanctification is also freely given to us of God.

2:13 Just like Paul did not use "enticing words of man's wisdom" (2:4) for the Corinthians to be saved, he also did not use "the words which man's wisdom teacheth" (2:13) in order for the Corinthians to be sanctified. Man takes pride in the big words and the "sophistication" of his wisdom, but God uses "the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1:21).

Note that, when you use God's Word, you are using the words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (2:13). This is why it is important to use a King James Bible. If you use a paraphrased translation, you are using the words of man's wisdom. The Holy Ghost uses God's words, not man's words.

The way the Holy Ghost teaches us the things of God is by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (2:13). I believe there are two, important meanings of this. First, this means that the Holy Ghost takes the spiritual things of one passage of God's Word and compares it with the spiritual things of another passage of God's Word. This shows that we learn the things of God through cross-referencing. This is why, in my books, I explain passages by quoting other passages.

If man wrote the Bible, he would have had a chapter on salvation, one on sanctification, one on baptism, one on circumcision, etc. However, God gives you a passage in one book, another passage somewhere else, and another passage in another book. As such, God conceals His wisdom throughout God's Word, and it is up to you to search it out (Proverbs 25:2). God does things this way because "He is a rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6), not people who casually read the Bible from time to time.

2:14 The second, important meaning of "spiritual things with spiritual" (2:13) is that the Holy Ghost, Who is a Spirit, teaches your spirit the spiritual things of God. This is why the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God. These things are "spiritually discerned" (2:14). Again, if you have never believed the gospel, you have no ability to understand the spiritual things of the Bible. The

vast majority of people in Churchianity have believed false gospels. Therefore, when you try to share sound doctrine with them, it is foolishness to them. This is why most people, who claim to be Christians, do not even know how they are saved, much less the basics about how to live the Christian life. They walk by sight, not by faith (II Corinthians 5:7).

2:15 Every Christian needs to memorize this verse. The mantra of unbelieving man, who wants “to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:19), is “Who are you to judge me? The Bible says, ‘Judge not, that ye be not judged’ (Matthew 7:1), and so you have no right to judge me.” However, Matthew 7:1 is Jesus’ instructions to the apostate nation of Israel. In other words, unbelievers have no right to judge. Why? Because they cannot know the things of God. However, a believer CAN know the things of God, because his spirit has been made alive in Christ.

Jesus told His **believing** disciples, “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). Here, Paul tells us that, if we are spiritual, meaning that we approach things from God’s perspective, we judge ALL things, yet we are judged of no man (2:15). Remember this verse the next time an unbeliever quotes Matthew 7:1 to you. Of course, you can quote I Corinthians 2:15 back, but they will not understand it, because they are spiritually dead. Nevertheless, you can keep this verse in your mind so that you do not allow atheists to lead you astray with their religion of tolerance. (By the way, their religion is a one-way street. They say that we have no right to judge them so that we do not object to their sinful behavior, yet they still object to our beliefs. In fact, they pass judgment on us by saying that we cannot judge them, but God’s Word says the judgment is passed upon them, because they cannot judge because they are unbelievers.) The irony of this, then, is that only believers can judge others, but it is only unbelievers who tell us that we cannot judge them, when the opposite is true.

2:16 The reason it is so important for us to read and believe God’s Word is because this is how we use “the mind of Christ” (2:16). This is in contrast to religion, which is “vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18). **Only the Bible believer can use the mind of Christ.** Everyone else uses his fleshly mind. However, we must read and believe the Bible in order to use the mind of Christ.

When you were born, you were given a fleshly mind. You had to spend time studying things in order to fill your fleshly mind with information. So, too, when you believe the gospel, you are given the mind of Christ, and you have to fill it up with information in order to use it. Jesus said, “I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things” (John 8:28). This means that you can only fill up the mind of Christ with sound doctrine from God’s Word. So much of Churchianity is all about emotions, and so they do not have the mind of Christ, because they are searching for the next “spiritual” high. The only way we use the mind of Christ is by making decisions based upon sound doctrine built up in our inner man as a result of reading and believing God’s Word. Therefore, the

Christian life and godly living are based upon God's Word, not upon feel-good emotions from singing "worship" songs.

I Corinthians 3 – Carnality not Rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ

3 Because the Corinthians have not allowed the Holy Ghost to teach them the things of God, Paul has had to speak to them as new believers who do not know God's Word (vs. 1-2). The reason is because the Corinthians are prideful, fighting over which preachers they like the best (sounds like Churchianity today!), rather than learning doctrine from God's Word (vs. 3-5). Paul tells them that the preacher does not matter, because, if they learn anything spiritual, it is God teaching them those things through those preachers (vs. 6-9).

But, the Corinthians need to be careful to believe only what is sound doctrine. If a preacher does not use the foundation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery (Romans 16:25-26), then they will not grow in sound doctrine (vs. 10-11). This is important because, the more sound doctrine they have in their inner man, the more they can let Christ live in them, which will result in a greater reward for them at the judgment seat of Christ (vs. 12-14). Because their salvation is eternally secure in Christ, they will not lose their eternal life, but they can lose their eternal, heavenly reward if they follow the carnality of man (v. 15).

Our bodies are the temple of God, and so we should only let Christ build sound doctrine in our temples, not letting men defile the temple of God with false doctrine (vs. 16-17). To do this, we need to abandon the wisdom of man for the foolishness of God by only glorying in the Lord. This is how all things are ours (vs. 18-23).

3:1 As we just learned, a Christian has two minds: 1) His fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18), and 2) The mind of Christ (2:16). Paul says that he had to speak to the Corinthians "as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (3:1). This shows that, although they were saved, they had not read and believed sound doctrine after being saved. Therefore, they had only used their fleshly mind, which is why they were still carnal. When we are saved, our souls and our spirits are made alive in Christ. This makes us part of the "new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17), which is life in Christ. However, this does not mean that we instantly know the things of the Spirit. We have to read and believe God's Word, allowing the Holy Ghost to teach them to us (2:9-16), before we know the things of the Spirit.

This shows how important it is for us to study God's Word (II Timothy 2:15), and it shows why Churchianity today looks just like the world does. They spend their time praying for the presence of God and seeking to feel the Holy Spirit in worship songs, when they should be spending their time studying God's Word so that Christ lives in them.

3:2 Hebrews 6:1-2 classifies "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" as "repentance from dead works..., faith toward God..., baptisms..., laying on of hands..., resurrection of the dead..., and... eternal judgment." Those are the basics of Israel's program. When Paul says that he fed the Corinthians with milk, we can

assume that he went over the same doctrinal issues, but for the Body of Christ's program. Therefore, he would have mentioned to change your mind about doing dead works and to recognize your sin and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for salvation (2:1-2). You then receive eternal, resurrection life with Christ (I Corinthians 15), and have the Holy Ghost and the mind of Christ to teach you the things of God as you read God's Word (2:9-16). This would be the "milk." "Meat" is diving into God's Word to learn sound doctrine, such as who we are in Christ, how the Christ life works, how we share God's love to others, and what our ambassadorship is all about. The Corinthians could not handle the meat, due to their carnality. This is why the "meat" that I mentioned is not found in I Corinthians. Instead, Paul has to deal with carnal issues in this epistle, such as listening to every preacher who claims to represent Christ (4:15), having sex with a man's father's wife (5:1-2), taking each other to court (6:1), not knowing how to choose a spouse (I Corinthians 7), not respecting each other's spiritual weaknesses (I Corinthians 8), not helping Paul financially (9:11-15), eating and getting drunk while some get nothing to eat and drink (11:20-21), talking over each other in tongues (14:26-27), and thinking that there is no rapture (15:12). Similarly today, when you share "meat" with Churchianity, they accuse you of being a heretic, because your stand on God's Word is against their church's doctrines that follow Satan's lie program.

3:3 This is at least the second epistle that Paul has written to the Corinthians (5:9), and they are still not able to understand advanced sound doctrine. This shows that a person's growth is contingent upon reading and believing God's Word, not upon just going to church. The Corinthians were all carnal, and most churchgoers today are carnal, even if they have attended church for years.

"Envy, and strife, and divisions" (3:3) are what caused them to be carnal. They envied others' positions, which helps explain why they were suing each other (6:1). They had strife because they did not even know basic, sound doctrine, because they were not believing God's Word. They also had divisions, because they followed man, rather than God. Following man is also why there are so many denominations today. If they believed God's Word, all the denominations would go away, because Christians' authority would be the Bible, not a church denomination's doctrinal statement. This is also why, when a pastor leaves a church, many people will usually leave the church, as well. They follow man and not God.

3:4-5 The Corinthians' carnality is seen in that they follow either Paul or Apollos, because those are the ones who came to them with the gospel. They should follow Paul (4:16), but only because his doctrine came from the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12), not because they heard and believed the gospel from Paul.

When Paul came to Berea, they believed what he said, because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). If Paul's doctrine was not in line with the scripture, the Bereans would have rejected it. By contrast, the Corinthians were following man. Therefore, some of them believed Paul and some believed Apollos, not

because the scripture agreed with them, but because they liked one over the other. This is what Paul is rebuking the Corinthians about, having “ten thousand instructors in Christ” (4:15).

I conclude that the Corinthians were following man, based upon what Paul says in 3:5. By saying, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos?”, Paul is saying that they were following men because of their positions. “There is no respect of persons with God” (Romans 2:11), and neither should there be with man. In Galatians 2, Paul gives the example of “false brethren unawares brought in” (Galatians 2:4). They “seemed to be somewhat” (Galatians 2:6), but Paul said, “it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person” (Galatians 2:6). Therefore, Paul did not cave under the pressure to try to put him back under the law, because he followed God’s Word, rather than man’s word. Paul says the same about “James, Cephas, and John.” They “SEEMED to be pillars” (Galatians 2:9). However, when Paul saw Peter break fellowship with Gentiles, causing other Jews to do the same, Paul did not say, “I’d better not say anything, because that is the apostle Peter.” No! Paul “withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Galatians 2:11). Similarly then, the Corinthians should only follow Paul or Apollos as they follow Christ (11:1). They should accept no man’s person, because no man is perfect.

Note also that, regarding the ministers of the Lord, Paul says, “even as the Lord gave to every man” (3:5). This means that everyone has ministers of the Lord to show them their sin and need for a Saviour. Regarding the Word of God, Paul says, “their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (Romans 10:18). Even if people do not proclaim the gospel, “the heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1-4). Toward the end of the tribulation period, an angel declares the everlasting gospel to all people on the earth (Revelation 14:6-7). Also, God has given an internal knowledge of Himself to everyone (Romans 1:19-20). All of these verses together tell us that the Lord has given ministers to every man, whether those witnesses be in the heavens, on the earth, or in the heart.

3:6-7 These verses are great to keep our pride in check. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). This means that, even if I do what I am supposed to do, I cannot glory in myself, because all I did was yield my body as an instrument of righteousness for Christ to use for God’s glory (Romans 6:13). This is what Paul means by saying that he planted and Apollos watered, but neither Paul or Apollos is anything, because it is Christ Who worked through them. It was not anything of Paul or Apollos because no good thing dwells in their flesh (Romans 7:18); therefore, we can only glory “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14).

3:8 The reason, that the planter and the waterer are one, is because they are one body in Christ (12:12-13). At the same time, each man receives a reward according to the labour that he allows Christ to do in him. This is because Christ is “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,” and Christ is over “all things” and is filling heavenly positions with His body (Ephesians 1:21-23). Therefore, the ones, who yield themselves more to Christ, are more valuable to Christ in heavenly places, giving them a greater reward.

3:9 “We are labourers together with God” (3:9) in the sense that we walk in the good works (Ephesians 2:10) that God hath ordained for us in Christ Jesus. In other words, we “labour” by letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16), yielding our bodies to Christ as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). This is considered labour, because we must “die daily” to the flesh (15:31) in order for Christ to accomplish this in us.

In Isaiah 66:1, the Lord says, “the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?” Solomon said about the Lord, “The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (I Kings 8:27). These verses teach us that the only way the Lord has a house is if He builds it Himself. Zechariah 6:12 confirms this by saying that “THE BRANCH”, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, is the One Who “shall build the temple of the Lord.”

This “temple of the Lord” in heavenly places ends up being the Body of Christ. Ephesians 2:22 says that we “are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Thus, as we read and believe God’s Word and use the mind of Christ, Christ is building the spiritual temple of the Lord in heavenly places in which God will dwell for all eternity, and that building is us! This is how, “Ye are God’s building” (3:9).

3:10 Paul is not bragging about his wisdom. Remember he said, in 1:18-19, that God has destroyed the wisdom of the wise with the preaching of the cross. Rather, Paul is talking about Christ in him being “a wise masterbuilder.” We know this because he is a wise masterbuilder, “according to the grace of God” given unto him.

Paul laid the foundation with the Corinthians, by making sure they believed the gospel in order to be saved (2:2). He also told them how to be edified in sound doctrine by reading and believing God’s Word (2:9-16). Now, it is up to each member of the body of Christ to allow Christ to build sound doctrine upon the gospel foundation within them.

3:11 This verse shows that the foundation is the gospel. Remember that Paul said, in 2:2, that he determined not to know anything among the Corinthians, “save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” The foundation is Jesus Christ, because it is His blood that atones for our sin, makes our spirits and souls alive in Christ, and gives us the Holy Ghost by which we can understand God’s Word. Without Christ’s work, we are still dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1); therefore, the capacity to build a spiritual building in Christ is not there. The foundation must be Christ. He is “the chief corner stone” of the Lord’s holy temple (Ephesians 2:20-22).

3:12-14 Gold, silver, and precious stones are purified by fire. Regarding Israel, God says that “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the

Lord an offering in righteousness” (Malachi 3:3). Therefore, the works of “gold, silver, precious stones” are works that are rewarded by Jesus Christ, because they survive the fire, with the impurities of our sin being purged out from them. Therefore, these are works of the Spirit.

On the other hand, “wood, hay, stubble” (3:12) are things that are burned up in a fire. Therefore, these things are destroyed by the fire, and so they must be works of the flesh.

“The day shall declare it” (3:13) refers to the judgement seat of Christ. II Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” The “good” would be gold, silver, and precious stones, i.e., things of the Spirit. The “bad” would be “wood, hay, stubble”, i.e., things of the flesh. All believers appear before the judgment seat of Christ after the rapture takes place. This is where we receive our reward of a throne, principality, power, might, dominion, or every name that is named (Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:16). Halfway through the tribulation period, Satan and his forces are kicked out of their positions in heavenly places (Revelation 12:7-9), and we take the places that we were rewarded with at the judgment seat of Christ.

Now, when works are mentioned, most people think of working at the soup kitchen, volunteering at church, or helping a little, old lady across the street. However, these are NOT what works are about. Jesus said, “That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man” (Mark 7:20). God said to apostate Israel, “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies” (Amos 5:21). That was because Israel was doing the works of the law, according to the flesh, but their heart was far from God. Jeremiah 17:10 says, “I the Lord **search the heart**, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”

Therefore, the work, that is tried at the judgment seat of Christ, is the motivation of the heart. If you build sound doctrine in the inner man and make decisions based upon that sound doctrine, you have built up gold, silver, precious stones, regardless of whether or not it looks like a good work in the flesh.

Therefore, when the fire tries every man’s work to find out what sort it is (3:13), ultimately, the work is doctrine. If I have sound doctrine in my inner man, my work will survive the fire, and I will receive a reward of a position in heavenly places. If I never built up sound doctrine in my inner man, I have nothing but fleshly works, which will all be burned up at the judgment seat of Christ, even if I did things that appear to be good to man, such as go to church every Sunday and volunteer on church work days. This shows, then, how critical it is for us to read and believe God’s Word and make decisions based upon sound doctrine that the Holy Ghost teaches us (2:13). Otherwise, our motivation is fleshly, and we will suffer loss of reward.

3:15 This is a great verse to teach the eternal security of the believer, because it says that we do NOT lose our salvation, even if our works are entirely carnal. In Daniel 3, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Most people know them by their Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.) were thrown into a fiery furnace. Daniel 3:27 says that the fire had no power upon their bodies. They did not even have the smell of fire on them. Why? Because the Son of God was in that fire with them, protecting them from harm (Daniel 3:25).

Similarly, Jesus Christ's soul went to hell (Psalm 16:10), taking the punishment of our sin upon Him, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Because Jesus Christ fully paid for our sins in hell, He won the victory over death for us (15:55-57), taking "the keys of hell and of death" with Him (Revelation 1:18). We are now "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6), Who is Christ, and our lives are "hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

At the judgment seat of Christ, our souls go through the fire, to make sure there is no unholiness in us, since God is holy (I Peter 1:16). All sinful impurities on us are purged out, and our bodies are not harmed whatsoever by the fire, because we are in Christ, and He is pure. Christ saves our souls in the fire, just like He saved Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. This is confirmed by II Timothy 2:13, which says, "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." In other words, if we follow our flesh after we are saved, the Lord Jesus Christ will still give us eternal life in heaven, because our lives are hid with Christ. Christ would have to deny Himself eternal life in order to deny us eternal life. Since "He cannot deny Himself" (II Timothy 2:13), all believers are saved by fire, even if they receive a loss of their reward. (This is the "loss" referred to in this verse.)

3:16 When Solomon built the temple, he prayed to the Lord: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (I Kings 8:27). Solomon acknowledged that sinful man cannot build a house for God to dwell in. God says the same thing in Isaiah 66:1, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?" The place of God's rest is built by "The BRANCH," the Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of his place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: Even He shall build the temple of the Lord" (Zechariah 6:12-13). The way He did this for us today was by creating a clean temple within believing man for God to dwell in.

The Body of Christ, both collectively and individually, is God's temple. Ephesians 2:22 says that the Body of Christ is "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." This is how 3:16 is true.

3:17 People like to use 3:17 to say that a believer can lose his own salvation by doing things that defile the temple of God. However, that cannot be what the verse says, because 3:15 just taught us that we cannot lose our salvation. **You can never use one verse to cancel out another verse.**

Remember that the context refers to doctrine built upon the foundation of salvation by the faith of Jesus Christ (3:11). Therefore, “defiling” the temple of God does not refer to drug or alcohol use or obesity. (I think it is funny that the church I grew up in used 3:16-17 to say that smoking is a sin, since it damages your body, but they did not use it for obesity.) Rather, it refers to bad doctrine. Remember that, in the book of I Corinthians so far, Paul has been talking about the instructors that they have in Christ, who teach the wisdom of this world, and Paul talks about this again in 3:18, talking about those who seem to be wise in this world. Therefore, the “any man” of 3:17 probably refers to unbelievers who come in to the Corinthians as “instructors in Christ” (4:15), even though they are really Satan’s ministers (II Corinthians 11:15), who come in and defile the temple of God, which are the believers, by teaching them false doctrine. For the believer, this false doctrine will be burned to get rid of the defilement, and the believer will be saved (3:15). For the unbeliever, who taught the false doctrine, “him shall God destroy” (3:17). Therefore, the one being destroyed is the unbeliever, not the believer. If it were the believer, Paul would be directly contradicting what he just said in 3:15. Also, if he were talking about the believer, he would not refer to him in the third person in the first part of the verse as “any man,” but in the second person in the last part of the verse as “ye.”

Therefore, “any man” and “him” are unbelievers teaching false doctrine to the Corinthians, and “ye” is a reference to saved individuals in the Corinthian church. So, the way I understand the verse is that if one of Satan’s ministers defile the Corinthians’ temple of God by teaching them false doctrine, God will punish the Satanic minister by destroying him in the lake of fire for doing this to the sons of God in Corinth.

3:18 So many people today have deceived themselves into thinking they know the things of God, when they have really approached the Bible using worldly wisdom. For example, they go back to the original Greek or Hebrew and use the definitions that they want to change the scripture to fit their theology. These people are, “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (II Timothy 3:7). This gives them “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (II Timothy 3:5). “The power thereof” is God’s Word (Hebrews 4:12). If you confront them with the truth, they will genuinely think you are crazy. This is because they have deceived themselves by using God’s Word to change “the truth of God into a lie” (Romans 1:25). As such, “they oppose themselves,” and are caught in “the snare of the devil” and do the devil’s will (II Timothy 2:25-26).

Paul says that the solution for such a person is to forsake the wisdom of this world, becoming a fool in the world’s eyes, so that he may have the true wisdom of God. This is a hard thing to do, especially for those higher up in Churchianity. They must suffer “the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that [they] may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8).

3:19-20 The wisdom of the world being foolishness with God means that God uses His foolishness, i.e., “the preaching of the cross” (1:18), to show “the wise” just how foolish they are. In other words, if God used His wisdom to confound the

wise in the world, He would be turning this into a wisdom contest. The arrogance of the wise of this world would then need to be protected by the philosophers trying to come up with greater philosophies to find a legal loophole to be ok with God. Therefore, God gets rid of this wisdom contest by using the foolishness of preaching to confound the wise (1:27), so that they will stop trying to be crafty to find a fleshly reason as to why they are ok with God. They can then recognize their sin and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin, rather than continuing in their worldly wisdom. This is how God takes the wise in their own craftiness, which is a quote of Job 5:13.

In other words, man's wisdom is to use vain imaginations to say that there is no God (1:21), concocting crazy philosophies of how evolution took place so that there is no God and truth is relative. Instead of confronting these arguments, God simply shows man that he is a sinner, and that Christ died for his sins. This gets man out of the philosophical arena, forcing him to confront the reality of his sinful condition. He now must either believe the truth or continue to believe a lie and be damned to hell (II Thessalonians 2:12).

This is further supported by 3:20's quote of Psalm 94:11, which says that man's wisdom is vain, i.e., empty. Ecclesiastes starts with "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2), and it ends with "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). This teaches us that everything that man tries is emptiness with God. Therefore, God uses His foolishness of the preaching of the cross to show man his emptiness so that he will fear God and keep His commandments. His commandments today are to recognize you are a sinner and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin.

3:21-23 Because man's thoughts are all vain, no one should glory in men. 1:29 tells us the same thing that, the reason God brings the wisdom of the world to nought by God's foolishness, is so "no flesh should glory in His presence." Because man did absolutely nothing to earn salvation, "no man should glory in men" (3:21), yet "all things are yours." How? Because "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). When we were saved, we were "justified freely by His grace" (3:24) and blessed "with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). "In Christ" is the key phrase. We were taken out of Adam and placed into Christ (Romans 5:17), and so we participate in everything that Christ receives from the Father. This is seen in 3:23's statement that "ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Note that Paul says that Paul, Apollos, and Cephas (3:22) are included in the things that are theirs. Why? Because, in Christ, they can learn all the sound doctrine that Christ chose to share through these three men. Why, then, would there be divisions among the Corinthians, where one person says he is of Paul and another says he is of Apollos? (3:4). Why divide over this, when all things are yours in Christ? This shows how carnal their divisions were.

I Corinthians 4 – Fools for Christ

4 Since we will all be judged based upon the sound doctrine in our inner man, we should be faithful stewards of the mystery (vs. 1-4). Since we do not know the heart motivation of others, we should not put preachers, or anyone else, on a pedestal, but leave that judgment to the Lord (v. 5). The problem was that the Corinthians had “ten thousand instructors in Christ” (v. 15), and so they were following the ones who tickled their itching ears (II Timothy 4:3-4). In other words, they judged spirituality based upon the flesh.

Because they are judging according to the flesh, Paul and Apollos have their spirituality transferred to them in the flesh (v. 6), so that the Corinthians understand how to judge properly. In other words, Paul and Apollos are spectacles unto men (v. 9), so that the Corinthians learn that weakness in the flesh is when Christ is strong in you (II Corinthians 12:9-10), not when you are healthy and wealthy, physically speaking, like the Corinthians are (v. 8).

Therefore, Paul and Apollos are fools, weak, and despised for Christ’s sake (v. 10). They suffer hunger, thirst, nakedness, and homelessness and are reviled, persecuted, and defamed (vs. 11-13) so that the Corinthians will learn to judge by the inward man, rather than by the outward appearance. Paul will now send Timotheus to them to see if they will learn this lesson (vs. 17-21).

4:1-2 We are “stewards of the mysteries of God” (4:1). Since we are stewards, we should be faithful (4:2) to give the mystery gospel to unsaved people and give mystery doctrine to saved people who desire to grow in the knowledge of the truth. This means that we need to study God’s Word rightly divided in order for our work to be approved by God (II Timothy 2:15). This shows that God did not save us just so we could go to heaven, but when He saved us, He gave us work to do. Therefore, the typical, lackadaisical attitude of the person who believes in eternal security, who says, “I won’t worry about that doctrine stuff. I’m going to heaven. That’s all that counts,” is not being a faithful steward of the mysteries of God. He has allowed his flesh to deceive him (Jeremiah 17:9) into thinking that doctrine is not important. Sadly, most of Churchianity falls into this category.

4:3-4 When people judge us as heretics or members of a cult for being right dividers, this should not bother us. We are ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20), and so the one, who judges us, is the Lord. We have just seen, from 3:10-15, that the Lord Jesus Christ will judge our works by the fire and reward them if they are things that we allowed Christ to do through us. Therefore, we should not worry about what man says about us. Paul says that we do not even judge ourselves (4:3). Rather, we should allow the sound doctrine of Paul’s epistles to judge us.

4:5 “Judge nothing before the time” (4:5) does not mean that we cannot judge others. In fact, 2:15 says, “He that is spiritual judgeth all things.” We have the ability, through the Holy Ghost, to judge whether something is according to sound doctrine or not. However, judging the actions of others is more difficult. II Timothy 3:5 says that some people have “a form of godliness.” So, what they do appears to

be godly, but it is really of the flesh. God told Ezekiel to dig a hole in the wall of the sanctuary in order to discover “the wicked abominations that they do here” (Ezekiel 8:7-9). Ezekiel then saw “abominable beasts,” “idols,” and “seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel.” (Ezekiel 8:10-11). This is what Israel did “in the dark” (Ezekiel 8:11). I am sure these same men looked godly to the rest of Israel, since they were the ancients of Israel. Paul told Timothy, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid” (I Timothy 5:24-25). Thus, “judge nothing before the time” means that we cannot say for sure that what others do in the name of the Lord are good things or bad things, because we cannot see the heart behind those actions.

Because we are in Paul’s epistles, “until the Lord come” (4:5) refers to the rapture. Then, we face the judgment seat of Christ, where we receive a reward based upon what we have done in the body (II Corinthians 5:10). Even if we only worked in the flesh after we were saved, we still receive the gift of eternal life (3:15), because our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). This is how “every man” shall “have praise of God” (4:5). Unbelievers will not receive praise of God, but they will not be at this judgement. Only believers will be at this judgment, and God will give them praise to the extent that they have allowed Christ to live in them.

4:6 Paul says that him and Apollos are a figure of these things. As Paul will say in his second epistle to the Corinthians, we have the treasure of the knowledge of the glory of God in our “earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (II Corinthians 4:6-7). What I think Paul is saying is that, by appointing leaders, such as Paul and Apollos, God is allowing the Corinthians to see the things of either light or darkness manifest in them. In other words, the Corinthians are able to see Paul and Apollos either walking in the Spirit or in the flesh. They then see that no one is perfect, which teaches them “not to think of men above that which is written” so that they are not “puffed up for one against another” (4:6). In other words, God works His doctrine through ordinary people, who are still in their vile flesh (Philippians 3:21), after they are saved. That way, when they walk in the Spirit, God is seen in them. When they walk in the flesh, man’s sin nature is seen in them. This keeps man from being puffed up, because it shows that good things only come from God. Therefore, the Corinthians can look at Paul and Apollos and not become puffed up themselves, because they see them with their flaws.

4:7 The one, who makes them “differ from another” (4:7), is Christ. They have Christ as a free gift to them when they believed. Therefore, they have no right to glory (1:29) over who they are in Christ. All glory belongs to the Lord.

4:8 Most people view the statement of “Now ye are full, now ye are rich” (4:8) as sarcasm. However, it is really a statement of who the Corinthians are in Christ. As Christians, they should use the mind of Christ (2:16), who became “servant of all” (Mark 10:44), become obedient to the Father, even unto the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8). Instead, Paul says that they “have reigned as kings without us”

(4:8). This means that the Corinthians were puffed up in the flesh over their spiritual condition, lording it over others, instead of being servants, as Christ was. They did not have a kingly reign, because that is in heavenly places. Believers cannot have a kingly reign on the earth, while Satan is “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, they reigned as if they were kings right now. Paul wishes they did reign, in reality, right now, because then it would mean that Satan was overthrown as the god of this world, and then Paul could have reigned with them IN CHRIST.

4:9 Not only do Paul, Apollos, and other apostles of the dispensation of grace (Ephesians 4:11) not reign as kings right now with Satan being the god of this world, but they are actually “made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men” (4:9). Here are the apostles of the dispensation of grace, allowing Christ to live in them (Galatians 2:20), while the rest of the world lives by Satan’s course (Ephesians 2:2). The world is crucified unto the apostles, and the apostles unto the world (Galatians 6:14). Their “conversation is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). Therefore, the world looks at them as a spectacle, because their behavior makes no sense to them. They are also a spectacle to angels, because angels see Christ living in them, contrary to their sin nature. God has set “the apostles last, as it were appointed to death” (4:9), so that people may see Christ in them and desire to have Christ living in themselves. In other words, Christ is willing to go to extreme measures with His body so that people may be saved.

4:10 Again, Paul is not being sarcastic here. God never uses sarcasm because His ways and thoughts are above ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). This means that we have no basis for determining when God is sarcastic. Therefore, 4:10 is a continuation of the spectacle of 4:9. To the world, men, and angels, the apostles “are fools for Christ’s sake,” while the carnal Corinthians are wise (4:10). The world views carnal Christians today as wise, because they are the ones getting the money and power from gullible Christians (II Timothy 3:5-7), while they view Bible believers as idiots, because they spend their time studying God’s Word and not profiting from it materially. Therefore, it should be easy for us to understand why Paul says that the apostles are fools for Christ’s sake, while the carnal Corinthians are wise.

The apostles are weak, as seen in Paul becoming weak so that the power of Christ may work through him (II Corinthians 12:9-10), but the Corinthians are strong, because they have not presented their bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord (Sacrifices are weak, not strong.) (Romans 12:1). Finally, the apostles are “despised,” because they are serving Christ, rather than Satan, while the Corinthians are “honourable” because they live just like the world lives (3:3).

4:11-13 It is the mark of the believer not to have a certain dwelling place. Jesus said, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20). Why? Because they are not following the course of this world, and so the world usually does not reward them. So, here are Paul and Apollos, working in the world and being punished by the world for not being of the world. In spite of this, they bless others with the gospel and mystery doctrine.

4:14 By contrast, the Corinthians are doing well in the world, due to their carnality. Paul did not write of the contrast between himself and the Corinthians in order to shame them, because “the sorrow of the world worketh death” (II Corinthians 7:10). In other words, if all Paul did was shame them, they would be involved in the sin of self-pity. Rather, Paul showed the Corinthians the contrast between their carnality and Christ living in them as a way to warn them (4:14) that they are walking by sight, not by faith (II Corinthians 5:7). He is warning them that they are following the world, which does not result in spiritual fruit.

4:15 This verse says that they have 10,000 instructors in Christ. People think of this as an exaggeration. However, with the proliferation of the Internet, we have more than that today. Paul talks about people, who would be rich, erring from the faith (I Timothy 6:9-10). He says that they “lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts” (II Timothy 3:6).

Today, we see thousands of preachers who do it for wealth and power, because they love pleasures more than they love God (II Timothy 3:4). Since the Corinthians are carnal (3:3), it looks like they have succumbed to some of these preachers. Churchianity is just as carnal as the Corinthians were. Churchianity is also following 10,000 instructors in Christ. However, this instruction is according to the flesh, so that they can get rich. People will give away a lot of money in order to continue to live in the flesh and have their guilty consciences seared with a hot iron, so that they do not feel the pain of their sin (I Timothy 4:1-2). Megachurch pastors are happy to oblige them. The situation was similar in Corinth. They have 10,000 instructors in Christ, but not many fathers, because not many people are willing to go through the things Paul went through (4:11-13), counting this world as dung, in order to win Christ (Philippians 3:7-10). This is how Paul begot the Corinthians through the gospel.

4:16 Wherefore, Paul beseeches them to follow Paul. Paul is not saying that they should worship Paul or exalt Paul. Paul said, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed” (3:5). Paul just got through saying that he is “made as the filth of the world, and [is] the offscouring of all things” (4:13). Therefore, Paul cannot possibly be exalting himself. Rather, he is telling the Corinthians to follow him in dying daily to the flesh (15:31), counting the things of this world as dung, and giving his life over to getting sound doctrine built up in his inner man and allowing Christ to live through him as a result.

Later on, Paul will tell them, “be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (11:1). He leaves out the latter part of this in 4:16 because it is already included in 4:15. There, he said that “in Christ Jesus” he had begotten them through the gospel.” Therefore, following Paul means that they follow Paul as he is in Christ Jesus, which is the same message of 11:1. The only way anyone could see 4:16 as a prideful statement is if it were ripped right out of its context in order to claim that Paul is full of himself so that they would not have to follow Paul so that they do not have to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:12). We should follow Paul because he is “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13).

Jesus Christ revealed sound doctrine for today to him (Galatians 1:11-12). Therefore, if you are not following Paul today, you are not following Christ!

4:17 Paul said that he had begotten the Corinthians through the gospel as their spiritual father (4:15). Therefore, they should follow Paul (4:16). Timothy is also like a spiritual son to Paul, who has followed Paul, which is why Paul has sent Timotheus to the Corinthians (4:17; 16:10-11). Apparently, Timotheus did make it to Corinth (II Corinthians 1:19), and the second epistle to the Corinthians is from both Paul and Timothy (II Corinthians 1:1). Timotheus needed to go to the Corinthians so that they would follow Paul's sound doctrine in the mystery dispensation, rather than following the ten thousands instructors in Christ, who were at Corinth (4:15).

4:18 The issue at Corinth is not whether or not Paul would come to them. Rather, the issue is that some of them are puffed up, because they think that Paul will not come to them. This means that some of the 10,000 instructors think they can teach false doctrine for worldly gain (I Timothy 6:9-10), thinking that Paul will never come to correct the bad doctrine.

4:19 Paul says that he will come to them and look at the power of those who are puffed up in their speech. Hebrews 4:12 says that "the word of God is quick, and powerful." Paul says that those, who love themselves, have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof (II Timothy 3:2-5). This tells us that the instructors, who go after the Corinthians' money, do not have any power behind their words, because they are using man's words to appeal to the senses or emotions (James 3:15), or they are handling God's Word deceitfully (II Corinthians 4:2). Either way, Paul can come and refute them with the Word of God so that they do not fool the Corinthians into giving them their money.

4:20 Now, when this verse says that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power, this obviously does not mean that we should not read and believe God's Word. The context clearly shows that Paul is saying that the kingdom of God is not established in man's words, but it is established in power, which is found only in God's words. When God created the heaven and the earth, He spoke everything into existence (Genesis 1). Therefore, the power of the kingdom of God, found in the words of Paul's epistles today, will easily overthrow man's arrogance in his own philosophical arguments that have a form of godliness.

4:21 If the Corinthians allow these puffed up instructors to dominate their church, Paul will have to come to them with a rod to correct them. This rod is not the law, as it is in the millennial kingdom (Psalm 2:9), because the Corinthians are already saved. Rather, it is a rod of grace, as Paul used against the Galatians in their epistle. He will have to give the Corinthians sound doctrine in an aggressive manner, rather than in weakness, fear, and trembling (2:3), as he did before. However, if they accept the correction of this epistle, he can come to them, rejoicing that they have not allowed false doctrine to overtake their church. In that case, he would come to them in love and meekness, rather than with a rod.

I Corinthians 5 – Kicking Sin out of the Church

5 A man in the church is having sex with his father's wife (v. 1), and the Corinthians are actually cheering him on (v. 2)! They need to kick this man out of the church (vs. 3-5) so that they do not create a sin culture (vs. 6-7). The purpose of the church is to feast on the Word of God (the Lord's supper), which they do not do when they feast on sin (v. 8). Therefore, they need to kick out this wicked person (vs. 9-13).

5:1-2 The Corinthians have fornication in their midst that even the Gentiles do not do. This shows that the carnality of the Corinthians is worse than that of unbelievers. The reason is probably because they are puffed up (4:18) in their salvation. They have allowed their deceitful hearts to trick them into believing that they should sin so that grace may abound even more (Romans 6:1). Unbelievers do the sins of their flesh, but their actions are usually curtailed by their consciences. The Corinthians have allowed their consciences to be defiled by the deceit of the devil into thinking that they can commit whatever sins they want to, including the ones against their own consciences, because they are going to heaven regardless of what they do. They should not use their liberty in Christ (Galatians 5:1) "as an occasion to the flesh" (Galatians 5:13), but as an occasion for them to live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). This shows the deceitfulness of religion that they would heap unto themselves teachers that scratch the itch of the lusts of their flesh (II Timothy 4:3-4), teaching doctrines of devils (I Timothy 4:1), rather than going by the sound doctrine that Paul has taught them.

A man in the church is having sex with his father's wife. This is probably a reference to the man's stepmother, since Paul probably would have said "mother" otherwise. This is specifically prohibited in Deuteronomy 22:30 ("A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt."). However, the church is puffed up about it, which shows that they are working "all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). For example, there were sodomites in the United States in the 1960s, but they were quiet about it, because society did not accept such behavior. Now, their behavior is accepted; therefore, they proclaim their sin with boldness. If having sex with a person's father's wife is not even named among the Gentiles, it means that, if someone was doing that, it would have been kept quiet among unbelievers in society. The fact, that the Corinthians are actually bragging about being able to get away with such a gross sin, shows that the Corinthians have developed a sub-culture in which anything goes in grace. In other words, they have used religion to become worse than the society around them! This is how bad the situation is in the Corinthian church. It is not unlike the vile, sexual acts that Catholic priests did over the years. They had a religious structure that protected them so that they could get away with vile, illegal things that would not be tolerated in society. Such is the case with this man in the Corinthian church.

5:3-5 Paul pronounces judgment on this man, saying that he needs to be kicked out of the church. I used to bring up these verses to show that you cannot lose your salvation, no matter how vile you are. While that is true, the rest of this

chapter seems to indicate that this man is not a saved individual. Verse 11 says, “if any man THAT IS CALLED a brother be a fornicator.” Paul calls him “that wicked person” in verse 13. Contrast this with the very next chapter, where Paul says that fornicators shall not inherit the kingdom of God and “such WERE some of you: but ye ARE washed, but ye ARE sanctified, but ye ARE justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (6:9-11). Therefore, if this man was a believer, Paul would not have referred to him as a wicked person. Rather, he is masquerading as a believer so he can get away with his vile, sexual sin, just like Catholic priests did to hide their perverse behavior with boys.

Therefore, when Paul says, “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,” he is primarily talking about the “flesh” and the “spirit” of the church as a whole (5:5). However, this verse could also be applied to the man. With regard to the man, kicking him out may get him to recognize that he is a sinner and needs to believe the gospel in order to be saved. If the man does this, his flesh is destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and his spirit receives eternal life. This appears to be what happened, based upon what Paul says in II Corinthians 2:4-9, assuming he is talking about the same man there.

With regard to the church, Paul says that the flesh of the church must be destroyed, meaning that sin must be taken seriously and dealt with severely so that the whole church is not given over to sin. The church is supposed to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3:15), and not a place where sin grows! This is why verses 6 and 7 tell them to “purge out...the old leaven,” because “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” And so, if the Corinthian church kicks this guy out of the church, the activities of the flesh in the church can be destroyed. The spirit is then saved at the judgment seat of Christ. This means that the Corinthian church does not lose the heavenly positions that the Lord Jesus Christ has for them.

5:6 Paul’s problem is not necessarily with the sin that the man has committed, but it is with the way that the Corinthians are reacting to it. They are glorying over this man’s heinous sin, which means they are taking pleasure in the flesh, rather than in Christ living in them. Such an attitude will result in the whole church falling into sin. (This is why the Catholic church’s coverup of their priests’ sexual sins resulted in an environment where hundreds of priests did the same thing and where sodomy was considered to be the norm among Catholic seminaries.) Therefore, the Corinthians need to purge out both the man and their attitude toward this sin, so that they use the mind of Christ on this issue (2:16).

Romans gives basic, faith doctrine for the grace dispensation. I & II Corinthians is the correction of a lack of the practical application of this doctrine. Galatians is the correction of believing false doctrine with regard to faith. It is no coincidence, then, that Paul says that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” both in I Corinthians 5:6 and in Galatians 5:9. This shows that not believing sound doctrine results in errors in thinking and in actions, and these errors are corrected with sound doctrine applied to life. Jesus said, “Of the abundance of the heart his

mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45), which means that sinful actions come from an inner man that is not following sound doctrine. This shows that what you believe matters tremendously!

5:7-8 “Ye are unleavened” (5:7) shows that all believers have no sin on their souls. Why? Because “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (5:7). Israel was to celebrate the Passover with seven days of unleavened bread (Exodus 12:15), which is a type of Christ being the ultimate Passover Lamb, which taketh away their sin (John 1:29). In the dispensation of grace, we do not celebrate the physical, Passover feast, because it was “a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17). Therefore, Christ is our Passover. Note that the verse says that Christ “IS sacrificed for us,” meaning that Christ’s sacrifice does not just give us eternal life in the past, but it also sanctifies us in the present as we read and believe God’s Word. Ephesians 5:25-26 says that Christ gave Himself for the church “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” Paul’s point, then, is that Christ our passover was sacrificed for us in order to have Christ live in us. When the church allows sin in their midst, they have old leaven mixed in so that they are no longer an unleavened lump. Now, the believers are still unleavened in Christ, because Christ has forgiven them of their sin, but the church as a whole has sin or leaven mixed in with them. Therefore, Paul tells them to cast out this unbeliever so that they will only feast spiritually upon unleavened bread.

This spiritual feast should be on “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (5:8), rather than “the leaven of malice and wickedness” (5:8). This shows that the true Lord’s Supper, today, is not drinking some wine/grape juice and taking a bite of bread/cracker or even having a full meal with the saints. The true Lord’s Supper is “feasting” spiritually on the truth of God’s Word, keeping away from false doctrine, as we will see in more detail when we get to chapter 11.

5:9 This verse tells us that I Corinthians is not the first epistle that Paul wrote to them. We do not have the previous epistle, mentioned in 5:9, because the prophets, that Christ gave to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11), deemed that it was not scripture (14:37). This helps us understand that the canon of scripture was not fixed by a Catholic council in 325 AD, as Churchianity would have you believe, but it was fixed by prophets that Christ gave to determine which writings are part of the scripture and which are not.

5:10 This verse shows that, while Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), it will be impossible for us to separate ourselves completely from sinners, but we can still kick them out of the church. For example, I cannot separate myself from unbelieving sinners at work, at the grocery store, or at the gas station, because unbelievers are everywhere. However, the church is supposed to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3:15). Therefore, any sin should be cast out of its midst.

Now, you may ask how we determine who to kick out and who to keep in. After all, all of us sin. First, this man, based upon 5:11-13, is not a believer. The church is

only comprised of believers. If someone comes in the church, is presented the gospel, and refuses to believe it, that person should be kicked out of the church. If a believer refuses to believe sound doctrine, lives carnally, and spreads his carnality to others, he should be kicked out of the church. The issue is that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (5:6). This happens when unbelievers continue to attend the church and when believers flaunt their sin. Therefore, either situation is remedied by expelling that person from the church. What is left are believers, who still sin and still have some false doctrine in their inner man, since none of us are perfect. But, the ones remaining have the attitude of believing the gospel and attempting to have Christ live in them. It is the church’s attitude that is important, not the individual sins, because we all sin after we are saved.

5:11 This verse makes it clear that the man, having sex with his father’s wife, is an unbeliever, because it says, “if any man THAT IS CALLED a brother be a fornicator.” In other words, Paul says that he is called a brother; he is not an actual brother. Not eating with him, while it would refer to physical food, primarily refers to spiritual food, in light of 5:7-8. Therefore, when Paul says, “With such an one no not to eat,” he is referring to not even allowing this person to attend Bible study. There are two reasons for this: 1) He is not saved. Therefore, he cannot understand the things of God, which means that his spiritual condition will not be improved by attending the church, and 2) His presence will make others think that sin is not that serious, which means they will continue their sin and probably increase their sin, since their hearts will deceive them into thinking sin is ok (Jeremiah 17:9), based upon this man’s presence alone, even if he stops bragging about his sin to others. A good application for today’s environment is that all practicing sodomites should be kicked out of the church.

5:12-13 “That wicked person” (5:13) is another clue that this person is an unbeliever, because believers are not wicked any more. In 6:9-10, Paul says that fornicators, among other evildoers, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Then, he says, “And such WERE some of you: but ye ARE washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (6:11). When you believe the gospel, your identity is changed from being a sinner to being a saint. This means that no believer is a wicked person, which tells us that this man was not a believer at this time.

These verses say that we judge people within the church, and God judges people outside the church. This does not mean that we cannot judge unbelievers outside of the church. After all, Paul told the Corinthians earlier, “He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man” (2:15). What this means is that, when it comes to sin, God has given believers the responsibility to judge people within the church and kick them out if they are unbelievers and/or are non-repentant regarding their sinful lifestyles. We do not judge the sin of people outside the church, in terms of punishing people for their sin. At the Great White Throne Judgment, God will open the books and judge them into hell based upon their works (Revelation 20:11-15). This is in line with what Paul said in 4:5, “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the

hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” In other words, we cannot judge someone outside the church into hell, because we do not know the hidden things of their hearts. We can still “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24) in terms of if sins are being committed by people who are not part of the church, but we are not to condemn anyone to hell. That is God’s responsibility, not ours, because we do not know the heart.

I Corinthians 6 – Abandon Religion for God’s Word

6 Another problem the Corinthians are having is that they are taking each other to court, instead of allowing believers among them to judge disputes (v. 1). Believers will be in positions of authority in heavenly places, and so why not let them practice now by judging disputes among believers (vs. 2-5)? In fact, it is better to be wronged by a fellow believer and just let it go than to take him to court, because then you are focusing on the spiritual, rather than on the physical (v. 7).

Furthermore, when you go to a court, you are probably dealing with judges who are not saved. This means they do not have the spiritual discernment of a believer (2:14), and they do not inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore, you should not go to them, because they will judge from a natural perspective, rather than a spiritual one (vs. 9-10).

The spiritual perspective is that “all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient” (v. 12). God will destroy the material things of this world, so, why are the Corinthians concentrating on the things that will be destroyed? (v. 13). Instead, they should yield their bodies to the Lord and bring glory to God (vs. 19-20).

6:1 The word “dare” (6:1) shows that taking a believer to court is a preposterous idea. Most judges are unbelievers. Even if they are believers, they are still judging according to laws that have been established by unbelievers. “The things of the Spirit of God...are foolishness” unto unbelievers (2:14), while believers, because they have the Spirit of God to teach them the things of God (2:9-13), can judge all things and are judged of no man (2:15). This is because believers are on a higher plane than unbelievers, due to having the mind of Christ (2:16) in order to understand the things of God. Therefore, it is utter foolishness for believers to take each other to court. Instead, they should have fellow believers judge disputes for them. When we are saved, we become adult sons of God and heirs with Christ in heavenly places (Galatians 4:6-7; Ephesians 2:6). By contrast, unbelievers will spend eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). This shows that believers have made the correct, eternal choice. Therefore, believers are much more qualified to judge in earthly matters than unbelievers are.

This is not to say that believers should not take others to court. For example, if you are cheated out of a house and you can gain that house back by going to court, go ahead and do so. Or, if a contractor did not perform a job that you paid him for, you can take him to court. The reason is because I Timothy 5:8 tells us

that we must take care of our household. Therefore, Paul is not telling us to let people take advantage of us.

The context of this chapter is believers in matters with other believers. These matters should be handled internally by the church, as we are better ambassadors for Christ when we do not have the public eye on disputes. Also, the church should settle matters that will be the best spiritually, rather than materially, and so, in view of eternity, the church's judgment is better than a court's judgment.

6:2 Because of who we are in Christ, “the saints shall judge the world” (6:2). The way this works is that Christ will judge the world (John 5:22) at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:12). Since our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3), we, by extension, judge the world by comparing their works with God's Word (Revelation 20:12). This results in them being thrown into the lake of fire forever (Revelation 20:15). By comparison, whatever issues come up among the saints today are “the smallest matters” (6:2).

6:3 Not only will we judge the world, but we will also judge angels (6:3). Angels were made a little higher than man (Hebrews 2:7). We receive our authority to judge angels based upon who we are in Christ. The way this works, again, is that our lives are hid with Christ in God. Christ is the man through Whom God's plan of glory is carried out for all eternity. We see this in Hebrews 2:7-10, which says that all things are put in subjection under man's feet. We know this “man” is Jesus, based upon Ephesians 1:10's statement that all things, both in heaven and in earth, are gathered together in Christ. Hebrews 1:14 says that the angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” John 1:51 says that, in the future, “Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” Putting this all together, we learn that angels will be sent out by believers, both in Israel's program and in the body of Christ, to be our ministers for issues that arise. This means that we judge angels in the sense that we send them to where they need to go to take care of issues, and we settle issues in areas that angels are unsure how to handle.

While angels are higher than man, they do not have sound doctrine in the inner man like we do. Ephesians 3:9-10 says that the mystery doctrine, that has been entrusted to the body of Christ, is used by us to show “the principalities and powers in heavenly places...the manifold wisdom of God.” The angels do not understand these deep things of God, as further demonstrated by Peter, when he says that “the angels desire to look into” Christ's sufferings, glory, and salvation of believing Israel (I Peter 1:11-12). Therefore, in the dispensation of the fulness of times (Ephesians 1:10), the body of Christ will be using mystery doctrine to determine where to send angels and to settle matters of which they are unsure how to handle. This is how we will judge angels. (This is not unlike how judges were set up to rule over Israel in Exodus 18:25-26.)

Paul's point, in bringing up judging angels is that, if we will have such an awesome, eternal responsibility, surely the saints of the body of Christ can judge

matters that come up between believers in the local assembly! These matters are temporal, while matters with angels are eternal (II Corinthians 4:18).

6:4 To emphasize how inconsequential the things of this life are, Paul says to have those “LEAST esteemed in the church” (6:4) judge in those matters. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away” (Matthew 24:35). Therefore, Paul tells us to “set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Jesus also said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). This shows that, when compared with eternity, the things of this life are inconsequential. Even if you are the richest man in the world, it is no big deal, because you cannot take a dime of it with you. Better to be least in God’s kingdom and be poor in this life, than to be rich in this life and headed for hell. (“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).) Therefore, in eternity, the results of disputes “pertaining to this life” (6:4) are meaningless. If the Corinthians put the least esteemed in the church over those things, it will show everyone that the disputes of this life do not mean anything. Paul is basically telling the Corinthians to stop fighting over material things and concentrate on growing spiritually instead.

6:5-7 The Corinthians’ carnality is shown in two ways: 1) They have disputes over things of this life with one another. Paul said, “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (9:22). Paul also gave up everything that he had in this life in order to win Christ. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ” (Philippians 3:7). Believers should set their “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Therefore, the Corinthians should not even care about their material possessions. If there are disputes over the things of this life, they should be over trying to give up their material possessions to help their fellow believers, not in trying to get as much as they can out of fellow believers! This is why Paul says that they should be willing to “take wrong” and “suffer yourselves to be defrauded” (6:7), because only spiritual things matter, not material things., and 2) They take their disputes to court. As we have already mentioned, the natural man cannot understand the things of God. Only believers can discern the spiritual things of God, and so “he that is spiritual judgeth all things” (2:14-15). Therefore, it is foolish to take disputes to a court, where an unbeliever will decide between believers. Why wouldn’t you have someone going to heaven judge between you, rather than someone going to hell?

This is why Paul says, “I speak this to your shame” (6:5). They should be ashamed that their carnality is so bad that they take each other to court. They should have a wise man among them who can settle disputes for them. If they do not, they should still appoint someone in the church to settle disputes, and, if the judgments he gives are unfair, so be it. At least a pagan, governmental system would not be deciding things for them. This shows that they love money more than they love the brethren (I Timothy 6:10). They are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (II Timothy 3:4).

Today, it would be highly unusual for two believers to allow a church member to settle a dispute among them, which shows that the carnality of Churchianity today is very similar to that of the Corinthians.

6:7-8 Here, we see the paradox between the material and the spiritual as we saw in 4:8-14. Materially speaking, they should be willing to “take wrong” and also “suffer yourselves to be defrauded” (6:7), rather than taking a brother to court over a dispute. By going to court, “ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren” (6:8). Paul means this spiritually, because they are defrauding their brethren of the love of the brethren and the life of Christ coming through them. Again, this shows the carnality of the Corinthians that they would focus on getting everything they can materially, to the detriment of their own spiritual condition. Only by having disputes settled by another brother do they not defraud themselves, neither materially nor spiritually.

6:9-11 Churchianity pulls 6:9-10 out of context to say that Paul teaches that you can lose your salvation if you do these sins after you are saved. The idea is that, while you can get away with the smaller sins and not lose your salvation, you cannot get away with the larger sins. However, verse 11 makes it clear that righteousness has to do with your identity, not with your performance. Paul says, “and such WERE some of you: but ye ARE washed, but ye ARE sanctified, but ye ARE justified.” Romans 3:21-22 says, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” The moment you recognize your sin (Romans 3:23) and trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sin (15:3-4), God replaces your filthy-rags righteousness (Isaiah 64:6) with His righteousness. Your “old man is crucified with [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth [you] should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6). The moment you believe the gospel, the Holy Spirit performs a spiritual circumcision on you, cutting off your body of sin from affecting your soul (Colossians 2:11-12). Therefore, it does not matter what you do after you are saved, it is covered by the blood of Christ. You CANNOT lose your salvation! This is why Romans 5:9,11 says that we have NOW been “justified by His blood,” and “we have NOW received the atonement.”

6:12 Therefore, Paul says that “all things are lawful unto me” (6:12). I can do whatever I want, and I will not lose my salvation. Churchianity argues, “But God does not want me to be a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, etc.” (6:9), and that is true. However, we are not talking about what God wants you to do, but we are talking about who you are—your identity. If you commit fornication, worship idols, and commit adultery after you are saved, you are still not a fornicator, idolater, or an adulterer, because God sees you, not with the sin on your life, but as who you are in Christ. God says that we are “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6), and, because my body of sin has been spiritually circumcised from my soul, God does not see any sin on my soul. Therefore, the justice of God demands that He give me eternal life, even when I walk according to the lusts of the flesh.

Also, we need to recognize that our liberty in Christ is not a license to sin, but it is a license to allow Christ to live in us. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Romans 6:1-2). When you learn that “all things are lawful unto me” (6:12), your flesh automatically objects, because your flesh lusts after the Spirit (Galatians 5:17) and wants to obtain by work what you have been given by the Spirit by grace. Your flesh wants to perform (Colossians 2:20-23). Therefore, Churchianity’s objection to all things being lawful unto you after you are saved is because it kills your flesh. It is bad enough that the flesh is useless when it comes to your salvation. Most people do not want to admit that. Among those who do realize that, most of them will not admit that their flesh is useless when it comes to their sanctification, because they want to take at least some credit for their standing with God. This is why Churchianity will not believe that all things are lawful unto them.

Instead, Churchianity wants to concentrate on the part of 6:12 that says, “All things are not expedient.” That way, they can sneak the law into the back door and have it control their lives so that they do not have to humble themselves and have Christ live in them after they are saved (Galatians 2:20). When they put themselves under the law, they make the Bible all about the flesh. They think that you either do wicked things in your flesh and lose your salvation, or you do good things in your flesh and keep your salvation. However, since our identity changes the moment we are saved from being in Adam to being in Christ, the issue is that you can do wicked things in your flesh and not be sanctified, or you can allow Christ to do things in you and be sanctified. Since we are free from sin when we are saved, why would we return to sin? This is Paul’s point. You WERE fornicators, idolaters, etc., but now you ARE washed, sanctified, and justified (6:9-11). Therefore, it is absurd for us to go back to living as sinners, because we are now saints of God. God wants us to shift our focus from Adam to Christ to match our new identity in Christ.

While all things are lawful unto Paul, they are not all expedient. If he caters to the flesh, he will not receive the high calling of a position in heavenly places (Philippians 3:14). This includes putting himself back under the law. Paul says in Galatians 2:18 that, “if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” Therefore, when Paul says that he “will not be brought under the power of any” (6:12), “any” does not just mean the list of bad things in 6:9-10, but it also includes “good” deeds of the flesh, such as trying to obey the law. This is why Paul says to “stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” which is the law (Galatians 5:1). We are to set aside both the evil things AND the good things of the flesh, not so we maintain our salvation, but so we press toward the reward that God has for us in heavenly places. “All things are lawful unto me” shows that we are eternally secure in Christ. “All things are not expedient” shows that we should read and believe sound doctrine and allow Christ to live in us so that we are good ambassadors for Christ. Therefore, we should not allow our flesh to trick us into thinking that this verse gives us a license to sin, but we should realize that it gives

us the license to have Christ live in us. This is not “easy believism”; it is easy Christism!

6:13 “Meats for the belly” (6:13) again shows us that feeding the flesh can refer to both good and bad things, since “meats” would be considered good for the flesh, as opposed to junk food. Regardless, after you are saved, you should not cater to the flesh because God will destroy both your flesh and the things done in your flesh. The destruction of your flesh is seen in Philippians 3:21, where Paul tells us that, at the rapture, Christ “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” The destruction of the works of the flesh is seen in 3:15, where the works of the flesh are burned at the judgment seat of Christ and the believer loses his reward. Since both will be destroyed, the believer should always walk in the Spirit.

Paul says that “the body is...for the Lord” (6:13). Acts 20:28 says that God purchased the church with His Own blood. Ephesians 1:14 calls us “the purchased possession.” Paul will soon say that “ye are bought with a price” (6:20). Before you believe the gospel, your body belongs to Satan. Once you believe the gospel, your body belongs to the Lord. Before you were saved, you worked for Satan by sinning. Therefore, it stands to reason that, once you are saved, you should present your body as a living sacrifice to the Lord (Romans 12:1) for Him to use for His glory, since He is the One Who bought it with His blood! You do this by renewing your mind (Romans 12:2) with sound doctrine from God’s Word rightly divided.

6:14 Ephesians 1:19-23 says that God’s power is toward us according to the mighty power which He used in Christ to raise “Him from the dead, and set Him at His Own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all” powers. Therefore, because God raised up Christ from the dead, we can be confident that God will raise the body of Christ from the dead. God does this “by His Own power” (6:14). Why would we try to serve God in our own power, or why would we use our power to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, since our fleshly power will be destroyed by God? Instead, we should tap into God’s resurrection power, by allowing the ascended Christ to live in us, as we read, believe, and follow the sound doctrine found in Paul’s epistles.

6:15 Since we are members of the body of Christ (12:12-13) and Christ did no sin (I Peter 2:20), it makes no sense for us to then join ourselves to an harlot (6:15). It is interesting that Paul uses the word “harlot,” because Paul just talked about a man who had sex with his father’s wife, not with a prostitute (5:1). Perhaps there is a deeper, spiritual meaning for us to understand here. Satan’s Babylonian religious system is called “the great whore... with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication” (Revelation 17:1-2). It is also called “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS” (Revelation 17:5). Perhaps, in addition to physical harlots, Paul is also talking about the spiritual harlot of religion. This makes sense in light of the more immediate context of God destroying the flesh and the lusts thereof and raising us

from the dead by God's power (6:12-14). Therefore, Paul probably uses "harlot," here (6:15), as a reference to following religion above God's Word.

II Corinthians 6:15, then, is a parallel verse to this one. It says, "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" This means that, if you join yourself to the idol of religion (II Corinthians 6:16), you are committing spiritual fornication with Satan's Babylonian harlot, and doing so in the name of Christ!

6:16-17 Joining yourself to a harlot makes you one flesh, but joining yourself to the Lord makes you one spirit. This is because Satan has you walk by sight and not by faith. James 3:15 says that this world's wisdom is "earthly, sensual, devilish." You use your flesh when you use religion as a form of godliness (II Timothy 3:5) to appear like you are following the Lord. It is very difficult to be removed from religion, because you become one flesh with that religion, just like it is very difficult to remove yourself from someone you have married. This is why II Timothy 2:26 describes people, who are following religion, as being in "the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

When you believe the gospel, your spirit is made alive in Christ. As you read and believe God's Word, the Holy Ghost teaches you the things of God, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (2:13). God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and so the Holy Ghost communicates sound doctrine to your spirit. This is why you are one spirit when you are joined unto the Lord (6:17). The problem is that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17). Therefore, most Christians use their one-flesh relationship with religion to create a form of godliness so that their flesh is satisfied. Catering to the one-spirit relationship with God involves dying daily to your flesh (15:31) and suffering "persecution for the cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12), which very few people are willing to do. Instead, they prefer to join themselves to the law after they are saved, making themselves transgressors (Galatians 2:18), because they have no power in their flesh to obey the law (Romans 7:18). They are committing spiritual adultery with the harlot of religion, rather than being faithful to Christ, Who purchased them with His Own blood (Acts 20:28). "God forbid" (6:15) that they should do this!

Also notice that these verses teach that sex equals marriage (6:16). The loosest sexual relationship is sleeping with a harlot, and even that results in the two becoming married or one flesh. How much more, then, does every other sexual relationship result in marriage in the eyes of God. This makes it easier to understand how Solomon had 700 wives (I Kings 11:3)!

6:18 The Corinthians need to "flee fornication" (6:18) by "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). Make the Bible your final authority, rather than your religion or your pastor.

While all sin separates you from God, fornication is the only sin that you commit against your own body. This is because, when you are married, you become one with your partner. Therefore, you sin against your partner when you commit fornication. Since Paul is emphasizing the spiritual, following religion is worse than doing evil things, because you are committing spiritual adultery against Christ. Romans 7:4 says, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” We became spiritually one with Christ when we first believed the gospel. Therefore, when we join ourselves to Belial by following religion, we commit spiritual fornication against Christ, even when we follow a religion that takes on the name of Christ, because Christ judges us by our heart (Jeremiah 17:10), not by our outward appearance (I Samuel 16:7). We also should not “look on things after the outward appearance” (II Corinthians 10:7), but we should follow the Bible over churches that say they follow Jesus. The great deception of Satan today is getting Christians to follow the red letters of Jesus, rather than “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery” (Romans 16:25), as given to Paul for us (Ephesians 3:2).

Because fornication is a sin against your own body, it is much more difficult for those, who follow religion, to abandon their religion and follow God’s Word instead, than it is for those doing evil things to make the Bible their final authority. We saw this in 5:5, where Paul said to kick out of the church the one having sex with his father’s wife. Doing so would deliver him “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” In other words, he could no longer use the crutch of religion to justify his sinful behavior. Similarly, Paul is telling the Corinthians to flee their religion of 10,000 instructors in Christ (4:15) and follow God’s Word rightly divided instead. He will send them Timothy to get them back on the right track (4:17).

6:19-20 Churchianity’s emphasis on the flesh is seen in their view of what 6:19 means. The church, that I grew up in, would use “your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost” (6:19) to say that smoking cigarettes is a sin. Yet, they had no problem having a flesh contest with their legalism by biting and devouring one another (Galatians 5:15), when, in its context, 6:19-20 is talking about glorifying God in your body. This means that, rather than trying to make a fair shew in the flesh through your religion (Galatians 6:12) or using grace as a license to sin (Romans 6:1), we should present our bodies as living sacrifices to God by renewing our mind with sound doctrine (Romans 12:1-2), being “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).

After all, Christ “hath purchased [us] with His Own blood” (Acts 20:28). “The life of the flesh is in the blood,” and “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11). Moreover, you are circumcised in the spirit when you are saved (Romans 2:29). This means that your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—(I Thessalonians 5:23) belong to Christ when you are saved. Therefore, if you make the decision in your soul to believe and follow sound doctrine, you will “glorify God

in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (6:20). This is how you keep a good temple through which the Holy Ghost can work.

I Corinthians 7 – Marriage Guidelines

7 Paul will now address the questions that the Corinthians sent him about marriage. The ideal situation is not to get married (v. 1), so that you can devote more time to serving the Lord, rather than having to please your spouse (vs. 32-35). However, most people, especially under 60 years old (I Timothy 5:9), burn with sexual desire to the point that it is better to marry, so that they focus on serving the Lord and pleasing their spouse, rather than burning with sexual desire (vs. 7-9). But, because a man's mind operates differently from a woman's mind, married couples will have trouble (v. 28), and so it is best not to marry if possible.

If someone is married, he should stay married. If his spouse gets a divorce, then he should stay unmarried (vs. 10-11). This applies to believers married to unbelievers, as well. Rather than looking at an unbelieving wife as a detriment to a man's walk with Christ, he should look at it as an opportunity for her and their kids to believe the gospel and be saved if he stays with her (vs. 12-16). Our primary focus should be that we are bought with Christ's blood, and so our decisions should be based on maximizing our ability to serve the Lord, rather than succumbing to our own lusts (vs. 17-24).

Some people may desire to get married but cannot find a godly spouse. (You should only marry a fellow believer (v. 39).) Also, some people may be married, but they regret that they married an unbeliever. Paul assures them that, if their situation is not ideal, it is okay, because what happens in this life pales in comparison to the time we will spend in eternity. Therefore, if we suffer now, it is okay, because we will not be suffering in eternity (vs. 29-31).

Now, regarding fathers who have daughters, they should try to keep their daughters virgins for life so that they can devote their time to serving the Lord. However, some fathers may not be financially able to do this, or they may see that their daughters want to get married, and so they acquiesce for their sakes (vs. 36-38).

7:1 By starting this chapter with "now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me," we learn that the Corinthians did not write Paul about the man committing fornication with his father's wife (chapter 5) nor about them taking each other to court (chapter 6). However, they did write about marriage (chapter 7). This shows the carnality of the Corinthians. They must have wanted to continue in fornication, because they did not mention it. Therefore, they probably wrote about marriage as a way to justify their sexual sin. In other words, they were probably hoping that Paul would tell them that marriage is a thing of the past. Perhaps this is why Paul starts his answer with "it is good for a man not to touch a woman" (7:1). He has already taught them that sex = marriage ("What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh" (6:16).), and so he tells them not to touch a woman, because having sex with

a woman means that you have now made a lifetime commitment to her. (“If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days” (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).) In other words, do not pursue sex for pleasure, but recognize you are promising to take care of a woman for the rest of her life when you have sex with her. So, do not touch her, but think about what you are getting into first.

We need to let these words really sink in, given how our society has such a casual view of sex. This casual view was the same in Corinth, as seen by the man having sex with his father’s wife (5:1). We also see the disciples with this view. When they learned from Jesus that marriage is for life, their reaction was, “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry” (Matthew 19:10). Therefore, we cannot look at I Corinthians 7 and say, “Well, that is how things were 2,000 years ago, but they are different today.” NO! Jesus said that “He which made them AT THE BEGINNING made them male and female...,and they twain shall be one flesh” (Matthew 19:4-5). Sex equaled marriage with Adam and Eve, and it is the same today.

7:2 Because God made them male and female from the beginning, most people have a sexual desire that God says should only be satisfied by one member of the opposite sex for life. When the disciples said that it is not good for a man to get married, Jesus said, “All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.” Those, who can be single all of their lives are eunuchs, who are either born that way, made eunuchs by men, or have devoted themselves to being lifetime virgins “for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” (Matthew 19:11-12). In most cases, especially in today’s sexually charged society, most members of the body of Christ would end up committing fornication if they never got married. Therefore, Paul says that, although “it is good for a man not to touch a woman,” “nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (7:2).

This is so much different from today’s society. Almost no one would even consider being a lifetime virgin as an option. Society floats the notion that you have a soul mate, or that you need to search for love. In the meantime, you can have as many sexual releases as you want through casual, sexual relationships with others until you find that one person you want to be with. Even if you do find that person, you may fall out of love with her, and so you should just live together until the next one comes along that you like better for the time being.

By contrast, God says that He made male and female from the beginning. Each one has a different mind so that they may keep the other person’s sin nature from getting out of control. If people can live without sex, they should do so, because it gives them more time to devote to the Lord. If they cannot live without sex, they should find a believer (7:39) of the opposite sex to marry so they can get a sexual release from them and not sin. Thus, believers should look at marriage from a spiritual perspective, rather than a physical one. In other words, when it comes to

marriage, they should follow whatever is the spiritually optimum situation for them, irrespective of emotions. This is a completely foreign concept today, especially within Churchianity.

7:3-5 Since believers are to get married in order to curb their sexual appetites, they should never withhold sex from each other. When you are married, the two become one flesh. Therefore, you no longer have complete control over your body, which means that, if your marriage partner wants to have sex, you should do so. God made men with a greater sexual drive than women so that women could practice submitting to their husbands, while men could practice being with only one woman. If a woman withholds sex from her husband, both suffer, as the woman does not fulfill her role, and the man is more likely to be unfaithful to his wife. In fact, Paul goes on to say, “Defraud ye not one the other” (7:5), which means that, if you withhold sex, you are wrongfully withholding what is due them. Granted, a husband should love his wife (Ephesians 5:25), and so he should not continuously demand sex when she is not feeling well or does not want to. At the same time, wives are also supposed to submit unto their husbands (Ephesians 5:22). Therefore, the excuse of “I’m too tired” or “I have a headache” is a method of defrauding the husband of the sex that is rightfully his, because his wife’s body belongs to him and vice-versa.

The only exception to the rule of having sex is if you both agree to fast from sex in order to give yourselves over to prayer. This probably means that you agree to pray in order to seek God for how to make your marriage better. It is a sad statement that Churchianity is quick to go to “Christian counseling” to try to make their marriage better, when they should go to God instead, because the solution comes from God, not from man, since God is the One Who made marriage! Even when they fast from sex in order to give themselves over to prayer, it should only be “with consent for a time” (7:5). Otherwise, Satan may tempt them for their incontinency. In other words, refraining from sex with your spouse for too long may result in you committing fornication.

In summary, believers should get married in order to have sex. Therefore, a marriage partner should not withhold sex from the other person, as it leads to sexual sin. Remember that Jesus said that adultery occurs in the heart (Matthew 5:27-28). Men are known for turning to pornography, while women are more known for committing adultery in their minds via romance novels or fantasies. Either way, it is fornication. You get married to avoid fornication (7:2); therefore, you are not fulfilling God’s purpose of marriage for the believer when you keep your marriage partner from having sex with you whenever he wants to. The sin nature of women is such that they try to usurp authority over their husbands by withholding sex until they get what they want. This is wrong.

7:6 Churchianity will try to discount what was said in 7:1-5 by Paul’s statement, here, that he speaks “this by permission, and not of commandment” (7:6). This also leads people to say that Paul is a male chauvinist, since men usually desire sex more than women do. However, this verse tells us something very important that is usually missed. We have already been adopted by God as sons and have

already been made heirs (Galatians 4:5-7). Therefore, God puts us under grace and treats us like adults (Romans 6:14). This means that we have the liberty to use our own criteria to decide if we should get married and who we should marry.

Paul's goal with the Corinthians is not to "have dominion over [their] faith, but [to be] helpers of [their] joy: for by faith [they] stand" (II Corinthians 1:24). While the Corinthians can use whatever criteria they want to, Paul has more sound doctrine built up in his inner man and seeks to help them avoid some mistakes that they would make otherwise. Therefore, while Paul does not command them to follow his advice, he does desire them to do so, so that Christ lives in them to a greater extent than would be true otherwise (Galatians 2:20).

From an inspiration perspective, Paul needs to make this distinction, because God has declared, through prophets in the body of Christ, that this epistle is not Paul's words, but they "are the commandments of the Lord" (14:37). Therefore, if there is any deviation from this, Paul needs to make us aware. This also shows the respect that the Lord Jesus Christ has for the opinion of his "apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). Since this epistle is the commandments of the Lord, Paul had to get permission from the Lord to include his opinion in here. The Lord allowed him to do so, because Paul's opinion is based upon sound doctrine. Rather than this detracting from the validity of this epistle being the inspired Word of God, it actually teaches us that, in the dispensation of grace, God treats us as adults and lets us make our own decisions. We are not like weaned children (Psalm 131), as Churchianity wants us to be, but we are adults in the body of Christ! Therefore, we need not pray to hear the still, small voice of God to lead us to marry a specific person, but we can use the principles found in Paul's epistles to take responsibility and make decisions on our own.

Americans value their freedom to marry who they want and take what job they want, as opposed to being put into an arranged marriage and an arranged occupation by their parents. So, too, we should value the liberty we have in Christ (Galatians 5:1) to make decisions based upon sound doctrine, rather than being commanded by God what to do, as God did with Israel in the Mosaic law. The reason that Christians do not want to take responsibility is so: 1) They can appear more spiritual to others, 2) They do not have to labor in studying God's Word to figure out how to make those decisions, and 3) They do not have to take personal responsibility when those decisions appear to be bad ones. The latter reason is why Christians say, "The Lord moves in mysterious ways. We cannot understand God. We just trust His way is best, even though it does not seem to be the case right now." (By the way, the Lord moving in mysterious ways is nowhere to be found in scripture. The Lord's ways are only mysterious to us when we have not read and believed God's Word, because God has already "abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Ephesians 1:8).)

7:7 Paul discloses, here, that he is not married. Perhaps he was married before. We do not know.

This verse tells us that some people have the gift of celibacy. In other words, they do not have a naturally occurring sex drive, and so they do not need to get married. You may wonder where these people are, since it seems like all young people today pursue sex. The answer comes from Matthew 19:12, where Jesus says, “For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” If people can be “made eunuchs of men,” it means that society can modify someone’s sex drive. Because our society is so geared around sex, those, who are born eunuchs from their mother’s womb, have their sex drives developed by society so that they need to get married in order to avoid fornication. In other words, today’s society, for the most part, has destroyed God’s gift of celibacy. The purity of people’s bodies has been destroyed to pursue the lusts of the flesh, making it less likely for people to believe the gospel.

7:8-9 The unmarried and widows have the advantage of not having to please their spouse, according to the flesh. Therefore, they can concentrate their energies upon serving the Lord with the spirit (6:17). However, if they have sexual desire to the point that they will focus on the flesh, it is better to get married and have to try to please a spouse, according to the flesh, than to burn with sexual lust. (“Burn” may also refer to what happens to the works of the flesh at the judgment seat of Christ (3:15). Therefore, if your sex drive is so strong that you will pursue the flesh if you do not get married, it is better for you to get married. This way, at least some of your works will not be burned at the judgment seat of Christ.)

We should note that Paul later tells Timothy that the church should not support widows under the age of 60. They should get re-married. Otherwise, they end up not doing anything, except going around as tattlers and busybodies (I Timothy 5:9-14). Women with active sex drives need to keep the house. Otherwise, they satisfy their lusts in different ways, resulting in them turning aside after Satan (I Timothy 5:15). This shows that most people under 60 need to be married. In other words, working for someone else’s flesh helps you spiritually more than working for your own flesh, because you will reach greater depths of debauchery when you are alone, since you do not have another person to provide a check to your sin.

We should note that Paul never uses the word “divorce” in any of his epistles. This is because God says that, once a man and a woman have sex, they are joined together for life (6:16). Therefore, God says there are three categories of people: 1) Never been married, 2) Married, and 3) Widowed. So, what do you do if your spouse divorces you when you want to stay married? Jesus said, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matthew 19:9). I take this to mean that, if your spouse cheats on you and will not stay with you, you can marry someone else. This results in you being in an adulterous relationship, because you are cheating against your spouse. However, the adultery is counted against your spouse for breaking your marriage union. Since you end up committing adultery anyway, it is best to remain unmarried after divorce, unless you cannot contain. My guess is that Paul was

divorced, and so he remained unmarried in order to devote his time to the Lord and not be in an adulterous relationship.

Also, the more sound doctrine you have in your inner man, the greater your ability to “contain” (7:9) is. Your flesh is greedy and is never satisfied (“Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied” (Proverbs 27:20).). This means that, if you pursue your sexual desires, your ability to contain those desires will be less. This is why some people get into all kinds of perverse sexual activity, such as the man in 5:1 who was committing fornication with his father’s wife. Therefore, the unmarried should not say, “I can’t contain, so, I will get married.” Rather, he should apply the salve of God’s Word to his “burning” to see if it can be contained. As Paul says in Galatians 5:16, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

7:10 When it came to the unmarried, Paul spoke “by permission, and not of commandment” (7:6), meaning that he gave his advice not to get married, but it is not a sin to get married. However, when he speaks to the married, the Lord commands, “Let not the wife depart from her husband” (7:10). This is because, when a man and a woman have sex, they become one flesh. “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6). As Romans 7:2 says, “The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.” Therefore, Paul says that the Lord commands that the wife not depart from her husband (7:10).

Note that there is a double standard in the Bible when it comes to marriage. Men are allowed to marry multiple women, while women can only marry one man. In order to be a church leader, a man is only to be married to one woman (I Timothy 3:2,12). However, it is not a sin for a man to marry multiple women, provided the women are not already married to other men (Leviticus 20:10). (Jacob is an example of this (Genesis 29:25-30).) This is because “the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man” (11:7). Also, by taking away a woman’s virginity, it can be difficult, historically speaking, for her to find a husband to take care of her. This is why Exodus 22:16 says, “If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.”

I did not bring this up to say that a man should have multiple wives. In fact, Paul says that a man should not even have one wife (7:28), because married people shall have trouble in the flesh. How much more, then, will they have trouble if a man has multiple wives! Also, we are to obey the law of the land we are in. Since most civilized nations today do not allow polygamy, it is a sin for those living in those nations that prohibit it. Therefore, today, polygamy is not really an option. I only bring this up in order to understand why Paul says, “Let not the wife depart from her husband” (7:10) and does not give a similar command to the husband.

7:11 Marriage is for life. Therefore, a wife should never leave her husband. If she does, she should come back to him. Since a man commits to taking care of a woman for life when he has sex with her, the husband is also commanded not to

put away his wife. Both have committed to be with each other “til death do us part.”

7:12-14 Paul goes back to giving his suggestions, rather than giving commandments from the Lord. Although they do not have to, believers should stay married to unbelieving spouses, because maybe they will be saved as a result. Noah’s family is an excellent example of this. “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). It appears that he was the only believer at the time. God had him spend 100 years building an ark. Why? (God could have saved Noah and the animals by simply snapping His fingers.) God probably had Noah spend 100 years building the ark so that his wife, three sons, and their wives were also spared. In other words, it took 100 years of preaching and building an ark (II Peter 2:5) before those seven people finally believed and were saved (I Peter 3:20).

This should help us understand why believers should not leave their unbelieving spouses. “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife” (7:14) and vice versa because he is more likely to believe the gospel, when he sees Christ living in his wife, than if he leaves his wife. Also, when the believer stays with his unbelieving spouse, his children are now holy, as opposed to being unclean (7:14). This is not to say that children go to heaven or hell based upon the beliefs of their parents. Rather, this demonstrates Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” According to John 14:6, Jesus Christ is “the way” of this verse. Therefore, a believing parent can teach the gospel to his children so that they will believe the gospel and be saved. This is how they are holy. If parents are unbelievers, the children will not be trained in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so they are unclean.

7:15 Although you are one flesh with your spouse, you cannot force him to stay with you. Therefore, if your unbelieving spouse leaves you, you are “not under bondage in such cases” (7:15), which tells me that God does not obligate you to stay with your spouse, since he has made his free-will decision to leave you. Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Therefore, when your unbelieving spouse leaves you, let him go.

Can you then re-marry? If your spouse leaves you and marries another, then he has committed fornication against you. He has now caused you to commit adultery, based upon Matthew 5:32 (“Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”), by getting re-married. You now go back to 7:8-9, where Paul says that you should stay unmarried, but you are free to get married if you choose. If you do, then the sin of re-marriage is counted against your former spouse, because he has caused you to commit adultery, since he left you and married someone else.

7:16 The bottom line is that believers should stay married for life, even if their spouses are unbelievers. In this way, both their spouses and their children may be saved in the future, much like what happened with Noah’s family during the 100

years he was building the ark. If their spouses will not stay with them, they are not obligated to try to force them to stay. Rather, they can let them go. If their ex-spouses have sex with someone else, they are free to marry someone else. If their spouses leave them but stay sexually pure, they are not free to be re-married, because God still sees them as being married to their unbelieving spouses.

7:17-18 When you are saved, God makes your spirit alive in Christ, while your flesh remains vile (Philippians 3:21). Since your flesh has not changed, you should not change your fleshly circumstances when you are saved. Therefore, if you are married, stay married. If you are unmarried, stay unmarried. If you were a Jew, you should stay a Jew. If you were a Gentile, you should stay a Gentile.

This flies in the face of the Judaizers, who were telling believers in the new dispensation, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). This is not unlike churches today that tell you that you must be water baptized or you must join the church, or else you never had true, saving faith. However, Paul says, “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6). This is because the Mosaic laws are “CARNAL ordinances” (Hebrews 9:10), meaning that they only purify the flesh (Hebrews 9:13). By contrast, “the blood of Christ...through the eternal Spirit” purges “your conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14). In other words, Christ fulfilled the law so that you do not have to. This means that, in Jesus Christ, what availeth is “faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6), not circumcision or water baptism. In other words, when we are saved, God changes our spirit, not our flesh. This means that we are to walk in the Spirit, and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Since circumcision or uncircumcision pertain to the flesh, those things do not matter. This is why Paul says to stay in your circumcision or uncircumcision when you are saved. For today, this means that you should not get water baptized or seek to reverse your water baptism when you are saved.

7:19 This verse makes it sound like keeping God’s commandments is not important. However, we need to understand that the Mosaic law was “a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17). Christ blotted out those handwriting of ordinances by nailing them to His cross (Colossians 2:14). Therefore, we do not need to keep those commandments. Think of it this way. God commanded Noah to build an ark (Genesis 6:14). Building an ark is nothing today but keeping the commandment of God that has been blotted out through the cross work of Christ.

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:24-25). The reason is that “the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14). Therefore, I should not try to obey the law today. Instead, I should recognize that I “am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.” I should “live by the faith of the Son of God” (Galatians 2:19-20). In this way, God’s love comes through me, and “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10).

So many in Churchianity have put themselves back under the law after they are saved, because they think they can serve God in the energies of their flesh. By doing so, they make themselves a transgressor (Galatians 2:18). Instead, we should “be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” by reading and believing God’s Word (Ephesians 3:16), allowing the Holy Ghost to teach it to us (2:13). Then, we will automatically obey God’s commandments, because God’s love coming through us will fulfill the law. This is why Paul says that, in Christ, being physically circumcised or uncircumcised does not matter. Why? Because we have already received the circumcision that counts, the spiritual one, which is not made with hands (Colossians 2:11).

7:20 Therefore, abiding in the same calling, simply means keeping your fleshly circumstances the same. What we have already learned, when it comes to marriage, is that we should not let marriage be a distraction from us serving the Lord. If we are married when we are saved, we should stay married. If we are unmarried when we are saved, we should stay unmarried.

The same thing applies to other fleshly circumstances. A big one is a career. People will spend many extra hours trying to get a promotion or getting a degree in order to progress in their careers. We should learn to be content in whatever circumstances we are in (Philippians 4:11). In this way, we can spend our extra time reading God’s Word and being good ambassadors for Christ, rather than trying to get ahead in this world. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35), and “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mark 8:36). Therefore, our goal should be to get by in this world, rather than getting ahead, and use the rest of our time learning sound doctrine from Christ. Instead, most Christians try to get ahead in this world and just get by when it comes to the things of Christ.

7:21 Paul just said not to try to change your circumstances, but now he says to seek freedom if you are a servant. This is not a contradiction, because being free would enable you to serve the Lord to a greater extent. In other words, you should not seek to change your fleshly circumstances in order to gain more in the material world, but you should try to change your circumstances if it would result in you having more time to learn God’s Word, provided such change does not disobey God. In other words, “set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Therefore, someone, who works 60 hours per week, should seek to find a 40 hour per week job, if he can survive on the lower salary, because it gives him 20 more hours per week to dedicate to the Lord potentially. (This is not to say that you cannot serve God in your “secular” job, but that a person could spend more time with the Lord in those extra 20 hours.)

7:22 Most people throughout history are stuck in their current circumstances. These people should not worry about this, because, if you are a servant in this world, you are free to serve the Lord in the spiritual realm. Conversely, if you are free in the material world, you are Christ’s servant in the spiritual world. This is

not to say that you are the opposite spiritually of what you are materially. Rather, this is saying that the Lord is everything for you, spiritually speaking. Therefore, we should not be upset with our fleshly circumstances, regardless of what they are. This is why we should be content in whatsoever state we are in (Philippians 4:11).

7:23 As we learned in 6:20, we are bought with the price of Christ's blood (Acts 20:28). This makes us servants of Christ. Therefore, we should do what He would have us do. This does not mean that we should not work a job and "live on faith" instead. After all, we are told, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). (This shows that "living on faith" is actually denying the faith.) Therefore, we do need to do a job in order to take care of our families. However, we do so as servants of the Lord, not as servants of men with the purpose of trying to get ahead in this world. We obey our masters "as the servants of Christ" (Ephesians 6:6), not men.

7:24 It is wonderful to know that God abides with us in our circumstances. This is why, when we suffer, God is there to comfort us. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

7:25 God does not command for virgins to remain virgins or for them to get married. This is because, when we are saved, we are adopted as God's adult sons and have the Spirit of His Son within us (Galatians 4:6-7). Therefore, we have the ability to make our own decisions.

With adults, you do not tell them what to do, but you can advise them if you have more wisdom than they do. This is the position that Paul is in. Therefore, he gives his advice to virgins. Note that his advice comes "as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." This means that he has faithfully held to mystery doctrine, which means that his experience should be helpful to others.

7:26 "The present distress" (7:26) refers to the adversity we face as Bible believers. It does not refer to a special circumstance that the Corinthians were facing. First, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17). We have to make the choice to "die daily" (15:31) to the flesh and walk in the Spirit instead (Galatians 5:16). Second, Satan is the god of this world. As such, he seeks to blind people from the light of the gospel (II Corinthians 4:3-4) and to separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35). Third, we have the world, that is following Satan's course (Ephesians 2:2), trying to get us to do the same, since the world takes pleasure in those who do evil (Romans 1:32). Fourth, we have Churchianity, who constrains us to try to serve God in the flesh, "lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).

All of this together is tremendous adversity to having Christ live in us. Therefore, Paul advises that a spouse not be added to this list. Even if a woman allows Christ to live in her, she will still sin on a daily basis. God made her mind different from men, which causes “trouble in the flesh” (7:28). Therefore, Paul advises that virgins avoid this trouble by remaining virgins for their entire lives.

7:27 I believe 7:27 illustrates the principle of the grass being greener on the other side. It is easy for someone to see the disadvantages of being single or married and desire to change his status. When he does, he is full of care, and we should be “without carefulness” (7:32). “Be careful for nothing;...let your requests be made known unto God,” allowing “the peace of God [to]...keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Then, think on spiritual things (Philippians 4:6-8).

I Peter 5:7 says, “Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you.” In Christ, you are a “new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). Therefore, we should put to death the lusts of the flesh (Colossians 3:5) and follow spiritual things instead. It is easy for a single guy to let his sexual desire get the best of him, and it is easy for a married guy to let his desire for freedom result in him trying to get out of marriage. In doing these things, he is concentrating on the things of this world, rather than setting his affection on things above (Colossians 3:2). Believers have a unique opportunity to allow Christ to live in us. We should not waste that opportunity by focusing on getting married or becoming single. Rather, focus on doing the will of God. “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (I John 2:17).

7:28 This verse shows that sex is not a sin. God created sex to be between one man and one woman for life. This provides the stability of the family and the stability of each person, since both men and women are likely to follow their sin natures to the extreme when they are alone. In marriage, the spouse can keep your sin nature in check, since the sins of a man are abhorrible to a woman and vice versa. At the same time, because men and women have different minds, a married couple “shall have trouble in the flesh” (7:28). No matter how much you live in Christ, you will sin, and your spouse will object to your sin and vice versa. Therefore, in marriage, you have to find a happy medium between your sin nature and your spouse’s sin nature. Since there is no lasting happiness in sin, you will have trouble in the flesh. (This is a promise of God that you will not see in a list of God’s promises from scripture!)

Primarily, the trouble comes from a woman’s attention to detail and ability to multi-task and a man’s summary view and inability to consider many options at once. Therefore, the woman will get upset when the man does not do a job like she would have done it, and the man will get upset that the woman takes way too long to do something. Now, the man has to use extra brain power to try to do a job like his wife would do it, and the woman has to be frustrated in skipping over details in things she does in order to please her husband. To spare people of this trouble, Paul suggests not to get married if it is possible for believers to avoid fornication.

7:29-31 There are many cases of people becoming believers, while their spouses remain unbelievers. Their spouses then hinder their growth in Christ. The fleshly reaction is to leave the spouse. However, we already learned that it is better for the unbelieving spouse and the children that the believing spouse remain in the marriage (7:14). Why? Because the unbelievers may become believers. But, the believing spouse's growth in Christ is stunted. However, when compared to eternity, it does not really matter. What's 50 years of suffering with an unbelieving spouse compared with spending eternity in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ? Besides, any suffering we do for godly living "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17), and so our reward is not hindered by an unbelieving spouse. If anything, it is actually enhanced. Also, the body of Christ does not take our positions in heavenly places until halfway through the tribulation period (Revelation 12:6-9), which is AT LEAST four years after the rapture takes place, if not many more years than that (depending on how large the gap is between the 69th and 70th weeks in Daniel 9:24-27). The 12 disciples had 3 or 3 ½ years to spend with Jesus, and Paul spent three years with Jesus (Galatians 1:18). Therefore, we should not complain about an unbelieving spouse, since we will have 4+ years after the rapture to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn sound doctrine for heavenly places. What a tremendous opportunity!

Therefore, a believer should not feel stuck in a marriage or feel stuck being single. Also, remember that God feeds birds, and you are much more important to God than birds are (Matthew 6:26). This means that your fleshly circumstance of singleness or being in a marriage does not really matter in the grand scheme of things. Since life on earth is short compared to eternity, Paul says "it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none" (7:29). If you are weeping over your situation or rejoicing, it does not matter, because, compared to eternity, it is like you never did either (7:30).

This shows how unimportant the things of this world are. Everything about this world will pass away when Jesus comes back. When it does, kings (Revelation 18:9-10), merchants (Revelation 18:11-16), and seamen (Revelation 18:17-19) will mourn over losing everything. However, for those, who have come out of that system and have set their affection on heavenly things, they will rejoice (Revelation 18:4,20). Therefore, we should not mourn over not being rich, popular, or having an ideal life, because we will have all those things in heavenly places. Those things will last forever in heaven, while those things on the earth will be destroyed when the Lord Jesus Christ establishes God's kingdom here.

Note also that 7:31 says that "they that use this world" are actually "abusing it." "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1), and the earth was made to do the same. This is why Jesus prayed to the Father, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). However, as long as Satan is "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4), the earth is being abused by sin. Romans 8:22 says "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." It is groaning because it was made to glorify God, but it is currently being abused by Satan. Why not allow Christ to live in us so that we do not abuse the world along with Satan and his crowd?

7:32-33 The reason that Paul recommends that virgins remain single is because he “would have you without carefulness” (7:32). We are to “be careful for nothing,” make our requests made known to God, and allow the peace of God to keep our hearts and minds as we think on spiritual things (Philippians 4:6-8). If we are trying to get married, we are focusing on the cares of this world, which will pass away soon. Therefore, why not focus on heavenly things, because those last forever. “For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:18).

These verses show why Paul recommends that believers not get married if possible. No matter how spiritually minded a person may be, he will still try to take care of and nourish his own flesh (Ephesians 5:29). (Even monks satisfy their flesh’s desire to be in control by neglecting their flesh (Colossians 2:23).) Also, men and women take care of their flesh in different ways because God gave them different minds. This means that, if a person is married, he will have to concentrate more on fleshly things, because he has to take care of his own flesh and his spouse’s flesh. Therefore, Paul says that it is best to remain single so that the time spent on taking care of your spouse’s flesh can be spent reading and believing God’s Word and allowing Christ to live in you. This makes the person “without carefulness” (7:32), regarding the things of this world.

7:34 Paul now addresses women to show that there is a difference in how a virgin woman serves the Lord versus how a wife serves the Lord. A virgin woman’s body is holy, because it has not been defiled by a man. While it is not a sin for a woman to have sex with a man and be married to him for her whole life, she is now “bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth” (Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:39). 11:3 says that “the head of the woman is the man.” Therefore, when a woman gets married, her body now belongs to her husband. This means that she is only one spirit with the Lord, not one body (6:17), and that she must care for the things of the world so that she can please her husband. Therefore, just like with men, it is better for women, if possible, for them to remain virgins their whole lives.

This is especially true for women because their head becomes their husband when they are married. Romans 12:1 tells us to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God. A woman cannot do this, because she has to present her body to her husband. For example, I Peter 3:1-5 says that wives are to “be in subjection to [their] own husbands.” Even if their husbands do not believe the gospel, they are not even allowed to speak the words of the gospel to them. Therefore, the married woman serves the Lord with “the hidden man of the heart,” not with her body. By contrast, believing men can still present their bodies as living sacrifices unto God, even if their wives are unbelievers, because “the head of every man is Christ” (11:3). (This world does not like to hear this, because they want to elevate women, because Satan has the world following the queen of heaven, which is his religious system (Revelation 17:1-5).)

7:35 This verse is a good summary of how to approach the question of if you should get married or not. What situation, single or married, will enable you to

serve the Lord without as much of a distraction? Whatever the answer is, that is what you should do. You do not need to pray for God to lead you to the one person He would have you marry, or ask Him to speak to your heart as to what you should do. Rather, use the mind of Christ, that you have as an adult son of God, to make your own decision. “Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (16:23).

7:36-38 These three verses address the situation of what a father should do with his virgin daughter. Remember that “the head of the woman is the man” (11:3). The reason is because “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Timothy 2:14). This tells us that women are more likely to make decisions based upon their emotions. Therefore, the father of a woman is in control of the decision for her to get married or not. If a father has the financial means to take care of his daughter for life and he does not think it is cruel to keep her as a virgin, then he “doeth well” (7:37) to keep her as a virgin for life.

Again, Paul has already said that it is better to be single than to be married (7:8), unless you burn with sexual lust (7:9). Therefore, it is best that a woman remains a virgin her whole life (7:38). This is more true for women than men for two reasons: 1) In general, the sexual drive of a woman is not as strong as the man’s sexual drive, and so she is less likely to burn, and 2) A woman has much more to take care of in the flesh if she gets married than a man does, since a woman is responsible for giving birth, feeding the baby, and taking care of the children until they become adults. Therefore, a woman would have much more time to devote to the Lord if she does not get married and her father supports her financially.

Having said this, I realize that we are in different times today. Civilized societies do not allow fathers to keep their daughters in their houses and make them remain virgins their whole lives. Also, women can work outside of the house and make a living for themselves, not needing anyone to take care of them financially. Moreover, it is frowned upon for girls under 18 to get married, even though 7:36 says that girls can get married as soon as they have their first periods (“if she pass the flower of her age”). Given these cultural differences today, it is best for a father to train up his child in Biblical principles, so that she is more likely to use the mind of Christ in making the decision to marry or not, rather than fleshly considerations, since civilized societies have taken the decision out of the father’s hands.

I think the reason that 7:38 says that the man, who gives his daughter in marriage, doeth well, is because he allows her to do what she wants, which is to marry a man. This falls under the category of “need so require” (7:36). However, if he has “no necessity” (7:37), he does better to keep her a virgin her entire life, which again demonstrates the principle that men’s minds are better equipped to make rational decisions than women are. This is not a slam against women, but simply a recognition of the different roles God gave men and women. Women are more emotional so that they can give birth and raise up children (Humans would have ceased to exist if women had the same mind as men do. You only need to look at society today, which tries to get women to think more like men, to see the

result has been a decrease in the number of children people have and the lessened importance of family.), and men's minds are more rational in order to make bigger decisions that affect the whole family. Men are God's overall managers, while women are God's micro-managers.

7:39-40 This verse is almost an exact repeat of Romans 7:2. A wife must stay married to her husband for life. (The same is true for a man.) This is why Paul says that it is better for a woman not to ever get married. If she marries, she may make a bad choice and be stuck with a mean, unbelieving husband for life. Or, she may make a very good choice, only to have her husband later become an atheist, sleep with other women, or abuse her. Again, she is stuck with him for life. Therefore, it is better for her never to get married.

One phrase is added to 7:39 that is not found in Romans 7:2. That phrase is "only in the Lord." This is the only qualification given for how you are to choose your spouse. God does not care how tall he is, what color his hair and eyes are, if he is athletic, or if he has a good job. The ONLY thing that matters to God is if the man is saved or not. Therefore, this should also be the number one qualification that a woman looks for in a husband. Why? Because we are not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14). This "unequally yoked" verse is talking about not having fellowship with people who are unbelievers, meaning that you should cut off fellowship from people who do not believe the Bible. How much more, then, should you not marry an unbeliever, because you will be yoked with him for life!

There are probably many young women who think Paul is crazy for his statement in 7:40 that "she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment," because they do not see how they can be happier alone than with a man. However, a believing woman is not alone. She has "the mind of Christ" (2:16), and she has the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:5). She is "not forsaken" by God (II Corinthians 4:9), and "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32). Therefore, if a woman (or a man, for that matter) feels alone and thinks she needs a husband, what she really needs is to read and believe God's Word and trust that, if a husband is what she really needs, God will give her the desire of her heart (Proverbs 3:5-6). However, if Christ is all she needs, then she should trust God and be content in her singleness.

Therefore, it appears that Paul is not crazy after all, but he is using the mind of Christ (2:16), rather than "his fleshly mind" (Colossians 2:18). This is why he says "and I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (7:40). In other words, he thinks that the Spirit of God agrees with him. You may say, "Doesn't he know if what he is saying is of the Spirit of God or not? After all, he is writing God's Word." Again, this goes back to what we talked about in 7:6. Because God says that we are adults sons of God, he leaves it up to us to make these grown-up decisions ourselves. Therefore, Paul is not in a position to command women not to get married. Rather, he is seeking to be a helper of their joy (II Corinthians 1:24). This

is why he gives his opinion and believes that this is what God would want women to do, but he does not give a definitive answer, just like you would not give your adult daughter a definitive answer as to what she should do in a situation, because she is mature enough to make her own decision.

I Corinthians 8 – Let Charity Be Your Guide

8 Paul now addresses eating meat sacrificed to idols. Eating idol meat is not the issue. The issue is making sure that the weaker brother does not stumble. If a weaker brother thinks that eating meat sacrificed to idols is a sin, then he should not eat that meat. If he does eat the meat, the weaker brother may think it is okay to eat it, and then he sins against his own conscience by eating it (vs. 7-11). Or, he may not eat it but will think less of you, and you will not have the opportunity to share sound doctrine with him as you would have had otherwise. Either scenario is not good. Therefore, when we are making the decision on what to do, it should not be based upon if it is a sin or not. Rather, we should make the decision that shares God's love to the greatest possible extent (v. 13).

8:1-3 “We all have knowledge” (8:1) does not mean that everyone knows that eating meat sacrificed to idols is okay, because Paul says, in 8:7, that this is not the case.

Paul must be saying that everyone knows some things. Knowledge is not the issue. The issue is charity. Knowledge, by itself, puffs you up (8:1), because it makes you feel superior to others, due to your knowledge. The content of the knowledge is not the issue. Rather, it is the attitude behind the knowledge that is important. If you think you know something (8:2), you really know nothing, meaning your knowledge is useless to God because you are puffed up with pride instead of having charity. What you ought to have is charity.

If you love God, people know this (8:3). People seeking the truth will then listen to what you say. Think of it this way. Let's say that I know that the blood of Christ saves someone. If I am prideful in that knowledge, then I will be bragging to others about how I know a person can be saved. Others will then not listen to what I have to say, because I am full of myself. On the other hand, if I love God, God will show me that the blood of Christ saves someone. Then, when people see the love of God coming through me, they will ask me how I got that way, and I can tell them that the blood of Christ saved me. They are then more likely to trust in Jesus' death as atonement for their sin than if I just bragged about my knowledge. Therefore, “charity edifieth” (8:1), because only charity (God's love) gets people to follow God, not pure knowledge. This means that, if I think I know something, I really do not know anything (8:2), because I do not know the love of God, and only the love of God edifieth.

The summary, of what Paul is saying in 8:1-3, is that everyone has an opinion on food sacrificed to idols. It does not matter who is right and who is wrong. All that matters is that we are good ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20) by sharing God's love with others so that they may be saved and come unto the

knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). If you only care about your knowledge, then you know nothing about how spiritual things operate.

A good example of this is the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew the Bible better than anyone else on earth, yet people almost had to drag that information out of Him. Why? Because He was not about showing everyone how much He knew. He knew that the only way people are saved is by accepting God's love, since God commended His love toward us through Christ's death (Romans 5:8). Therefore, He quietly went about living by every word from God so that others would know that He loved God (8:3). Those, who were seeking God's love to save them, would then come to Him for the answer. If they did not come to Him for the answer, there was no point in sharing it, because they would not believe it. This demonstrates that, what draws us to God, is His love, not knowledge. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (I John 4:12). Others, seeking God's love, will be drawn to it, and we can share the gospel with them, whereby they are saved. However, if we just tell everyone what we know, it shows we are puffed up, and they are not edified by charity.

This is why Jesus never went on a church building program. In fact, He did the opposite. When He fed 5,000 men (John 6:10) and saw that they believed false doctrine about Him, He ran away from them so He could be alone (John 6:14-15). When they followed Him, He said, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:26-27). In other words, Jesus chastised the crowd for following Him for the wrong reasons. He then spoke to them of spiritual things (John 6:28-65), and all forsook Him except the 12 disciples (John 6:66-69). Even then, Jesus said that one of the twelve was a devil (John 6:70-71). Therefore, the love of God constrained Jesus, not to show His knowledge, but to share God's love only with those who were seeking to receive it.

8:4-6 Paul had to make it clear that charity is what is important, not knowledge, because the Corinthians are carnal (3:3). He simply could have answered their question about meat sacrificed to idols, but they would just be puffed up in that knowledge. Therefore, he now begins answering that question after sharing that charity is the most important thing. Ephesians 3:17 says that we need to be "rooted and grounded in love." The "love of Christ" is what "passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19). In other words, the foundation of the love of Christ needed to be established in the Corinthians' hearts, before he could share the knowledge of meat sacrificed to idols. Otherwise, they would be prideful in their knowledge. Now that the Corinthians understand that charity is the most important thing, he will answer their question about meat sacrificed to idols, putting charity first in his answer.

"An idol is nothing in the world" (8:4), meaning that there is no intrinsic value in the idol. Also, God is the only God in the world ("The Lord He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else" (Deuteronomy 4:39)). This

means that God really has no competition. Granted, someone can make an idol and/or place a god before God (8:5). Either of these things would be sin (Deuteronomy 5:7-9). However, if the Corinthians have no involvement with the idol, except that they buy meat that has been sacrificed to an idol, there is no sin in them eating that meat. By believing the gospel, the Corinthians have said that “there is but one God” (8:6). Therefore, to them, whether or not meat has been sacrificed to idols is irrelevant.

We should note that 8:6 is not saying that the Godhead does not include the Holy Ghost. Paul’s goal, here, is not to make a statement on the Godhead. Rather, he is talking about the God we worship. We worship God the Father because “of Whom are all things” (8:6), meaning that all things exist, due to the Father’s wisdom (Proverbs 8:22-23). We also worship the Lord Jesus Christ because “by Whom are all things,” meaning that all things were created by the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16). Therefore, we are a new creature in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17), which means “we [are] by Him” (8:6). Because our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (in His glory plan (Ephesians 1:17), “we [are] in [God the Father]” (8:6). The Holy Ghost is the member of the Godhead who accomplishes these things by His power (2:13; 12:13). This is why He is not mentioned here.

8:7 The problem with meat sacrificed to idols is not the idol itself, since the idol is nothing (8:4). The problem is that some people are superstitious (Acts 17:22), thinking that it is a sin to eat meat sacrificed to idols. If that person eats meat sacrificed to idols, he has sinned against his own conscience, because “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). This shows that he has a weak conscience (8:7), because he does not have sound doctrine in his inner man regarding idols. The result is that his “conscience...is defiled” (8:7), meaning that he feels like he cannot trust his own conscience. This may cause him to go against other things in his conscience. For example, he may now think that committing fornication with his father’s wife is okay (5:1).

As Christians, we should not flaunt our knowledge in front of others. Doing so can bring them harm, because we may be teaching them it is okay to disobey their own consciences. This is why Paul said that, “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth” (8:1). A Christian, who understands that an idol is nothing, would not sin by eating the meat sacrificed to idols, while a Christian, who does not understand this, would be sinning by eating this meat. (Remember that sin is doing something that is not in faith (Romans 14:23).)

Do not Interfere with the Process

It is important to understand that, when you believe the gospel, Jesus Christ has purchased you with His Own blood (Acts 20:28). This means that your body and your spirit now belong to God (6:20). Therefore, you are to present your body as a living sacrifice unto God (Romans 12:1). God did not save you to put you on a cloud to play a harp for all eternity. He saved you to bring glory to Himself by sharing God’s love with others for all eternity. Therefore, when you are saved,

Christ's sanctification process in you begins. Christ has just started working on you when He saves your soul. He is NOT finished working on you!

Ephesians 5:26 says that the reason Christ gave Himself for the church was so "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Philippians 1:6 says, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

When you are saved, your conscience is purged "from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14). Christ then uses the Word to strengthen you with sound doctrine in the inner man. As you apply the sound doctrine in your life, you suffer for the godly living (II Timothy 3:12). The trials you go through "worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5). This is how Christ gets you from knowledge to the love of God.

Do you want to "be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19)? First, you have "to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). In other words, you need basic, mystery doctrine inside you. This results in Christ dwelling "in your hearts by faith," and then trials for godly living result in you "being rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17). You can then get more advanced mystery doctrine in your inner man (Ephesians 3:18). The love of Christ will then pass knowledge so that you are "filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19).

The problem is that, if you are the stronger brother and a weaker brother sees you eating meat sacrificed to idols, he may eat the meat because you ate it. Now, instead of Christ being his master, you are his master, which is why Paul says that his conscience is now defiled (8:7). Whether or not you eat meat sacrificed to idols is not the issue. The issue is that it is easy for you to become the spiritual authority to the weaker brother, rather than Christ being that authority. He then follows you, rather than God's Word rightly divided. This is the defiled conscience.

This is the primary reason why people in Churchianity follow church leaders, doctrinal statements, commentaries, and other things that are contrary to God's Word rightly divided. They read the Bible and think they know what it says. Then, someone "more mature" in the faith tells them it means something different. They then trust the "strong" brother over their Bibles. They will now follow Churchianity's rules, rather than allowing Christ to teach them God's Word by giving them knowledge, which works tribulations, which works patience, which works experience, which works hope, which works the love of God in them (Romans 5:3-5). They are "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness" (Ephesians 4:14). The result is they are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7), because they are learning man's traditions, rather than having Christ give them knowledge and God's love through "the washing of water by the Word" (Ephesians 5:26).

This is why Paul says, “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (8:13). Paul does not want to interfere with the process that Christ started of getting knowledge and charity built up in the inner man of the weaker brother by Paul becoming “god” to the weaker brother. God forbid!

8:8 It is not a sin to eat meat sacrificed to idols, but it also does not help our spiritual condition if we do eat meat sacrificed to idols.

8:9 On the other hand, the Christian, with a weak conscience, sins when he eats meat sacrificed to idols, if he thinks it is a sin. This shows that eating meat sacrificed to idols cannot do us any good, but it can actually “become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.”

8:10 Now, we do want a fellow Christian’s conscience to be strengthened, meaning that we want him to read and believe sound doctrine so that he understands that eating meat sacrificed to idols is not a sin. However, we do not want his “weak” conscience to “be emboldened” to do things against his own conscience, because he sees us doing those things. In other words, if we are the strong Christians, and he is the weak one, he is likely to change his behavior to match ours. If he does this, he is eating meat for the wrong reason, because he is going against his own conscience. This means that he is not doing it by faith in God’s Word, which makes it a sin. Therefore, we should refrain from eating meat sacrificed to idols, if a fellow Christian believes it is a sin.

When we do not refrain from eating the meat, instead of teaching him that it is okay to eat meat sacrificed to idols, we teach him that it is okay to go against his own conscience. When we do that, we are not showing charity to our brother. This is the point of I Corinthians 8. When we learn this, we can apply this concept to all the “rules” out there. For example, if a brother thinks it is not okay to drink alcohol, we should never drink it in his presence. This applies to anything that we have the liberty in Christ to do. Remember, “all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (6:12). We should “use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). Yes, I have the right to eat meat sacrificed to idols, but showing charity to my brother is far more important than exercising my rights! “But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of” (Romans 14:15-16).

8:11 This verse is not saying that a weak brother loses his salvation when he goes against his own conscience by eating meat sacrificed to idols. That cannot be the case, because our salvation is based upon Christ’s death for us, not our works, whether good or bad. “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself” (II Timothy 2:13). Therefore, if the weak brother sins against his own conscience, that sin is covered by the blood of Christ, and Christ remains faithful to give him eternal life in heavenly places.

Therefore, when this verse says that “through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish” (8:11), it must mean that his reward in heavenly places perishes. But, you may say, it says that Christ died for this weak brother. Doesn’t this mean that Christ’s death is of no benefit to him? In terms of his walk with Christ, that is what this means; however, it does not mean he loses his salvation, because he has already been justified by Christ’s blood (Romans 5:9). He cannot be un-justified!

Christ did not die only to save you from hell, but He also died for you to have a high position in heavenly places with Him. Galatians 2:21 says that, if we frustrate the grace of God, “then Christ is dead in vain.” Obviously, Christ’s death is not meaningless, but it is saying that, if I stop operating under grace, the power of Christ’s death to overcome my flesh is not realized in my life. Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ gave Himself for the church “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” Christ died so that we could be sanctified by God’s Word. When we do not “let the word of Christ dwell in [us] richly in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16), we “perish” from our positions in heavenly places, although we still go to heaven. Our works are burned at the judgment seat of Christ, and we suffer the loss of a reward in heavenly places (3:15).

8:12-13 Since everyone of us is a member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5), we hurt a fellow member when we cause him to go against his weak conscience. Now, he will not be edified with sound doctrine because, even if he learns sound doctrine, he will not live by it, because he does not see others living by it. I have become his master, rather than Christ being his master. This is how I “sin against Christ” (8:12). This is definitely NOT a good position for me to be in! I am not to have dominion over his faith. Rather, I should be a helper of his joy (II Corinthians 1:24). In order to keep from usurping Christ’s authority over the weaker brethren, Paul says that he will not exercise his liberty in Christ in a way that will make his brother offend against his weak conscience. As Paul said in Romans 14:15, “Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” “To his own master he standeth or falleth....God is able to make him stand” (Romans 14:4). Therefore, I should not cause him to fall.

I Corinthians 9 – Free to Serve

9 Most Christians have the legalistic attitude of “what things am I allowed to do?” Can I go to the movies, can I drink alcohol, etc.? The question that we should ask isn’t “What things am I allowed to do?”, but it is “What things can I do to bring God more glory?” Paul says that he has the power to eat and drink, get married, and not work (vs. 4-6). After all, “a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto” Paul (v. 17), and so he should be financially supported by the Corinthians, when he is working for them. Even the ox gets to eat the corn that he treads upon (v. 9). Therefore, he should reap financial support from the Corinthians for the spiritual work that he does for them (v. 11). Other preachers are taking money from the Corinthians (v. 12). Certainly, Paul has the right to do the same, since he has begotten them through the gospel (4:15).

However, it's not about what he is allowed to do; it is about what brings more benefit to God's kingdom. Therefore, Paul has not eaten food sacrificed to idols, drunken alcohol, gotten married, or taken money from the Corinthians for serving them (v. 15). Paul does not participate in carnal things so that his spiritual reward is greater by having more people saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. Paul has become "all things to all men, that [he] might by all means save some" (vs. 18-22). Paul then encourages the Corinthians to do the same thing. They should keep their bodies from following pleasures of the flesh and bring those bodies into subjection to Christ (v. 27), so that more people are saved (vs. 24-27).

9:1-3 It is astounding to think that Paul has to defend himself, given what he just shared in chapter 8, that he will gladly forego his freedom to keep from offending weaker brethren (8:13). Apparently, the "ten thousand instructors in Christ" (4:15) in Corinth are examining him (9:3), saying that he is not an apostle and that the Corinthians must obey the law in order to be "good" Christians (9:1-2).

An apostle is one sent by the Lord Jesus Christ. While Paul was not one of the twelve apostles, who Jesus selected in His earthly ministry, he is "THE apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13), who Jesus specifically selected to dispense the mystery gospel (9:17) to the whole world (Acts 9:15).

We should not limit apostles to the twelve, as Churchianity does. The reason is because, AFTER Jesus "ascended up on high" (Ephesians 4:8), He gave "some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11) "TILL" God's word was completed (Ephesians 4:13). Because Churchianity focuses on Jesus' red letters, they miss the new dispensation of grace committed to Paul, and so they miss Paul's distinctive ministry and apostleship. Apparently, Corinth's 10,000 instructors in Christ did the same thing. (Note that because apostles are given to the church "TILL" God's Word is completed, there are NO apostles today. Any "pastors and teachers" today should only be in those positions because they desired to be and they met the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7, not because God supernaturally put them in those positions.)

Paul was commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to be the apostle of the Gentiles. Paul saw the Lord when Jesus Christ spent three years with him giving him sound doctrine for the mystery dispensation (Galatians 1:11-12,17-18), and later on when Paul was caught up into the third heaven (II Corinthians 12:1-4). This is why it is astounding that he has to defend his apostleship to the Corinthians, when, those accusing him of not being an apostle, did not have such lofty qualifications.

Another reason Paul should not have to defend his apostleship to the Corinthians is because he has begotten them through the gospel (4:15). Due to their carnality (3:3), Paul had come to them with the testimony of God, demonstrating the Spirit and God's power (2:1-4). Unfortunately, others came "with enticing words of man's wisdom" (2:4), which was leading them away from believing Paul. In other words, instead of using the mind of Christ (2:16) to evaluate Paul, they were using their

fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18), which resulted in them doubting Paul's apostleship.

It is no different today. Churchianity uses their fleshly mind to subordinate Paul's epistles to the red letters of Jesus, even though Paul's epistles are the commandments of the Lord to us today in the dispensation of grace (14:37), while Jesus' red letters were for Israel's program to confirm the promises God made to them (Romans 15:8). Thus, Churchianity uses man's wisdom and gets things backwards, because they are deceived by Satan's lie program, being taken captive by him to do his will (II Timothy 2:24-26).

9:4-6 Paul lives a meager existence. He refrains from eating and drinking things that would offend others, he is not married, and he works as a tentmaker to support himself (Acts 18:2-3). Earlier, Paul said, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient" (6:12). Therefore, Paul has the power to eat whatever he wants, get married, and be supported by the church. However, in grace, the issue is not what ability you have in the flesh to do. That is legalism. Legalism says, "Thou shalt not," which causes people to look for loopholes and opportunities to fulfill the lusts of the flesh while claiming that they are not doing so. This is "a form of godliness" (II Timothy 3:5).

Grace living says, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2). Then, it goes one step further and says, "How can I use my liberty in Christ to serve others by love (Galatians 5:13) so that they may be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth?" (I Timothy 2:4). Therefore, Paul does not say, "You must support me, Corinthians," or "I will get married and enjoy the finer things of life." Rather, Paul says, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20), and "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8).

This shows that grace living involves an attitude adjustment. It means foregoing the lusts of the flesh in order to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). However, because the Corinthians are carnal, they think that Christianity is about having a form of godliness while doing whatever they want in the flesh. Thus, they see Paul as a sucker or less godly than their 10,000 instructors in Christ.

9:7-11 Paul now defends the ability of Bible teachers to be supported by those they teach. College professors are paid a lot because they have spent years studying to get to the point where they are able to teach advanced material to their students. How much more, then, should a Bible teacher be supported by his students, because the Bible teacher is giving knowledge that is infinitely better than what college professors teach, because God's Word lasts for ever (Matthew 24:35).

Paul says that he is in a war, which II Corinthians 10:3-5 shows to be the case. ("We do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of

God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”) Those, fighting in a war, do not get rich, but they should at least be taken care of by those they are fighting for. Similarly, Bible teachers should be taken care of by their students. This is what Paul says in 9:7.

In 9:8-10, Paul backs this up by quoting Deuteronomy 25:4, which says, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.” Paul then says that God says this, not for oxen’s sakes, but for our sakes, so that we may have hope when we teach God’s Word. However, it is important that God says this about oxen, because it shows our standing, spiritually speaking. It is Christ who lives in us (Galatians 2:20), and we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to the Lord (Romans 12:1). This should eliminate the pride of the Bible teacher, knowing that he is merely a servant of the Lord. He does not gain Bible knowledge because he is smart, but rather he gains the knowledge because the Holy Ghost has taught it to him (2:9-16). “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise...that no flesh should glory in His presence” (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

This tells us that, while Bible teachers should be supported by their students, they should not get rich off of them. You do not shower riches upon oxen because they are beasts of burden. Similarly, riches should not be showered upon Bible teachers, so as to keep them humble. Knowledge is important, but it must also be accompanied by charity, or else the knowledge is worthless (8:1; 13:2-3). Furthermore, if we do shower riches upon Bible teachers, the result is that they will err from the truth (I Timothy 6:9-11), because they will get more money by scratching the itching ears of those following their own lusts (II Timothy 4:3-4). Therefore, Bible teachers should only be supported just like you would support oxen. In other words, you support them in what is necessary for them to survive and nothing more.

9:12 Although Paul deserves to be supported by the Corinthians, he supports himself by making tents. Why? “Lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ” (9:12). Grace living is not about getting all that you can, but it is about presenting your body as a living sacrifice unto God so that Christ lives through you. Paul recognizes that the Corinthians are carnal (3:3). This means that, if they support him, they will probably tell people that Paul is an apostle for the money. After all, they are already questioning his apostleship (9:1-3). Therefore, Paul foregoes being supported by the Corinthians, even though he has every right to expect their support, so that more people are saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. By contrast, the 10,000 instructors in Christ there (4:15) seem to be taking money from the Corinthians, as 9:12 indicates.

Similarly today, Churchianity is carnal, and nearly every pastor takes money. Therefore, there are many people, who will not believe the gospel or even go to a church, because they think that the leaders are only in it for the money (a lot of them are). This is why pastors should not be supported by their congregations. Sure, they have every right to expect support from them. However, the issue is not what they deserve. Rather, in grace, the issue is how to be the most effective

ambassador for Christ that one can possibly be. Therefore, pastors should forego what God says they should receive materially so that there is greater profit to the church spiritually. At the same time, they should still receive money from those who desire to give to them, so that these spiritually mature believers still have the opportunity to obey God in this matter.

9:13-14 The tithe was established by God in order to support the Levites in Israel, because their full-time jobs were to take care of the things of the temple (Numbers 18:23-24). Therefore, Israel was robbing God if they did not give a tithe (Malachi 3:8-9), just like we rob the government today if we do not pay our taxes (Mark 12:17). Since pastors today should not be associated with the government, we are to give cheerfully, as we purpose in our heart (II Corinthians 9:7), not out of a requirement.

Note also that the tithe was NOT money, but it was food that was brought to the storehouse so that Levites could take food from it to feed their families (Malachi 3:10). If you want to help someone in a financial bind, it is much better to help them with food or clothing, rather than with money. This way, you know your support is going for the right thing, instead of them buying alcohol or drugs with it. Similarly, it is best to support a pastor with material goods, rather than with money, so that you make sure they are not using your support to buy a fancy house, car, or suit of clothes.

Although we are in the dispensation of grace, the Lord has still “ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (9:14). In this way, Christians have the opportunity to reward servants of the Lord, but it is not a requirement so that Christians give out of grace motivation.

9:15 Nevertheless, Paul has not received support from the Corinthians because he does not want any man to make his glorying void. Paul desired only to glory “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14). If Paul received support from the Corinthians, people would be focusing on the support he received, rather than on the souls saved and built up in sound doctrine. He would then be unable to glory in the cross of Christ. It would then be better if he died and went to heaven (9:15). Therefore, Paul did not take money from the Corinthians.

9:16-17 “A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me” (9:17). Paul makes it clear that the Lord Jesus Christ gave him a new gospel to preach to others that was not taught by the apostles nor Jesus Himself. In fact, in Galatians 1:11-12, Paul says, “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” This is why Paul calls the gospel that he preached “my gospel” (Romans 2:16 & 16:25; II Timothy 2:8). “My gospel” is found nowhere else in scripture, because Jesus appointed 12 apostles in Israel’s program, but He only appointed Paul as “THE apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13). This is because Paul preached “Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25), while Peter preached things “which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets

since the world began” (Acts 3:21). A secret is different from what is spoken. Somehow, Churchianity misses this concept.

Furthermore, Romans 15:16 says that Paul is “THE minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” The Lord Jesus Christ had Paul preach to all unbelievers, as Acts 9:15 says. This is why “Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (9:16). This is not to say that Paul would lose his salvation, but he would lose his reward if he did not preach the gospel (9:17).

Paul also had to preach the gospel “willingly” (9:17). Motivation is everything when it comes to the judgment seat of Christ. If you do things to please men, you have your reward. You are only rewarded by Christ when you allow Christ to live in you (Matthew 6:2-6). Therefore, if Paul preaches the gospel to the whole world, but he does it for money, he will not be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ. When you start receiving money, it is easy to do things for the money and to become prideful. To avoid this possibility, Paul does not take any support from the Corinthians.

I believe Paul takes his cue from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord had money coming into His ministry, yet He deliberately made Judas Iscariot His treasurer (John 12:4-6; 13:29), even though He knew that Judas was stealing the money (John 6:70-71). This way, money did not pile up on Him, and so He was not tempted to become greedy and thereby sin.

9:18 Paul had an awesome responsibility, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles and the Lord Jesus Christ had committed the new, mystery gospel specifically to him to preach to the whole world. Having such “power in the gospel” (9:18) would make it very easy to get prideful in the flesh. In Acts 8:18-19, we are told of a man named Simon, who offered money in an attempt to receive the power to give the Holy Ghost to anyone he laid his hands on, as he figured he would make a lot of money with that power.

Paul could have made a lot of money with his power in the gospel. Of course, the Lord Jesus Christ would not have given him this power if he would have done this. Still, the temptation was there. Therefore, Paul sought to preach “the gospel of Christ without charge” (9:18), so that he would receive a heavenly reward, rather than a monetary one.

Most church leaders today have their affection set on the things on the earth, rather than on heaven (Colossians 3:2), such that it is nearly unheard of for a pastor not to take any money from his congregation. Yet, here is Paul. If anyone deserved to receive support from a church, it was Paul. However, he would not take money from the Corinthians, because he would rather suffer on this earth so that more people may be saved.

9:19-22 Because Paul lives in grace, he is “free from all men” (9:19). Paul then uses his freedom in Christ to make himself “servant unto all, that [he] might gain the more” (9:19). In other words, Paul is not concerned with monetary gain or power in this world. Rather, he makes the gospel as appealing as possible to his audience so that they may be saved.

“Unto the Jews I became as a Jew” (9:20). Physically speaking, Paul is a Jew (Philippians 3:5). However, in the body of Christ, “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Galatians 3:28), which means that Paul no longer identifies as a Jew. But, he knows that many Jews will not listen to him if he does not appear to be Jewish. Therefore, he “became AS a Jew.” Paul put himself under a Nazarite vow (Acts 18:18) and took four Jews into the Jerusalem temple, who had also taken a Nazarite vow (Acts 21:23-24), just so he could preach the gospel to the Jews. (Paul also had Timothy circumcised so that Timothy would have an audience with the Jews (Acts 16:1-3).) Doing all the things required of a Nazarite or being circumcised seems like an extreme measure to take just to speak to some Jews, but this shows how serious Paul was about getting people saved. After all, if just one soul is saved as a result of what they did, all suffering on this earth is well worth it, because it works for them “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17).

“Them that are under the law” (9:20) would be the Gentiles, who are under the law of the conscience until they are saved (Romans 2:14-15). Therefore, if the Gentiles thought that a good person was someone who did not smoke or drink, for example, then Paul did not smoke or drink. “The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14). This means that “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10), and “there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12). Therefore, all unsaved people under the law cannot perform the law.

Note carefully that, if you put yourself under the law, i.e., you try to obey the law in your flesh, you make yourself a transgressor (Galatians 2:18). However, a Christian can obey the law, when he lives by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). Paul did not put himself under the law, but he was “AS under the law” (9:20). Therefore, he could allow Christ to obey the provisions of the law through his flesh. This would be a witness to the Gentiles that only in Christ can one obey the law. Paul did this, then, so that they might be saved.

Finally, Paul made himself to be “without law” to those who were “without law” (9:21). Paul adds the parenthetical phrase that all people are under the “law to God,” but saved people are not judged by that law because they are “under the law to Christ” (9:21). In other words, they have become dead to the law (Galatians 2:19) due to Christ being the substitutionary curse for them (Galatians 3:13). As a result, they now belong to Christ, which is why they are “under the law to Christ.” To these people, Paul openly lived the in-Christ life so that they would learn to do the same. Paul did not do this to save their souls from hell, since Christ had already done that for these gospel believers. Rather, he did it to save them from living a religious life in the flesh, so that they would use their liberty to allow Christ to live in them.

“The weak” (9:22) would be those he talked about in chapter 8. They are believers, who do not have much sound doctrine built up in their inner man. When Paul says he became as the weak, it means that he made things simple for them to understand so that they could grow in sound doctrine. Therefore, he did not save them from hell, but he saved them from false doctrine.

These verses make it clear that we should not be theologians or legalists. Instead, we should use our liberty to meet others where they are spiritually, so that they may grow.

9:23-27 Paul compares presenting the gospel to running a race. Churchianity likes to say that this means that you need to make sure you obey the 10 commandments, pay your tithes, and attend church every time the doors are open. However, the context of Paul’s statement is “for the gospel’s sake” (9:23). He wants as many people as possible to believe the gospel and be saved. It has nothing to do with his own salvation.

In a race, only one receives the prize (9:24), and the winner is usually the one who “is temperate in all things” (9:25). This means that he makes winning his number-one priority. The runner does not deviate from his running schedule, his diet, his sleep schedule, and everything else that he has planned to be the best runner he can be. Similarly then, Paul is focused on making the gospel his number-one priority, so that people may be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). This means that Paul modifies his behavior to match what the people around him think that a good, God-fearing person should do. In this way, they look at Paul as being the model that they desire to follow. They are then more likely to believe the gospel that he presents them, because they see it working in his life.

For example, if I want to be friends with a weightlifter, I should take an interest in lifting weights. If I want to be friends with a runner, I should take an interest in running. Similarly, to the Jews, Paul “became as a Jew” (9:20). To the Gentiles, he sought to obey their law (9:20). By doing this, Paul makes the gospel as appealing as possible. This means that he foregoes what he wants to do in favor of what others think he should do. This goes against man’s philosophy to please himself. Paul has been “bought with a price: therefore” he strives to “glorify God in [his] body, and in [his] spirit” (6:20). A runner foregoes the pleasures of his flesh in order to win the race. When he does, he obtains a crown that will pass away (9:25). By contrast, Paul is striving to glorify God by having more people believe the gospel and sound doctrine. When this occurs, he obtains an incorruptible crown (9:25). Therefore, we should take our decisions more seriously than even a prize runner does.

Paul does not run uncertainly or punch the air (9:26), which is what Christians do, spiritually speaking, when they follow the lusts of their flesh. Instead, he brings his body into subjection to the consciences of others so that they will believe his gospel and be saved. Therefore, Paul probably did not smoke, drink, or

curse, not because it was a sin for him to do so or to puff up his own flesh, but because others thought those things were sins. Most Christians, if they obey these rules, do so in order to make themselves look good to others; they satisfy their own flesh's desire to serve Christ by neglecting their flesh (Colossians 2:23). (Really, they are serving their own flesh if they do this.)

By contrast, Paul presents his body a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1), so that Christ lives through his body to do God's will. This shows the difference between law and grace motivation. Law motivation serves the flesh in trying to make the flesh look good. Grace motivation yields the flesh over to God for God to use it in a way that will get others saved. Thus, law focuses on yourself, while grace focuses on others. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4). Paul will expound on this in the next chapter. "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (10:33).

I Corinthians 10 – Make Reading and Believing God's Word Your #1 Priority

10 Israel was "baptized unto Moses" (v. 2), yet God was not pleased with them, due to their unbelief (v. 5). The stories of Israel in the wilderness are both examples (v. 6) and ensamples (v. 11) unto us not to sin. Eternal security is not a license to sin (v. 12). Rather, it is the opportunity to live by the faith of Christ (Galatians 2:20). We cannot say that there was no way out of our sin, because God has made a way for us to bear sinful temptations (v. 13). Note that the verse does not say that we escape the temptations, but that we bear them by living by God's Word, rather than succumbing to the temptations.

When we read and believe God's Word, we have the communion of the blood and body of Christ (v. 16), both of which conquered sin through His death, burial, and resurrection. Therefore, we can overcome sin in Christ, as well. By contrast, unbelievers feast at the table of devils (v. 20) when they follow "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

Granted, "all things are lawful for me" (v. 23), but the lesson of chapter 9 was to use our position in Christ to let Christ live in us so that others are saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, we should forego our fleshly liberties if it results in keeping weaker brethren from stumbling (vs. 24-33). All should be done to the glory of God (v. 31).

10:1 "Moreover" tells us that this chapter builds upon the previous chapter. In chapter 8, we learned that we should forego our liberty in Christ to participate in things that a weaker brother thinks is a sin. In chapter 9, we learned that Paul was a religious chameleon, as he was "made all things to all men, that [he] might by all means save some" (9:22). After learning that charity is what edifies (8:1), it may be easy to fall into the trap of the "seeker friendly" church today, that only cares about others' feelings and not about doctrine. Therefore, Paul uses chapters 10-11 to show the Corinthians that they should not be ignorant brethren (10:1).

They need to read and believe their Bibles on a regular basis so that they know how to have Christ live in them.

Paul says that “all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea” (10:1). This is a reference to Israel being delivered from Egypt by passing through the Red Sea (Exodus 13:18), and then God led Israel in the wilderness by “a pillar of a cloud” by day (Exodus 13:21-22). This is not saying that the Corinthians were Jews. Rather, the “our fathers” term refers to the Corinthians’ spiritual fathers. Moses, Joshua, and Caleb are “our fathers” in the sense that they believed the gospel given to them, just like the Corinthians believed the gospel given unto them. Paul mentions this so that the Corinthians understand that God brings about His love in believers by having them learn sound doctrine and apply it to situations.

10:2 Churchianity has trained people to think of water baptism whenever the word “baptized” is mentioned. However, “baptism” really means “to be identified with.” This verse makes this definition clear. After all, Israel came through the Red Sea on dry land (Exodus 14:21-22), while Pharaoh’s army drowned (Exodus 14:26-29). Therefore, being “baptized unto Moses...in the sea” must have been a dry baptism for Israel, not a water baptism.

It is the same for the Corinthians. Paul will later say that “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (12:13). This is a dry baptism. Earlier in this epistle, we learned that Christ did not send Paul to water baptize, but to preach the gospel (1:17). This shows that water baptism does not save people today, like it does for Israel during the at-hand phase of the kingdom (“Baptism doth also now save us” (I Peter 3:21).). Instead, the moment you believe the gospel, the Holy Ghost spiritually baptizes you into Jesus Christ’s death so that you will be raised together with Him in resurrection (Romans 6:4-6). In other words, you are identified with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, much like Israel was identified with God’s deliverance through Moses from the Red Sea. This dry baptism into Christ must be the only baptism God recognizes today, since Ephesians 4:5 says that there is but “one baptism.” Thus, the first thing that Paul makes sure the Corinthians are not ignorant about (10:1) is the proper definition of their baptism into Christ. This is important because, if you think that your baptism is of the flesh, you will seek to serve God in your flesh, which is what Churchianity does today.

10:3-4 These verses demonstrate that, when we read and believe God’s Word, we are eating and drinking Christ, spiritually speaking. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35). Moreover, He said, “Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed” (John 6:54-55). Now, we can understand what Jesus meant by these words. He meant that, if you read and believe God’s Word, you are eating and drinking of Christ, spiritually speaking. God warned Israel, “Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast

forgotten God that formed thee” (Deuteronomy 32:18). Here, in 10:4, Paul clearly identifies that “Rock” as being Christ.

Note that Paul says that Israel all did “eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink,” and that meat and drink was Christ (10:3-4). Paul will build on this when he gets to chapter 11. There, he speaks of the Lord’s supper and states, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (11:26). This means that, as often as they read and believe God’s Word, they are showing Christ’s life to others.

Thus, 10:3-4 teaches the Corinthians that the true meat and drink is of “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3). This is what God gave Israel, when He gave them His law. Galatians 3:24 states, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” In other words, the law was to teach them to come to Christ for salvation. Only then could they obey the law. Therefore, Paul has now taught the Corinthians to live by God’s Word.

10:5 The “many of them” refers to the unbelievers among Israel in the wilderness. Hebrews 3:19 says, “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” However, not all of them were unbelievers. Caleb and Joshua did get to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:30; 26:65).

This should show the Corinthians that you are not saved because you are part of a church. You are only saved if you recognize your sin and trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

10:6 You may wonder why God does not lead us through physical trials today, like He did with Israel. The reason is because God already wrote down the things that happened to Israel. Therefore, we can learn the same lessons, that Israel was supposed to learn, by simply reading and believing God’s written Word.

“These things were our examples” (10:6). EX-amples relate to the EX-ternal. We see externally that Israel was identified with Moses by walking across the Red Sea on dry land (10:2), and that they ate and drank from Christ while in the wilderness (10:3-4). However, in spite of these external advantages, Israel did not internalize these things. They did not believe Christ’s Word to them, because they lusted after evil things. They desired the flesh pots of Egypt (Exodus 16:3), rather than the spiritual food of Christ. They did not learn the lesson that “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Therefore, “they were overthrown in the wilderness” (10:5).

10:7 Paul quotes Exodus 32:6 here. Israel gathered together for a “feast to the Lord” (Exodus 32:5), but they were really worshipping “a molten calf” (Exodus 32:4). “The people sat down to eat and drink” from their offerings to this false idol (Exodus 32:6). They “rose up to play” means that they worshipped it (Exodus 32:8) by getting naked, dancing, and singing songs (Exodus 32:18-19,25).

Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, “there is no new thing under the sun.” If you are only trying to get pleasure in this life, “a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry” (Ecclesiastes 8:15). This is exactly what Israel was doing in the wilderness by serving idols. “All that is in the world [is] the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (I John 2:16). Israel lusted in the flesh by eating; they enjoyed the pride of life by drinking; and they lusted with the eyes in their naked dancing.

Since this is all there is in the world and there is no new thing under the sun, we can learn not to go into idolatry like Israel did. Israel took on the name of God, and then did all the sins of the flesh in the name of the Lord (Exodus 32:5)! Similarly, most churchgoers take on the name of the Lord and go to church. In that church, they bow down to the idol of their religion. The way they do this is by praying to an idol, bowing down at a pagan altar, and “eating” and “drinking” in the vain imaginations of their church’s and pastor’s philosophies (Romans 1:21-23) that have exalted themselves against the knowledge of God (II Corinthians 10:5). They then make themselves merry by coming to church half naked (at least the women do) and singing songs that have themselves as the subject, e.g., “I want to know you;” “I want to draw close to you;” and “I want to feel your presence.” (“I” is the subject, and “you” is the object. Who is the “you” they are singing about?) They may even dance and speak in tongues while they do it. Exodus 32 is written down precisely “for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition” (10:11). In other words, if Christians would just read and understand what went on with Israel in Exodus 32, they would not participate in such things today!

10:8 This verse refers to the event recorded in Numbers 25:1-9. That was when Israel joined themselves to Baal-peor by committing whoredom with the daughters of Moab, ate food sacrificed to other gods, and bowed down to those gods. The result was that God sent a plague upon Israel and killed 24,000 people.

Two things to note about this: 1) People will say this is a Bible contradiction, because Numbers 25:9 says that 24,000 people were killed, and I Corinthians 10:8 says that 23,000 people were killed. However, there is no contradiction, because Numbers 25:9 says that 24,000 “died in the plague,” while I Corinthians 10:8 says that “three and twenty thousand” “fell in one day.” Therefore, 24,000 people died in total, and 23,000 of the 24,000 died in one, specific day.

2) Modern translations say that they were killed for their “sexual immorality,” e.g., NIV, ESV, NASB, NLT, and CSB, while the KJB says that they committed fornication. So, people say that it must not be referring to Numbers 25. However, the first point to note is that Numbers 25:1 says that “the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.” Deuteronomy 7:3-4 says that Israel is not to marry people of other nations because “they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods.” Therefore, it appears that Israel did commit sexual immorality by marrying girls of another nation. However, the true sin, that God was angry about, was that, in marrying these girls, Israel got involved in Baal worship, which is the sun god or Satan. This is the “fornication”

that they committed, as the KJB says they did. In other words, they committed spiritual fornication against God. Revelation 17:5 calls Babylon “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” She is called “the great whore...with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Revelation 17:1-2). This shows that those, who get involved in religion, i.e., “every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” (II Corinthians 10:5), commit spiritual fornication against God. In other words, they have taken on the name of God, as a woman does when she marries a man, but they have followed religious ordinances. Thus, they have spiritually cheated on God.

Numbers 25:6 shows the combination of marrying girls of another nation and worshipping other gods, such that both the Israelite man and the Midianitish woman he was married to, had to be thrust through with a javelin in order to stay the plague (Numbers 25:8). Note that the woman was thrust “through her belly” (Numbers 25:8), which is where a child would develop, showing that, the only way to stop the plague, was to stop a generation of kids from being born, who would be half Jews/half Gentiles. Otherwise, Israel would be mixed up in idolatry in their “worship” of the Lord in the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Remember, these things are written “for ensamples” and “for our admonition” (10:11). This shows how man, once he participates in religious idolatry (10:7) will soon make that idolatry a part of himself by joining his soul to that religion (10:8). **Therefore, such religion needs to be kicked out of the church.** (People make a big deal out of the man in sexual sin being kicked out of the church (5:5), while most people do not know that Paul also kicked people out of the church for teaching bad doctrine (I Timothy 1:19-20).)

10:9 This verse refers to Numbers 21:4-9. There, Israel claimed that God and Moses had brought them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness because they had no bread or water. Their statement was not true, because God gave them water to drink and manna to eat, but their “soul loatheth this light bread” (Numbers 21:5). “And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deuteronomy 8:3). God gave them sustainable food, rather than enjoyable food, so that they would learn to seek after the spiritual, rather than the physical. They needed to “walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7).

By saying “there is no bread, neither is there any water” (Numbers 21:5), Israel tempted Christ (10:9). How? Because they had “spiritual meat” and “spiritual drink” from the “spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (10:3-4). Therefore, by saying they had no bread nor water, they were saying that Christ was not sufficient for their need, even though Philippians 4:19 says, “But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Also, they had taken on the name of the Lord in utterly destroying Canaanite cities (Numbers 21:2-3). Therefore, they were tempting Christ, by taking

on God's name but then trusting in physical provisions, rather than spiritual ones, just like Churchianity does today.

Therefore, God then "sent fiery serpents among the people...and much people of Israel died" (Numbers 21:6). Satan is "that old serpent" (Revelation 12:9), and all those following him will have their place in the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). Therefore, God's punishment of "fiery serpents" fit Israel's crime. It was only then that the people finally said, "We have sinned" (Numbers 21:7). The Lord had Moses make "a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole." All those, who had been bitten, would be healed when they looked upon the serpent (Numbers 21:8-9).

Jesus says that this was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ being lifted up on a cross for man's sin (John 3:14). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). God made Christ "to be sin for us,...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). We receive eternal life when we recognize our sin (Numbers 21:7) and trust in Jesus' death as atonement for our sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

This shows that, because Israel tempted Christ by seeking after the things of the flesh, they had to look to Christ to receive forgiveness of sin.

10:10 Most people say that this verse is referring to Numbers 16:41-47. What is significant about that passage is that it is when Israel murmured against God after Korah and his group were killed by God. This is significant because Korah's rebellion represents going against God's anointed (Moses) and replacing him with religious people who are out for money. Korah got 250 of the renowned princes in Israel to rebel with him against Moses (Numbers 16:1-2), claiming that every Jew was just as holy as any other Jew (Numbers 16:3). In other words, they claimed that Israel did not have to believe God. Similarly today, Churchianity says that you do not have to recognize your sin and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin. Instead, you need to say the sinner's prayer, join the church, get water baptized, and pay your tithes. Tithing is the crucial part of this because they have replaced the gospel with money. I Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." By going after money, they err from the faith. You may think that is not the case with Korah. However, Jude 11 talks about religious people, who "perished in the gainsaying of Core" (Core = Korah). This proves that Korah's reason for going against Moses was for "gain" or money.

In addition to Numbers 16:41-47, God says that Israel murmured against Him in Exodus 15:24, 16:2, 17:3, and Numbers 14:2, 16:11. However, the event, referred to is Numbers 16:41-47, because that is when Israel was "destroyed of the destroyer" (10:10). ("The destroyer" is probably the Lord. Israel would have been familiar with this, because the death angel had passed over the houses of those who had blood sprinkled on the doorposts, so that their firstborns were not destroyed. Exodus 12:23 describes this as, "the Lord will pass over the door, and

will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.” Here, in Numbers 16, the Lord destroyed unbelieving Korah and his men by sending them to the lake of fire.) This is also the event where God said that He would “make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you” (Numbers 17:5). The way God did this was that He did “a new thing,” whereby “the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up....They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished.” Then, fire came “from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense” (Numbers 16:30-35). In other words, for the first time, God sent Korah and his men alive into hell and destroyed Israel’s leaders who followed him.

This shows how serious apostasy is, that God would skip the intermediate step of dying and going to the grave by sending them straight to hell. The reason this is serious is because Korah’s rebellion was so deceptive. Before, Israel murmured against God and Moses because they did not have physical food or drink. This time, they murmured against God’s spiritual leadership. If God let them get away with this, they would have thought they were following God by following Korah. Then, none of them would be saved. (This is like the world at the Tower of Babel where God said, “This they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” (Genesis 11:6).)

Similarly today, most people follow Churchianity’s false doctrine right into the pit of hell. So, why doesn’t God swallow up false leaders today, like He did with Korah? Because we have God’s complete, perfect, inspired, and preserved Word today to work in us. Israel did not have God’s written Word. (Maybe they had Genesis and Job, but that would have been it.) Therefore, they had to rely upon God’s spoken Word and the physical evidence that apostates go to hell. Today, we have Korah’s rebellion written down for us as “ensamples: and they are written for our admonition” (10:11), such that God does not open up the earth and kill Churchianity’s leaders today.

You would think that, after this happened, Israel would have been shaking in their boots and would have asked for God’s forgiveness, as they did in Numbers 21:7, after God sent fiery serpents among them, but they did not. Instead, Israel said to Moses and Aaron, “Ye have killed the people of the Lord” (Numbers 16:41). In other words, it was clear that God Himself killed these apostates, and yet Israel STILL put their trust in Korah and his company as men of God, rather than believing the evidence before their very eyes! This shows how deceptively wicked (Jeremiah 17:9) religion is. For this, God said He would destroy the whole nation (Numbers 16:44-45). It was only because of Moses’ and Aaron’s quick action to bring an atonement to God for them that only 14,700 men were killed (Numbers 16:46-50).

10:2-11 Note the progression in these verses. First, Israel was identified as God’s people (10:2). Second, they received God’s Word (10:3-4). Third, they rejected God’s Word by lusting after evil things (10:6). Fourth, they followed their evil lusts in the name of God, making them idolaters (10:7). Fifth, they committed fornication by claiming to be God’s representatives on earth in their idol worship

(10:8). Sixth, they tempted Christ by following after the flesh, rejecting Christ as their spiritual food (10:9). However, because it was clear that they were following the flesh, they admitted their sin and asked for God to save them (10:9; Numbers 21:7). Seventh, they organized a religious rebellion against God, and God destroyed them (10:10; Numbers 16:16-35). They then complained of God's punishment, and God nearly wiped out the whole nation (Numbers 16:41-50).

Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Israel walked in the counsel of the ungodly when they partied with a molten calf (10:7); they stood in the way of sinners when they adopted the Babylonian religious system of Baal worship (10:8); and they sat in the seat of the scornful when they presumed to take the place of Moses and the Levitical priests in Korah's rebellion (10:10).

10:11 10:6 says that the events of 10:2-4 are examples, meaning they are external. 10:11 says that the events of 10:7-10 are ensamples, meaning they are internal. God attempted to give Israel the spiritual meat and drink of Christ in 10:2-4, but they followed their own "rock" of religion with Baal worship instead (Deuteronomy 32:37). Therefore, Christ remained external to them, while they internalized their false gods. They then used the false doctrine in their inner man to worship the molten calf (10:7), get involved in Baal worship (10:8), tempt Christ (10:9), and try to overthrow God's leaders with a Satanically inspired religious rebellion (10:10). Thus, Israel serves as EX-amples (10:6) for us to read and believe God's Word so that Christ lives in us. If we do not do this, Israel also serves as EN-samples to admonish us (10:11) to trust only in God's Word, rather than in the vain philosophies and traditions of men (Colossians 2:20-23).

This verse says that "the ends of the world are come" upon us. I take this to mean two things. First, the ends of the world are come upon us in the sense that the god of this world, Satan (II Corinthians 4:4), has used the course of this world, the lie program (Ephesians 2:2), to persecute us for godly living (II Timothy 3:12). After all, just after mentioning the god of this world, Paul says that "we are troubled on every side" (II Corinthians 4:8), as if the ends of the world (the left end and the right end) are folded up and are trying to crush us in the middle.

Second, the ends of the world are upon us in the sense that our program is toward the end of God's plan to reconcile heaven and earth back to Himself. God fulfilled or completed the Word of God with the mystery (Colossians 1:25). I Corinthians 15:23-24 says, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." Once the rapture of the church takes place, the Lord will make a short work of Israel's program (Romans 9:28), and so the end of the world will come at Jesus' second coming. Prophetically speaking, there is only one week of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 left when the rapture takes place. Thus, the ends of the world are also upon us in the sense that God's Word is completed, and God

will soon end the world with the rapture, the resumption of Israel's program, and then Jesus' second coming.

10:12 "Wherefore" means that the conclusion of 10:12 is based upon what we just read about Israel. Israel was God's chosen people, "above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6). In spite of this high position, God set Israel aside and declared that "ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hosea 1:9), due to their unbelief.

Today, God is primarily saving Gentiles, but He warns that we should "be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee" (Romans 11:20-21). This does NOT mean that individual Gentiles can lose their salvation. Rather, it means that, at the rapture, God will end the dispensation of grace and start Israel's program again. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (10:12).

This verse is also true on an individual level. If you think, "I've got enough doctrine built up in my inner man. I don't need to keep studying the Bible," then you will fall. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Galatians 5:17). Also, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, it is very easy to get a lot of Bible in your inner man and be lulled into a false sense of security. Paul tells us that we need to "die daily" (15:31). Jesus said, "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

Since we should live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4), we need to read scripture every day so that we do not allow our deceitful and lustful flesh to rob us of having Christ live in us. The moment we think we stand on our own, we become prideful, which means we are in the flesh. Therefore, we need to remind ourselves constantly: "Yet not I, but Christ" (Galatians 2:20). God allowed a messenger of Satan to buffet Paul "lest [he] should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations" (II Corinthians 12:7). This shows that, the more sound doctrine you have in your inner man, the more susceptible you are to falling into pride.

10:13 I John 2:16 says that "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" is "all that is in the world." Eve was tempted in those three areas, Jesus was tempted in those areas, and you will only be tempted in those three areas, as well. This is how the temptations you face are "common to man" (10:13). For example, Jesus was never tempted to look at Internet pornography, because that did not exist when He was on earth. However, He was still tempted to look at a woman with lust in His heart (Matthew 5:28). Therefore, He faced the same temptation as men do today, even though may manifest itself differently today.

This verse is often quoted to say that God will take away any hard temptation from coming your way. However, this is NOT what the verse says. It says that God "will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to BEAR it." God will not take away the temptation, but He will give you His Word so that you

can go through the temptation without sinning. James 1:3 says, “that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” Romans 5:4-5 says that patience works experience, which works hope, which works the love of God in your heart. Therefore, it would be a bad thing if God removed temptations from you.

Matthew 4:1 says that the Spirit of God led Jesus “to be tempted of the devil,” because God knew that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10). Therefore, we should not be surprised when we are tempted, as well. Note that, when Jesus was tempted three times of the devil, He bore each temptation by quoting scripture (Matthew 4:3-10). This shows us that the way of escape, that God provides for us to bear the temptation, is scripture, which will defeat the temptation for you. This is how “God is faithful” (10:13). He faithfully included everything in His Word that we need to know to overcome temptations, “according as His divine power hath given unto us ALL things that pertain unto life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3). If we do not read our Bibles, God has provided the way of escape in His Word, but we cannot take that way, because we do not know it. Again, this shows the importance of reading and believing our Bibles every day.

10:14-15 “Wherefore” tells you that this verse is based upon the last verse. This means that, as far as God is concerned, all sin is idolatry. Romans 1:21-22 says when man knew God, “they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” What man does is he uses religion, i.e., vain imaginations, to try to get rid of the knowledge of God so that man can be God so that man can do whatever he wants to do. This is idolatry, because it makes an idol out of sin or religion. We often think of idolatry as worshipping a graven image, but that is the second commandment. The first commandment is “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). This shows that idolatry is putting anything before God, even if it is not a graven image. II Corinthians 10:5 says that we are to cast “down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” This is how we “flee idolatry” (10:14).

The most common “idol” among mankind is religion.

Because the Corinthians have God’s Word without error and they have the Holy Ghost to teach them His Word (2:12-16), they are “wise men” (10:15). If they use this godly wisdom, they will correctly judge (2:15) that all things, whether considered by the world to be good or bad, that are not according to sound doctrine found in Paul’s epistles, are idolatry. Churchianity and the world do not understand this, because they approach God from a natural man’s point of view (2:14) and so they do not discern that true idolatry is anything that is not operating by the faith of Christ, even if it is ordained by a church to be the way in which we are to worship God.

10:16-22 These verses must be referring to a spiritual communion, not a physical one. Verse 17 tells us that we “are one bread, and one body.” Why? “For we are all partakers of that one bread.” In other words, we are the one body of Christ

because we have all eaten of Christ. The way this happens is by the Spirit of God baptizing us all into Christ “and have been all made to DRINK into one Spirit” (12:13). Obviously, drinking of the Spirit of God must be taken spiritually, NOT physically. Jesus said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:51,53-54). The way we do this is believing the gospel. How do I know this? Because “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28), and you must have faith to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Anybody can eat physical bread or drink physical liquid. You do not have to have faith for that. Therefore, eating and drinking of the literal body and blood of Christ is not how you are saved. It must be spiritual.

When you believe the gospel, you spiritually partake of Jesus’ body and blood. You are then bought by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). You are then to live “by the faith of the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20). You do this by reading and believing God’s Word, allowing the Holy Ghost to teach it to you, and then using the mind of Christ to make decisions (2:9-16). Christ is the only human who can live out God’s Word, because He did no sin (1 Peter 2:22) and no one else is good in himself (Romans 3:12) in order to accomplish this. The way Jesus lived a perfect life was by recognizing that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). If I drink physical water, it sustains my body temporarily. If I drink spiritual water, I “shall never thirst,” and I will have “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). This water is “the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive” (John 7:38-39). John 1:1 says that the Lord Jesus Christ IS the Word. Jesus said, “My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed” (John 6:55). In other words, God gave us physical bread and physical water to eat and drink so that we would understand that our eternal, spiritual life is based solely upon “digesting” God’s Word.

We receive eternal life when we believe the gospel, and we live out that abundant, eternal life (John 10:10), when we live by the Word of God. Christ living in us is the true flesh and true drink INDEED. This is what Paul is teaching the Corinthians. (This is also how the Lord Jesus Christ “liveth for ever and ever” (Revelation 4:9).) The true “spiritual meat” and “spiritual drink” is Christ (10:3-4). When we feast on God’s Word, the life of Christ lives through us. Therefore, when the Corinthians get together to study God’s Word, they are blessing the cup of the blood of Christ and they are breaking the bread of the body of Christ.

This cannot be referring to the physical because they did not have the physical blood and body of Christ. It cannot be what the Catholics do with the Eucharist, because Hebrews 10:26 warns that, “If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” I realize this is written to the Hebrews, not to us today. However, this verse still proves that Jesus’ death on the cross cannot be repeated every week. His sacrifice was “once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

Also, note 10:20-21, which says that we should not take part in what the Gentiles sacrifice, because “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.” This must be a spiritual reference, because Paul just said, in 8:4 that, “concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.” Paul would not tell the Corinthians, in chapter 8, that it is not a sin to eat meat sacrificed to idols, and then turn around in chapter 10 to tell them that “I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils” (10:20), if chapter 10 was referring to physical meat and drink. Therefore, chapter 10 must be referring to spiritual meat and drink, as the context of 10:3-4 shows.

This shows that God is concerned with the spiritual, not the physical. God does not care one bit if you eat meat sacrificed to idols, because, if there is anything bad in the physical, it “goeth out into the draught, purging all meats” (Mark 7:19). However, if you take up spiritual food that is “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (II Timothy 3:5), the spiritual corruption stays in your inner man. “The rudiments of the world...have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship,” but they really satisfy the flesh (Colossians 2:19-23). Because of this, you cannot convince someone following Churchianity’s traditions that he is not serving God. This is why relying on religious formalities is the most dangerous thing a believer can do, spiritually speaking, which is why Paul warns about it here.

The ironic thing is that people use these verses to look at the physical, when Paul has made it clear that this chapter is all about the spiritual. We see the progression from examples (10:1-6) and ensamples (10:7-11) of what not to do to what we should do, i.e., eat of the spiritual meat and drink of Christ in His Word (10:16-21).

In order to understand this spiritual application, Paul points to “Israel after the flesh” (10:18). (He has to mention the flesh because the context is the spiritual.) Israel’s old covenant is a fleshly covenant. Therefore, when they ate of the sacrifices of the altar, their flesh was purified (Hebrews 9:13). Is the idol any thing (10:19)? No. Is the thing sacrificed to idols any thing (10:19)? No. What is important is the motivation behind partaking in the sacrifice. What is in the heart of the person eating the sacrifices of the altar?

The Gentiles, of 10:20, are those following a pagan religion. This religion may have been Judaism in the Corinthians’ day and the religion of Churchianity today. By following a religion, you are involved in a spiritual thing. Therefore, when we follow religious ordinances today, with the idea that we serve God in these things, we are really eating, spiritually speaking, at the table of devils and claiming to be serving the Lord in these things!

You can only have one number one priority. If the Bible is your final authority, you will drink the Lord’s cup. If religious ordinances are your final authority, you will drink the cup of devils. Most people in Churchianity believe that they follow the

Bible by following what their pastor says that the Bible says. In reality, they are following religion's spin on the Bible, and so they are feasting at the table of devils, rather than at the Lord's table. This is why: 1) Our spirit baptism into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and our resulting in-Christ life, 2) How to rightly divide the Word of truth, and 3) The purity of the King James Bible are three fundamentals of the faith that are vehemently opposed by most every churchgoer today. Paul is warning against following man in spiritual things, in place of eating and drinking of the spiritual meat and drink of Christ (10:3-4). This is what is important to God today, not whether or not you partake in a cracker and grape juice in the occasional church service!

10:22 is a rhetorical question to show how foolish it is for Christians to follow religious ordinances. Following the course of this world through religion is the same as eating at the table of devils. So, why would we do this? Are we trying to provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than the Lord that He would change His Word to try to get us on His side? Of course not!

Granted, the Lord's "name is Jealous"; He "is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:14). However, all 6 Biblical references to God being a jealous God are found in Exodus – Joshua. God is jealous in the sense that He desires for "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). Since Israel was not saved, He was jealous over them. In the body of Christ, we are already saved, and we know that Christ will be faithful to perform the good work He started in us (Philippians 1:6), creating "a glorious church" that is "holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). Because God has complete confidence in His Son, we cannot provoke the Lord to jealousy today. (In fact, it is the Lord Who is provoking Israel to jealousy today by giving salvation to the Gentiles apart from Israel (Romans 11:11).) Also, the Lord Jesus Christ "is the blessed and only Potentate" (I Timothy 6:16), and He is "omnipotent" (Revelation 19:6), meaning that He is the all-powerful one. Therefore, it is the Lord Who is on the side of strength, not us. **You cannot get God to change His standing by your bad behavior!**

10:23 This verse is very similar to 6:12. Both say that all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient. The difference is that 6:12 goes on to say, "But I will not be brought under the power of any," while 10:23 says, "But all things edify not." Chapter 6 is talking about not doing the things of the flesh in an evil way. In other words, you do not want to get into sinful habits that will control you. Chapter 10 is talking about not doing the things of the flesh in a good way. In other words, you do not want to get into religious habits that keep you from reading and believing sound doctrine and allowing Christ to live out that doctrine through your life. Sure, you can follow Churchianity and not lose your salvation, but doing so means you are captive by the devil to do his will (II Timothy 2:26), even though you do things in the name of Christ. The sad thing is that most Christians fall into these categories. Either they use God's grace as an excuse to follow their evil flesh, or they follow their flesh in a cloak of religion so that they think they are serving Christ, when they are really not allowing Christ to live in them. Paul says that we should only do those things that edify.

10:24-26 Now, Paul switches gears to talk about physical food. Since most people are fooled into thinking that we serve God in the energies of our flesh, those, who recognize that it is Christ living in us that is important, should seek “another’s wealth” (10:24). In other words, we should do things that will help others grow spiritually, rather than doing things to prosper us materially. Therefore, going back to chapter 8’s lesson, if meat is placed before us, we should eat it, so as not to offend the one who gave it to us (10:25), so that we might have the opportunity to present the gospel to him (10:33). We cannot sin in whatever we eat, because “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof” (10:26).

10:27 Again, this must be a physical feast, because there is nothing wrong with choosing to go to it, while Paul just told the Corinthians not to go to a spiritual feast that is of the devil (10:20-21). The difference between chapter 8’s discussion and this discussion is that chapter 8 refers to believers with weak consciences, while this discussion refers to “them that believe not” (10:27). Therefore, you are going to see if you can present the gospel to an unbeliever. This is why you should ask “no question for conscience sake” (10:27). Your goal is not to make sure people know what is right or wrong; your goal is to get the person saved. Too many times Churchianity has the “holier than thou” attitude when it comes to unbelievers, and like to flaunt what good people they are. This kind of attitude will not get people saved. Rather, we should be down to earth, looking for opportunities to agree with the hypocrisy and wrong thinking of Churchianity so that we may share the clear gospel with them. They may be willing to listen to the gospel, when they find that we are just like them, except we are going to heaven. We are not any better than them.

10:28 Now, there may be some churchgoers at the feast, who point out that the meat was sacrificed to idols. If so, the rules of chapter 8 apply, and so you should not eat the meat, lest you wound the conscience of the weaker brother.

Note that Paul says, both in 10:26 and 10:28 that, “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” Since everything belongs to the Lord, you can eat whatever you want, no questions asked (10:25). Also, since everything belongs to the Lord, you can also forego your liberty to eat what you want, no questions asked (10:27). The point is that “ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). Most people, who believe in eternal security, like to use their liberty in Christ as an excuse to the flesh, but Paul says that the reason we are “dead to the law” is so we “might live unto God” (Galatians 2:19). In other words, we should use our liberty to please God, not to please our flesh. Therefore, we can use our liberty to eat what we want, but we can also use our liberty to forego eating, if doing so makes us more effective ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:19-20).

10:29 You may think it is not fair that you limit your liberty based on another man’s conscience. However, God did not save you to give you MATERIAL blessing; He saved you to give you SPIRITUAL blessings (Ephesians 1:3). Suffering, in this life, “worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Why?

Because material things are temporary, while spiritual things are eternal (II Corinthians 4:17-18).

So, yes, it is not right that we suffer in this life. However, God's justice comes in heaven, not on earth. It was also not right for Christ to suffer, because He did no sin (I Peter 2:22), yet He suffered so "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Since our lives are "hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3) and Christ purchased us "with His Own blood" (Acts 20:28), we should present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God (Romans 12:1), so that we "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church" (Philippians 1:24). In other words, it is a **light** thing for us to sacrifice our liberties in Christ so that others may be saved. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5), and humble yourself to having Christ live in you (Philippians 2:8), even if you have to forego some fleshly pleasures. We are to set our affection "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

10:30 The reason you need to forego some liberties, is because weaker brothers or unbelievers with a religious conscience may think you are a hypocrite if you eat meat sacrificed to idols, because they **think** it is wrong, even though you **know** that it is not wrong. Therefore, they will not listen to and believe the gospel that you present to them.

Jeremiah 17:9 says that "the heart is deceitful above ALL things, and desperately wicked." This means that man's heart will come up with every excuse possible not to believe God. For the person who has never believed the gospel, he may say that he does not listen to Christians because they are hypocrites. Most people think that Christians are supposed to follow a higher moral code than others, and that moral code is probably what they have heard that Christians are supposed to do, not what the Bible actually says. Therefore, if they think it is wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols and they see you eat the meat, they may use that as an excuse not to believe the gospel. This is why Paul says that others may speak evil of us, doing something in grace that is not wrong in God's eyes. As such, we should forego these liberties in order to help others.

10:31-33 The question Christians should ask is not "What CAN I do?" but "What is the most expedient thing for me to do?" (10:23). Christ did not purchase me with His Own blood so that I could use grace as an excuse to sin. Rather, He did so to give me liberty so that, whatsoever I do, I "do all to the glory of God" (10:31). I can restrict my liberty so that I do not offend anyone (10:32). "Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). In other words, **grace is not a license to sin; grace is the opportunity to live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20).**

Note that three groups are mentioned in 10:32: 1) Jews, 2) Gentiles, and 3) The church of God. All unbelievers have their own religion. Romans 1:21-22 says, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was

darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” If you do not believe God, you have vain imaginations to ease your guilty conscience so that you can continue in your unbelief and not feel bad about it. (Even atheism is a religion, as they believe they will be ok with God by saying that there is no God.) In Paul’s day, Jews had their own religion, because God had made them His people, and Gentiles had their own religion. Paul is saying that we should not offend these religious people so that, if they finally do recognize their sin, they may come to us for the gospel. He also says that we should not offend the church of God, so that we do not cause a weak brother to stumble, such that he stops making the Bible his authority, as Paul went over in chapter 8. Thus, we are not to offend unbelievers, i.e., religious people or Jews and Gentiles, so that they may be saved, and we are not to offend weak believers, so that they may come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

If we do this, we may save others (10:33). We would save religious people from hell by getting them to believe the gospel, and we would save members of the body of Christ from apostasy by getting them to believe the Bible as their final authority, rather than what Churchianity says. You really only have two choices in life: 1) Believe the Bible, or 2) Believe man-made religion. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people, whether they are going to heaven or not, follow religion, rather than the Bible.

I Corinthians 11 – Head Coverings and the Lord’s Supper

11 God is very concerned with people following the roles He has given them. The question is not “Am I capable of doing something?”, but it is “What is my God-given role?” Man is the head of woman, and Christ is the head of man (v. 3). However, the Holy Ghost gave a spiritual gift to every member of the body of Christ, man and woman (12:7), in the days of the Corinthians. When man speaks in a church service, he honors his head, Christ. When a woman speaks in a church service, she honors her head, man. However, the honor should go to Christ, not to man. Therefore, Paul says that a woman should wear a head covering when she exercises her spiritual gift, so that the man is not honored (vs. 5-6), while it would be a shame for a man to cover his head, because he should be honoring Christ (vs. 4,7). This does not make the woman less of a person than a man, because a man would not exist unless a woman gave birth to him (vs. 11-12).

God even shows in nature the principle of the man being over the woman, as it is natural for women to have long hair (v. 15), while being unnatural for men (v. 14). This is also why men are much more likely to go bald than women are. Since God does this in nature, the Corinthians should have head coverings for women to show that they are following their God-given roles. This does not apply to us today, since the spiritual gifts have ceased (13:8-12).

However, men being over women still applies today, which is why women are to “keep silence in the churches” (14:34). Not doing this can lead to the trouble the Corinthian church is having over their meals together. Some are eating a lot and

getting drunk, while others are going hungry (v. 21). The purpose of the meals together is not to eat as much as they can, but it is to show the fellowship that they have as a result of all of them being in Christ.

If they can get along eating together, then they can also get along in learning sound doctrine together. When they edify each other in sound doctrine, they “shew the Lord’s death till He come” (v. 26) because others see Christ living in them. When they do not grow in sound doctrine, they are weak, sickly, and sleep, spiritually speaking (v. 30). They also are judged by the world to be hypocrites, taking on Christ’s name but not being Christlike (vs. 31-32).

11:1 Paul said, “Be ye followers of me” in 4:16. Now, he adds, “even as I also am of Christ” (11:1). This is not Paul being egotistical. Rather, he knows that he received the mystery by revelation of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:25), which in other ages was not made known unto men (Ephesians 3:5). This means that, only by going to Paul, can we find the doctrine that we are to follow today. Therefore, by saying “be ye followers of me,” Paul is really saying to follow Christ. If you do not follow Paul today, then you are not following Christ!

Romans 15:8 says “that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Romans 15:16 says that Paul is “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God.” Romans 11:25-26 says, “that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” By putting these verses together, we learn that, if I follow Jesus’ red letters, I follow the instructions that God gave to Israel. If I follow Paul’s epistles, I follow Jesus Christ’s instructions that God gave to the Gentiles. Since God is saving Gentiles today, the way that I follow Jesus Christ is by following Paul’s epistles. If I follow Jesus’ red letters, I am NOT following the truth of God for today. Thus, Paul is not being egotistical by saying that we should follow Paul. Rather, Paul knows that what he writes is Jesus Christ’s instructions to us today (Romans 16:25). Since Jesus is “the way” (John 14:6), Paul is guiding us to follow the way to the Father by following Paul, since following Paul is the only way to follow Jesus today.

Did you know that the Lord Himself made Moses to be a god to the Egyptians? Exodus 7:1 says, “And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.” God never says that He made Paul out to be a god today. Yet, Churchianity complains that WE have made a god out of Paul, when we are simply following Jesus Christ’s instructions to us today through Paul. At the same time, Churchianity has made a god out of Moses by saying we must follow the ten commandments, when Jesus Christ’s instruction to us today through Paul is that ALL things are lawful for us (10:23). We are not restricted by the ten commandments, because the law is for unbelievers (I Timothy 1:9). Believers “are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14). Therefore, in reality, it is Churchianity, who has made a god out of man, and is following him, while they accuse us of doing that with Paul, when God’s Word specifically tells us twice to follow Paul today (4:16; 11:1).

11:2 “The ordinances” are the instructions for the mystery program that Paul gave them. Since Christ has blotted “out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us” (Colossians 2:14), i.e., the law, we are to keep the grace ordinances, rather than the ordinances of this world (Colossians 2:20). Primarily, this means that we are to “stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1). In other words, we are to stand in grace (Romans 5:2), and use our liberty, not as “an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). How sad that most of Churchianity will look at “the ordinances,” here, and automatically think they are supposed to keep the law, when “the ordinances” are really grace ordinances. Use grace to try to “please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (10:33). If we see these ordinances as the law, we will appear as hypocrites to others, because if I put myself back under the law, “I make myself a transgressor” (Galatians 2:18). Therefore, we are to keep the ordinances of grace.

11:3 Now, Paul will talk about how the body of Christ should behave when they fellowship with each other. God is above Christ, who is above man, who is above woman. This may seem confusing, because Christ is God. However, Christ is also a man, and it is “the man, Christ Jesus,” who is the mediator between God and men (I Timothy 2:5), because He “gave Himself a ransom for all” (I Timothy 2:6), such that He possesses “the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18). Thus, God is over Christ, the man.

God made man to be the head of the woman. There are two reasons for this: 1) “For Adam was first formed, then Eve,” and 2) “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Timothy 2:13-14). Adam knew that he was sinning, while Eve was deceived by Satan into sinning. Jeremiah 17:9 says that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” It is bad enough that the world has many religions that deceive people into thinking they are ok with God when they are not. It would be even worse if women were placed over men, because they are more likely to be deceived than men are, as God says in I Timothy 2:13-14. Therefore, God made man first and put him in charge of the woman.

I realize we live in an “enlightened” time right now, where women are actually considered to be better than men are, but God’s Word never changes. God made the different minds of men and women, and so He knows more about it than anyone else. Therefore, since God says that the man is the head of the woman, then that is what should be done. Trying to have women usurp man’s authority shows a lack of faith in God’s order. Therefore, it is a sin. However, we should not be surprised by this, since we have a sin nature. This is why God told Eve, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16). In other words, woman will desire to rule over man, but she will not succeed, because God ordained that man is to rule over woman. This is still true, regardless of what the feminists do today.

11:4-6 This brings us to the issue of head coverings. Since the head of man is Christ, if man covers his head, it is a symbolic hiding of Christ. Therefore, if a man prays or prophesies with his head covered, he dishonours his head (11:4).

Verse 5 talks about women praying or prophesying. Paul will talk about the spiritual gifts in chapters 12-14. 12:7 says, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Therefore, every believer in the Corinthian church had a gift of the Spirit. (The gifts are not in operation today, because God's Word has already been completed, as will be seen in 13:8-12.)

14:34 says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." This presents a problem if a woman's gift is speaking in tongues, interpretation, or prophecy. How is the woman going to use her spiritual gift when she is commanded to be silent in church? The answer is head coverings.

By covering her head, the woman is acknowledging that she is not really speaking in church. Rather, the Holy Ghost is speaking through her. This is the purpose of head coverings, so that a woman can exercise her spiritual gift without usurping authority over man. By covering her head, she is symbolically hiding her spouse, which is good, because Christ is to be seen in her.

Since spiritual gifts ceased with the completion of God's Word, head coverings are not needed today. Since God's order of God then Christ then man then woman is still the order while we are on this earth, I Timothy 2:11-12 says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (I Timothy was written after the spiritual gifts had ceased, and so we know that women are still not to usurp authority over men today.)

Also, note that God tells the body of Christ today "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10). This means that women are not to attempt to enhance their outward beauty. Therefore, it makes sense that women should wear head coverings when all eyes are upon them, as the Holy Ghost speaks through them.

The mention in 11:5-6 about women being shorn or shaven shows that God designed for only women to have long hair, not men, to show the world that the man is the head of the woman. In other words, God gave woman a natural covering of long hair and men are far more likely to go bald than women are, so that we learn, **just by looking at people**, that man is the head of the woman. (This is why Deuteronomy 22:5 says, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.") God made men and women to look differently so that the world can see that man is the head of the woman. (Since humans do not want to follow God, they try to remove the distinction between man

and woman by making gender a choice. Thus, they make themselves out to be God. “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Romans 1:23.)

Therefore, Paul says that, if a woman is exercising her spiritual gift, i.e., “prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered” (11:5), this is such a shameful act that she might as well have her head shaven so that she has a bald head! She is showing off her head, symbolically, which means she is blatantly usurping the authority of her husband. (If a woman is not married and is not under the authority of her father, she should still have her head covered, because she would be usurping authority over other men in the church.) Again, this is not a concern today, because the spiritual gifts are not in operation. Therefore, a woman is to keep silent in church.

11:7 This verse sums up what we just said. Since the head of man is Christ, he should not wear a head covering, because “he is the image and glory of God” (11:7). Since the head of the woman is man, she should wear a head covering, so that people see Christ in her, rather than seeing her husband. Therefore, rather than degrading the woman, the head covering actually shows the fallen state of the man, that she is to cover her husband symbolically with a head covering.

11:8-9 This perspective shows how backward our society is today. They think that, when we make the woman servant of the man, we are saying she is less valuable than the man. This is not at all the case! It is just that God gave man and woman different roles. It is God’s prerogative to do so, since He is the Creator. In a job, the employee is not any less of a human being or any less important than his boss. If anything, the employee is more valuable than his boss, because the employee gets the job done. Similarly, without the woman, man would not exist, because the woman gives birth to the next generation (“Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety” (I Timothy 2:15).) Furthermore, I Peter 3:4 says that a woman, with “a meek and quiet spirit,...is in the sight of God of great price.” If God values a woman for calling her husband “lord” (I Peter 3:6), then a woman should be thrilled to serve a man, **because she is filling her God-given role.** Thus, the woman is of the man and the woman was created for the man (11:8-9), and both of these things are good, because God made them that way. Nothing that God makes is bad.

It is the sin nature of the woman that objects to her servant role. “Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of Him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of Him that framed it, He had no understanding?” (Isaiah 29:16). “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?” (Romans 9:20).

11:10 The woman’s head is the man (11:3). By covering her head, she has “power on her head” (11:10). In other words, as long as she is covering her head so that

people glory only in the spiritual gift in her, rather than in her beauty, she is honoring Christ. Because God made women attractive to men, if a woman does not hide her beauty when the Holy Ghost is speaking through her, men are likely to notice her physical beauty and not be edified in the sound doctrine that God is speaking through her, because they are concentrating on her flesh.

Ephesians 3:10 says that the intent of God revealing the mystery to the body of Christ and having us teach it to others is so that to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” In eternity, angels are ministering spirits for saved people (Hebrews 1:14). Therefore, angels desire to look into (I Peter 1:12) the deep things of God that God has revealed to us (2:9-13). This means that, when we have a Bible study, angels listen in so that they may learn, as well. If God is speaking through women exercising their gift of speaking in tongues, interpretation, or prophecy and the women do not have their heads covered, the excellency of the power is of them, and not of God (II Corinthians 4:7).

If you think this is crazy, I remind you of Noah’s day. In Genesis 6, we learn that fallen angels had sex with women to create superhuman creatures (Genesis 6:2-4). This wickedness was so great that God destroyed man with a flood (Genesis 6:5-7). Jesus said, “as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37), which means that this will happen again during the tribulation period, after the body of Christ has been raptured up to heaven.

Therefore, I see two reasons why 11:10 says that women should cover their heads because of the angels. 1) Angels need to learn mystery doctrine, too, so they can serve us in eternity, as Ephesians 3:10 says that it is the church’s job to show the manifold wisdom of God to the powers in heavenly places, and 2) Angels need to know that women, in spite of their beauty, are still fallen creatures. Any good in them is Christ coming through them. Head coverings keep the angels from repeating what happened in Noah’s day while the body of Christ is still on the earth. This also shows why women, after the head coverings have been abandoned due to the Word of God being completed, are not to usurp authority over men in the church today (I Timothy 2:12).

Women, flaunting their outward beauty and not serving their men, may be what caused the fall in Noah’s day and will probably cause a similar fall of angels during the Antichrist’s day (This is why Daniel 8:10 says that the Antichrist cast down some of the angels to the ground.). The fact, that most women are not willing to fulfill their servant role, shows why a woman of a meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the eyes of God (I Peter 3:4), and why Solomon could not even find one woman in a thousand who served the Lord (Ecclesiastes 7:28-29). How many of these women can be found today? Not many. This is another reason why the rapture of the body of Christ will probably happen soon.

11:11-12 Man and woman are interrelated, because they are both humans. When a man marries a woman, the two of them are viewed by God as one flesh (Genesis 2:23-24). God made the woman to be “an help meet” for man (Genesis 2:18). The

way woman does this is by her brain being different from a man's brain, such that she is repulsed by how a man uses his sin nature to sin. Women sin just as much as men do, if not more so, but man's sins are so blatant and against what woman would do, that she helps keep his sin nature in check. Just look at the prison population. The vast majority of violent crime is committed by single men. This is because man's sin nature manifests itself in more violent and blatant ways than women's sin nature. A married man, then, is much less likely to commit violent crimes, because his wife's mind keeps his sin nature in check. This is how women help men.

Men help women because women tend to think more with their emotions, and so the man is there to reign her emotions in so that they do not get out of control. Our society, today, is much more concerned with feeling good and having top-notch health care than it was 100 years ago. The result is that health care has become unaffordable for the poorer members of our society. This is due to women usurping authority over men, allowing emotions to overcome rational thinking.

Thus, by looking at the negative tendencies of men and women, we can see how each helps the other out. This is why the man is not without the woman, and the woman is not without the man (11:11). "The woman is of the man" (11:12) in that she joins herself to the man in marriage, and "the man also by the woman" (11:12) in that he must be born of a woman.

Note that 11:12 says, "But all things of God." This is because "all things were made by [the Lord Jesus Christ]; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Moreover, "All things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17). All unbelievers die in Adam; all believers are alive in Christ (15:22). When we believe the gospel, we are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. "There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Therefore, in the end, all things are of God. This means that men should not desire to be women and vice-versa, because our identity is who we are in Christ, not in our gender.

We can also look at the life cycles of men and women to see how they fulfill their different roles over time. Women have three, key, physical differences from a man: 1) The ability to grow a baby inside their bodies, 2) The ability to feed a baby with their bodies, and 3) They have periods each month, which make it harder for them to work outside the home than it is for men. God also gave women detail-oriented minds, while men look more at the big picture. God made these differences so that it would be clear to both men and women that the women are in charge of raising the children. This includes educating them at home "until the time appointed of the father" (Galatians 4:2). And so we can think of each child representing a 20 year full-time job for the mother.

Proverbs 22:6 says to "Train up a child in THE WAY he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Jesus said, "I am THE WAY" (John 14:6). Therefore, the responsibility of the mother is to train up her children in the doctrine that Jesus has given us today through Paul (Romans 16:25).

This makes the husband's responsibility to work in order to provide food, shelter, clothing, and any other essentials for himself, his wife, and his children. Since the wife is responsible for training up the children in the things of the Lord, the husband is responsible for instructing his wife in Jesus' way. Titus 2:6 says that young men are "to be sober minded," which means that they need to follow sound doctrine found in Paul's epistles (Romans – Philemon) and not stray away from it. They then teach their wives the sound doctrine that they need to follow. In this way, the husband keeps his wife and his children from the dangers of Satan's policy of evil. This is important because "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:14). The woman's mind is more susceptible to believing false doctrine than the man's mind is. This does not mean that the woman is "stupid." Rather, her mind is equipped to take care of the house and the children, not to battle constantly against false doctrine outside the home. "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (I Timothy 2:15). Again, this shows the woman's role. Titus 2:4-5 says that young women are "to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." This shows that husbands need to teach their wives sound doctrine, and their wives need to adorn the doctrine by following it and by teaching it to their children.

Once a woman is about 50-55 years old, the last child should be out of the house. Psalm 90:10 says that the average person will live between 70 and 80 years. (Isn't it interesting that trillions of dollars spent on health care has done very little to increase man's life span?) God also has made it so where a woman lives about five years longer than a man does. Therefore, once a woman is done raising children, her next job is probably to take care of her mother and/or her husband's mother, because they are widows. Once they die, her husband should be about 65 years old, and no longer able to work due to the physical demands on jobs outside of the home. She can then take care of her husband until he dies. She should then have another five years to live, and her daughter or daughter-in-law can take care of her until she dies. Thus, we can see how God has designed the woman and the man to take care of each other. This is how the man is not without the woman and the woman is not without the man (11:11-12).

11:13 The Corinthians are spiritual, which means they have the ability in Christ to judge these matters themselves (2:15). Since the "head of the woman is the man" (11:3), it makes sense for a woman to cover her head, if the Holy Ghost is speaking through her in a service. Otherwise, she is usurping authority over men. This makes logical sense. The problem is that women tend to think more emotionally, and so they are more likely to object to this rule, because their sin nature is geared toward wanting to be in charge (The Lord said to Eve, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16).)

I can see why women are like this. It is because women are more detail oriented than men are, which means they can more easily see how men get things wrong than men can see how women get things wrong. Therefore, they would rather be in

charge, so they make sure things are done correctly. God did this on purpose, giving women the greater ability to see if things are right or not, while making men in charge of women. In this way, it keeps men humble, as they see that they fail when they would have succeeded if they would have listened to their wives. This also keeps women humble, because they do not get to have their own way, and so it keeps their pride in check. Thus, both genders see that the issue is not who is right, but it is fulfilling the roles that God has given each of us, since God knew what He was doing when He created man and woman. **When you go against this, you are not trusting God. Don't you think God knows how men and women should act better than you do?**

11:14-15 These two verses are often taught to say that a head covering is not needed, because God gave women long hair to be their covering. Therefore, as long as women have long hair, they have their “covering,” and do not need to wear a head covering. Women like this because then they do not have to recognize that they are in a subservient role to men. Men like this because they can see more of the women’s beauty with her long hair being exposed for all to see, which caters to man’s sin nature. Therefore, very few “Christian” churches today teach that women are to wear head coverings.

However, this cannot be the interpretation, because it does not make logical sense, in light of what Paul said in 11:4-7. The language, in 11:4-7, makes it obvious that the “covering,” that Paul is talking about, can be taken off or put on easily. 11:4 says, “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.” If the covering is hair, then a man must shave his head, or at least make sure his hair is not “long,” before he speaks in tongues or prophesies. 11:7 says, “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head.” I have never heard of growing long hair as being referred to as covering your head. Does this mean that the man is not to wear a toupee?! This interpretation does not make logical sense. Similarly, no woman could have the Holy Ghost speak through her unless her hair was long enough (11:5-6), and how “long” does her hair have to be before it is a covering for her? However, 11:4-7 make perfect sense, if the covering is a piece of cloth that can be put on or taken off.

Basically, 11:13 says that, in Christ, we see that it is not comely for a woman to pray with her head uncovered. Then, Paul tells us that “even nature itself” teaches us that it is a shame for a man to have long hair, while it is a glory for women to have long hair. Why? Because a woman’s “hair is given her for a covering” (11:15). In other words, God Himself made women’s hair to be long and men’s hair to be short or to go bald so that, even unbelievers would recognize that men have authority over women.

In other words, Paul is not saying that a woman’s long hair IS her head covering. Rather, he is saying that God made our minds to think naturally that women should have long hair and men should have short hair so that all people, both unbelievers and believers, would see that men are the head of women. If unbelievers can see this, then surely believers should see this, as well (11:13). Thus, a woman’s long “hair is given her for a covering” (11:15) **in nature** so that

she sees that the man is the head of the woman. Then, **in the church**, women are to have a cloth covering over their hair when they are exercising their spiritual gift, so that the church knows that the only time it is okay for women to speak in the church is when the Holy Ghost is speaking through them via a spiritual gift. Otherwise, women are “to keep silence in the churches” (14:34).

We should also note that some Pentecostal churches teach that women should never cut their hair because “if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her” (11:15). There are two problems with this: 1) Paul is talking about “nature itself” (11:14), not about godliness, and 2) The glory is going “TO HER.” Galatians 6:14 says, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” If Pentecostal women glory in their long hair, they are not glorying in the cross of Christ. Paul would rather have them cut their hair and glory in Christ, rather than glorying in how beautiful their long hair looks. Therefore, 11:14-15 does NOT teach that women should have long hair. In fact, they should cut their hair short if they are tempted to create a legalistic rule about long hair, or if they make their hair into a vain thing.

11:16 When Paul says, “we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (11:16), people use this phrase to say that Paul does not have his churches practice head coverings. Again, this makes no sense, in light of what he said in 11:4-7. Paul would not say that: 1) A man dishonours Christ by wearing a head covering (11:4), 2) A woman “dishonoureth her head” (11:5) by not having a covering, and 3) A woman might as well be shaved bald if she does not wear a head covering (11:6), but then turn right around and say, “we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (11:16). In other words, Paul would not say, “Men dishonour Christ and women dishonour men by not wearing a head covering, but, what do I care? Do what you want!”

The context of “we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (11:16) is long hair for women and short hair for men (11:14-15), not head coverings. In other words, nature teaches us that women should have long hair and men should have short hair. However, we are servants of Christ, not nature. As servants of Christ, “all things are lawful for me” (10:23). Therefore, if I think that I should have long hair and/or my wife should have short hair, I can go ahead and do so. I will be going against nature, but I will not be going against Christ. Therefore, it is okay to do this. This falls under Romans 12:18: “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

11:17-19 11:16 was a transition verse, where Paul closed out his discussion of head coverings and is now transitioning to the Lord’s Supper. 11:16 says, “If any man seem to be contentious.” Why would any believer be contentious when we are supposed to “by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13)? This shows they are in the flesh.

Paul writes 11:17-19 to show their contentions, and then uses the example of the Lord's Supper in the remaining part of the chapter (11:20-34) to show how a properly functioning local assembly of the body of Christ should behave.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). Therefore, when the body of Christ gets together, they should be helping each other out. However, Paul says that, when the Corinthians come together, they do so "not for the better, but for the worse" (11:17). This is because there are divisions and heresies among them (11:18-19). Now, Paul does know that there are divisions among the Corinthians, because "the house of Chloe" has already spilled the beans about there being "contentions among you," such that some say they are of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas, and some of Christ (1:11-12).

Paul does not mention any specific heresies that are being taught, but he said that "there MUST be also heresies among you" (11:19). Why? Because, while there are two, different dispensations going on at the same time, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ all understood the dispensational changes and the differences between the two dispensations, which means there would have been no contradictions among them, even though there were dispensational distinctions. Therefore, if people are choosing sides, it stands to reason that people have either misunderstood or twisted the words of different people to make it look like there are sides to choose. Peter said that "unlearned and unstable" people "wrest" or twist the scriptures "unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:16). Therefore, in order for there to be divisions among the Corinthians, there also must be heresies among them (11:19).

In other words, there cannot be cliques when "ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)? So, why are there Baptists, Nazarenes, Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Lutherans, etc. today? Because some of them must be teaching heresies. It is the same thing with the Corinthians. If they are all Bible believers, there would be no divisions. Granted, not everyone would agree on every point, but the only disagreements would be on things that are not clear in scripture, which is where they would agree to disagree.

"They which are approved may be made manifest among you" (11:19) probably means that certain people are approved by others because they are in line with what they believe. This is like people today who say that "So and so is a 'good' preacher," while they do not like some other preacher. The reason is that the "good" preacher is in line with that person's beliefs, while the other one is not. By contrast, if Christians are Bible believers not believing heresies, there would be no divisions. There also would not be the putting of men on pedestals, because it would be Christ getting the glory, not the men.

11:20-22 Based upon what is said here, Paul is talking about a physical meal here. When he says, "this is not to eat the Lord's supper" (11:20), I believe the key word in that phrase is "Lord's". They are getting together for supper. However, for it to be the "Lord's" supper, they would have to have Christ living in them. Since the privileged cliques in the church are eating what they want and getting drunk

while others, not in the cliques, are going hungry, this is man's fleshly supper, not the Lord's supper.

Also, note that this is not "the Lord's snack" of bread/cracker and wine/grape juice, but it is a full meal. What makes it "the Lord's supper" is the fellowship that members of the body of Christ have with each other, as a result of who they are in Christ. Since the Corinthians are fighting over food and drink, they are not participating in who they are in Christ. Thus, it is not the Lord's supper. If they are going to behave in this manner, they should eat at home (11:22). At least that way, they do not take on God's name and then blaspheme it by acting in the flesh.

11:23-25 Since the issue with the Corinthians is a lack of fellowship in who they are in Christ, Paul now goes over this fellowship. Thus, he now concentrates on the spiritual fellowship of church, not the physical fellowship. Remember what we learned in 10:16-22 that the communion of the body and blood of Christ is spiritual. When we come together as a church, we are to read and believe God's Word rightly divided, recognizing our life in Christ and that Paul's epistles alone (Romans – Philemon) are written specifically to us today. When we do this, we are participating in the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

Jesus told Israel, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51). "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). Since the Bible never records the disciples gnawing on Jesus' physical body, the way we do this must be spiritually. Jesus said, "the WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Thus, we partake of Jesus' flesh and blood by reading and believing God's Word to us today, not by participating in a physical meal. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Basically, what Paul is doing is he is talking about the atrocities of their suppers, in 11:20-22, and he now starts talking about the true Lord's supper, which is feasting on God's Word rightly divided. Jesus said that, when Israel ate and drank the physical passover meal (Luke 22:15), they were doing it to remember the cross work of Christ (Luke 22:19-20). Paul told the Corinthians earlier that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (5:7). This means that Christ blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,...nailing it to His cross" (Colossians 2:14). As a result, no one should judge us "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" because these things were "a shadow of things to come; but the **body** is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

11:26 Therefore, when Paul talks about eating and drinking the Lord's supper, he is talking about the true Lord's supper, which is feasting on the Word of God. 11:26 makes this evident. Otherwise, how would I "shew the Lord's death" by eating a cracker and drinking some grace juice? Only people at church would see me do that. Even so, all I would be doing is "remembering" the Lord's death, not "shewing" the Lord's death. However, if I am feasting on the Word of God rightly divided, then I only glory in the cross of Christ. The world is crucified to me and I

unto the world (Galatians 6:14). I then live “by the faith of the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20). Therefore, I “shew” the Lord’s death to the world by my behavior based upon only glorying in the Lord’s death and recognizing that I am crucified with Christ. In other words, the world sees Christ in me, rather than seeing my vile flesh and sin nature. Therefore, I am shewing Christ crucified to them.

11:27 The bread and cup of the Lord is His Word. The way you would partake of this “unworthily” is if you do not believe it. When the Jews rejected Paul and Barnabas’ preaching of the gospel, Paul said that they judged themselves “unworthy of everlasting life” (Acts 13:46). They heard the word and did not believe, and so they were unworthy. Therefore, if you hear the Word of God and choose not to believe it, you are “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (11:27). Now, you cannot lose your salvation if you have already believed the gospel. However, Christ’s death does not work in your life when you live according to your flesh, rather than by the Word of God. Galatians 2:21 says, “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” It does not say, “Christ DIED in vain” (past tense), but it says “Christ IS DEAD in vain” (present tense). Obviously, Christ is not dead today, because He has eternal life. Rather, it is saying that Christ’s death is not working in you. Therefore, His death is vain or empty to you from a practical standpoint. You are then “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” from the standpoint that you claim to be a Christian, but you are not letting Christ live in you. You were bought with Christ’s blood (Acts 20:28), and you are Christ’s ambassador (II Corinthians 5:20). Therefore, when you do not believe God’s Word nor do you allow it to work in your life, the world sees the body and blood of Christ as being of no value, because they do not see your life changed. This makes you guilty of blaspheming the body and blood of the Lord.

11:28-29 A lot of churches take these verses to mean that you have to examine yourself to make sure you do not have any unconfessed sins on your life before you eat a cracker and drink some grape juice. If that were the case, it leads to a lot of worry, and it is probably best that you wait until you get home to eat. After all, you do not want to drink damnation to yourself (11:29). So, best to skip this snack! And, exactly how would you damn yourself by eating a cracker and drinking grape juice? Colossians 2:16 says, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day.” It sounds like you are being judged in all three when you eat the cracker and drink the grape juice. We also have Romans 14:17, which says, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” So, how can I eat and drink damnation to myself when God’s kingdom is about spiritual sustenance (righteousness, peace, and joy), rather than physical sustenance (meat and drink)? The answer is, “You cannot do this.”

11:28 is simply stating that, when you come to God’s Word, you need to examine yourself and ask what your motivation is in studying. If it is to shew yourself approved unto God by reading and believing the Bible (II Timothy 2:15), then you are eating of the bread (Christ) and drinking of the cup (Christ) (see 10:3-4) worthily. In other words, you are allowing the Holy Ghost to teach you the deep

things of God (2:9-13). However, if you are coming to God's Word in the flesh—to show everyone how “spiritual” you are, to feel good about yourself, to look to others like you are a “good” Christian, or to ease a guilty conscience—then you will not understand the things of God (2:14). You are then eating and drinking unworthily.

Whenever you approach God's Word from a fleshly point of view, you eat and drink “damnation to [yourself], not discerning the Lord's body” (11:29). Reading the Bible in the flesh creates a form of godliness, while denying the power of godliness, i.e., God's Word, working in your life through the Holy Ghost (II Timothy 3:5). You then feel like you have “done your duty” to God, and so your desperately wicked flesh will then deceive you into thinking that it is okay to indulge some of the pleasures of the flesh, because you have “earned” them (Jeremiah 17:9). This is why some of the most heinous sexual sin, among other things, is committed by Churchianity's leaders. They either think they are “ok” in their sin, because of the time spent reading the Bible and going to church, or they think they can hide their sin in their cloak of Churchianity. Either way, they deceive themselves into thinking they are okay with God as a result of their “godly” activities that somehow cancel out their ungodly activities. Thus, they eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning that they are the Lord's body (11:29). They should present their bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord (Romans 12:1) and hold the head, which is Christ (Colossians 2:19). Instead, they do not discern that they are part of the Lord's body, and so they try to please themselves. They eat and drink damnation because, if they are ever confronted by their selfish living, they object to it because they are in fellowship with a church. They do not discern that the Bible is there to give you sound doctrine so that Christ can live in your body (Galatians 2:20). Therefore, they come to scripture to please themselves, rather than to please God, which is why they do not understand it.

11:30 Since Paul has been talking about the spiritual communion of the Lord's blood and body, 11:30 should also be taken spiritually. (Paul has already covered the physical condition of the Corinthians in their physical suppers (“One is hungry, and another is drunken.” (11:21)), and so he need not cover that again here.) We learned about weak brethren in chapter 8. These are the ones, who do not have much sound doctrine built up in the inner man, and so they are not able to apply sound doctrine to specific situations that often.

The “sickly among you” (11:30) are those who have Bible knowledge, but they take it out of context or change it around to make the Bible say what they want it to say, rather than allowing the Holy Ghost to teach it to them. This is a worse situation than the weak brethren. While the weak do not apply sound doctrine, because they do not know it, the sickly apply false doctrine to situations. Thus, they “oppose themselves” and do the will of the devil (II Timothy 2:25-26). Often, they are spiritually sick and do not know it. This is why they are in the snare of the devil (II Timothy 2:26).

The ones asleep are the ones who are saved but do not care about the things of God. They would rather enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season than to give up the

things of the world in order to know Christ. Paul has a few warnings for these people in his epistles. In Romans 13:11, he says, “It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” Just three verses later, Paul tells the Romans how to do this. They are to “put...on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). Rather than sleeping, they are to “Awake to righteousness, and sin not” (15:34). Finally, Paul says, in Ephesians 5:14 to “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” These verses demonstrate that Paul is not talking about physical sleep, but spiritual sleep.

Therefore, when Paul says that “MANY are weak and sickly among you, and MANY sleep” (11:30), it shows how carnal the Corinthian church is (3:3). It is no different from today, when most Christians act like they are not saved, pursuing the lusts of the flesh, rather than walking in the Spirit.

11:31 2:15 says, “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.” The verse before it says that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned. This tells us that, as believers, we have the ability to judge spiritual things, because we have the mind of Christ (2:16), God’s completed Word, and the Holy Ghost to teach it to us (2:9-13). If we use these tools to judge ourselves, we will stop following the lusts of the flesh and walk in the Spirit instead. If we do this, the world will not judge us as hypocrites.

11:32 However, if we do not use these tools to judge ourselves, the world judges us. They either say that we are hypocrites and will not have anything to do with us, or they will note that we are not like Christ at all. (The former is the more likely conclusion.) Either way, the world separates itself from us, because we are two-faced.

This is how “we are chastened of the Lord” (11:32). This is the only time Paul says we are chastened of the Lord. Churchianity likes to say that, if we get a disease or lose our money that God is punishing us for our sin. However, in the dispensation of grace, when we believe the gospel, we are “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6), who is Christ. We are adopted as sons of God and receive the inheritance (Galatians 4:5-7). If we sin, God does not see it, because our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). God sees us as seated together with Christ in heavenly places right NOW (Ephesians 2:5-6).

Think about it. How are we chastened by our parents when we are adults? The answer is the world punishes us when we break the world’s rules, and so we are chastened indirectly by our parents because we did not follow the good instruction they gave us when we were children. This is how God chastens us. 11:31-32 specifically says that, when the world judges us, we are chastened of the Lord.

By contrast, children are chastened directly by their parents. Israel is considered to be children until they receive the atonement at Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20; I Peter 1:7-9). The “CHILDREN of Israel” are called servants (Leviticus

25:55), which is why they go through the five cycles of chastisement, as found in Leviticus 26. Even in Revelation, they are still called “servants” (Revelation 1:1). Once Jesus Christ comes back, they finally become sons of God, and they inherit all things (Revelation 21:7). Therefore, we should not be surprised to see God describing chastening in a childlike manner in Hebrews 12:5-11. Churchianity mistakes this for us today, but the book of Hebrews is written to the Hebrews, not to the body of Christ. Therefore, the only chastening we receive from the Lord today is through the world judging us for walking like they do. God does NOT inflict us with a disease or strip us of our money due to some sins we have committed. God does not see those sins; they are covered by the blood of Christ. Praise the Lord!

“That we should not be condemned with the world” (11:32) does not mean we can lose our salvation. At the judgment seat of Christ, our works are tried to see what sort they are. If they are of Christ (gold, silver, and precious stones), we receive a reward. If they are of our flesh (wood, hay, and stubble), we suffer loss of reward, but we still receive eternal life (3:11-15). If we operate entirely in the flesh, then our works are condemned, just like the world’s works are condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). This is how we are “condemned with the world” (11:32).

11:33-34 Now, Paul concludes the chapter by talking about the physical Lord’s Supper. He started with the physical Lord’s Supper (11:17-22), noting that they were despising the church of God by operating in the flesh in that supper (11:22). He then explained how the true purpose of coming together is to partake of the spiritual Lord’s Supper (11:23-32), i.e., to feast on sound doctrine from the Word of God. If they do that, the world will not judge them as hypocrites. They will also be walking in the Spirit. Now, Paul concludes the chapter by showing how righting themselves spiritually will also right themselves physically. If they walk in the Spirit, they will not greedily shove as much food and drink in their mouths as possible before others arrive, but they will “tarry one for another” (11:33).

If someone is not getting enough food at their suppers so that he leaves hungry, he should eat at home (11:34). This is a great example of Christ living in a person. We have already seen that some are drunken and others are hungry (11:21). This shows that there is plenty of food and drink to go around, but those not in the clique do not get to partake. Rather than getting upset and complaining about not being treated fairly by the others, the one not getting any food should simply eat at home and only come to the church when it is time for Bible study. In so doing, he exposes the lusts of the people in the clique, and perhaps this will cause them to examine what they are doing and repent of their behavior. In so doing, the outcast believer is obeying Romans 12:21, which says, “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Another application would be leaving immediately when the service is over, rather than sticking around to talk in a clique.)

If the Corinthians can at least get things right in their suppers, they have taken a crucial first step toward having Christ live in them. This will help in them being

ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20) to those around them. Paul will then work on other issues when he comes to visit them (11:34).

I Corinthians 12 – Spiritual Gifts; Tongues Was the Worst Gift

12 Because the Corinthians are carnal (3:3), they are ignorant about the purpose of spiritual gifts (v. 1). They are using them in a fleshly way, when they should be using them in a spiritual way.

The first thing they need to understand is that there are different gifts, but there are not different Gods (vs. 4-6). Therefore, the spiritual gifts need to be used together to honor the one God, rather than following their flesh to puff themselves up. Every believer was given a spiritual gift (v. 7), and the Spirit gave those gifts based upon each individual's maturity level (Romans 12:3-6). The Corinthians valued tongue talking above all of the other gifts, but it was actually the least important of the gifts (v. 28). They should seek after spiritual gifts that edify the body, not that make them feel good in the flesh (vs. 21-26). Yet, charity is even better than even the best spiritual gifts (v. 31), which Paul will show them in chapter 13.

12:1-2 In 10:1, Paul did not want the Corinthians to be ignorant of the Old Testament being examples and ensamples for us. Why? So that they do not make the same mistakes as Israel did. Now, in 12:1, Paul does not want the Corinthians to be ignorant of spiritual gifts. Why? Because “ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led” (12:2). In other words, the Corinthians were used to following their emotions (That is what “carried away” means here.) in their religion, rather than thinking things through logically. Paul does not want them to abandon scripture for a good feeling. It is especially easy to get into emotionalism when it comes to spiritual gifts, because God is doing something through your flesh that others can see. Therefore, it is easy to glory in yourself, rather than in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14). Apparently, this was already happening, as the Corinthians were talking over each other in other tongues (14:27), in a contest to show who was the most spiritual among them. Therefore, Paul will spend three chapters (12-14) telling them why God gave spiritual gifts (chapter 12), that charity is better than gifts and that the gifts will end (chapter 13), and how to use the gifts (chapter 14).

If the Corinthians are ignorant about this, they will continue to use spiritual gifts in a fleshly way, not bringing edification to the body of Christ. One only has to look at Pentecostals today to see the danger in this. Most Pentecostals do not even read their Bibles, or they at least put more emphasis on feeling good than on learning God's Word. This has spilled over into all of Churchianity, in which most congregations today, invite the “presence of the Spirit” to fill their buildings or for God to “come and visit them” (whatever that means). Therefore, most churches are lacking in teaching sound doctrine, and they follow their emotions instead. They do this in spite of the fact that the spiritual gifts are not in operation any more today (13:8-10). How much more, then, is it likely that the Corinthians would fall into this same dangerous trap when the gifts were real and from the Holy Ghost!

12:3 This verse seems out of place. If the Corinthians are using their spiritual gifts, they would not call Jesus “accursed” (12:3). Also, how can “no man...say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (12:3) when Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,” and “I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:21,23)? If Jesus never knew them, then they must not have had the Holy Ghost at any time, but they still called Jesus, “Lord, Lord.” Since it is PHYSICALLY possible to call Jesus “Lord” in your flesh, Paul must be referring to calling Jesus “accursed” or “Lord” (12:3) by the Holy Ghost.

How would I call Jesus “accursed” spiritually? Paul’s epistles were given to him “by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:12). Paul preached “Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery” (Romans 16:25). Paul is “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles” (Romans 15:16). Paul says twice regarding anyone preaching a false gospel, “let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8-9). Paul will close his first epistle to the Corinthians by saying, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema” (16:22) (“Anathema” means accursed.). This means that, if I reject God’s Word to me today found in Paul’s epistles for the emotionalism of tongue talking, I am calling Jesus “accursed”!

When Jesus ascended to the Father, God made Him “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Since we are not in heaven to see this but we have the Holy Ghost given unto us (Romans 5:5), we can only call Jesus “Lord” by the Holy Ghost. (As a side point, this shows that Lordship salvation is a false gospel, since no one can make Jesus the Lord of their life. Only the Holy Ghost can call Jesus “Lord.”)

What I think Paul is saying, then, is that the Spirit of God uses spiritual gifts to MAGNIFY God’s Word, not to tear it down. As we will see later, tongue talking is the most basic of spiritual gifts (12:28). If someone claims to be using his spiritual gift and does not put an emphasis on the mystery given to Paul, that person is, in a sense, calling Jesus accursed. He is not using his spiritual gift. If someone magnifies Paul’s epistles, then he is calling Jesus “Lord”, and so that person is using his spiritual gift.

12:4-6 These three verses are a great statement on the Godhead, and how each Member has His role in working in the body of Christ today. The Holy Ghost is in charge of dispersing spiritual gifts (12:4). The reason for this is because the goal of spiritual gifts for the body of Christ is to build sound doctrine in the inner man (14:12,26), and the Holy Ghost is in charge of teaching us the deep things of God (2:9-14).

God the Father has “put all things under” the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,” and Jesus will fill heavenly places with His body (Ephesians 1:21-23). Therefore, 12:5 says that the Lord is over the “differences of administrations.”

12:6 says that “there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” 15:24-28 says that the Lord Jesus Christ must reign until all enemies are put under His feet. Then, Jesus will give the kingdom over to God the Father so that God may be all in all. Ephesians 1:17 says that God the Father is the “Father of glory.” Colossians 3:3 says, “your life is hid with Christ in God.” Romans 8:17 says that we are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Putting all of this together, we conclude that God the Father is over everything, which means that the Father is the one with “diversities of operations.” The Father “worketh all in all” (12:6) and He is “all in all” (15:28).

Therefore, in 12:4-6, Paul is showing that all three members of the Godhead do different things in the dispensation of grace for our spiritual well-being. God the Holy Ghost is the edifier (12:4), God the Son is the administrator (12:5), and God the Father is the operations manager (12:6). This shows just how much God loves us that He is completely involved in our spiritual growth!

12:7 This verse says that “EVERY man” in the body of Christ receives a spiritual gift. The gifts are then listed in 12:8-10. Why is it, then, that Pentecostals believe in the gifts today, while Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, etc. do not? Because the spiritual gifts are not in operation today.

Ephesians 4:13-14 says that the gifts are given to the church “TILL we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Therefore, there is a time limit placed on the gifts. The purpose of the gifts is “that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” Therefore, when the Word of God was completed, the spiritual gifts ceased to exist. (We will have more to say about this in the commentary on 13:8-12).

This means that the Pentecostals are making up their spiritual gifts. If not, then why don't other denominations have the gifts, since the gifts are given to “EVERY man” in the body of Christ, not just to a select few?

12:8-10 Here is a list of 9 spiritual gifts. This is not a complete list. Verse 28 also mentions helps and governments. Romans 12:6-8 also mentions the gifts of ministering, teaching, exhorting, ruling, and mercy. Ephesians 4:11 also mentions the gifts of apostles, evangelists, and pastors for a total of 19 gifts in these four passages. Because the Corinthians are carnal (3:3), the gifts Paul mentions here are the lower-level ones.

Romans 12:6 says that gifts differ “according to the grace that is given to us,” which is “according to the proportion of faith.” “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). Therefore, the more the Corinthians read and believe God's Word, the greater the spiritual gift they will receive, because God can entrust them with greater responsibility.

You may look at the list of gifts in 12:8-10 and say that some of these gifts exist today, because some people can give you “the word of wisdom” or “the word of

knowledge” (12:8), and some people have “faith” (12:9). However, no one has the gift of healing or the working of miracles (12:9-10). I am not saying that wisdom, knowledge, and faith do not exist today. What I am saying is that none of these things are given SUPERNATURALLY by the Holy Ghost. If I have wisdom, knowledge, or faith, it is because I have studied to shew myself “approved unto God a WORKMAN that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15). In other words, I have to WORK in order to have wisdom and knowledge. Romans 11:6 says, “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” Since the spiritual gifts are of “grace” (Romans 12:6) and I obtain wisdom and knowledge by working, then no one today has those “gifts”, or any other gifts, for that matter.

Pentecostals like to concentrate on the gift of speaking in tongues, just like the Corinthians did, but they do say that all of the other gifts exist, as well. Yet, they cannot point to one proven instance of someone with the gifts of healing or the working of miracles. Sure, they say that God healed certain people when they prayed, but that is not what is talked about here. Since the gifts are given to “every MAN,” the way healing works is that someone with the gift of healing lays his hands on a person and he is healed, just like Jesus, the disciples, and Paul did. The gift of healing is not me praying for God to heal me and He does so, but it is God giving someone the supernatural ability to heal people. The point is that Pentecostals can tweak the Word of God to try to say that Paul does not say that the gifts will cease when the Word of God is completed (13:8-10), but they cannot get around the fact that they have no evidence of certain gifts being in operation today. Since God says that the spiritual gifts are an all-or-nothing thing, we must conclude that no spiritual gifts are in operation today.

So, what are these gifts listed here? Knowledge is knowing of spiritual things, while wisdom is knowing how to apply knowledge to certain situations. Faith is the ability to believe what God says, even though your flesh tells you something different. Healing is the ability to lay your hands on someone or speak the word, and that person is healed. The working of miracles is supernatural things that are done to demonstrate that what you say is of God, such as what the disciples did after Jesus’ ascension. (“The Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20).) Prophecy is when God supernaturally puts His Word in your mouth for you to speak to others. Discerning of spirits is the supernatural ability to determine if someone/something is of God or the devil. (This is what Peter did when he said that Ananias and Sapphira were lying about giving all the money for the possession that they sold (Acts 5:1-4).) “Divers kinds of tongues” is the supernatural ability to speak in other languages. “The interpretation of tongues” is the supernatural ability to translate speaking in tongues to the common language of the people listening to it.

With the exception of healing, miracles, and possibly discerning of spirits, all of these things can be done today, but you have to work in order to be able to do them. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, God supernaturally gave them the ability to do these things without any work. That is the difference between a gift

and work. For example, if you give me \$100 because I did some work for you, then I earned that money. However, if you just give it to me as a present, it is a gift. It cannot be both. Similarly, I can speak in another tongue if I work to learn that other language, but the Corinthians could speak in other languages because the Holy Ghost supernaturally gave them the words to speak, just like He did with the believing remnant of Israel in Acts 2:1-12. Today, speaking in other languages is a work, while the Corinthians did it through the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Mormons claim that they have the gift of tongues by saying their missionaries to foreign countries learn languages faster than others do. Sorry, nice try!)

12:11 This verse shows that it is up to the Spirit of God to determine what gift to give to each person. 12:28 says that speaking in tongues is the least important of the gifts. 12:31 tells them to “covet earnestly the best gifts.” 14:39 says that the tongue talkers should “covet to prophesy.” If speaking in tongues is the least important gift, then why doesn’t the Spirit give them better gifts? The reason is because they lack the spiritual maturity for the other gifts. Once they use their gifts responsibly and understand more sound doctrine, the Spirit will give them better gifts, because He can depend upon them to handle higher-level gifts responsibly.

For example, a rich father does not give his son millions of dollars at first. Rather, he gives him smaller gifts at first, and then gradually increases the amounts after his son handles the smaller gifts responsibly. So, too, the Spirit of God would start off new believers with tongue talking and then give them better gifts as they mature spiritually. This is what is meant by “the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (12:11).

12:12 All saved people are one body of Christ. Galatians 3:28 says, “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Therefore, when the Holy Ghost gives a gift to someone, that gift is to work with the gifts of the other members of the body of Christ. This means that the Corinthians should expect to see ALL of the gifts (not just tongues or healings) working together to accomplish God’s purpose in us, just like all the parts of your body work together to accomplish what the head wants done. (The body’s head is Christ (Ephesians 5:23).)

12:13 This verse is key to understand the dry baptism by the Spirit into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Churchianity wants to make this water, but it cannot be water baptism. The reason is because Paul said earlier that he thanks God that he only baptized a few of the Corinthians, “for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1:14,17). Now, Paul is saying to the Corinthians that “by one Spirit are we ALL baptized into one body... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (12:13). This means that this baptism cannot be water because, if it is, he would not thank God that he baptized only a few of them. He would have made sure that every single one of them was baptized, because Spirit baptism is the only way that they could be saved. If they have not experienced the baptism of 12:13, they are not part of the body of Christ and they do not have the Holy Spirit, which means they are going to hell.

As we learned in 10:2, the word “baptism” does not mean “water”, rather it means “to be identified with.” Romans 6:3-4 says that those, who are “baptized into Jesus Christ [are] baptized into His death,” and that “we are buried with Him by baptism into death.” Romans 6:6 says that “our old man is crucified with Him.” Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ.” Colossians 2:11 says that, in Christ, “ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” Obviously, this is a spiritual circumcision, not a physical one. The next verse defines this spiritual circumcision as being “buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.” Since the circumcision is spiritual, the baptism must be spiritual, as well.

Also, Ephesians 4:5 says that there is only “one baptism,” which means that God does not recognize water baptism today. Why? Because Colossians 2 goes on to say that, when Jesus was crucified, He nailed the handwriting of ordinances to His cross (Colossians 2:14). The reason is because those ordinances, which includes water baptism, “are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17). Since we are baptized into Christ’s body, we have received the Spirit of God, which is much better than the shadow of being baptized into water. Therefore, God does not recognize water baptism today.

This baptism by the Spirit into Christ’s body also explains why we have eternal security. Our baptism or identification into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection is how we are spiritually circumcised. Circumcision means that something is “cut off.” What is cut off is the link between our flesh and our soul. Romans 6:6-7 says, “That our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” Colossians 3:3 says, “Ye are dead.” In other words, when we are identified with Christ’s death by Spirit baptism, our flesh is cut off or circumcised from our soul. While we still have our vile flesh (Philippians 3:21), any sin we do in our flesh does not touch our souls any more, because we are identified with Christ’s death, which fully paid for all of our sins. The sin stays in the vile flesh, which Christ will destroy at the rapture; the sin never touches our souls! Our identity is now Christ, not Adam. This is how we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Therefore, any one who does not recognize this Spirit baptism, that automatically happens when you believe the gospel, does not recognize their eternal security nor that their life is in Christ. You cannot live for Christ in your flesh, since no good thing dwells in your flesh (Romans 7:18). **This is why the most important thing to learn, once you are saved, is your Spirit baptism into Christ.** Since Satan does not want you to learn this, he has tricked all of Churchianity’s denominations into following water baptism, rather than Spirit baptism. In this way, Satan has effectively eliminated the body of Christ’s service of God, because they try to do so in their dead flesh. This is the primary reason why the dispensation of grace has been going on for nearly 2,000 years!

Note, from this verse, that physical distinctions are done away with in the body of Christ. We are “one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or

free” (12:13). Why, then, would Christians believe that God CREATES a physical distinction by having you baptized in water, when Spirit baptism into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection actually ELIMINATES physical distinctions?!

12:14-20 Churchianity likes to use these verses to say that every Christian must go to church and do whatever his “job” is at the church. Otherwise, they are not serving the Lord. However, we need to understand that a building is not the church, the people are. Also, ALL saved people are the body of Christ, not just the people at your local assembly. With today’s technology, we can even connect with members of the body of Christ that are on the other side of the world and “have church” online, rather than in a building!

For the Corinthians, there were specific, spiritual gifts given to each saved person. If there was only a tongue talker at church that day, he could not use his gift, because it must be interpreted and then prophesied to say whether it is of God or not. “But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God” (14:28). However, now these gifts have passed off the scene because we have God’s completed Word for us to “come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man” (Ephesians 4:13). Therefore, it is not critical to have everyone come into a building and use spiritual gifts in order to be edified by God’s Word. We can do that by simply reading a King James Bible.

Now, this does not mean that each person does not have a part in the local assembly. Each person has natural abilities, and each person has skills that he has learned over time. For example, a local assembly can have someone lead the singing, another person handles the finances of the church, another person is the bishop, another person coordinates prayers, and another is in charge of getting food together for a meal with each other. Each person should use his abilities and skills to help the body as a whole.

However, we need to remember that the proper functioning of the body only occurs when we listen to the head, which is Christ (11:3). The Colossians came together as a local assembly, but Paul said they were “not holding the Head” (Colossians 2:19), because they were following “commandments and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:22). The result was that they were worshipping their own will (Colossians 2:23), rather than worshipping God. Therefore, just because a local assembly gets together and each person has a job, does not mean that the church is functioning as it should. It must function according to the leading of Christ as its head, regardless of what jobs each individual person does.

The way Christ leads is **by His Word**, not by some inner impression or feeling. Therefore, the way you perform your job in a local assembly is according to sound doctrine. For example, the song leader should only pick songs that promote sound doctrine. The finance person should only spend money on what will help the church be ambassadors for Christ, getting people saved and coming unto the knowledge of the truth. The bishop should only teach things that are according to sound doctrine, not based upon church history or tradition, but upon the Word of

God rightly divided, taken literally and in its context. Prayers should be offered for spiritual growth, not for physical healing. Food should be coordinated so that everyone can afford the food they are to bring, and it should be something that everyone should enjoy.

The point is that, in the Corinthians' day, the specific job you did was more important than it is today, because everyone had a spiritual gift that needed to be used for the edification of the body of Christ. However, today, there are no spiritual gifts. Therefore, the most important thing for you to do is to read and believe God's Word, and then use whatever talents and skills you have within the context of holding Christ as your head.

This shows that your specific job does not matter. In fact, if you are part of a local assembly that does not have Christ as their head, meaning they do not make the Bible their final authority, it is better for you to leave that assembly and use your talents and abilities elsewhere, than it is to stay in that assembly, because they are not holding the head, which is the most important thing you can do.

Moreover, with today's technology, you can use your talents and skills to help others in the body of Christ, even if you are not able to do so in person. Maybe you can organize meetings and conferences, start a prayer list, write things on Biblical topics, or teach others certain skills over the Internet.

I write all of this to say that our number one priority should be holding the head (Christ), learning sound doctrine, and using that sound doctrine in our lives to help others, both the saved and the unsaved. These things should not be sacrificed, as is so often the case today, in order to have "fellowship" with others in a local assembly.

12:14-16 These verses are good to show that eternal security is true. Churchianity says that Christ never leaves us or forsakes us, but we can leave Him. They will say that Christ will never let go of us, but we can let go of Him. However, these verses prove this is not possible. Christ is the head (11:3), and we are His body (12:27). Since the body is one unit, no member of the body can break away from the body, even if it wants to. Verses 15-16 have the foot and the ear saying that they are not part of the body, but that does not mean that they are not part of the body any more. In other words, believing a lie does not change the truth. II Corinthians 13:8 says, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." You can claim not to be a Christian all you want to, but, if you have recognized your sin and trusted in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sin, you WILL go to heaven, whether you want to or not. This is because, when you are saved, "your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Later on, "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny himself" (II Timothy 2:13). Once you are saved, you are part of the body of Christ. Therefore, Christ would have to deny Himself eternal life, in order to deny you eternal life. Since He cannot deny Himself, Christ will give you eternal life guaranteed. The illustration of the body helps us understand this. If you are a foot, you can say

that you are not part of the body, but that does not make it so. You are still part of the body.

12:17-20 While we do not have spiritual gifts today, we do have natural abilities and acquired skills through work. Each person, then, is uniquely equipped to work in the body of Christ. Some are preachers, some are prayer warriors, some are encouragers, some help financially, etc. All members of the body of Christ should contribute what they can to help the body as a whole. This will help prepare us for our positions in heavenly places, where each person will have a different position, whether it be a throne, dominion, principality, power, or might (Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:16).

Because we have NATURAL abilities and acquired skills, we have to be very careful not to get these confused with the spiritual gifts Paul talks about to the Corinthians. Churchianity has a tendency to say that God is working in their church when they see attendance numbers growing and more money coming in. However, this just means that people are happy with what is going on there, as with investment clubs that see their portfolios grow or sports fans who see their teams win. It does not necessarily mean that God is “blessing” the church. In fact, because people tend to go after the flesh, even in churches, it is more likely that a church with growing numbers and money is probably NOT serving God. Paul warned that churchgoers will not “endure” sound doctrine, but will turn away from the truth, listening to fables, due to the itching ears of their flesh (II Timothy 4:3-4). We see this with Jesus, when He spoke to the 5,000 in John 6 (see John 6:10,24). He told them to concentrate on the spiritual, rather than the physical (John 6:26-27). The result was that most of them left Him except for the 12 apostles (John 6:66-68), and this was during the time when God WAS blessing people physically speaking.

Therefore, serving God is not about the numbers. While it would be great to see church attendance grow, the most important thing is to let Christ live in you. Sadly, this often leads to decreased interest by others, since most walk by sight and not by faith. This becomes clear when we recognize that the body of Christ does not have spiritual gifts today. Even if they did, any growth would be fleeting, as people would leave, once the church gets into sound doctrine, much like the 5,000 left Jesus when He gave them spiritual truths in John 6. Jesus said, “THE WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63), not “THE PHYSICAL MIRACLES that I do”!

Also, we need to note that, since we concentrate on the spiritual, the greatest result of having Christ live in us will be seen in heaven, not on the earth. There, we will learn of people who were saved or learned to have Christ live in them as a result of us doing this on earth. We will also meet angels, to whom we have shown the manifold wisdom of God, which is the intent of God revealing the mystery to us today. Ephesians 3:10 says, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” Personally, I would rather have a large crowd of angels learning from Christ living in me, than to receive glory from a large crowd of men on earth.

This happens when each member of the body of Christ works toward spiritual things, instead of material things. Paul told the Romans that they obey Christ by being “wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil,” then “the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:19-20). This happens when each member of the body does his part, meaning that he allows Christ to live in him, using his NATURAL skills and abilities that he allowed Christ to develop in him through God’s Word, all to the glory of God, with no thought given toward pleasing men.

When we think that our abilities are more important than others, we stop bringing glory to God, because then it is all about me, rather than about Christ. This is what Paul is saying in 12:21. If the eye says “unto the hand, I have no need of thee” (12:21), the eye will only do what it wants to do without giving consideration to the rest of the body. An example of this is that if a church decides the only thing that is important is that they “feel” the Holy Spirit. They then base their entire services on emotionalism, rather than on the Word of God. The result is that they walk in the flesh, rather than in the Spirit. Another example is if a church decides that theology is the only thing that is important. They then spend their time learning Greek, studying manuscripts, and consulting commentaries. They have based their entire services on human intellect, rather than the Word of God. Even if they use the Word of God in their studies, they are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (II Timothy 3:7). Another example is if a “Bible” study turns into a complaint fest about various ailments. They then pray for fleshly healings, rather than spiritual growth.

Instead, Philippians 4:5 says, “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” This means that each member of the body of Christ should learn sound doctrine from God’s Word and apply it in their lives based upon their natural skills and abilities. They have then “moderated” their feelings to Christ living in them, because “the Lord is at hand” in their lives to work effectually in those who believe (I Thessalonians 2:13). Unfortunately, most churches are either known for theology, worship, or prayer that is all centered around the flesh.

12:22-25 These verses demonstrate the principle that, the parts of the body that people do not desire to be, are usually the most necessary parts, and the parts that people want to be, are usually the least necessary. This is because we tend to look at things from a fleshly point of view, rather than a spiritual point of view.

In the context of the spiritual gifts, the Corinthians all want to speak in tongues and they will even talk over each other to show how “spiritual” they really are (14:27). Prophesying does not seem like a big deal, because you just speak words that everyone can understand. It seems like anyone can do it, and so the Corinthians do not desire that gift. Yet, tongue talking is useless without an interpreter (14:28), but prophesying is of great benefit, because it tells the church what God’s Word is for today (14:1-19). There is less honor for the prophet (“A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house” (Matthew 13:57).) and more honor for the tongue talker, even though the prophecy

gift is more important (12:28). This shows how the carnal Corinthians are bestowing “more abundant honour” upon the “less honourable” gifts, while “our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness” (12:23). This is so “there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another” (12:25).

Today, quietly studying God’s Word (I Thessalonians 4:11-12) in order to be approved by God (II Timothy 2:15) and praying for spiritual needs without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17) are two of the greatest things you can do as members of the body of Christ. However, Churchianity bestows more honor upon worship leaders, missionaries, and youth pastors.

12:26 A lot is made out of this verse, coupled with Hebrews 10:25 (“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”), to try to get people to come to church. This just amounts to a cash grab by the leaders. First off, Hebrews 10:25 does not apply today, because it is written to the Hebrews. I cannot “see the day approaching” because there are no prophetic events that have to take place before the rapture of the church. “The day” is a reference to Jesus’ second coming, not the rapture. (You only have to look at the conditional salvation of Hebrews 10:26 to see that Hebrews is not written to us today.)

Second, 12:26 is not saying to come to church and do your part. Rather, it is saying that members of the body of Christ are all connected together. If I suffer, I cause other members to suffer. If I am honoured, the other members can rejoice with me. Since the context is spiritual gifts and the working of the spiritual body together, the suffering and honouring must be spiritual, as well. I suffer spiritually if I have a form of godliness (II Timothy 3:5) or follow anything else that is contrary to “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery” (Romans 16:25).

Therefore, if I go to a church that does not preach the revelation of the mystery, I suffer, spiritually speaking. I then cause other members of the body of Christ to suffer, as I spread false doctrine to them. We only have to look at Churchianity and see how they live just like unbelievers, if not worse, to see that this is true. Therefore, rather than this verse being a verse that says that I should attend a church, this verse is actually saying that I need to make sure that I do not spiritually suffer.

How do I do that? By “holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Colossians 2:19). Since I am a member of the body of Christ, I need to get instructions from my Head, Who is Christ, not from other members of the body. If I listen to the Head, I do my part to help the whole body. If I listen to Churchianity, I am not holding the Head, and so I do not do my part. The church is NOT a building. It is an organization with Christ as its Head. Ephesians 1:22-23 says that God “hath put all things under [Christ’s] feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that

fillesh all in all.” I get nourishment from Christ, not from a man-made church. I get this nourishment by reading and believing God’s Word. Therefore, if I am attending a church that is not holding Christ as the head, I need to leave that church. Otherwise, I will suffer, along with the rest of Christ’s body, because the people in that organization are listening to man, not to God. Therefore, rather than being averse to support attending a man-made church, 12:26 actually tells us to make sure we listen to Christ through God’s Word, even at the expense of leaving a man-made church, because we want to be honoured and rejoice, spiritually speaking, rather than suffering.

12:27 In case there was any doubt who the head of the church is, Paul makes it clear that it is Christ, since we are His body. The head is not the Pope, the Baptist organization, or any other person or man-made church. As such, we should take instructions from Christ through His Word. Israel, on the other hand, is the bride of Christ, according to Revelation 21:9-10. This shows that God has two programs: 1) The bride of Christ, Israel, to rule over the earth, and 2) The body of Christ to rule over the heaven. This makes sense since “God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Therefore, as Christ’s body, we need to take our instructions from Christ found in Paul’s epistles, not in the red letters of Matthew – John.

12:28 We will now give a brief description of each gift. An **apostle** is a “sent one,” specifically sent by the Lord Jesus Christ. We often think of the 12 apostles as the only apostles. However, the Body of Christ also had apostles. Paul is “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13). He is the one specifically sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to minister the gospel of God to the Gentiles (Romans 15:16), while Jesus was God’s apostle to minister God’s promises to Israel (Romans 15:8).

A **prophet** is someone who speaks the Word of God. We often think of prophets as being the Old Testament prophets or people who tell the future, but God also gave prophets to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11) until God’s written Word was completed (Ephesians 4:13). They simply spoke the instructions, that the Lord Jesus Christ gave them for the mystery dispensation, that were not yet written down. They also declared which of Paul’s epistles were scripture and which were not (14:37).

Teachers are those who are SUPERNATURALLY given the ability to teach by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have teachers today, but today’s teachers need to “STUDY” and be “workmen” in God’s Word rightly divided (II Timothy 2:15).

Miracles are those who are able to do things supernaturally, while gifts of **healings** are those who are able to heal people physically. Note that we are not talking about people praying to God and God healing them, but we are talking about God healing them through people with the gift of healing. **Helps** probably is the supernatural ability to help or comfort people in their time of need. The gift of **governments** is probably the supernatural ability to place people in the right positions for them to serve in the church, like a pastor may appoint various leaders in a church. Finally, **diversities of tongues** are people speaking in other

tongues, and then others interpreting those tongues into the common language of the people.

12:28-31 Most of the people in the Corinthian church were speaking in tongues, and that was it. The reason is because their spiritual gifts were “according to the grace” given to them, which was “according to the proportion of faith” (Romans 12:6). “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Therefore, the more they read and believed God’s Word, the more faith they had. The more faith, the greater the spiritual gift they would have.

Since the Corinthians were carnal (3:3), they did not have much faith, which meant that they had the lowest gift, which is tongues (12:28). Today, Pentecostals desire speaking in tongues over everything else. If they want more gifts, they may seek after miracles and gifts of healings, but even these are lower on the spiritual-gift list. Note that the best gift is being an apostle, second is a prophet, and third is a teacher (12:28). Then, it says “AFTER THAT miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (12:28). In other words, ALL gifts are below apostle, prophet, and teacher, yet Pentecostals desire the things that are “AFTER THAT,” or these lower gifts. This shows their carnality is just like the Corinthians’ carnality.

12:31 says to “covet earnestly the best gifts.” Yet, the 10th commandment says, “Thou shalt not covet” (Exodus 20:17). This is not a Bible contradiction. The 10th commandment says that you should not covet “any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Exodus 20:17). However, the spiritual gifts belong to the Holy Ghost. If I covet my neighbour’s wife and take her away from him, she is mine and no longer my neighbour’s. However, if I covet to prophesy and the Holy Ghost allows me to do so, I have not taken the prophecy gift away from anyone, because the Holy Ghost has an unlimited supply of gifts. This is why it is okay to covet the best gifts of the Holy Ghost, while it is no okay to covet what belongs to your neighbor.

Obviously, the best gifts are the ones higher on the list. This is why Paul will later tell them, “Covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues” (14:39). Prophecy is a much better gift than speaking in tongues, because the prophet can tell you what the Lord says. The tongue talker does not know what he is saying. Therefore, prophecy edifies the church, while tongue talking cannot edify unless there is an interpreter there to translate. “I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (14:5).

Regardless of the believer’s spiritual gift, there is “a more excellent way” (12:31) that Paul will now share with the Corinthians in chapter 13. This “more excellent way” is charity or God’s love. Paul spends the first three verses of chapter 13 saying that he could speak with angels’ tongues, have all knowledge and all faith, and give all his goods to the poor, even giving his body to be burned, and he would accomplish nothing if he did not have charity. Therefore, while the Corinthians should “covet earnestly the best gifts,” it is more important that God’s love come

through them. In other words, it is better to speak in tongues but share God's love with others, than to be an apostle and not share God's love. Therefore, Paul will now spend a whole chapter on charity.

I Corinthians 13 – Charity: The More Excellent Way

13 Paul said, in 8:1, that “knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.” Spiritual gifts can also puff up the Corinthians. We see this among Pentecostals today, who do not think they need to study the Bible, as long as they speak in tongues or feel the Holy Ghost. However, the most important thing is charity because it is by God's love (charity) coming through the Corinthians that others are saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth (John 13:35).

The spiritual gifts ceased operating when God's Word was completed (vs. 8-12) What remained was faith (Romans – Galatians), hope (I & II Thessalonians), and charity (Ephesians – Colossians), and the greatest of those three things is charity (v. 13). Therefore, it is more important to have charity than to exercise all spiritual gifts, have all knowledge (vs. 1-2), and even give your flesh up in complete sacrifice (v. 3). Without charity, these things are nothing, because they are not of God. This is because all of the fruit of the spirit is found in charity (vs. 4-7).

The danger of fundamental Churchianity is that they get into theology without the practical application of sound doctrine. The danger of Pentecostalism is that they get into emotionalism and disregard God's Word. As Bible believers, we need to read and believe sound doctrine and allow Christ to apply that sound doctrine through our lives. This application of sound doctrine is charity, i.e., God's love.

13:1-3 “The more excellent way” of 12:31 is charity. Churches use the argument that we need to go back to the original Greek in order to get the true meaning of the New Testament, since Greek is a more eloquent language than English is. They will argue that there are ten, different, Greek words for “love,” while English only has one. Here, we see that English has more than one word for “love.” The word “charity” is used throughout this chapter as a special, English word used to describe God's love. However, all of the modern translations take “charity” out of their Bibles and replace it with love. What is ironic is that, the same people who say we must go back to the Greek in order to understand the New Testament better, remove words, such as “charity,” from their modern English translations in order to dumb-down God's Word in English, the King James Bible!

This chapter shows how the most important thing to have is charity. The problem is that most of Churchianity goes to one extreme or the other. Either they become theologians and/or legalists to where they study God's Word regularly, but they do not apply God's Word to their lives, because it is all theoretical to them. These are people who are spoiled “through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). At the other end of the spectrum are people who say they do not need to study the Bible, because all they need to do is love. However, since “God is love” (I John 4:8) and God reveals Himself through scripture, people cannot genuinely share God's

love with others if they do not know what God is all about by reading His Word. Thus, the “Biblical scholars” are really just scholars of philosophy and tradition, while the touchy-feely Christians are sharing a false love with others. The only way to have charity is by reading and believing God’s Word and allowing Christ to live in us by applying the sound doctrine we have learned in the Bible. Very few people actually do this.

These first three verses cover things in the flesh that people value to say that they have charity or God’s love. 13:1 says that, regardless of how eloquent of a speaker you are, if you do not have charity, your words are meaningless. 13:2 says that, if you understood all spiritual things, you are nothing without charity. 13:3 says that, if you give everything you can give, physically speaking, there is no profit in doing so, if you do not have charity. Thus, in three verses, Paul has destroyed all of man’s accomplishments and put God’s charity as the number one priority!

In 13:1, Paul talks about speaking “with the tongues of men and of angels.” I think “tongues of men” refers to using man’s wisdom to sound good to others. I think “tongues of angels” refers to talking about spiritual things. Today’s megachurch pastors fit into this category. They use a lot of smooth talk and talk about God from a fleshly point of view, using pop psychology. Paul says that all they are doing is making a bunch of noise, if they do not have charity. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). If someone has recognized his sin and is looking for salvation, he will not believe the words you speak, no matter how eloquent they are, if he does not see charity coming through them, because he will not see God in those words.

In 14:39, Paul says that the gift of prophecy is a good gift to covet, because it is the ability to speak the words of the Lord to his audience. So, if Paul can speak God’s words, understand all spiritual things, and have all faith so as to remove all mountains of religion (Matthew 17:20), you would think he is doing all he can. However, without charity, he is nothing (13:2). Granted, the word of God can still penetrate the hearts of people, and they can be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. (We see this in Philippians 1:15-18.) However, Paul HIMSELF is nothing without charity. Why? Because in the end, only “faith, hope, charity” (13:13) will abide, and “charity never faileth” (13:8). Therefore, any works done without charity will be burned up at the judgment seat of Christ (3:12-15), making the person nothing without charity.

The irony of 13:3 is that, today, people think of charity as feeding the poor or doing other things to help people, while expecting nothing in return. This verse makes it clear that feeding the poor is not a good deed unless you have “charity,” i.e., God’s love. Therefore, a deed, in itself, is not loving or unloving. What makes a deed a “good” deed is charity motivation behind it. As with 13:2, giving everything you have to help others may still get them saved and/or have them come unto the knowledge of the truth. It is just that you do not profit yourself when you give everything of yourself and do so without charity.

I John 4:8 says that “God IS love.” It does not say that He is loving, but that He is love. Therefore, the best definition of love is: God. God, then, “commendeth His love toward us” by having Christ die for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). We receive God’s love when we believe the gospel. “We [then] love Him, because He first loved us” (I John 4:19). I John 3:14 says, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” Now, I realize John is talking to Israel, not to us today. However, this verse shows that we can only have love in Christ. Any “love” outside of Christ is lust or has an ulterior motive.

If we live based upon sound doctrine, we share God’s love with others, and they will believe the gospel and/or sound doctrine from us because they see God’s love coming through us. Now, this is assuming that they have recognized their sin and are looking for the solution to their sin. Most churchgoers are trying to do good things to boost their pride so that they think they can work their way to heaven. These people constrain you to do good deeds “only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ” (Galatians 6:12). These people will follow the smooth talkers and believe false gospels and false doctrine. However, Paul is talking about true, spiritual profit, and this only comes from love. Those, who have recognized their sin and know that they are not righteous (Romans 3:10), will look for God’s love because “charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8) that they have. This is why charity profits where eloquent speaking (13:1), all knowledge (13:2), and all good works (13:3) do not.

13:4-7 Galatians 5:22-23 says, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Nine things are listed, but the verse says “fruit”, not “fruits.” This shows that love is THE fruit of the Spirit, and the other eight things listed are characteristics of love. We see this in the description of charity found in 13:4-7. The following list is my opinion of which of the eight characteristics of love (joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance) is mentioned in each description of charity found in 13:4-7:

“Suffereth long” = longsuffering
“Kind” = gentleness
“Envieth not” = peace
“Not puffed up” = meekness
“Seeketh not her own” = meekness
“Not easily provoked” = temperance
“Thinketh no evil” = goodness
“Rejoiceth in the truth” = joy
“Beareth all things” = longsuffering
“Believeth all things” = faith
“Hopeth all things” = faith
“Endureth all things” = longsuffering

Contrast this with Revelation 13:15 which says that, for the last half of the tribulation period, the false prophet will “cause that as many as would not worship

the image of the beast should be killed.” Matthew 10:21 says that Satan will get family members involved in this: “And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.” What a world of difference there is between God’s love and Satan’s hate! Honestly, it is the difference between heaven and hell. (The primary attribute of hell is that it is void of love. This is why it is awful beyond description.)

This should teach us that, as far as God is concerned, the end does not justify the means. Therefore, we should not try to trick or coerce people into believing the gospel or sound doctrine. Instead, God’s love would have us suffer long with others, be kind, do not envy how many people are on Satan’s side or their higher standing in the things of this world, do not be puffed up about knowing more truth than others, do not seek our own well-being, do not be easily provoked into an argument, do not think evil of others, rejoice when we have the opportunity to share the truth with others, bear with their unbelief, believe that they can still be saved, have hope that they will believe, and endure with them until they finally believe the gospel and learn sound doctrine (13:4-7). This is charity applied. It is how God’s love comes through us to others in order for them to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

13:8-11 When 13:8 says, “Charity never faileth,” it does not mean that, if we share charity with others, they are guaranteed to believe the gospel and/or sound doctrine that we are trying to show them. “Faileth,” in this context, refers to no longer existing. We know this to be true based upon the next statement: “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail” (13:8). Obviously, God’s prophecies do not fail in the sense that they fail to come to pass. Therefore, “fail” must mean that they will cease. Basically, Paul is saying that charity will last forever.

By contrast, he says there will come a time when the gifts of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will cease to exist. 13:9 tells us why. It says, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” We now know that the purpose of the spiritual gifts is to impart spiritual knowledge. It is not to make us look godly. **The Holy Ghost’s job is to teach you the things of God; it is not to make you feel good.** When Jesus first told the disciples about the coming Holy Ghost, He said, “The Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). He did not say, “The Holy Ghost shall make you feel good as you speak in tongues and feel God’s presence in worship songs!” Moreover, Paul has already told the Corinthians that the Holy Ghost teaches them the deep things of God. “Now we have received...the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (2:12-13).

When I Corinthians was written, Romans, II Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon had not been written yet. Therefore, they knew “in part” (13:9) the mystery doctrine for them to follow. II

Timothy 2:7 says, "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Therefore, they need all of Paul's epistles in order to understand all spiritual things, but 9 of Paul's 13 epistles were not written at the time. In order to get all mystery doctrine to the Corinthians, the Holy Ghost gave them spiritual gifts. Thus, they prophesy in part to make up for only knowing in part.

The next verse says, "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (13:10). This must mean that the spiritual gifts will pass off the scene when the "perfect" is come. This "perfect" ends up being the completed Word of God, which was completed when Paul wrote his last book, probably II Timothy. (We know that Paul's writings completed God's Word because he says that the mystery dispensation was given to him "to fulfil the Word of God" (Colossians 1:25-26). We also have Ephesians 1:8 which says that God has "abounded toward us in ALL wisdom and prudence." Ephesians was written after Acts 28, which brings up another reason why the spiritual gifts stop operating then. God said that "through [Israel's] fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Romans 11:11). Since "the Jews require a sign" (1:22), another reason God gave the spiritual gifts to the body of Christ was so the Jews would desire to be saved. The book of Acts concludes with Paul telling the Jews that he will no longer go to them with the gospel; he will only go to Gentiles from now on (Acts 28:25-28). Therefore, another reason why sign gifts were not needed any more is because Paul would no longer go to the Jews.)

Churchianity says that the "perfect" is when we go to heaven. However, that does not make any sense, because the Holy Ghost gave spiritual gifts to the body of Christ so that they would learn God's Word. Also, 13:10 says, "When that which is perfect IS COME." Therefore, the perfect is coming to the Corinthians. If this referred to seeing Christ in heaven, it would say something like, "when we are perfected in heaven," or "when WE come to that which is perfect."

Furthermore, Ephesians 4 supports the "perfect" being God's completed Word. Ephesians 4:8 says that the Lord Jesus Christ gave gifts to men after He ascended to His throne in heaven. The purpose of the gifts is "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). This is in line with what we have already observed here in I Corinthians. Then, Ephesians 4:13-14 says that the gifts were given "TILL we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Notice that Ephesians 4:13 talks about coming into "the knowledge of the Son of God unto a PERFECT man." When God's Word is completed, we have full knowledge of the Son of God for this dispensation, resulting in "a perfect man," because the body of Christ has all the knowledge from its head, Christ, that is necessary to keep us from being "carried about with every wind of doctrine."

Then, we are “henceforth...no more children.” It is no coincidence that we are said not to be children any longer once we mature with all doctrine for this dispensation, because 13:11 mentions this, as well. It says, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” In other words, Ephesians 4 says that the spiritual gifts will pass off the scene once we come into the knowledge of the Son of God, because we do not need them any more since we have full knowledge. The result is that we are spiritually mature adults, as opposed to being children. I Corinthians 13:11 says the exact same thing, that, once the perfect is come, we are no longer children, and so we are to put away childish things, i.e., spiritual gifts. Therefore, the spiritual gifts pass off the scene when God’s Word is completed when Paul pens his last divinely inspired word.

This also makes sense when we compare Israel with the body of Christ. With regard to the body of Christ, we have NOW been justified by Christ’s blood (Romans 5:9), and we have “NOW received the atonement” (Romans 5:11). We are “no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:7). This means that we are “blessed...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3), and we are sitting “together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6) right now. In other words, we are already adult sons of God, making us “joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17).

By contrast, Israel is called God’s servants (Leviticus 26:55). Even in Revelation 1:1, they are still called “servants.” Galatians 4:1 says that “the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all.” This is the position that Israel is in until they receive the atonement, which takes place at Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20; I Peter 1:7-9). In other words, Israel is spiritual children until then. The gifts of the Holy Ghost initially went to Israel because they were children, and the reason the Jews seek after signs is because they are still children (1:22). When Jesus comes back and gives them the atonement, God “will put [His] law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts....They shall all know [Him], from the least of them unto the greatest of them” (Jeremiah 31:33-34). There is no mention of them speaking in tongues in the kingdom, because it will not be necessary. Similarly, once Christ “abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence” (Ephesians 1:8) with the completion of Paul’s epistles, tongue talking, along with the other gifts of the Spirit, ceased.

In summary, when we believe the gospel today, we are considered to be spiritual adults, and believing Israel will not be spiritual adults until Jesus’ second coming. Therefore, when Paul says, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (13:11), he is saying that, once God’s Word to the body of Christ is completed, the Holy Ghost will put away the spiritual gifts, because they are childish compared with God’s completed Word. After all, a child babbles, and tongue talking sounds like babbling to those who do not know what is being said. This is why Paul says, “In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (14:19).

With this in mind, let's look at Ephesians 4 again. Christ gave spiritual gifts to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:8,11) "TILL" we grow up to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children" (Ephesians 4:13-14). In other words, **spiritual gifts are only necessary for children**. Since God has already said, in Galatians 4:7, that we are no longer children, it makes sense that the "perfect" refers to Christ abounding toward us in all wisdom and prudence (Ephesians 1:8) with God's completed Word. Therefore, Paul is telling the Corinthians, in 13:11, to put away the childish actions of spiritual gifts, once God's Word is completed.

We should also note that the Corinthians were carnal (3:3). Therefore, they were more childish than other believers. This is why Paul spends so much time on spiritual gifts with the Corinthians, when you do not see him doing this in other epistles. It is no coincidence, then, that today's Pentecostals know less of God's Word than Baptists and other denominations. Therefore, even without these verses in our Bibles, we can see, just by observation, that studying God's Word as a workman (II Timothy 2:15) is what adults do, while seeking after spiritual gifts is what children do.

13:12 Again, Churchianity uses this verse of seeing "face to face" to say that the "perfect" refers to the rapture of the body of Christ. They say that the spiritual gifts pass off the scene when we pass off the scene, because that is when we see Jesus "face to face." However, the context does not support this. The verse says, "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" (13:12). If this were talking about physically seeing Jesus, it would mean that I can physically see Him darkly right now, and that I will see Him clearly later. Obviously, that is not the case, because I see no image of Jesus physically right now. Thus, Paul must be talking about spiritual sight, which makes sense, because we are to "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7).

Also, the context is knowledge. "Now we see...darkly" equates to "now I know in part" (13:12), and so "seeing darkly" versus "seeing face to face" must be in reference to knowledge. This makes sense in light of the fact that spiritual gifts are being talked about in I Corinthians 12-14, and we have already seen, from Ephesians 4, that spiritual gifts are no longer useful once we "come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man" (Ephesians 4:13).

Furthermore, we can turn to II Corinthians to figure out what "face to face" really means. II Corinthians 3:15-16 says that Israel has a vail upon their heart when Moses is read. By contrast, the body of Christ is said to "with open FACE beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." The result is that we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3:18). Then, just a few verses later, we are told that "God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the FACE of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6). So, we "with open FACE" (II Corinthians 3:18) get the light from

God “in the FACE of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). Hmm...this sounds like “face to face” to me.

John 1:1 identifies Jesus as “the Word.” People say, “Well, Jesus is the Living Word,” and this is somehow different from the written Word of God. However, when referring to the written Word of God, Hebrews 4:12 says that it is “quick,” meaning that it is alive. Galatians 3:8 also tells us that the scripture foresaw “that God would justify the heathen through faith.” This tells me that the written Word of God is alive, just like Jesus is alive. Therefore, I do not see how you can differentiate between Jesus and God’s Word.

This means that, if I read God’s Word with “open face” (II Corinthians 3:18), I am looking into “the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6), as I read it and the Holy Ghost teaches it to me. (It is no coincidence that the Holy Ghost’s job is to teach believers the things of God (2:12-13), and that the Holy Ghost is the One Who gave spiritual gifts to the Corinthians (12:7-11). In other words, the spiritual gifts accomplished the teaching of the things of God until God’s Word was completed.) This is how I am changed into the image of the Lord by the Spirit of the Lord. Note also that II Corinthians 4:6 mentions that, when we do behold the face of Jesus Christ, we receive “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (II Corinthians 4:6). And, so, again, knowledge is mentioned in the same context as “face.” Therefore, the most likely interpretation of beholding “face to face” (13:12) is that this takes place when my face beholds the face of Jesus Christ in God’s WRITTEN Word. The Corinthians knew in part and prophesied in part in order to see Christ’s face. However, once God’s written Word was completed, the perfect face of Christ had come in God’s Word, and so the prophesying in part, along with the other spiritual gifts, passed off the scene (13:9-10). The Corinthians were then to put away the childish things of the spiritual gifts, because they are now a man (13:11), i.e., they are “a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

The Corinthians did NOT see Jesus’ physical face as “through a glass, darkly” (13:12), and so “then face to face” (13:12) CANNOT be referring to seeing Jesus’ physical face in heaven.

13:13 When God fulfils the Word of God with the mystery given to Paul (Colossians 1:25), the result is that “faith, hope, charity” (13:13) remain. Paul gives the pattern for his epistles in II Timothy 3:16-17. They are given “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect.” (Hmmm, there is that word “perfect” again in relation to a man.) The doctrine of faith is found in Romans. The reproof and correction of faith are found in I & II Corinthians and Galatians, respectively. Same thing with the doctrine of charity found in Ephesians – Colossians. The doctrine of hope is found in I & II Thessalonians, and “instruction in righteousness” is found in I Timothy – Philemon. (A similar pattern is found for Israel’s edification in Hebrews – Revelation.)

Knowing that Paul's epistles teach the doctrines of faith, charity, and hope, and Paul says, "Now abideth...these three" (13:13) once the "perfect is come" (13:10), this verse is yet another proof that the "perfect," of 13:10, must refer to the completed Word of God.

Finally, Paul concludes this verse by saying, "The greatest of these is charity" (13:13). We are saved by the faith of Christ (Galatians 2:16), and our hope is laid up for us in heaven (Colossians 1:5). The reason charity is the greatest of these is because it is what leads people to believe the gospel. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Romans 5:3-5 says that tribulation, which comes from faith in God's Word, results in hope, "and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." So, we see faith, hope, and charity, and it is charity that is the result of the faith and hope. Then, people see that charity in our lives and desire to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). This is why charity is the greatest of the three. This is also why Ephesians – Colossians is the most advanced doctrine you will find in Paul's epistles, because it teaches charity and charity is the end result of faith and hope. (The same holds true in the Hebrew epistles, where I John is the most advanced doctrine there, because it is also about charity.) Because of this, **charity is the currency of God's eternal kingdom.**

I Corinthians 14 – Prophecy Is Much Better Than Speaking in Tongues

14 Once the Corinthians have charity, they should desire to prophesy, not speak in tongues (v. 1). The reason is that prophecy edifies, exhorts, and comforts the church, while tongues only edify oneself (vs. 3-4). (This shows how selfish Pentecostals are today.) It is completely illogical to think that tongues benefit others, when no one can understand what they say (vs. 6-11). This shows the carnality of the Corinthians. Granted, they have to start with tongues and use them responsibly in order to "graduate" to more important gifts. Therefore, a new Christian at Corinth should use the tongue gift but pray that he may interpret so that he can edify the church, not just himself (vs. 12-15). An even better gift is prophecy, because then an interpreter is not needed. It is better for the church to speak 5 words of prophecy than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue, because no understanding is gained with the tongue talking (v. 19). Prophets are also more important than tongue talkers, because they were needed to identify which of Paul's letters were scripture and which were not (v. 37).

Since all believers in Corinth received a spiritual gift, they needed to take turns in exercising their gifts (vs. 26-33). In talking over each other, they were following their emotions. Women are more likely to do this, and so they should keep silent in the church (vs. 34-35). Of course, the real reason for woman's silence is because her head is her husband (11:3).

14:1 Paul spent chapter 13 describing "a more excellent way" (12:31) than spiritual gifts. This more excellent way is charity. He said that the spiritual gifts would pass away once God's Word was completed, but that charity would never

pass away (13:8). Charity is how heaven will operate for all eternity. Paul spent chapter 13 showing how important charity is. Now, he will spend chapter 14 showing how important it is to get God's Word in the inner man and allow Christ to live it out through you.

When reading your Bible, always keep in mind that God's twofold will for your life is for you to: 1) Be saved, and 2) Come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). Therefore, the purpose of the spiritual gifts for the Corinthians is for them to come unto the knowledge of the truth. It is not for them to feel good or to show how spiritual they are.

They are to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (12:31). The way they receive the best gifts is by maturing in sound doctrine (Romans 12:6), because it means they will use their gifts more responsibly. The best gift must be prophecy, because Paul says to "covet to prophesy" (14:39). This means that the gift of prophecy is better than "miracles," "gifts of healings," and "diversities of tongues." In fact, 12:28 lists "prophets" above these gifts. Why? Because prophets speak God's Word. We are to "live...by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Therefore, once you are saved, the most important thing you can do is to get God's Word in the inner man so that Christ can live it through your body. This is why coming unto the knowledge of the truth is the second part of God's will for your life.

Since the Corinthians did not have God's completed written Word, Paul tells them to desire to prophesy (14:1) so that they may learn more of God's Word so that Christ can live in them to a greater extent. Since we have God's completed Word today, we can read and believe God's Word, have the Holy Ghost teach it to us (2:9-13), and use the mind of Christ (2:16) so that Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20). Chapter 14 is showing the Corinthians that prophecy is more important than tongues. Applied to today, when we have God's completed Word, the lesson for us to learn is that reading and believing God's Word is more important than the emotionalism of Churchianity's "worship" services. We do not worship God by feeling good. Rather, we worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). This means we read and believe God's Word, which results in the Holy Ghost teaching our spirit the things of God, i.e., the truth. Thus, Bible study is the most important thing today for the edification of the believer, just like the gift of prophecy was more important for the Corinthians than speaking in tongues.

14:2-3 Isn't it interesting that Pentecostals desire to speak in tongues, because they are speaking mysteries in the spirit (14:2). However, Paul preached "Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25), and these same Pentecostals do not want to have anything to do with Paul's mystery. Why? Because speaking in tongues is an outward manifestation of the Spirit that makes them look good in the flesh, while the mystery, that Paul preached, is good for them spiritually, but it makes their flesh look bad, because it shows that "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). Therefore, they purposely discard the gospel that saves them today for the appearance of righteousness via speaking in tongues.

The Corinthians were carnal (3:3), as well, which is why they also liked tongue talking the best. 12:28 shows that, in order of importance, speaking in tongues is the LEAST important spiritual gift, while prophecy is the second MOST important gift. The Holy Ghost gives spiritual gifts “according to [their] proportion of faith” (Romans 12:6). The more sound doctrine you have in your inner man, the greater your faith and the greater the gift the Holy Ghost can entrust you with. Since the Corinthians did not have much faith, most of them were “stuck” with the least important gift, tongue talking.

If you speak in tongues, only God understands what you are saying. Therefore, the only way the body of Christ is edified is if God tells someone, with the gift of interpretation, what was spoken in tongues, and then a prophet confirms that it is a word from the Lord. However, if you have enough faith to have the gift of prophecy, the two middlemen can be eliminated, and you can just speak God’s Word directly. This is why Paul says that “no man understandeth him” who speaketh in an unknown tongue (14:2), while a prophet speaks the Word of God that everyone can understand, which results in “edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (14:3).

We should note that the gift of tongues changed when it was given to the mystery dispensation. Tongues were first given to Israel in Acts 2. There, they spoke “with other tongues” (Acts 2:4), and everybody heard in their own tongue, wherein they were born (Acts 2:6). Thus, in Israel’s program, tongues were a sign gift. Believing Israel spoke, and others heard the speech in their own languages, even though believing Israel did not know those languages. When tongues were given to the mystery dispensation, people spoke in a language only known by God. This, then, required the gift of interpretation for people to understand it, and a prophet to say if it was from the Lord or not.

In doing so, tongues accomplished two purposes. First, they were a sign to unbelieving Israel that God was with the Gentiles now, which was meant to provoke Israel to jealousy (Romans 11:11). Second, they helped in the maturity of the members of the body of Christ, as it showed them that God could use them in a greater capacity as they matured spiritually. Thus, tongues were used as a sign in Israel’s program and were used for growing in spiritual wisdom in the mystery program. This is in line with the statement that “the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom” (1:22).

14:4 We should note that, usually, the word “edifieth” is used to signal an increase in spiritual understanding. Therefore, at first glance, this verse may seem to say that the tongue talker grows in spiritual understanding by speaking in tongues. Therefore, you may argue that tongue talking is good because it has at least some spiritual benefit. However, verse 14 puts this argument to rest by saying, “if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.” This means that the edification of the tongue talker is not in his soul. Therefore, tongues do not edify the tongue talker, except that it gives him the opportunity to use it responsibly so that the Holy Ghost can entrust him with a

better gift later on. Unfortunately, the Corinthians were using tongue talking to puff up their flesh, rather than grow in the Spirit.

This verse also explains why Pentecostals today emphasize tongue talking over prophesying. Tongue talking builds up the tongue talker's flesh, while prophesying builds up the church's soul. Tongue talking today is nothing more than a flesh contest. By speaking in tongues more than the other person, the tongue talker appears to be more spiritual/godly than the others. If you really want to be godly, you need to spend thousands of hours reading, believing, and applying God's Word to your life. However, if you only want to appear godly, you can just babble like a baby, and ignorant brethren think you are in tune with God. Pentecostals take this easier route to "spirituality." It was the same for the Corinthians, which is why Paul spends a long chapter (chapter 14) explaining that prophesying is better than tongue talking. For those desiring to walk in the Spirit, this is obvious, but, for the carnal Corinthians (3:3), it is not obvious.

14:5 At the time that Paul wrote this epistle, tongue talking was speaking God's Word in a spiritual language that no man understood (14:2). It then required someone with the gift of interpretation to speak the words in a language that man could understand. A prophet was simply someone who spoke God's Word. (It does not matter if he was foretelling future events or not. In fact, there are no future events to foretell in the current, mystery dispensation.) Therefore, speaking in tongues + interpretation of tongues = prophecy.

This explanation is substantiated by this verse, because Paul says, "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret" (14:5). In other words, the person, with the gift of speaking in tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues does the same thing as a prophet, i.e., he speaks God's Word to the church in the common language of the people.

Now, Paul does want all of the Corinthians to speak with tongues, because it shows that they are saved (This is assuming that they are not faking it, because the Holy Ghost only gives gifts of the Spirit to believers.). In fact, Paul himself speaks in tongues more than the Corinthians do (14:18), because he uses the gift more responsibly than they do. However, he prefers that they prophesy, rather than speak in tongues, when the Corinthians meet together, so that the whole church is edified. Paul will later say, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (14:19). Why? The gift of prophecy edifies the church, while the gift of tongues edifies the tongue talker (14:4). This is what makes the prophet greater than the tongue talker (14:5).

In my childhood church, tongue talking was common during corporal prayer and also after each message in night services. After those messages, there would be an altar call, which was not meant as an opportunity for unsaved people to be saved, because it was rare that we had visitors during those night services. (If we did, the visitor would think we were mad (14:23).) Rather, the altar call was used as an opportunity to speak in tongues. The service was not over until everyone was done

speaking in tongues. There was one, particular lady who would often pray in tongues for 30 minutes longer than everyone else, and so she was keeping people from going home, since everyone else was supposed to pray for the people who were speaking in tongues that God would continue to bless them. Finally, the pastor got tired of not getting much sleep, and so he told her to stop talking in tongues for so long. This shows that there was no edification from the tongue talking for the church as a whole, even in a church that exalted tongue talking! (What is funny is that, if someone else told someone not to talk in tongues for so long, he would be accused of quenching the Spirit (I Thessalonians 5:19). However, since the pastor is “a man of God,” no one questioned him.)

14:6 This verse shows that spiritual profit only comes by the Word of God, because “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Paul says that profit comes “by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine” (14:6). It does not come by speaking in tongues, healing people, working miracles, feeling the presence of God, or moving in the Spirit.

14:7-9 Our abundant, eternal life is only found in the Word of God. Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). Since tongue talking, in the Corinthians’ day, was the Word of God, what they spoke was “life giving sound” (14:7). However, if you cannot understand the sound, it does not give you life. Today’s application is in people, saved or not, who read God’s Word, but do not believe it. They are reading the words of life, but they are not getting that life, because the things of God “are spiritually discerned” (2:14). The Holy Ghost must teach these things to their spirits, and their spirits do not listen to the Holy Ghost if they do not believe God’s Word (2:11-16). Therefore, a Christian can read Paul’s epistles over and over again but never see the mystery in it, because he believes Churchianity over the Word of God.

Paul says that, even those things, without life giving sound, cannot be understood if there is no distinction in sounds. This refers to fleshly type sounds. No one would go to a concert to hear people play random notes all at the same time. (Actually, “free jazz” is just that. You’ve probably never heard of it though, because it sounds like chaos.) That would be a miserable experience, rather than an enjoyable one. If order is required in a fleshly world, how much more should it be required in the spiritual realm. Yet, the Corinthians talk over each other in tongues (14:26-27). This is because no man can see their spirits, and so they can use their flesh, by talking in tongues over each other, as “a form of godliness” (II Timothy 3:5) in an attempt to convince people that they are godly people.

This works when their audience does not know what godliness is about. For example, if I went to a tribe in Africa, I could explain, through an interpreter, how movies work, and they would be in awe over my knowledge even though, compared to those working in movies, I know very little. Similarly, the Corinthians could show everyone how spiritual they are by speaking in tongues, and people, in their flesh, would be in awe of them.

In reality, however, “the mystery of godliness” is summed up in that “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Timothy 3:16). Tongue talking is not mentioned here because godliness has to do with the spiritual, rather than the physical.

Paul’s example is much better than mine. He says, “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (14:8). The Bible is our spiritual trumpet. It tells us how to “fight the good fight of faith” (I Timothy 6:12), so that we wrestle effectively “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). If we do not believe God’s Word, the Holy Ghost does not teach it to us. Therefore, the Bible gives an uncertain sound to us, and we lose spiritual battles. This is why Churchianity is not living by the faith of the Son of God, not allowing Christ to live in them (Galatians 2:20).

14:10-11 Every voice in the world is distinct. You gain knowledge by knowing the meaning of each voice. Similarly, there are “many kinds of voices” (14:10) in the spiritual realm. II Corinthians 11:15 says that Satan’s ministers are “transformed as the ministers of righteousness.” Note that it says “THE” ministers of righteousness, which shows that Satan’s ministers have replaced God’s ministers in Churchianity. In other words, Satan has performed the old switcheroo. The reason Churchianity claims that right dividers are heretics and are part of a cult is because Churchianity believes that Satan’s ministers are God’s ministers. Why? Because they do not have the spiritual discernment to recognize the voice of God, as found in God’s Word rightly divided. In other words, they do not gain spiritual understanding because they are not able to distinguish between God’s voice and Satan’s voice, because they make Churchianity’s teachings their final authority, rather than God’s Word.

Churchianity thinks that the voice of God is a subjective thing that is out in the air. It is something they hear in their prayers. They do not believe in God’s voice being found exclusively in the Word of God. This is because they are following the devil, and he is “the prince of the power of the AIR” (Ephesians 2:2). The devil’s wisdom is “sensual” (James 3:15), and so they think they hear God’s voice through picking it up out of the air through their senses, i.e., their emotions. By contrast, the written Word of God is “truth,” and it is “pure” (James 3:17). It is “as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Psalm 12:6). Therefore, God’s Word is much more objective and reliable than Churchianity claims it to be. This makes Churchianity “children of the devil” (John 8:44), provided they have never believed the gospel of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection ALONE as atonement for their sin (15:3-4). Regardless of if they are saved or not, following their senses to distinguish the voice of God, is how they really follow the devil, being “taken captive by him at his will” (II Timothy 2:26). This is because they do not know the meaning of the voice.

Similarly, for the Corinthians, they are not growing spiritually, when all they do is speak in tongues over each other, instead of waiting for interpretations that will

tell them the clear Word of God. It is no coincidence, then, that most Pentecostals today have very little understanding of God's Word, because they follow their subjective senses/emotions, rather than the objective Word of God through the Holy Ghost teaching them God's Word as they believe it. This shows that they do not know the meaning of the voice of the Holy Ghost, because they think He is there to make them feel good (following their senses), rather than being there to teach them God's Word (God's pure Word) (John 14:26; I Corinthians 2:9-16).

14:12-13 It is a good thing that the Corinthians are "zealous of spiritual gifts" (14:12). Their problem is that they are going after the gifts that make their flesh look good, while the purpose of the spiritual gifts is to mature them spiritually. And so Paul tells them to build upon their zeal for spiritual gifts by seeking to edify the church. If they do this, they will seek out the gifts that are the most beneficial. Since tongues do not edify the church while prophecy does, they should "covet to prophecy" (14:39). Or, since they already have the tongue gift, they could combine it with the interpretation gift, which would also edify the church.

This is why Paul next says, "Let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret" (14:13). Zeal, according to the flesh, is not good. We have already seen fleshly zeal in chapter 5, where a man has so much sexual zeal that he does not mind that he is ruining his family's relations by having sex with his father's wife (5:2). If the Corinthians only seek to use their spiritual gifts in fleshly ways, they will never graduate from the tongue talking gift, and so the church will not be edified, which is why the Corinthians "are yet carnal" (3:3).

Another example of using zeal for a spiritual thing in a fleshly way is Paul before he was saved. He says that he "profited in the Jews' religion above many [his] equal" because he was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of [his] fathers" (Galatians 1:14). Paul says that this was a zeal "toward God" (Acts 22:3), much like being zealous of spiritual gifts is a zeal toward God for the Corinthians. Paul's problem was that he used that zeal to persecute "the church of God" (Galatians 1:13). The Corinthians' problem is that they are using their zeal for spiritual gifts to desire gifts that puff up their flesh. Paul is trying to orient them toward edifying the church spiritually instead, by using their zeal for spiritual gifts to progress spiritually to better gifts.

14:14 When the gift of tongues was in operation, the tongue-talker's spirit was praying to God's Spirit. The tongue talker did not understand what he was praying because verse 14 says, "my understanding is unfruitful." Speaking in tongues was still profitable because Paul says that he thanks God that he speaks in tongues more than all of the Corinthians do (14:18). The way it was profitable was that the tongue-talker's spirit was communicating with God's Spirit, which meant that the person's flesh was not in sin. This profit may be much like us reading Biblical passages, such as I Chronicles 1-10. You may not have your understanding about the things of God increased, but at least you are thinking on the things of God, rather than the things of this world.

However, the tongue talker does not know what he is saying, according to this verse. That, in itself, makes the gift of interpretation better than the gift of tongues (14:13). If the tongue talker would interpret or prophesy, instead, his spirit would be communing with God's Spirit, and his soul would be edified with sound doctrine. Granted, the interpretation or the prophecy would not look as "spiritual" to others, but it would be, in fact, more profitable. It would also profit the church as a whole, because they could also be edified with sound doctrine.

Another potential benefit to the believer, who speaks in tongues, is the opportunity to use it responsibly. If he speaks according to course (14:27), meaning that he does not speak over others and he seeks to learn sound doctrine from others, he has shown himself spiritually responsible and so he can move on to a more important gift. Otherwise, he is "stuck" with the least important gift, tongues. Yet, to the carnal Corinthians (3:3), it is a very desirable gift, as seen today with Pentecostals. They would rather blab in nonsense syllables than to mine the treasures of wisdom and knowledge found in Christ and His Word (Colossians 2:2-3).

14:15 Praying and singing is probably supposed to be done with God's Word. If you have the gift of interpretation or prophecy, you and the church can be edified when you pray or sing God's Word, but if you that in tongues, it helps no one.

14:16 The reason that tongues is almost a useless gift is that no one knows what is being said (14:12). Yes, tongues are in the spirit (14:14) and so there must be good things being said through them, but tongues are just a waste of time for everyone involved when no one can understand what is being said.

Also, Jesus said, "They that worship [God] must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Speaking in tongues worships God in spirit, but it does not worship Him in truth, because no one can understand the truth spoken, because no one understands the tongues. This is why Paul says that speaking in tongues needs to be accompanied by interpretation (14:13). **There is no true worship of God in tongue talking alone.**

14:17 God's will is for all to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). If you are in the church, you are presumably saved, which means that God wants you to come unto the knowledge of the truth. But, that does not happen during speaking in tongues, because people are not edified, because they do not know what you are saying. Therefore, God's will is not done in the church.

14:18 This is not to say that tongues is a bad gift. All spiritual gifts come from God, and God is good (Matthew 19:17). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). Therefore, Paul thanks God that he speaks in tongues more than the Corinthians do. When he speaks in tongues, his spirit is praying (14:14), which means that he is not operating in the flesh. A second reason that speaking in tongues is good is that tongues are a sign for unbelieving Jews (v. 22). This is probably the main reason why Paul thanks God that he speaks in tongues so much because, as long as he is

speaking in tongues, it means that Israel still has a chance to be saved. After all, Paul told the Romans, “I could wish that myself were accused from Christ for” Israel (Romans 9:3-4). Therefore, there are benefits to speaking in tongues, which is why Paul thanks God that he speaks in tongues more than the Corinthians do.

14:19 Five words of understanding are better than 10,000 words that no one can understand. “Christ died for our sins” (15:3) are the five words that everyone needs to know in order to be saved. “Yet not I, but Christ” (Galatians 2:20) are the five words that all saved people need to follow so that Christ lives in them. In these two, five-word phrases, God’s will of having all people saved and coming unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4) can be realized.

Today, people speak at about 115 words per minute, which means that it would take almost 1 ½ hours of constant talking to speak 10,000 words. That is A LOT of talking, and yet five words of understanding beats 1 ½ hours of tongue talking!

A key phrase is “in the church” (14:19). Outside the church, Paul thanks God that he speaks in tongues more than all the Corinthians do (14:18). Tongues edify only the tongue talker, while prophecy edifies the church (14:4). Therefore, inside the church, if there is no interpreter, the tongue talker should “keep silence” (14:28). When he does not, tongue talking keeps the church from being edified.

14:20 Pursuing after tongue talking makes the church “children in understanding” (14:20). Children are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” by cunning men (Ephesians 4:14), because they do not have the spiritual discernment to recognize false doctrine when it is taught to them. Pentecostals today are usually children in doctrine compared with fundamental Churchianity, which proves this verse to be true. Yet, Pentecostals will accuse Churchianity of being the children, because they do not speak in tongues like the Pentecostals do. Then, Churchianity will accuse right dividers of not following scripture, when we are the ones believing scripture. This goes to show that the primary concern of Churchianity, whether Pentecostals or not, is to make a “fair shew in the flesh” (Galatians 6:12). If they were concerned about spiritual things, they would not care that church history and tradition do not support right division. They would only care that the Word of God supports it.

Further, Paul tells them not to be children in malice, which is the desire to do evil. With the contentions among them (1:11), their carnality (3:3), the bragging about sexual fornication (5:1-2), taking each other to court (6:6-7), having cliques at the Lord’s supper (11:21), and boasting in tongue talking (14), it appears that they are adults in malice, but children in understanding. Such is the case with Churchianity today, as well. They appear to be standing for the truth, as they defend their doctrine against others, but they are really defending their FORM of godliness (II Timothy 3:5). Their stand is just a smoke screen to keep you from recognizing that they are involved in a flesh contest, just like the Corinthians were with their speaking in tongues.

14:21-22 This verse is a quote of Isaiah 28:11-12. The context of Isaiah is that God is separating out “a foolish nation” (Deuteronomy 32:21) (foolish to the world, not to God (I Corinthians 1:18)) from the apostate nation of Israel. God says he will “teach knowledge” to “them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:9-10). The method by which God says He does this is by using “stammering lips and another tongue” (Isaiah 28:11). The “stammering lips” were Jesus’ parables, and “another tongue” was given in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. The problem is that Israel “would not hear” (Isaiah 28:12).

Therefore, God started the dispensation of grace with the apostle Paul. However, He did not give up on Israel. God sent Paul with the mystery gospel to “the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). I Corinthians 1:22 says, “The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.” Therefore, God gave them the sign of the gift of tongues that went to the body of Christ to provoke the Jews to jealousy so that they might be saved (Romans 11:11-14).

This shows that tongues “are for a sign...to them that believe not,” i.e., unbelieving Israel (14:22). Therefore, tongues is a gift for Israel, and God continued it through the Corinthians so that Jews might be saved, since the Corinthians’ meeting place shared a common wall with the Jewish synagogue (Acts 18:7). At the end of Acts, Paul tells the Jews that he will no longer go to them (Acts 28:28), because they have diminished away in the dispensation of grace (Romans 11:12). Therefore, tongues cease to exist as a gift.

Tongues are not for them that believe, because no one understands what is being said, and so the tongue talker sounds like a barbarian (14:11). This is why Paul says that prophesying is what helps the church, not tongue talking (14:22). (This also tells us that the church should be full of believers. Believers should be able to share the gospel with others so that, by the time they come to church, they are already saved. Today, Churchianity is all about getting people into the church, and they do not hear the gospel when they are in the church. Thus, the concentration is on money and power, rather than on saved souls.) Therefore, desiring the gift of tongues is desiring confusion, while desiring the gift of prophecy is desiring clarity.

Tongues are not for believers, but they serve as a sign to the Jews to show that God is speaking through the Corinthians so that they may desire to have the same thing happen with them. The Corinthians can then give them the gospel that they might be saved. Tongues are NOT for the believing Corinthians to edify them. Prophecy is what the Corinthians need for edification. Yet, they seek after tongues because it pleases their flesh.

Similarly, Pentecostals today seek after tongues. Even when tongues were real in Israel’s program, we see that they were given so that unbelievers may believe the gospel. Mark 16:17 says, “These signs shall follow them that believe;...they shall speak with new tongues.” Believing Israel then “preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20). In

other words, tongues were the means to the end of getting people saved. However, the Corinthians and Pentecostals think that tongues are the end to show their spirituality. Therefore, going after tongues is like not wanting to do anything more than to put a Band-Aid over a sore that is caused by a disease. The disease will get worse, even though you do not see the effect of the disease. Similarly, tongue talkers will not come unto the knowledge of the truth if they stop with speaking in tongues. Instead, they should move on to interpretation and then to prophecy so they can be edified in sound doctrine.

14:23-25 In 14:21-22, Paul was talking about tongues being a sign for Jews. Now, in 14:23-25, Paul says that clear speaking is what is needed for unbelieving Gentiles, who come to the Corinthian church. Why? Because “the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom” (1:22).

I was in a Pentecostal church when I was a child. A boy about my age was coming to Sunday school, and I invited him to come to a Sunday night service. When he did, he saw people moving in the spirit and speaking in tongues. He never came back to the church again, not even to Sunday school. Why? Because he thought the people were crazy (14:23). He liked Sunday school, because everyone spoke in words that he understood, but he stopped coming when he saw the adults on Sunday night, because they were babbling like babies.

Similarly, Paul tells the Corinthians that, if the whole church speaks with tongues (This is how we know that the Corinthians desired to speak in tongues above the other spiritual gifts.), not only are they not edifying themselves, but they are also keeping Gentiles from being saved. The “unlearned” (14:23) would be those, who do not understand about the spiritual gifts, and “unbelievers” would be those who have never believed the gospel. Both groups will think the Corinthians are mad and will leave the church, much like the boy who attended my childhood church for a while.

By contrast, if all are prophets, then the unlearned or the unbeliever will hear the clear Word of God. If he is an unbeliever, he may believe the gospel and be saved. If he is unlearned, he may learn about the spiritual gifts and grow in sound doctrine from the prophets.

Now, when 11:24-25 says that “the secrets of his heart [are] made manifest” and “he is convinced of all, he is judged of all,” this does not mean that God tells the prophet specifics of how the unbeliever cheated on his wife or embezzled from his company and then the prophet tells everyone. Rather, the secrets of his heart are how he has used religion to ease his guilty conscience. Besides, God is not concerned with specific sins you do. He is concerned with you being in sin and having your sin covered by the blood of Christ. In other words, God wants to get rid of the cause of your sin in eternity, not the symptoms of the sin nature.

Romans 1:19-20 says that God has shown Himself to everyone. Everyone knows of the Godhead and of God’s eternal power. Romans 1:32 says that everyone knows that they are worthy of death as a result of their sin. Instead of turning to God for

the solution, men become “vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:21-22). In other words, man develops “imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” (II Corinthians 10:5). The unbeliever, then, goes to church and hears that he has sinned (Romans 3:23) and deserves death for his sin (Romans 6:23). This is how he is “convinced of all, he is judged of all” (14:24). In other words, he is convinced that his religion will not get him into heaven, and his sin is judged as sending him to hell. As such, the “secret of his heart,” i.e., his religion, is revealed. If he is honest, he will recognize that God is in the Corinthians, and then he will worship God (14:25). Remember John 4:24 that you can only worship God by worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. This means that the unbeliever has now believed the gospel and is saved. This would never happen if all the church did was speak in tongues.

This is how my wife, Lonna, was saved. She heard the preacher speak and got mad at her mom, thinking that her mom told the preacher her secrets. Her mom had done no such thing, and the preacher did not give specifics about Lonna. Instead, the preacher gave the gospel, which attacked the vain imaginations of her heart and convicted her that only the Lord Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection could save her. This is what Paul means in 14:24-25, not that the Holy Ghost will reveal who slept with who, all of the lies that you have told, or all of the thoughts of hatred in your heart toward others. Rather, He reveals the barrier to believing the truth that you have placed within your heart as not being sufficient to pay for your sins.

14:26 There is nothing wrong with the Corinthians coming to church with a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, or an interpretation, because God could use all of these things. The issue is “let all things be done unto edifying” (14:26). Apparently, the Corinthians were using their spiritual gifts in a carnal way. They wanted to use their gifts, not to help the church as a whole, but to show off to others how spiritual they are based upon how they use their gifts.

14:27-28 To keep carnality from taking over in the exercise of spiritual gifts, Paul says that they should take turns using their spiritual gifts. “All things [should] be done decently and in order” (14:40). Tongue talkers are the most likely ones to use their gift in a carnal way, since they have the least amount of spiritual maturity. Their gift is also the least important to the church, since no one will be edified, unless there is an interpretation of the tongues (14:4). Therefore, Paul says that only two or three should speak in tongues at a time, but they must take turns speaking, and then one person can interpret for them. However, if there is no interpreter, then there should be no tongue talking in the church.

Again, we need to note that the purpose of the exercise of the spiritual gifts in the church is so the church can be edified. God’s Word had not been completely written down at this time, and so God revealed the unwritten portion to the body of Christ through the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Since no one could understand “an unknown tongue” (14:27), there was no purpose in speaking in tongues in the church without an interpretation. This is hard for Pentecostals to understand,

because tongues are fake or of the devil today. Thus, they are done to feel good and to look spiritual to others, not to edify the body of Christ with sound doctrine.

I think that Paul is saying that no more than three should speak in tongues in an entire service, although it does not really say this here. One reason I think this is because all of the believing Corinthians would have the gift of tongues, but not all would have more advanced gifts. Therefore, if everyone used their gift of tongues, there would be no time left for the other gifts to be used, when the more advanced gifts are more important to exercise for the edification of the body. For example, prophets speak “thus saith the Lord” directly to the church. It is better that a preacher speak in the common language of the people, rather than him speaking in a different language and then having to translate it, because the latter method takes twice as long as the former. Similarly, prophets get the Word of God to the people in half the time as a tongue talker and an interpreter together. Therefore, the second reason why I think tongue talkers are limited to three or less in each service is because they are not as beneficial as the other gifts are. Finally, I believe tongue talkers are limited to three people because the text says, “Ye may ALL prophesy one by one” (14:31), but it does not say that ALL may speak in tongues.

14:29-31 The gift of prophecy is simply someone who is given a word from the Lord in the common language of the people. The purpose was to convey sound doctrine that was not yet written down in God’s Word. Since God’s Word was completed with Paul’s epistles (Colossians 1:25), the gift of prophecy, along with all of the other spiritual gifts, are not in operation today.

This is not to say that someone cannot be a pastor or teacher today (Ephesians 4:11), or that some people do not have talents and training that lead some to be good teachers while others are not. Rather, this simply means that the Lord does not supernaturally gift someone with a position in the church like He did before (Ephesians 4:7-8). You have to “STUDY” and be a “WORKMAN” in order to be a pastor or teacher (II Timothy 2:15).

14:27 said that two or three tongue talkers were to let one interpret. Similarly, 14:29 says that two or three prophets were to let one judge. A judge is someone with the spiritual gift to determine if what the prophets say is of God or not. In other words, are they true or false prophets? Romans 12:6 says to “prophesy according to the proportion of faith.” “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Therefore, if a prophet went beyond what he knew to be God’s Word, he could be prophesying falsely. I Corinthians 12:9 mentions that one of the spiritual gifts is faith. The person with the gift of faith, then, would be able to judge if what is said by the prophet is of God or not. Therefore, I believe Paul is saying, in 14:29, that what the prophets say, has to be verified by a judge with the gift of faith to say whether or not something is of the Lord, much like what the tongue talkers say has to be interpreted into the common language of the people.

Paul says that, if the Holy Ghost gives a prophet a word for the church, then the prophet currently speaking should stop, and let the second prophet speak. This is

probably meant to keep the flesh from taking over. In other words, the Holy Ghost is the one in charge, not the individual members of the body of Christ.

Because the gift of prophecy is more beneficial to the church than tongue talking is, I believe Paul is saying, in 14:30-31, that prophets should continue to speak, as long as they are receiving a word from the Lord. This is why Paul says that “ye may all prophesy one by one” (14:31), while there is no such provision for the tongue talkers (14:26-28).

Note that the prophets must take turns. There is no profit in people speaking over each other. You may think that this is an obvious statement. However, the Lord speaking through believers can become a fleshly thing. Galatians 5:17 says that “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,” and so it would be very easy for the flesh to try to interrupt another prophet to try to show that he is more spiritual than the other person talking. This is why Paul has to state here that a prophet must wait his turn.

Also, note that Paul says that prophecy has two benefits to the listeners: 1) “All may learn”, and 2) “All may be comforted” (14:31). We are “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16) when we get sound doctrine in the inner man. When we apply that sound doctrine, we suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12). The Word of God then comforts us because we know that “our light affliction” gives us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:16-17). This is the comfort of God.

Man’s comfort is someone saying, “There, there, everything will be ok.” Man says that the problem will be solved with a FLESHLY benefit. God says that is not the case. He says that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). However, that is okay, because all things work for our SPIRITUAL good (Romans 8:28), because we receive an eternal weight of glory for our physical suffering. This is God’s comfort.

If all the Corinthians have is tongue talking with no interpretation, they do not learn, and so Christ does not live in them. They are also focused on the things of this world, and so there is no comfort for them. We can equate this to Churchianity today, which does not read and believe the Bible. As such, they are focused on the things of this world and react to things just like unbelievers do.

14:32-33 You may think, “What in the world does it mean that ‘the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets?’” (14:32). Verse 33 provides the explanation by saying that “God is not the author of confusion.” What this means is that God works through the spirits, souls, and bodies of the prophets to communicate God’s Word to man, eliminating the confusion of Satan’s lie program and bringing peace to the church (14:33) through “edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (14:3).

Before a prophet is saved, his spirit is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Once he believes the gospel, he is “quickened...together with Christ” or made alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:5). He is given “the Spirit which is of God” (2:12), and

He is given the mind of Christ (2:16). His spirit and body now both belong to God (6:20). Therefore, he can read and believe God's Word and allow the Holy Ghost to communicate the deep things of God to his spirit (2:10,13). He can then make the decision to "walk in the Spirit,...and not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

Applied to 14:32-33, this means that the prophets can use their souls to make the decision to listen to their spirits as the Holy Ghost communicates sound doctrine to them. If they make this decision, they can then communicate this sound doctrine to the rest of the church. What Paul is saying is that the spiritual gifts are controlled by those who used the gifts. They can choose when to exercise the gifts. It is NOT like the Azusa Street Revival where the "Holy Ghost" came upon them and they all spoke in other tongues at the same time, resulting in confusion among the listeners. Such confusion is found in the Hindu practice of Kundalini Yoga, it is NOT found in anything God does. The prophet could get a word from the Lord, and then he could wait until others were done talking, because he could control the exercise of his gift. The reason for this ability to control it is because God communicates His Word to His body in a way that brings them spiritual peace, not confusion (14:33). Paul says that this is how it is "in ALL churches of the saints" (14:33). God's spiritual gifts are not about feelings, but about peace, revealing sound doctrine to Christ's body.

As a side note, this is similar to how Jesus Christ lived by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). John 1:1 calls Him "the Word." Churchianity uses this to refer to Jesus as "the living Word," and that can be true for us today, as well. We can choose to live by the sound doctrine built up in our spirits, such that "Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). In other words, I present my body as a living sacrifice unto Christ (Romans 12:1) so that the living Word lives in me. This is how the spiritual gifts were to operate in the Corinthian church. They were to receive the word of the Lord, and then control how it is communicated in order to edify, exhort, and comfort the body of Christ (14:3). They were not weaned children who had to speak whenever the Holy Ghost told them to (Psalm 131:2). Rather, they were adult heirs of God (Galatians 4:6-8).

14:34-35 These two verses may seem out of place, especially since Churchianity likes to take them out of context to say that Paul is a male chauvinist. However, the role of women in the church must be followed in order for everything to be done in an orderly fashion.

The context of church order goes all the way back to chapter 11. There, we are told that, "the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (11:3). This does not mean that the man is more important than the woman; it just means he has a different role. God made the woman with the unique ability to have a living human being develop inside her body. Then, once the baby is born, she has the unique ability to feed that baby with her body. Men cannot do either one of these things. This tells us that God has given women the unique role of bearing and raising children.

God has given men the unique role of being the head of women. Who makes man the head of woman? God does. The woman is not to teach “nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (I Timothy 2:12). God gives us two reasons for this: 1) “For Adam was first formed, then Eve,” and 2) “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Timothy 2:13-14). God made Adam first so that he would be over the woman. Also, God made the woman’s body so that she would give birth and feed the children. To go along with this role, God gave the woman a mind that is more emotional than a man’s mind. Again, this does not make the man better than the woman or vice-versa. It is just that she has a different role. Women were made by God to consider feelings more so than men. Therefore, Eve was deceived by the serpent when Adam was not deceived. The woman’s curse is that she will desire to be in charge of the man, but the man will still rule over her (Genesis 3:16).

You cannot blame Paul for being a male chauvinist because Paul did not make man, and he did not cause Eve to be deceived. Besides, everything that Paul writes here “are the commandments of the Lord” (14:37). They are “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery” (Romans 16:25). When women get upset with men, Paul, God, or whoever for not allowing them to speak in church, then they are just proving that God is right, according to what He told Eve in Genesis 3:16.

The issue, in the context of I Corinthians 14, is that “all things” need to “be done unto edifying” (14:26). Since God made women to raise children, women are more concerned with feelings. They stand up for their children to make sure they are favored or at least treated fairly. (You only have to watch how soccer moms behave vs. how soccer dads behave to figure this out!) While this is good for their children, because kids are weak members of society that need to be protected, this is not good for the church.

The goal of the exercise of spiritual gifts in the church is for the church to be edified (14:26), not for them to feel good! Therefore, God says that women are to “keep silence in the churches.” It is even “a shame for women to speak in the church” (14:34-35), because their priorities do not align with God’s priorities in the exercise of spiritual gifts, because God did not give women the wisdom to lead in this area. Women are saved from their curse of sin “in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety” (I Timothy 2:15). Men are saved from their curse of sin by being the ruler over their own house and over the church of God (I Timothy 3:4-5). If women rule over the church, how can men serve the Lord, since they cannot have babies and feed them, as women do, nor do they have the skill set to raise them in a godly fashion like God has gifted women to do?

Furthermore, God has not gifted women to rule the church in a godly fashion. If women rule over the church, they will rule in a way that makes everyone feel good, rather than in a way that edifies the church. When I was growing up in the 1980s, the Pentecostal church I was in had some women pastors. Most of the other denominations of Churchianity did not allow this. However, Pentecostals did,

because their churches were based upon emotionalism anyway. A good service was not where someone was edified in God's Word, rather it was where everyone felt good, i.e., the presence of the Holy Ghost. (By the way, my childhood church did not allow women to speak or vote in business meetings, which I am sure made for an interesting conundrum, when the pastor was a woman!)

Today, most Churchianity denominations allow women to be pastors, and most churches, regardless of denomination, are into emotionalism. Why? Because, even if the church has a male pastor, the women control the church behind the scenes, and they do it to where everyone is made to feel good, not "to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (14:3) from God's Word. Therefore, the singing of songs is now the focal point of most churches, rather than the preaching of God's Word. And, when God's Word is preached, it is changed to cater to the feelings of the flesh, rather than to edifying the spirit. Now, this is not to say that men leading the church would make churches perfect when it comes to edification. However, we can see the damage that women leaders, as a whole, have done to Churchianity over the last 40 years or so, as women have taken over the details of church services, rather than men.

What Paul is saying in these verses is that women need to keep silent in the church so that all things are done unto edifying (14:26), rather than unto good feelings. Now, God does want women to be edified in sound doctrine, as He does with men. However, because men are the head of the women (11:3), women should ask their husbands at home for the understanding of God's Word that was given at church (14:35). Just like it would be a shame for men to get pregnant and have a baby because God did not give them that role, so too "it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (14:35).

What if the woman is a believer, but her husband is not a believer? In that case, it makes it more difficult for a woman to mature in the things of Christ. I am sure Christ, knowing this, will be sure to reward the woman with the understanding of sound doctrine in other ways, since God has promised to reward those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). One, particular woman may do a much better job as a pastor of a church than all of the men in the church, but that is not the point. **A believing woman gets men saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth by adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2:10), not by preaching it to men.** God says that "the head of the woman is the man" (11:3). If a church allows a woman to usurp authority over a man, then the church is not being a good example of how God made things, and so it will be harder for people to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth in such an organization.

We only need to look at Churchianity as a whole to see what a disaster women leaders have been.

My childhood church had chaos ruling, because people were speaking in tongues over each other. I also noticed that my grandmother spoke in tongues, while my grandfather did not. Usually, it was the women of the church, who spoke in

tongues, while most of the men did not, even though they both went to the same church for many years. The men were more concerned with reading and believing God's Word than the women were, because God has made men's minds like that.

A woman can juggle 10 things at the same time really well, because that is a skill that is necessary when you are raising children. Men can only do one thing well at one time, but they will do that one thing better than women, because men are able to concentrate on one thing at a time, because that is how God made their minds. Therefore, men are good doctors, while women are good nurses. Men are good financial decision makers, while women are good at following a budget. Men are good public speakers, while women are good speakers in small groups. Men are good with the big picture, while women are good with the details. This is how God made men and women's minds differently, and we should follow God's design by not allowing women to be leaders in the church. Instead of feeling slighted by God, women should feel blessed that they get to raise up the next generation in the things of God. (This seemed to be the case with Timothy's mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:5).)

I would venture to say that the Corinthians were allowing women to be leaders in their church, and this is why the spiritual gifts were not being exercised correctly. I say this for two reasons: 1) Paul would not need to mention that men are the head of women (11:3), and that women are to keep silent in church if they were already submitting to their own husbands in church (14:34-35), and 2) It was "the house of Chloe" (Chloe sounds like a woman's name.) that told Paul of the contentions among the Corinthians (1:11). There are at least five house churches mentioned in Romans 16 (vs. 3-5, 10, 11, 14, and 15), and they all appear to be led by men. Here, we have Chloe leading a household church (1:11), even though the former chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue, Crispus, is part of the Corinthian church (Acts 18:8). It is no coincidence, then, that the Corinthians have more problems than any other church to which Paul writes. Therefore, Paul tries to get things in order by having the women of the church keep silent and only ask their husbands when they get home (14:35) so that "the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:5). (A woman's sin nature is more divisive than a man's sin nature is.)

14:36 The church I grew up in taught that they were the exclusive Bride of Christ. The Corinthians may not have taught that themselves, but they were behaving as such. Each person was so selfish that he was making sure he used his spiritual gift, even if it meant that it did not help the church. It was as if they could not be edified by the written scriptures, which is why Paul asks if the Word of God came unto them only. It was also as if the Corinthian church was the authority, not God's Word, which is why Paul asks if the Word of God came from them. In other words, their emphasis on exercising spiritual gifts to the detriment of the church is only excusable if God only sent His Word to them and it was only coming out from them. Since this is not the case, they should be concerned with edification through the use of spiritual gifts, not trying to exercise their authority in Christ through their flesh. (This Corinthian attitude is much like today's Catholic church. They put their word over the Word of God and are more

concerned with the exercise of that authority in the world than they are with the edification of each person in their church.)

14:37 Paul is “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13). If anyone can say he is speaking for God, it is Paul, not the Corinthians. Yet, Paul magnifies, not himself, but his office (Romans 11:13). Paul only glories in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14).

Basically, what Paul is saying in this verse is that, if the Corinthians are so concerned about speaking the Word of God that they are talking over each other in exercising their spiritual gifts, then why don't they look at the fact that the Word of God to them, i.e., the mystery, was revealed to Paul for the Gentiles (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:2-4). They would then read and believe the letter that Paul has written to them as the Word of God and follow the instructions that Paul is giving to them here, regarding the exercise of spiritual gifts. A modern application for Pentecostals today would be, if they are so concerned with the Holy Ghost speaking through them, then why not read God's Word and have the Holy Ghost teach it to them (2:12-13)? Then, they would truly have the Holy Ghost speaking through them, instead of faking it with their made-up gibberish.

We learn about what a prophet is from this verse. Most people think of prophets as those who speak of future events, like Ezekiel, Daniel, or John. However, this verse tells us that a prophet is simply someone who speaks or identifies the word of the Lord. Therefore, if the Corinthians are so concerned about speaking God's Word, they should get their prophets to verify that this letter is God's Word. This means they should be concerned with reading and believing it. But, the Corinthians' problem is that they want to speak God's Word, not apply it.

This also tells us how the New Testament was put together. It was not done in 325 AD by the Council of Nicaea, as Churchianity would have you believe. Rather, God's prophets said what was scripture and what was not. We learn, from 5:9, that Paul wrote an epistle to the Corinthians before he wrote this one, yet that first one was not included in God's written Word. The reason is because the prophets said that the first epistle was not God's Word, but this epistle is God's Word.

Also, note that Paul knows that this epistle “are the commandments of the Lord” (14:37), while the previous epistle he wrote was not. It seems, then, that Paul, since he was a prophet himself, was told by God when he was writing down the very words of God. Also, note that Peter refers to Paul's epistles as scripture in II Peter 3:15-16. This shows that at least some of Paul's epistles were already accepted as scripture before God's Word was completed, which again shows that it was God's prophets (Ephesians 4:11-13) who set the canon of scripture, not a Catholic council.

14:38 Paul is not saying that we should not teach sound doctrine to members of the body of Christ. Basically, what he is saying is that some people will get caught up in emotionalism to the exclusion of logical thinking regarding the Word of God. The truth is presented to them that the written Word of God found here is more

important than the spiritual gifts, but they refuse to believe it because the exercise of their spiritual gift makes them feel good in the flesh. In this case, there is nothing you can do, because the person is not thinking logically, and so Paul says to let him be ignorant.

This is much like today when a Pentecostal values tongue talking over the Bible, a Catholic values the Eucharist over the Bible, or a Baptist values his pastor's interpretation over the Bible. When the Bible is not their final authority, they will remain ignorant, because the knowledge of the truth is found in God's Word. So, when they value something else over the Word of God, all you can do is let them be ignorant and pray for them that they may recover themselves from the snare of the devil (II Timothy 2:24-26). This is because the proof of the truth is found in God's Word, but they do not value it. Therefore, there is nothing you can do.

14:39-40 The Word of God is to be valued above all else. Since prophets speak the Word of God directly, the Corinthians should "covet to prophesy." But, they can also learn the Word of God through tongue talking and interpretation, and so they should not forbid people from speaking in tongues (14:39). They just need to make sure "all things [are] done decently and in order" (14:40). They need to keep the tongue talking, and all spiritual gifts for that matter, from taking over in a carnal way. Their focus should be on being edified by God's Word, rather than making "a fair shew in the flesh" (Galatians 6:12). Similarly today, churches need to get their focus back on learning God's Word in their services, rather than trying to feel good and feeling "the presence of the spirit."

I Corinthians 15 – The Christian Faith Crumbles Without Jesus' Resurrection

15 Paul's longest chapter proves Christ's resurrection, because some of the Corinthians are saying that there is no resurrection of the dead (v. 12). If this is the case, then our faith is vain, we are dead in our sins, and we will all go to hell (vs. 16-18).

This chapter starts with the gospel that saves us today (vs. 3-4), which is found only here in the whole Bible. Paul lists eyewitnesses of the resurrection (vs. 5-9), including himself as the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). Since "Christ is risen from the dead" (v. 20), then we are made alive in Christ (v. 22) when we believe the gospel. All things are not put under Christ's feet yet (v. 27), and so we need to make the daily decision to die to our flesh and let Christ live in us (v. 31). God will give us different resurrection bodies than what we have now, because we will be operating in the heavenly realm (vs. 38-41). As a plant is to the seed, our resurrection bodies are to our current bodies. In other words, our new bodies are much more glorious than our current bodies (vs. 42-45). Our new bodies are part of the "new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17) which is "the Lord from heaven" (v. 47). Thus, we are part of the body of Christ.

We receive our new bodies at the rapture (vs. 51-53). Only then is death finally put away (v. 54), and this is all due to the resurrection power of God that He wrought in Christ (v. 57; Ephesians 1:19-20). The lesson to learn in this is that, no matter

what happens to us in this life, whenever we allow Christ to live in us, that labour is not in vain, because it will reap an eternal reward for us in heaven (v. 58). Thus, believing in Christ's resurrection and our resurrection in Christ are the essential foundation of the Christian faith.

15:1-2 By using the word "brethren," we know that Paul is addressing saved people, meaning that the Corinthians are going to heaven. Therefore, when he says in verse 2 that "ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you" (15:2), we know he cannot be referring to soul salvation. The question then is, "Saved from what?"

Paul concludes verse 2 by saying, "Unless ye have believed in vain." In verse 10, he says that he "laboured more abundantly than all the apostles." Then, in verse 58, he tells the Corinthians that "your labour is not in vain in the Lord." We can put all of these together and conclude that, if the Corinthians keep the gospel in mind, their labour will be them living by the faith of the Son of God as Christ lives in them (Galatians 2:20). This means the love of Christ will be shared with others so that they may be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). Therefore, the answer to the question: "Saved from what?" is that they are saved from a life of futility, i.e., living in the flesh and suffering the loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ (3:14-15), if they keep in mind the gospel. In this way, they only glory in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14), and so their flesh does not get in the way. However, if they do not keep the gospel in mind, their labour will be in vain, because they will be labouring in the flesh, which will not be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

Notice that verse one speaks of the Corinthians' soul salvation, while verse two speaks of their salvation from living by the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2). We can easily see this by looking at the verb tenses used in the two verses. The Corinthians "HAVE received" the gospel (v. 1), which is in the past, and so they HAVE been saved from hell. They currently stand by grace in their position of eternal life (v. 1). This is explained to us in Romans 5:1-2, which says that we are now "justified by faith," and it is by the Lord Jesus Christ that "we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." We stand in grace, as a result of the cross work of Christ. If we decide to put ourselves back under the law, we make ourselves a transgressor (Galatians 2:18), and we have "fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). This is not to say that we lose our soul salvation, but it is to say that we are not operating in our standing in grace from a practical standpoint.

The Corinthians currently stand in God's grace (15:1), and "ye are saved" from following the flesh, "if ye keep in memory" the gospel that Paul preached unto them (15:2). So, since they received the gospel in the past, and they stand in grace currently, Paul is not saying that "ye ARE saved" from hell if ye keep the gospel in memory. If that were the case, they would not be standing in grace, because grace and works do not mix (Romans 11:6). Rather, they are saved from a life in the flesh, if they keep in memory the gospel. Noting the word "also" in verse 2 helps us to understand this as well. They received the gospel and stand in grace, such that

they have eternal life as a present possession. In addition, they are “ALSO” saved from labouring in their flesh in vain, if they glory in the cross of Christ alone.

If they do not, they will trust in their own flesh to save them from this world, as so many in Churchianity do today. Then, they would have believed in vain (15:2). Not that they lose their salvation, but that Christ will not be living in them. As such, they will “frustrate the grace of God” and so “then Christ is dead in vain” (Galatians 2:21). Again, Christ’s death still atones for their sin, because their salvation from hell has already been accomplished. But, Christ’s life does not work in them, because they are living in their own flesh (Galatians 2:20).

15:3-4 This is the gospel for today. We must recognize Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sins in order to receive the gift of eternal life. If you believe you need to turn from your sins, get right with God, give your heart to Jesus, do better next time, be water baptized, go to church, pray, give money in the offering, or any other thing in order to have eternal life, you are not saved. It is only by Christ's death on the cross and the power of His resurrection that you have eternal life.

You will not find the details of today’s gospel anywhere else in scripture. This is because God only wants those, who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6), to be saved. He will not “give...that which is holy unto the dogs,” nor cast His “pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6).

Note that Paul delivered this gospel to them “first of all” (15:3). This is because he could not tell if they were saved based upon their carnal behavior (3:3). He said, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (2:2), when he came to them. They must be saved by the gospel before they can learn any sound doctrine. The gospel was something that Paul received “by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-12).

We should follow Paul in this and not get into any Biblical discussions with those who have not believed the gospel yet. The natural man cannot understand the things of God (2:14), and so we are just wasting our time if we talk about the things of Christ with church folks who have never believed the gospel.

Note also that Christ's death and resurrection were “according to the scriptures.” Isaiah 53:8-9 says that He would die, and Psalm 16:10 says that He would rise from the dead, while Hosea 6:2 says that He would rise on the third day. Israel’s hard-heartedness kept them from believing the Christ would die, be buried, and rise from the grave on the third day. When Jesus first shared this with His disciples, Peter said, “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee” (Matthew 16:22). Therefore, even members of the little flock did not understand these scriptures, but the Old-Testament scriptures of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection were there for those with a heart of belief to overcome the mountain of religion. Jesus even told those on the road to Emmaus: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the

prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25-27). Jesus, as the perfect man, knew that He was to die. Otherwise, He never would have went to the cross, yet man is so hard hearted that most will not even believe it after the fact. Here, in 15:3-4, the gospel is plainly stated to us and shown that Christ did everything according to the scriptures, which shows that He is the one and only Messiah.

15:5-7 The following are the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection that are recorded in the red letters:

Matthew 28:9 – Mary Magdalene and the other Mary saw Jesus

Matthew 28:16-17 – The eleven saw Jesus but some doubted

Mark 16:9 – Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene

Mark 16:12 – He appeared to two people (also Luke 24:15)

Mark 16:14 – Then, He appeared to the eleven

Luke 24:34 – The Lord appeared to Simon before He appeared to the two people in Luke 24:15

Luke 24:33,36 – The Lord appeared to the 11 and those that were with them

John 20:14 – Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene

John 20:19 – The evening of Jesus’ resurrection, He appeared to the disciples, except for Thomas

John 20:26 – Eight days later, Jesus appeared to the disciples, including Thomas

John 21:1-2 – Later, Jesus appeared to 7 disciples

Acts 1:2,9 – Jesus was with the apostles when He ascended to heaven

If we put together these scriptures, it appears that Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome (Mark 16:1) just after His resurrection. Then, He appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34). Then, He appeared to the two men (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:15). That same night after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the eleven (twelve disciples minus Judas Iscariot) and others with them (Luke 24:33). Then, He appeared to His apostles over a period of 40 days until His ascension (Acts 1:2-3).

Now, let’s see if we can put all of this together, given what Paul says in 15:5-7. Paul skips the women seeing Jesus and goes right to Peter seeing Him (Luke 24:34). The women told the apostles of Jesus’ resurrection, and they did not believe them. Then, Peter went to the tomb and wondered about what had happened (Luke 24:11-12). It was probably then that Jesus met Peter (Luke 24:34), which is what Paul refers to.

Then, Paul says that Jesus was seen “of the twelve” (15:5). You may assume that Paul is talking about the 12 apostles. The problem with this assumption is that Judas Iscariot hung himself on the same day that Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:1-5). (Matthew 28:10,16-17 mentions that Jesus met with the 11 disciples on a mountain in Galilee. However, this was probably days later, since we know that Jesus met with the disciples that night in Jerusalem.) It looks like that, after meeting with Peter, Jesus met with the two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-15). These two men “returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them” (Luke 24:33). Jesus then “stood in the

midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you” (Luke 24:36). This coincides with John’s account in John 20:19, except that John says that Thomas was not there (John 20:24). So, the twelve, to whom Paul is referring, is probably the 12 apostles minus Judas Iscariot and Thomas and adding in Joseph and Matthias, who were the two finalists to replace Judas Iscariot as the twelfth apostle (Acts 1:23-26). Paul only refers to Jesus meeting “the twelve” (15:5); he does not specifically say it is the 12 apostles. It would not be the 12 apostles, since 15:7 mentions that he was seen “of ALL the apostles” later. This would mean that Luke’s eleven (Luke 24:33) would be the 12 that Paul is referring to minus Joseph. This would mean that Matthew’s eleven (Matthew 28:16) would be the original twelve apostles minus Judas Iscariot.

The next thing Paul mentions is that Jesus “was seen of above five hundred brethren at once” (15:6). This is not mentioned in the red letters. Also, there were only “about an hundred and twenty” disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:15), even though most of the five hundred brethren were still alive many years later when Paul wrote to the Corinthians. So, where were these men on the day of Pentecost? Matthew 27:52-53 says, “Many bodies of saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” My guess is that these are the “five hundred brethren at once” (15:6). Basically, Jesus had a special post-resurrection ministry for these saints, and Jesus met with them to tell them all about it. They then operated in this ministry, apart from the little flock, for many years afterward. This is why they were not at Pentecost.

Then, Paul says that “He was seen of James” (15:7). We are not told of this anywhere else. Peter was the leader of the little flock after Jesus’ ascension (Matthew 16:16-19; Acts 1:15, 2:14, 3:12, 4:8). After the dispensation of grace began with Paul in Acts 9, it appears that James became the new leader of the little flock (see Acts 12:17, 15:13, and 21:17-18). The mystery dispensation was not revealed until given to Paul (Galatians 1:11-16; Ephesians 3:1-5). However, Jesus probably met with James in private to let him know that there would come a time when he would be the leader of the little flock. This time is during the diminishing away of Israel in Acts 9-28 in the dispensation of grace, and so it is not until Paul’s writings that this meeting was revealed, since it relates to the little flock after Jesus put Israel’s program on hold.

Then, Jesus was seen “of all the apostles” (15:7). I am guessing that this took place eight days after Jesus’ first meeting with disciples, as recorded in John 20:24-29. Acts 1:2-3 says that Jesus met with “the Apostles whom He had chosen” over a period of forty days. Note that Paul mentions “the twelve”, in 15:5, and we noted there that this is probably the twelve apostles minus Judas Iscariot and Thomas and adding in Joseph and Matthias. Thus, only 10 of “the Apostles” were at that meeting. But, eight days later, Thomas sees the Lord for the first time, and the other 11 “Apostles” (including Matthias, but not Judas) were probably there at the same time.

By the way, skeptics may use these verses I have mentioned to try to prove that the Bible is full of errors, because it seems to contradict itself. However, these so-called differences actually prove that this is the Word of God. After all, if the Bible were man's book, man would have cleared up these so-called "contradictions." But, God puts in details that seem to contradict themselves so that He can reward with the truth those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6), while using these same things to send delusion to the unbelievers so that they will believe a lie and be damned (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). Basically, God gives man what he wants—truth to believers and lies to unbelievers—through the fleshly vagueness and the spiritual clarity of His Word.

15:8 "Last of all He was seen of me also" (15:8). I think Paul separates himself, here, to show that he is NOT one of the 12 apostles, contrary to what Churchianity would want you to believe. Jesus was seen "of all the apostles" (15:7) of Israel's dispensation before Jesus ascended to heaven. Then, about one year afterward, Jesus called to Paul out of heaven, but Paul did not see Jesus at the time, because he was blinded (Acts 9:3-8).

Jesus was probably seen of Paul for three years (Galatians 1:18) in between Acts 9:22-23, in which time the Lord Jesus Christ gave him the mystery gospel (Galatians 1:11-12) and doctrine for the new dispensation (Romans 16:25-26).

Spiritually speaking, Paul was an apostle "born out of due time" (15:8). In the prophecy program, the time for apostles was during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, so that they could go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 10:5-8). "The fulness of the time was come" in the prophetic program when "God sent forth His Son" (Galatians 4:4). However, due to the unbelief of Israel, Jesus Christ stood up at the stoning of Stephen and put Israel's program on hold (Acts 7:55-56). Therefore, the "due time" of the kingdom was put on hold. Then, Jesus Christ called Paul to start the dispensation of grace, making him "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13) "born out of due time" (15:8). It was no longer "due time" for God's kingdom to come to earth, but it is now "due time" to testify of Jesus' sacrifice also applying to the Gentiles (I Timothy 2:6) in the dispensation of grace.

15:9 In Israel's program, in order to be an apostle, one had to be a believer from the time of John's baptism until Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:21-22). However, during that time, Paul "persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" beyond measure (Galatians 1:13). As such, he is "not meet to be called an apostle" (15:9), according to the qualifications of an apostle in Israel's program. This is probably why he says that he is "the least of the apostles" (15:9).

Note the progression of Paul's humility as you read through his epistles. Here, he says he is the least of the apostles. In Ephesians 3:8, he says that he is "the least of all saints." In I Timothy 1:15, Paul calls himself the chief of sinners. This demonstrates the principle that, the more sound doctrine you have in your inner man and the more you live by the faith of the Son of God, the more you see things as God sees them.

15:10 The Holy Ghost indicted the nation of Israel at Stephen's death (Acts 7:55-56). The Lord Jesus Christ set aside Israel's program and would soon begin the dispensation of grace. He would take Saul of Tarsus and make him Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). The problem was that "Saul was consenting unto [Stephen's] death" (Acts 8:1). He was on Satan's side, not God's side.

Paul "persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" beyond measure (Galatians 1:13). He was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (I Timothy 1:13). However, Jesus knew that Paul was blinded by the Jews' religion. He was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of [his] fathers" (Galatians 1:14). And so Jesus called to Paul out of heaven in Acts 9 and asked him why he was persecuting Jesus (Acts 9:5). Paul then knew that he was following religion and not God. Therefore, he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief (I Timothy 1:13). God's mercy to Paul was not to give him hell for his unbelief, but to give him an opportunity to believe the gospel and be saved. Once he believed the gospel, God called him by His grace and revealed His Son in him so that he could preach Jesus Christ crucified among all unbelievers (Galatians 1:15-16). God's mercy gave Paul a chance to be saved from hell; God's grace gave him a chance to let Christ live in him as the apostle of the Gentiles. (The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Matthew 12:31-32), then, refers to Israel, as a whole, rejecting God's kingdom through their religious leaders. The blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, on an individual basis, is committed by taking the mark of the beast or worshiping the image of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11), not by blaspheming the church in ignorance, as Paul did.)

Therefore, God's grace was not bestowed upon Paul in vain (15:10). Now, Paul does not bring up this point to brag about how good of a Christian he is. Rather, he gives himself as an example so that the Corinthians also will not "have believed in vain" (15:2). It brings home the point that God did not save the Corinthians so that they could go to heaven and play a harp on a poofy, white cloud. Instead, God's grace is with them so that Christ can live in them (Galatians 2:20) as ambassadors of Christ, reconciling others to God (II Corinthians 5:20).

Paul says that he "laboured more abundantly than they all" (15:10). This would be more abundantly than all the people who physically saw Jesus after His resurrection: Cephas, "the twelve", 500 brethren, James, and then "all the apostles" (15:5-7). If you have read through the first seven chapters of Acts, you can see that thousands of people believed the gospel, but the end result was that Israel, as a whole, rejected God's salvation for them. The reason Paul can say that he "laboured more abundantly than they all" is not because he put in more time and effort than they did combined, but it is because it was "the grace of God which was with" him that laboured more abundantly (15:10).

This is not unlike what Jesus said about John the Baptist. He said, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28). John was

not greater because he was a greater man. He was greater because he had a greater message. His message was “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). The message of prophets before him usually was that God was about to punish Israel if they did not repent. In other words, John is greater because his message was of salvation, while the prophets’ message before him was that God was about to destroy them.

Similarly, Paul’s message was greater than the message of the believing remnant to Israel. The believing remnant’s message was for Israel to repent, be water baptized (Acts 2:38), and put themselves under the Mosaic law (Matthew 23:2-3 plus Acts 2:42 (apostles’ doctrine)) so that they would save themselves from God’s wrath at Jesus Christ’s second coming. Their sins would then be blotted out at that time (Acts 3:19-20). However, Paul’s message was to trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin (15:3-4) right NOW (Romans 5:11). Paul did not teach them to observe the Mosaic law (Matthew 28:20), but he taught people: “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Corinthians 5:20). In other words, the reason that God’s grace laboured more abundantly through Paul, than it did through all the others who saw Jesus after His resurrection, is because there is more power behind God’s grace being displayed through Paul than there was through the little flock, just like there was more grace being displayed through John the Baptist than there was the prophets that preceded him.

This shows us how important it is to allow Christ to live through us every day (Galatians 2:20), because **Christ is doing more through us today than He did through any other group of believers before Paul!** This also explains why Paul listed, in 15:5-7, the people who saw Christ’s resurrection. This shows that seeing Christ’s resurrection through the eyes of faith is more important than seeing it through physical eyes. In spite of the fact that over 500 Old-Testament saints rose from the dead and saw Jesus after He rose from the dead and witnessed about it to others, God’s grace was more abundant through Paul than it was through them. That is because God’s grace is reconciling people to God today, while God’s grace in early Acts was pointing people to the Mosaic law so that they could be saved at Jesus’ second coming.

This shows us that having God’s completed Word today is better than seeing Jesus physically walk on earth. This is because “the Word of God is quick and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12). When the rich man asked Lazarus to rise from the dead and tell his five brothers about hell, “Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Luke 16:29). He said that, “if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31). This is because faith is spiritual, not physical. This is why, when recounting what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17, Peter said, “We have also a MORE SURE WORD of prophecy” (II Peter 1:19). In spite of the fact that Peter was an eyewitness of the Lord Jesus Christ’s physical majesty (II Peter 1:16), he says that God’s WRITTEN word is more sure than seeing the Lord Jesus Christ in His coming kingdom! Therefore, the greater message of the grace of God to reconcile us to God today so that we now are seated together with

Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5-6) is better than hearing the lesser message of Israel under the law from people who physically saw Jesus walk on this earth in His post-resurrection body. In other words, today, we have a greater ability to have Christ live through us than Israel did during the at-hand phase of the kingdom! This is how the grace of God labours more abundantly through Paul than through the little flock of Israel.

15:11 Therefore, fleshly credentials do not matter when it comes to spiritual matters. Paul does not say in this verse that the people, of 15:5-7, preached the same message as Paul did. Rather, he is saying that it does not matter who preaches the gospel. The Corinthians should not look at Paul and say, “I am not listening to you because you persecuted the church of God and wasted it beyond measure. I will listen to the 500 Old-Testament saints, because they rose from the dead and saw Jesus walk on this earth after His resurrection.” Instead, they should consider the content of the message, and its power to save them from hell and allow Christ to live in them. Therefore, it does not matter “whether it were I or they” (15:11), as long as they believed Paul’s gospel for salvation.

When Paul says, “so WE preach” (15:11), he is not including the people in 15:5-7. The “we” would be Paul, Sosthenes (1:1), and everyone else in Paul’s camp, because Paul is preaching “the gospel of the uncircumcision,” while the little flock is preaching “the gospel of the circumcision” (Galatians 2:7). (This conclusion is also supported by the use of “our” and “we” in 15:14-15.) In 15:11, I think Paul is saying that “we” (Paul and those in his camp) preach the gospel of grace to you, and you believed it. Therefore, you are saved. Background does not matter, because it is Christ living in Paul that is being preached, not Paul’s Jewish credentials.

15:12 Jesus’ resurrection is the most important event in history. In order to be saved today, you must believe in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sin (15:3-4). So, how is it that some of the Corinthians say “that there is no resurrection of the dead” (15:12)? The resurrection focuses on the spiritual and eternal, rather than on the carnal and temporal. Since the Corinthians are carnal (3:3), they are focused on the here and now. They are like today’s church which wants to have their “best life now” and follow the health-and-wealth gospel. Anyone, who focuses on this life, is saying, practically speaking, that there is no resurrection, because his priority is on the things of this world.

Also, Paul’s gospel is different from Peter’s gospel, but they both preached that Christ rose from the dead. Paul preached Christ’s resurrection as good news, as part of the gospel to save them (15:3-4). Peter preached Jesus’ crucifixion as bad news, because it was Jesus that “ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). Then, “God hath raised [Him] up” (Acts 2:24) and made Him “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Therefore, Israel is subject to God’s wrath. However, they can still be saved if they repent and are water baptized (Acts 2:38). This means that, for Israel, the resurrection is still good news, because they have another chance to be saved. Peter even said, “This Jesus hath God raised up,

whereof we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32). Therefore, although Peter and Paul preached two, different gospels, they both still preached that Christ rose from the dead (15:12).

15:13-15 The idea, that there is no resurrection, is utter folly for a believer. If there is no resurrection, then Christ never rose from the dead. If Christ never rose from the dead, then there is no power in the gospel. Paul says that “the gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). This is salvation from hell and the curse of sin. However, if Christ never rose from the dead, then there is no power over death and hell. This makes the gospel powerless. Therefore, Paul’s preaching is vain (15:14). Also, the Corinthians’ faith is vain (15:14), because they would be trusting in something that has no power. In other words, Paul is saying, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then why are we doing this? “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). Why suffer, if there is no reward for it?

The two, main groups of Jewish religious leaders were the Pharisees, who were the legalists, and the Sadducees, who believed there was no resurrection (Matthew 22:23). Believing there is no resurrection makes our faith worthless and God powerless to save us. What is appealing about it is that it causes you to focus on your flesh exclusively. Your flesh lusteth against the Spirit, desiring to accomplish what the Spirit of God has already accomplished in you (Galatians 5:17). If there is no resurrection, then your focus is entirely on this world, which pleases your flesh. So, you can play church, talking about the things of God, but then you go about living in the flesh. This gives you a form of godliness for your flesh to have control of your life. This is very appealing to the flesh. Plus, it is very appealing to religious leaders because people will pay big bucks to look godly, while still catering to the flesh, meaning that their flesh does not suffer persecution. Therefore, unbelieving people, bound for hell, pop up as “godly” people, propagating a fleshly life with a cloke of godliness so that they can become rich in this world. “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (I Timothy 6:10).

Also, if there is no resurrection, then Christ did not rise from the dead, which means that Paul is a false witness (15:15).

15:16-17 These two verses are almost a repeat of verses 13-14. This shows that this information is very important. The difference is that verse 17 concludes with “ye are yet in your sins.” The whole purpose of believing the gospel is so Christ can give you the victory over death and hell and that God’s love can come through you for all eternity. If Christ never rose from the dead, then everyone is still dead in their sins, which means that no one is going to heaven. Satan has won.

However, many “Christians” live their lives as if there is no resurrection, because it pleases their flesh. Here is the issue: Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection mean that in your flesh dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18). This is a blow to the pride of the flesh. At the same time, everyone knows they are worthy of death for their sins (Romans 1:32), and so they cannot just live in their flesh, because their

conscience will tell them to stop. So, what people do is they go to church, talk about God and the Bible, but then deny the resurrection. This way, their conscience is appeased, but they can still live in the flesh, because all they have is this life.

Now, Satan is “more subtil than any beast of the field” (Genesis 3:1), and so, today, you will not have people denying the resurrection with their lips. However, in practice, they do, because they live according to the flesh, as if there is no resurrection. The same holds true with many of the tenants of Churchianity. They will say that they believe the Word of God is true, but yet they do not believe in right division. They say that they follow what Jesus says, but they will not follow Jesus’ words to us today through the apostle Paul (Romans 16:25). Similarly, they say that Jesus rose from the dead, but they live as if He did not, because “Christians” live just like unbelievers do. In fact, as a whole, Churchianity lives worse than the heathen do because they commit all of the same sins, and they probably commit more because they can get away with more with their cloke of godliness. And, they add to that: 1) Hypocrisy, and 2) Blaspheming God’s name. This is why Jesus said that the Pharisees’ children were twofold more the children of hell (Matthew 23:15), because religion makes people think they have eternal life, when they do not, because they have acted like Christians in order to please their flesh, rather than believing the true gospel for today of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection alone as atonement for sin (15:3-4).

The bottom line is that Churchianity is used, not to have eternal life and have God’s love come through believers, but it is used to ease a guilty conscience. Then, they tweak the truth to throw out the resurrection, and now the flesh has free reign to seek its lusts to the exclusion of Christ living in them. Therefore, Paul spends the longest chapter in his epistles on the resurrection to show how essential resurrection is to eternal life. Without the resurrection, “your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

15:18 Since no resurrection means no life and that everyone goes to hell, then it also means that the Corinthians’ loved ones, who believed the gospel, are also in hell if there is no resurrection. This is a great point to note. What most in Churchianity usually do is they ignore the life in Christ so that they do not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. All they do is live in the flesh and not consider the next life. When it comes to loved ones, they automatically assume that they are in heaven, even if they never believed. We see this with the Pharisees. They “build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous” (Matthew 23:29). By revering the dead, they make themselves look godly, but yet they live according to the flesh. Paul’s point is that, if there is no resurrection, then all of your dead loved ones are in hell. So, you cannot use them to build your form of godliness. Instead, they are examples of stupidity, believing a gospel that has no power. Paul, then, is showing the Corinthians how crazy it is to say that there is no resurrection.

15:19 For many years, I have heard churchgoers say that Christians ought to be the happiest people alive. Technically, that is not true. We should “rejoice

evermore” (I Thessalonians 5:16). “Happy” appears 28 times in your Bible, and Paul only mentions it twice (Acts 26:2, Romans 14:22), because HAPPiness is based upon HAPPenstance. But, joy is based upon who we are in Christ.

Regardless, Paul’s point is that Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), and he has the world operating by his course (Ephesians 2:2). When we allow Christ to live in us, our “flesh lusteth against the Spirit” (Galatians 5:17). Therefore, the in-Christ life consists of the world and our flesh persecuting us. This is why “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). Therefore, we should be the most miserable people on the face of the earth (15:19). Yet, we are to “rejoice evermore.” Why should Christians be the happiest people alive? The answer is the resurrection. If our only hope is in this life, we are “most miserable.” However, because we have a hope laid up for us in heaven (Colossians 1:5), we should always rejoice. This hope is “that in the ages to come [God] might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7). Since “God is love” (I John 4:8), this is the best thing that could possibly happen to us. Therefore, we “rejoice evermore” (I Thessalonians 5:16), even though we suffer constantly for letting Christ live in us (II Corinthians 4:8-11). However, if not for the resurrection, our hope would disappear. This is why the resurrection is such a vital belief to the Christian.

15:20 When you see “But now” in Paul’s epistles, it is a good sign. Note that this verse is in the present tense. Christ “is risen” right now. This signals His eternal life, because He died 2,000 years ago, and yet He is still risen today.

Christ’s becoming “the firstfruits of them that slept” (15:20) shows that His resurrection is unlike any resurrection before His, such as Lazarus (John 11:44-45) or Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:41-43). Previous resurrections resulted in people dying again, but Jesus rose and never died again. Romans 6:9 says, “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.” Why? Because He conquered hell and death (Revelation 1:18); therefore, He has abundant life (John 10:10). Lazarus did not have abundant life. He was still “bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin” (John 11:44). Similarly, when Jairus’ daughter was raised, Jesus told them to give her something to eat (Mark 5:43). By contrast, when Jesus rose from the dead, He did it all Himself. This is because Jesus IS “the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). Jesus’ resurrection from the dead means that He conquered hell and death, and so He has life within Himself. Therefore, He is “the firstfruits of them that slept” (15:20), or the first one to receive His glorified, eternal, fleshly body.

Paul even says “that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (II Timothy 2:8). God told Jesus, the man, to live a perfect life and die for the sins of man. He did this. Therefore, Jesus, the man, had faith in what God told Him. Because of this, Jesus, the man, was raised from the dead, according to His own death on the cross, i.e., Paul’s gospel. Similarly, the power to raise all believers from the dead, regardless of dispensation, comes from Jesus’ conquering of hell through His death, burial, and resurrection. This is seen in

Ephesians 1:19-20, which states that God's power is exceeding great "to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." Therefore, the power to raise all believers from the dead was "WROUGHT" or created in Christ at His resurrection. This same power raises us from the dead. Therefore, Christ is "the firstfruits of them that slept" (15:20), while our resurrection bodies will come later at the rapture of the body of Christ, and believing Israel will rise from their graves at Jesus' second coming.

15:21-22 These verses show that all of mankind are in two people: 1) Adam, or 2) Christ. Because we all have a sin nature thanks to Adam, we are in Adam when we are born. Once we recognize our sin and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sin, we are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. Since Christ rose from the dead, we also have risen from the dead once we believe the gospel. This is because we are baptized into Jesus Christ's death (Romans 6:3). Because we are identified with Christ's death, we are also identified with His resurrection. This means that our lives are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3), and we are accepted in the beloved (Christ) (Ephesians 1:6). Therefore, God has to give us eternal life in heaven. If God sends us to an eternal hell, He would have to send Christ to an eternal hell. Since God cannot deny Himself of eternal life, He cannot deny us of eternal life (II Timothy 2:13). Praise the Lord!

This is why Christ had to be fully man, in addition to being fully God. Being fully God meant that He would never sin. Being fully man meant that He could be the propitiation, or fully satisfying sacrifice, for our sins (Romans 3:25). The reason is given in 15:21. Since death came by one man, only man could bring about the resurrection of the dead, and that man, who did so, was Christ.

We should note that 15:22 is not teaching universal salvation. It does not mean that all are made alive by Christ's death, burial, and resurrection such that all go to heaven. Rather, it means that all those "IN CHRIST" are made alive. You are only "in Christ" by believing the gospel. Those, who do not believe the gospel, are still in Adam, and so they end up in the lake of fire.

15:23-24 15:23 may make you think that the rapture and Jesus' second coming are the same event. After all, Paul says that Christ rose from the dead first, then all those in Christ are raised at Christ's coming. "Then cometh the end" (15:24). However, Paul is not giving a detailed account of end-time events. Rather, he is proving the resurrection.

What he is saying in these two verses is the whole reason Christ came to the earth as a man, lived a perfect life, and took our sin upon Himself, was so that He could conquer death for us. Christ's resurrection from the dead shows that He is the firstfruits or the first one to be raised to eternal life in a glorified body. Now, once we believe the gospel, we are placed into Christ. We then belong to Christ. He purchased us with His own blood (Acts 20:28). It does not matter if we are part of Israel's dispensation or part of the grace dispensation. Either way, all people, who

believe the gospel presented to them, have been bought with the price of Christ's blood, and we belong to Him (6:20). Therefore, when Jesus comes back at the rapture, He will raise us up from the grave. Then, when He comes back for Israel after the tribulation period is over, they will rise up from their graves. Explaining these dispensational distinctions is not pertinent to Paul's discussion of the resurrection, since all believers belong to Christ and will all be raised by Christ in the future. Therefore, He lumps both the rapture and the second coming into one.

When all have been resurrected, who will be resurrected, that is the end, and Christ delivers up the kingdom to God the Father (15:24). When God made the world, He gave dominion of His creation to man (Genesis 1:26). Adam gave it over to Satan when man sinned (Luke 4:5-6). Since death came by man, life also has to come by man (15:21). Therefore, Christ took our sin upon Him so that He could fight against death to win the dominion of the world back from Satan. Jesus conquered death, because His righteousness kept death from having power over Him (Acts 2:24). Therefore, Jesus emerged from hell, having "the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18).

15:24-26 God is the possessor of heaven and earth (Genesis 14:19). As the possessor of heaven and earth, He gave dominion of the earth to Adam. When Adam sinned, Satan usurped his authority, making Satan the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). God knew that the second Adam, Christ, would get the rule of the earth (and heaven, for that matter), back from Satan. Therefore, in eternity, man will rule over heaven and earth. Ephesians 1:10 says, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." God must wait until all things are gathered into Christ before man (Christ) can rule over everything again. Since Satan is an evil ruler, God the Father has to reign over everything right now. Granted, Jesus has destroyed death. However, death is not swallowed up in victory until "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption" (15:54). In other words, death is not swallowed up in victory for those, who are in Christ, until they receive their glorified bodies. Therefore, the enemy of death has not been destroyed yet. Death has no power over believers' lives, but all believers will still die, provided the rapture does not take place in their lifetimes.

Since death has not been swallowed up in victory yet, God the Father must continue to reign. However, once death has been destroyed, all believers, in both dispensations, will be reconciled to Christ. Therefore, the end has come. Christ can then deliver up the kingdom to His Father (v. 24), with all enemies now being under Christ's feet (v. 25). In other words, God the Father gave dominion of His kingdom to man (Adam). Man allowed Satan to usurp that rule. God sends another man (Jesus), and He gets the rule back from Satan. He then delivers the kingdom to the Father, since the Father has had to rule in the meantime, since Satan is the god of this world, and not man. (This is why we see Satan having to report to God in Job 1-2, for example.) The Father then examines the kingdom and determines that "all rule and all authority and power" (15:24) have been put down by Christ. He then gives the kingdom back to Christ for Him to rule over as fully

man, since Christ will rule completely according to the Father's plan. Then, all those in Christ will rule with Him for all eternity.

15:27-28 Now, we get a footnote, as it were, that, just because all things are put under Christ's feet, it does not mean that God the Father is subject to Him. Rather, the Father is "excepted" from being under the rule of Christ, as the Father continues to be over the Son for all eternity. Therefore, the Son remains subject to the Father.

Once this takes place, God is "all in all" (15:28). At first, God made man and gave man dominion over the earth. Man rebelled against God, giving the authority of the earth to Satan. Satan also had rebelled against God. God then sent His Son, fully God and fully man. As man, Christ won the victory over death for us. We were then placed into Christ when we believed the gospel. Christ is also in God, because He is fully God, as well as being fully man. Therefore, our lives are "hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). This means that, when Christ rules over God's kingdom, God is also ruling over His kingdom, because God is in Christ, and we are in Christ. The reason, then, that God gave man dominion over the earth is so that God could indwell man and rule through man. This is how God is "all in all" (15:28).

The writer of Hebrews adds some information for us that is parallel to what Paul is giving here. He says, "But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus..., crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:8-9). In other words, Jesus receives the position of authority over God's kingdom from the Father because He has tasted death for every man. This is why He is sitting at the right hand of the Father and is both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:32-36). However, He cannot exercise that power until death has been fully defeated when we receive our glorified bodies. But, Christ did exercise His power as Lord and Christ by standing at the right hand of God and putting Israel's program on hold and starting the dispensation of grace (Acts 7:55-56).

On earth, Jesus asked for one more year for Israel's program to continue, because the Father was "Lord" at that time (Luke 13:6-9). However, when Jesus rose from the dead, the Father made Him Lord. Therefore, Jesus Himself could stand at the right hand of the Father and put Israel's program on hold and start the dispensation of grace with Paul in Acts 9:22-23.

Jesus was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15), because He understands that the temptation to sin for man is great. Therefore, He asked for a one-year grace period for Israel's program. However, after He went into hell and suffered for our sin, He fully knew the consequence of sin. This meant that He now had the wisdom to make decisions as Lord. It is from this position that He makes the dispensational change, once the one-year grace period for Israel was over, and they still did not believe. Yet, we still see God's grace in that the Holy Ghost, through Stephen, said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60), meaning

that Jews could still be saved in the mystery dispensation that started with Paul in Acts 9.

15:29 The Mormons make a big deal out of this verse. This verse is why they spend so much time with genealogy. They say that a good Mormon can research his family tree, and then he can be baptized for a dead relative, who was not a good Mormon. In doing so, the dead relative can now move up in the afterlife to a higher level of existence. Of course, this is not what this verse is saying.

First, we know that water baptism is not recognized by God today. Paul says, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1:17), showing that water baptism is not part of the gospel. The reason is because, the moment you believe the gospel, the Spirit of God baptizes you into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-4). (The word “baptize” means to identify with, not dunk in water. We see this in 10:2, where Israel was “all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” “The sea” is a reference to the “Red Sea.” As we know, God had the Red Sea’s waters part, and Israel walked across on dry land. Therefore, Israel was identified with the DRY baptism of the Red Sea.) We know that Paul is referring to the dry baptism by the Spirit because Paul says that “ALL” are “baptized into one body” (12:13), even though Paul does not know if all of the Corinthians were water baptized or not (1:14-16).

We can also see that the Spirit baptism of Romans 6:3-4 is a dry baptism by looking at Colossians 2:11-12. These verses say that “ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.” Obviously, this is referring to a spiritual circumcision. The verses go on to say that we are “buried with Him in baptism.” This statement defines “the circumcision of Christ.” Since circumcision and baptism are linked as one event here and we know that spiritual circumcision is in view, then we know that spiritual baptism is also in view. Therefore, the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5 must be spirit baptism. Colossians 2:17 talks about the things of Israel being “a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” Therefore, the “shadow” of water baptism is replaced by the “body” of spirit baptism. As such, the water baptism by Mormons for their dead relatives is meaningless.

Even if you do not recognize spirit baptism, Mormon baptism for the dead must be meaningless because the only way you can get into heaven is by making the free-will decision to believe the gospel. No one can force you into heaven after you are dead by being water baptized for you! Romans 3:22 says that we receive “the righteousness of God...by faith of Jesus Christ” by believing the gospel. The righteousness of God is only “upon all them that believe.” Therefore, even if water baptism had saving power today, it could not save dead people!

Another possible meaning of 15:29 is that Paul is referring to a pagan religion that baptizes for the dead. The reason this is possible is because he says, “What shall THEY do which are baptized for the dead?” Then, the subject is changed to “we” in 15:30. Therefore, you could make the argument that Paul is saying that resurrection is true because some pagan religion baptizes for the dead. However,

this argument does not make sense because you do not prove a truth by going to a false religion. For example, I would not say that resurrection is true because the Mormons baptize for the dead. Therefore, Paul would not be saying this either, especially in light of the fact that he says, in 15:33, that “evil communications corrupt good manners.” Paul would not use an “evil communication,” i.e., a pagan doctrine to communicate a truth, because paganism corrupts good manners, even if the pagans have a good doctrine mixed in with all of their bad ones. After all, even a blind squirrel finds a nut every once in a while. (We see paganism attempting to corrupt good manners in Acts 16:16-18, where Paul casts out the devil from a woman who was saying that Paul was a servant of the most high God, shewing people the way of salvation. The devil’s statement was true, but Paul cast the devil out so that it would not communicate false doctrine to people.)

What I believe this verse is really saying is that the Corinthians, who were water baptized, were baptized for the dead, spiritually speaking. We have already seen that water baptism is not for today, yet Paul says that he baptized Crispus, Gaius, and some others in the Corinthian church (1:14-16). Why? Because the Corinthian church was “joined hard to the [Jewish] synagogue” (Acts 18:7). Crispus was “the chief ruler of the synagogue.” When he believed the gospel of grace, Paul water baptized him (Acts 18:8). Why? So as to be able to preach the gospel to those in the Jewish synagogue next door. The Jews would have known that John, Jesus, the disciples, and all others of the believing remnant of Israel were water baptized in order to be saved in Israel’s program (Mark 16:16). If Crispus was not water baptized, he may have appeared as a hypocrite to those in the Jewish synagogue, and they would not have believed the gospel in order to be saved. Therefore, Paul water baptized Crispus.

Paul says, “Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews” (9:20). Physical circumcision is not for today, yet Paul had Timothy physically circumcised so that Jews may be saved (Acts 16:3). The Nazarite vow was a sanctification ceremony, specifically for Israel’s program (Numbers 6), yet Paul took the Nazarite vow in order to have an audience to present the gospel to unbelieving Jews (Acts 18:18). Certainly then, water baptism was a ceremony that believers, who came from the Jewish synagogue, should undertake, in order for some Jews, who are right next door, to be saved.

Paul says that they were “baptized for the dead” (15:29), because all unbelievers are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Therefore, 15:29 refers to being baptized for people, who are spiritually dead, not for people who are physically dead. Since the Corinthians were carnal (3:3), that is about all that some of them did so that others may be saved. By contrast, Paul stands “in jeopardy every hour” (15:30) and has “fought with beasts at Ephesus” (15:32). In other words, Paul is listing works that are done in Christ that prove there is a resurrection. The work of some of the Corinthians was to be water baptized so that some Jews may be saved. Since these Jews are spiritually dead, then the Corinthians were “baptized for the dead” (15:29). Also, only SOME of the Corinthians were water baptized. This is why Paul uses the word “they” (the Corinthians, who had been water baptized) in 15:29, instead of “you.”

Paul's point, then, is that, why did some of the Corinthians get water baptized in order to save some Jews if there is no resurrection? Why even bother?

15:30 The interpretation of 15:29, that “baptized for the dead” means that some of the Corinthians were water baptized so that they may reach unbelieving Jews with the gospel, makes sense in light of what Paul says in 15:30. Paul says that “we” stand in jeopardy every hour. The “we” probably refers to Paul and those with him, such as Sosthenes (1:1), and Silas. They stand in jeopardy because all religious people are against them. For example, around the time that Paul wrote I Corinthians, Gaius and Aristarchus were in trouble in Ephesus, and Paul left the city, lest he be killed, since the city cried out for two hours, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (Acts 19:28-20:1). Later, the Jews will try to kill Paul in Jerusalem for going against the Jewish religion (Acts 21:29-30). There is big money in religion, and Paul's preaching of grace and the free gift of eternal life is hurting the religious business, whether it be a Gentile religion or a Jewish religion.

Paul wrote I Corinthians around Acts 19. He wrote Romans and II Corinthians around Acts 20. In Romans 15:19, Paul said that he had preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum. That was about half of the world. He would later get to Spain (Romans 15:24), where he would cover the other half of the world. In covering the first half of the world, Paul mentions, in II Corinthians 11:23-27, many of the things that he had suffered, including being beaten with stripes 5 times, 3 times by rods, once stoned and left for dead, and being shipwrecked once. He says that he received these things “of the Jews” (II Corinthians 11:24). The problem was that the Jewish religion hated Paul, just like Churchianity today hates Bible believers. The reason is that Paul was exposing the religion of the Jews, which was contrary to God's Word (Mark 7:6-9). Paul was leading people to believe God and His Word, rather than believing religion.

Remember that the Lord sent Paul to “the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Paul's “manner”, then, was to come into a city and preach to the Jews in a Jewish synagogue. The Jews would reject him, persecute him, and then Paul would go to the Gentiles. For example, we see Paul going to the Jews and being persecuted by them in Acts 17:1-9. Basically, every time Paul went into a Jewish synagogue, he would be persecuted. Paul is saying, “Why stand we in jeopardy every hour” if there is no resurrection (15:30).

Paul stands in jeopardy of being persecuted and even killed, every time he proclaims the gospel. Paul may be the most wanted man in the world at the time. Why would he subject himself to potential punishment like this if there is no resurrection, since he is not getting any material benefit from preaching the gospel and mystery doctrine?

In other words, why go through this persecution in every city, if there is no reward in the life to come. Paul “profited in the Jews' religion above many [his] equals in [his] own nation” (Galatians 1:14), yet Paul had “suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that [he] may win Christ” (Philippians 3:9). Why would

Paul give up all his material possessions and his social life in exchange for having little money, having to make tents just to survive (Acts 18:3), and being a social outcast if there is no reward for him in the life to come (II Corinthians 4:8-10)?

15:31 Paul dies daily. Romans 6:11 says, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Notice that the verse does not just say “reckon,” but it also says to “reckon...also.” This means that someone else has reckoned you to be dead to sin, and that someone else is God. Since God is all knowing, we should also reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. Paul says that he does this on a daily basis. He does this when he reads and believes God's Word and applies it in his life. His flesh lusts against his spirit (Galatians 5:17), Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), and Satan has the world operating by his course (Ephesians 2:2). This means that this world, your own flesh, and most everyone else, including Christians, make the decision to live by the lusts of the flesh. Therefore, it is crucial that we read God's Word every day and believe what it says. When we do this, we make the decision to “die daily” to the lusts of the flesh.

Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” When we die daily, Christ lives in us. If there is no resurrection, Christ does not live in us. Paul says, “I protest by your rejoicing” (15:31). The Corinthians are rejoicing in the carnality of their flesh. In other words, they are rejoicing in the temporal, material world, rather than in the eternal, spiritual world. Therefore, Paul protests by their rejoicing. By contrast, Paul has his rejoicing “in Christ Jesus our Lord” (15:31). Paul is rejoicing in who he is in Christ, which is why he counts all things in the flesh as dung that he may win Christ and be found in Him, that he “may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death” (Philippians 3:8-10). When we suffer for godly living, we die to our flesh and experience the resurrection power of Christ in our lives. Because the abundant life (John 10:10) of Christ is far better than anything in this world, Paul counts the things of this world as dung. He dies daily to them. He protests by the rejoicing of the Corinthians in the flesh, because his rejoicing is so much better in Christ. Therefore, he dies daily to the flesh so that the resurrection power of Christ can live through him on a daily basis.

15:32 We do not have an account in scripture of Paul fighting against physical beasts at Ephesus. Christians were thrown to the lions, but may not have been thrown to the lions quite this early in history. Acts 19 records Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's companions in travel, being caught and rushed into the theatre. It sounds like they tried to bring Paul into the theatre, but Alexander was brought in there instead (Acts 19:29-33). And so, from the Acts account, it does not appear that Paul fought with physical beasts at Ephesus. But, here in 15:32, he says he did, and so he may have. On the other hand, this could be a reference to spiritual beasts. Religious people, in Israel's program, are called “brute beasts” in II Peter 2:12 and in Jude 10. However, since Paul is talking to the carnal Corinthians and is talking about material suffering being welcomed since the

resurrection of Christ lives in him eternally, Paul is probably referring to fighting with physical beasts at Ephesus, which means that Acts simply did not record this detail. In any event, Paul is saying that he will be rewarded in eternity for fighting with beasts at Ephesus.

However, if there is no resurrection, then Paul should give up on suffering for Christ. Instead, he should focus on the pleasures of this life. Ecclesiastes 2:24, 5:18, and 8:15 say that “a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry.” This is why Paul says that these are the best things to do in this life “for to morrow we die” (15:32). Now, this does not mean literally tomorrow, but it means that all of the things you work for you in this life come to an end the moment you die, IF there is no resurrection of the dead. Luke 17:27-29 says, “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark...and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.” This shows that, when a society stops believing in the resurrection, they live completely for themselves, and all morality goes out the window, such that God has to destroy that society. Jesus said that the world will be like Noah's day and like Lot's day when Jesus comes back (Luke 17:26-32), which means that man will, once again, forsake the resurrection, and will do so on a global scale, as man did in Noah's day. This shows us that belief in the resurrection is the only thing saving the world from destroying itself today! Note that both Noah's and Lot's societies were destroyed due to sexual immorality, which shows that not believing in the resurrection leads to sexual immorality. The fact, that so much sexual immorality goes on today, shows that the rapture of the body of Christ must not be far away.

15:33 This is a great verse to demonstrate that what you believe matters. So much of Churchianity has discarded Bible study and learning fundamental doctrine and have instead followed good feelings at church. Paul tells us, here, that such people are deceived. He says that “evil communications corrupt good manners” (15:33). In other words, when you do not believe and follow sound doctrine, you will live according to the flesh, rather than walking in the Spirit. It is easy to be deceived into thinking this is not the case, and we can see this ring true in Churchianity today. Why? Because Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” In other words, your flesh is so desperate to have its wicked way that it does not mind deceiving you into thinking that you are serving the Lord by attending church, trying to feel the presence of the Spirit, and getting emotional about it every Sunday. Your flesh does not mind appearing to serve Christ, as long as it gets its own way. Thus, most people in Churchianity are deceived into thinking they are serving Christ, when they are not. Paul says, “Be not deceived.” Contrary to what your flesh wants you to believe, the only way you can serve Christ is by having good communications based upon the sound doctrine of God's Word rightly divided.

15:34 The way to have Christ live in you is to “awake to righteousness,” meaning to let Christ live in you by making decisions based upon the mind of Christ using

sound doctrine built up in the inner man. When we do this, we automatically will “sin not” (15:34), as Romans 13:10 tells us that “love is the fulfilling of the law.” This shows that we should not focus on a legalistic obedience of God's Word. When we put ourselves back under the law, we make ourselves a transgressor (Galatians 2:18), because our sin nature takes occasion by the commandment to work in us “all manner of concupiscence” (Romans 7:8). In other words, what we have our minds dwell on is what we will end up doing. Therefore, if we think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:8), we will sin not. However, if we think on the law, we will sin more. The only way we can think on the good things is if we have those good things in our inner man. This is why reading God's Word and getting that sound doctrine in our inner man is so important. When we do this, we “awake to righteousness” (15:34). Sadly, as with the Corinthians, most of Churchianity “have not the knowledge of God” because they do not read and believe their Bibles (15:34). Paul says, “I speak this to your shame,” which shows that all believers should read God's Word and know it. II Timothy 2:15 says, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.” This shows that Christians, who rightly divide the Word, meaning that they recognize that only Romans - Philemon are written TO us today, and read and believe God's Word, are “not to be ashamed,” because they can live by the Word of God. By contrast, Christians, who do not rightly divide and read and believe God's Word, are to be ashamed. After all, Christ bought them with His blood (Acts 20:28), and they continued to serve Satan with the lusts of their flesh, because they did not die daily to their flesh by reading and believing God's Word rightly divided. This shows how important it is to read our Bibles!

15:35 The “some man” of this verse is someone following Churchianity, rather than being a Bible believer. We know this for two reasons: 1) Paul calls this person a “fool” (15:36). A fool is someone who does not believe God (Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3). Therefore, this man has not made the Bible his final authority. This would fall under the category of “foolish and unlearned questions” (II Timothy 2:23). Yet, for some reason, Paul still answers the question anyway, and 2) The context is evil communications corrupting good manners and how we should have the knowledge of God by reading and believing God's Word (15:33-34). Perhaps, then, this is why Paul answers the question, even though it is a foolish one that should be avoided, as an example to the Corinthians of how Biblical unbelief results in Biblical ignorance in even the simplest of spiritual matters.

15:36-38 “How are the dead raised up?” (15:35). 15:38 says, “God giveth it a body”, and so the answer is that God raises up the dead. Paul even says this in II Corinthians 1:9. The way God raises the dead is “according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead” (Ephesians 1:19-20). Basically, because Christ did no sin (I Peter 2:22), Christ became sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21). He then swallowed up death in victory (15:54), because Christ had the power over sin, having never sinned Himself. Therefore, God's justice was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11), such that God was able to work His mighty power in Christ to raise Him from the dead. “Death hath no more dominion over Him” (Romans 6:9). Since we are in Christ, death no longer has

dominion over us (“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14).). “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6:5).

Note the word “planted” in Romans 6:5, which leads us to the second question: “With what body do [the dead] come?” (15:35). Paul gives an illustration of a grain of wheat planted into the ground. When it rises, its body is completely different from the grain, and it is much better as wheat, than it was when it was “bare grain” (15:37). This is the same for us in the resurrection. It is a body that is completely different and much better.

Jesus gave this same illustration when He talked about His death. He said, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:23-24). Jesus refers to His death as His glorification, because His death results in bringing forth MUCH fruit. Jesus then applies this to His disciples by saying, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12:25). Since Paul gives us this same illustration, our lives are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3), and Jesus also applied it to His disciples, I think it is reasonable to assume that, when we die, we will also be given a body that “bringeth forth much fruit.”

We have an idea of this body when we look at Jesus’ resurrection body, because He is “the firstfruits” of the resurrection (15:20). Jesus’ glorified body looked similar to His previous body, which was in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3). He could do additional things, such as disappear and re-appear somewhere else (Luke 24:31,36) and suddenly appear behind a locked door (John 20:19). However, the main difference is spiritual, as Paul mentions in 15:44. This is where the “much fruit” of the glorified body resides, not in the physical but in the spiritual.

I John 3:2 says, “it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” This shows that, the way we have much fruit in a glorified body is when we have the spiritual insight to discern Who Christ really is. This probably means that we view Him as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (I Timothy 6:15), meaning that we live by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). We will not have a sin nature, and we will never sin again. Therefore, everything we do in eternity will glorify God!

15:38 tells us that, the body God gives us, will please Him. It also says “to every seed his own body.” This tells us that our heavenly bodies will be different from our earthly bodies and will be different from the bodies of those in hell. Every body is made by God to please Him. People will say that there is no God because we do not have perfect bodies, because we get sick, we have pain, there are birth defects, limbs can be lost, etc. However, God gave us physical bodies to please

Him. If He gave us perfectly operating bodies, we would probably trust in our flesh, rather than recognizing our sin and believing the gospel. Therefore, God intentionally gave us bodies that would break down, so that we would recognize our morality and look to God to give us immortality in the life to come. We do not have imperfect bodies, but we have bodies that were “fearfully and wonderfully made” by God (Psalm 139:14) to fail at times ON PURPOSE so that we would turn to God for eternal life. “For when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:10), meaning when my flesh is weak, Christ can be strong through my flesh, as I present my body as a living sacrifice unto God (Romans 12:1).

15:39-41 Hebrews 10:5 says that God prepared a body specifically for the Lord Jesus Christ to live in, while He was on earth. The same thing applies to all of God’s creation. God made the flesh on the earth to be different among men, beasts, fishes and birds. These are terrestrial bodies (“Terrestrial” means earth.).

There are also celestial bodies (“Celestial” means heaven.). The sun, moon, and stars differ from one another. They may look similar, since they are all round balls of light, but they each serve a different purpose. For example, the sun lights the earth, the moon is a reflection of that light, and stars are lesser lights to help at night.

15:42-44 Understanding, that terrestrial bodies differ from celestial bodies and that bodies within each realm differ from each other, helps us understand how our resurrection bodies will differ from our natural bodies. We are told that our bodies go into the ground as natural bodies, and they are raised as spiritual bodies (15:44). So, we have terrestrial bodies now, and we will have celestial bodies in the resurrection. Just like a stalk of wheat is much more glorious than its seed, our celestial bodies will be much more glorious than our terrestrial bodies.

The sun, moon, and stars have greater glory than terrestrial bodies of men, beasts, fishes, and birds. This is true, even though the sun, moon, and stars are inanimate objects. Can you imagine, then, how glorious our bodies will be in the resurrection because we are alive human beings in Christ?!

Psalm 104:2 says that God covers Himself “with light as with a garment.” God says that He made Adam “in His own image” (Genesis 1:27). Before Adam sinned, we are told that “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25). When Adam and Eve sinned, “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Genesis 3:7). This shows that God gave them a clothing of light when He created them, and they lost their clothing of light when they sinned.

When Jesus rose from the grave, Mary did not recognize Him (John 20:14), because He had His glorified body, which would have included this clothing of light. Jesus is “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). I John 3:2 says that “when [Jesus] shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” Malachi 4:2 refers to Jesus as “the Sun of righteousness.” Revelation 21:23 says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the light of the

New Jerusalem. It also says that the glory of God lightens New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:11 describes believing Israel as “having the glory of God.” Thus, they are the moon. Genesis 1:14 says that one of the purposes of the sun, moon, and stars is to “be for signs.”

This means that, one of the purposes for which God created the sun, moon, and stars, is for us to get a glimpse of the glory of God in eternity. In God’s kingdom on earth, Christ will be the sun and believing Israel will be the moon, spiritually speaking, and their light will show the Gentiles the light of God, i.e., His glory. They can then be part of His glory if they side with Jesus at the end of the millennial reign in His final battle with Satan (Revelation 20:7-10). We see this in Revelation 21:24 “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.” With the real spiritual sun and moon in place, there is no need for the temporal earthly sun and moon to be there, which is why Revelation 21:23 says, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Tom Scelzi in Australia came up with the following, and he has given me permission to share it:

"It is raised in incorruption" (15:42) - Incorruption is a reference to the whole Godhead (15:50).

"It is raised in glory" (15:43) - Glory is a reference to the Father (Exodus 33:18-22; John 1:14).

"It is raised in power" (15:43) - Power is a reference to the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13).

"It is raised a spiritual body" (15:44) - The spiritual body is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ who has a glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21).

So, Paul could be saying that all three members of the Godhead are involved in the resurrection. Just like all three members were involved in Jesus' resurrection (John 2:19-21; Acts 13:30; Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 3:18). (End of Tom’s comment)

I believe Tom’s comment is a great way of explaining how “God may be all in all” (15:28). “Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:3-4).

God gave dominion of everything He made to man (Psalm 8:6). Adam gave this up to Satan when he sinned, and Christ got the dominion of everything back from Satan. All things will not be placed under Christ’s feet until death is destroyed (15:25-27), which is at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:13-14). Then, all things are gathered together in Christ—including heaven and earth (Ephesians 1:10). Those saved, in today’s dispensation, are Christ’s body (12:27) in heaven. Those saved, in Israel’s program, are Christ’s bride (Revelation 21:9) on

the earth. The body is one with the head, and the bride is one with her husband. Thus, both realms are reconciled to Christ by all believers being reconciled to God through Christ.

The angels are ministering spirits for believers (Hebrews 1:14). Since believers are in heaven (body of Christ) and on earth (bride of Christ), angels are seen as ascending and descending upon a ladder from heaven to earth and vice-versa (Genesis 28:12). In John 1:51, Jesus reveals that this “ladder” is really the Son of man, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus’ body is in heaven, and He is physically located on the earth with His bride, Israel. The angels, then, are sent to the universe to do things for the body in heaven and the bride on earth, which is why they ascend and descend from heaven to earth. The fact, that they do so on the Son of man, shows that all things have been reconciled to Christ in the dispensation of the fulness of times (Ephesians 1:10), and God gets all the glory (Ephesians 1:17). This is why angels have a clothing of light, and all believers will have a clothing of light as part of their new bodies. Thus, Israel is described as lighting the earth with the glory of God (Revelation 21:23), and the body of Christ is described as being “light in the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8). Further, both Israel and the body of Christ are called “children of light” (Luke 16:8; John 12:36; Ephesians 5:8; I Thessalonians 5:5), which is synonymous with being the children of God. Since we are in Christ, God’s promise to man to have dominion over all things is really a promise to the man, Christ Jesus, and us in Him, both the body and the bride of Christ.

These verses say that our physical bodies are “sown in corruption..., dishonour..., [and] weakness” (15:42-43). Our bodies are corrupted by sin. Contrast this with Christ’s body which did not suffer corruption, even when He paid for our sins in hell (Psalm 16:10). Our bodies dishonour God because no good thing dwells in our flesh (Romans 7:18). By contrast, Christ honoured His Father (John 8:49), because He did His Father’s will (John 5:30; Hebrews 10:7-10). Our bodies are weak, in that they have no power to overcome sin, but Christ is strong through us (II Corinthians 12:10) when we choose to live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20).

In the resurrection, these verses say that our new bodies will be “raised in incorruption,... glory,... [and] power.” They are incorruptible because the sin nature is gone, and we will always live by the Word of God. They are glorious because, just like Israel, we will be a reflection of Christ in eternity. They are powerful because the Word of God is “quick and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12).

The reason for these great differences is that our natural bodies are sown into the ground, and we reap a spiritual body. If I sow corn seed, I will get corn. If I sow apple seed, I will get apples. Therefore, people, who do not believe the gospel, sow corruption, and they will reap everlasting torment in the lake of fire. However, for all, who believe the gospel, we are “buried with [Christ] in baptism” (Colossians 2:12), and we reap the abundant life of Christ (John 10:10). Praise the Lord!

15:45 Genesis 2:7 tells us that the first Adam was made a living soul. How did this happen? “The Lord God formed man,” and then He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. So, God gave man a body, and then He gave him breath, which resulted in the first Adam becoming a living soul.

Regarding the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, God also prepared a body for Him (Hebrews 10:5), except His body was prepared “to be sin for us,... that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21). Thus, the last Adam is “a quickening spirit” (15:45). Note that “quickenings” is in the present tense. This means that, by taking our sin and giving us Christ’s resurrection life, Christ makes us alive. Everyone, who recognizes his sin and trusts in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for his sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4), is quickened, or made alive, by Christ. “And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). In other words, God gave life to the first Adam, and the last Adam was made to give life to others. An old saying is, “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for life.” Similarly, God gave life to the first Adam (give a man a fish). Then, when he sinned, he died, and he no longer had life. However, God made the last Adam to be a life giver (feed him for life). Therefore, all, who come to Christ, receive life from Him in place of the death they had with Adam. Now, they are set for life, eternal life! This is why 15:22 says, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” This is also why John 1:4 says regarding Jesus, “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

15:46 The difference between Adam and Jesus is that Adam was natural and Jesus was spiritual. This is not to say that Adam did not have a spirit, nor that Jesus did not have body. Note that the verse does not say that Adam was fleshly, because that implies sin (Galatians 5:16), but God made Adam “natural,” which means he was made to fit in with the rest of God’s creation on earth. The problem is that Adam chose to sin, which resulted in the sin nature. In other words, because Adam was natural and he chose to sin, it is now natural for us to sin.

By contrast, Jesus was spiritual, meaning that He was not made as Adam was. (God did not breathe the breath of life into Jesus, because Jesus IS life. God simply made a body for Him (Hebrews 10:5), in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), for His spiritual life to reside in. This body resided in Mary’s womb, since God is the one who forms life in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16).) He was born of a virgin, so that He did not have a sin nature, because that comes from your father, not from your mother, because Adam was given the commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17) before Eve was created (Genesis 2:22). Jesus’ Father is God, and God is a Spirit (John 4:24), which means that His seed is not the sin nature, but it is spiritual. At the same time, Jesus was also a man, because his mother was of mankind. This means that Jesus could be tempted to sin (Hebrews 4:15), while God cannot be tempted to sin (James 1:13). However, because He is spiritual, it means that Jesus would not choose to sin.

Note that Acts 13:33 says, “He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.” Granted,

Jesus was always God's Son, but He is said to have been begotten of the Father on the day that He rose from the dead. This is because Jesus conquered death when He rose from the dead. Jesus was created spiritual, but He became "a quickening spirit" when He rose from the dead (15:45). Thus, Jesus was begotten of the Father as the one who gives eternal life to all those the Father sends to Him by them believing the gospel. (John 6:44 "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.")

Paul says, in II Timothy 2:8, "That Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." Paul's gospel is Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (15:3-4). The "gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Putting all of this together, Jesus had life in Him because He was spiritual and never sinned. This enabled Him to defeat death and hell in the grave (Revelation 1:18). He was then raised by the power of God, which made Him a quickening spirit to give life to all those who believe the gospel. The power of God that rose Jesus from the dead changed Jesus from being spiritual to being a quickening spirit (the ability to give life to other spirits), because He had conquered death and sin for us. Thus, Jesus was spiritually begotten of the Father on resurrection day.

Adam had natural life in innocence. He sinned and became spiritually dead. Jesus had spiritual life in the body God placed in Mary's womb. He became sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21) and conquered death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of death, because of His life (Acts 2:24). God then used the power of God, i.e., the gospel of Christ, to raise Jesus from the dead (II Timothy 2:8). This is called "the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" (Ephesians 1:19-20). Jesus was now begotten of the Father (Acts 13:33) as a quickening spirit, which means that we could now receive the same power of God to raise us from the dead and seat us in Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5-6). In other words, Christ's becoming sin for us allows us to participate in or be baptized into or be identified with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). This is the "quickening" part of Jesus' quickening spirit.

15:47 This verse says that Adam "is of the earth, earthy," but it does not say that Jesus is of the heaven, heavenly. While Jesus is from heaven, He also became a man like we are (except for the sin nature, of course). When He rose from the dead and sat at the Father's right hand far above all powers (Ephesians 1:20), God made Him "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:34-36). This means that the Lord Jesus Christ combines the earth and the heaven into one man. Romans 8:3 says that God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." So, He is from heaven, since He is God's own Son, but He took on the likeness of the earthy Adam, which means He can redeem Israel, as their kinsman redeemer. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in

all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:14-18).

Jesus took on the likeness of the earthy in order to defeat death and help those who believe the gospel. Thus, Jesus became Lord over death, by coming from heaven and taking on the likeness of the earth. This means that this “second man is the Lord from heaven” (15:47). He is identified as Lord so that we can see that He conquered the curse of sin.

Paul will show the Galatians that the Lord’s death applies to our sin, also. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13-14). This means that Gentiles in the Body of Christ are just as much spiritual children of Abraham as Jews in the Bride of Christ are. Thus, Jesus’ taking on “the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16) does not just mean that He was a Jew, but it also means that He took on the spiritual seed of Abraham, because Jesus is spiritual (15:46). The spiritual seed of Abraham is both believing Gentiles and believing Jews, because Abraham was justified by faith alone in Genesis 15:4-6 (see Romans 4:3) and by faith plus works in Genesis 22:9-10 (see James 2:22-24), making Abraham “the father of us all” (Romans 4:16). Thus, Jesus’ sacrifice applies to all believers in both Israel’s prophecy dispensation and the Gentile’s mystery dispensation. Praise the Lord!

15:48-49 We are born earthy because we are born in Adam (15:47). The Lord Jesus Christ is heavenly because He is from heaven. Jesus never suffered corruption from sin (Psalm 16:10), but conquered it. Therefore, He remained heavenly. When we trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sin (15:3-4), we are baptized or identified with Christ, which means we also bear the heavenly, as 15:49 says.

James 1:14-15 says that, when we are tempted, we are drawn away from God by our lust. Lust’s child is sin, and, in the end, sin’s child is death (James 1:14-15). We are not talking about physical death, but soul death. Spiritually speaking, sin is like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), which are of no use to anyone. The only thing you can do is to keep them from ruining other things, since a little leaven (sin) ruins the whole lump (5:6), and so the second death is described as burning forever in a lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Since all have sinned (Romans 3:23), the result is that the earthy must die. This is why 15:22 says that “in Adam all die.”

The opposite is true about Christ. Christ has “abundant life,” which He gives to all those who believe the gospel (John 10:10). Now, we need to understand what life truly is. Life comes from the breath of God, as seen in Genesis 2:7, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). For us

today, the moment we believe the gospel, we are born of the Spirit, which means we have God's life in us. This is seen in Jesus' statement in John 7:38-39, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" The way the abundant life of the Lord Jesus Christ is activated is by living by the words of God. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). This is why Deuteronomy 8:3 says, "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." So, when we believe the gospel, we are given the Holy Ghost. We "drink" of the Holy Ghost when we read God's Word, because the Holy Ghost teaches it to us (2:11-13). When we live by God's Word, we are living out our eternal life. When we get to heaven, we will not have our sin nature, and so we will never sin again. Instead, we will live by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. **This is what the abundant life of Christ is all about.** This is why Jesus says, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14), because the Lord is "the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 2:13).

Therefore, unlike sin, which leads to death, Christ gives life, and it is a life that never ends. Rather, it keeps bubbling up like a foundation of water. "A pure river of water of life" proceeds "out of the throne of God" (Jesus is fully God.) "and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1) (Jesus is fully man.), and we will each be eternal springs of the living water of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is God's words in action through us. Since God's living water will never give out, because it is living, we will never die. So, when these verses say that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," we can rest assured that the earthy is temporary, while the heavenly is eternal.

15:50 This is not saying that we will not have flesh and blood in our new bodies. Rather, it is saying that the heavenly will inherit the kingdom of God, not the earthly (15:48-49). Matthew 16:17 is an excellent cross reference. Jesus told Simon Barjona that "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." And so God in heaven is contrasted with flesh and blood on the earth.

Leviticus 17:11 says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." I Peter 1:18-19 says that Israel was "redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ." Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus Christ washed Israel from their "sins in His own blood." Acts 20:28 says that God purchased the church of God with His own blood.

Therefore, if blood makes atonement for our souls, and it is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that does this, then how can we not have flesh and blood in our new bodies? Also, after the resurrection, Jesus told His disciples, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." He then ate some fish and some honey (Luke 24:39-43).

So, Jesus had flesh and bones after His resurrection. He would have had blood, too, but they could not see the blood, which is why Jesus did not mention it.

Basically, what Paul is saying is that our flesh and blood are sinful, and so it cannot inherit the kingdom of God, just like corruption cannot inherit incorruption. Therefore, rather than making a theological statement here, the lesson to learn is that no one can work his way to heaven. It took “the Lord from heaven” (15:47) to do the work, giving us the victory over death, hell, and the grave (15:54-57).

15:51 Paul shows, in just five words, that the rapture and Jesus’ second coming are two, separate events: “I shew you a mystery” (15:51). Jesus’ second coming is not a mystery. The Old Testament prophets “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ [first coming], and the glory that should follow [second coming]” (I Peter 1:11). It is not until you get to Paul that you learn of a rapture. This is because the whole dispensation of grace was a mystery until revealed to Paul (Ephesians 3:1-6). Otherwise, Satan and his forces would not have had Christ crucified (I Corinthians 2:7-8), and then God would not be able to reconcile heavenly places back to Himself through Christ (Ephesians 1:3,10; Colossians 1:20-23).

The body of Christ is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3), being seated together there in Christ right now (Ephesians 2:5-6). Therefore, when the rapture takes place, the Lord descends from heaven, the body of Christ rises, we “meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). Note that the Lord never physically comes to the earth; He only comes as far as the earth’s atmosphere.

By contrast, Israel, the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9-10), is promised that they will inherit the earth (Psalm 48:1-2; Matthew 5:5; Revelation 5:10). Therefore, with Jesus’ second coming, He comes on a white horse (Revelation 19:11), His feet actually stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4), and He fights the Antichrist and his forces on the EARTH (Revelation 19:19-21). Therefore, you cannot confuse the rapture and Jesus’ second coming, if you simply believe what your Bible says.

Paul starts this mystery of the rapture by telling us that not all believers will be resurrected, because some of us will be alive when the rapture takes place. In many cases in scripture, the word “sleep” is used to refer to death. This does not mean that your soul goes to sleep when you die, because II Corinthians 5:8 tells us that “to be absent from the body, [is] to be present with the Lord.” Rather, the word “sleep” is used because all believers live eternally. Yes, our bodies die, but our souls do not, and the soul is who we really are. Therefore, when Hebrews 9:27 says, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,” it is not referring to physical death. We died to this world when we believed the gospel. Colossians 3:3-4 says that “ye are dead” and “Christ...is our life.” Once this took place, we were judged to have eternal life, which is why we NOW have justification (Romans 5:9) and we NOW have the atonement (Romans 5:11). Thus, when we go to the grave, God looks at us as being asleep, rather than being dead.

Note also, from this verse, that our flesh is “changed” (15:51). Philippians 3:20-21 says that, at the rapture, “The Lord Jesus Christ...shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Christ has our bodies stored somewhere in order to change them into His glorious body. I do not know how this works, since the physical body decays. God said that, when we die, we return to the dust (Genesis 3:19). At the same time, Jude 9 says that Michael the archangel disputed with the devil over the body of Moses. Why would he do that if the body ceases to exist? Therefore, it must not cease to exist, because the Lord Jesus Christ “shall CHANGE our vile body” (Philippians 3:21). There are also people, like my wife Lonna, who are cremated, which takes away the decaying process. There are others who have their ashes scattered in the sea. So, how does God change their bodies, or the bodies of people who died 2,000 years like Paul? I believe the answer is that, the moment believers die, our souls and our spirits go to heaven to be present with the Lord and God takes the body (although the physical sight of it still remains on the earth) to a storage place. (Perhaps this storage place is somewhere inside the earth.) At the rapture, the Lord raptures them up as glorious bodies to be like His body.

15:52 Churchianity says that the rapture occurs “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (15:52). While I do not doubt that the rapture happens quickly, this verse is actually referring to our bodies being changed “in a moment.” This shows the all encompassing power of the Lord Jesus Christ to take the vile flesh of all believers from the last 2,000 years and give us glorified bodies instantly.

My educated guess is that the Lord Jesus Christ takes these bodies of the dead that are stored somewhere and instantly changes them and raises them up. It makes sense that the storage place is somewhere in the earth because the live people are also on the earth, and their bodies, when they died, returned to the earth.

When Abel was killed, God told Cain, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10). I bet you did not know that blood has a voice! When talking to the Pharisees, Jesus said, “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Matthew 23:35). Apparently, when we die, the blood from the bodies of believers still lives! This is probably true because “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11).

We also know that, when Jesus was pierced with a spear while on the cross, “forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19:34). I John 5:6,8 says, “This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth....And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” Again, we see there is life in the blood for it to be a separate witness. Also, note that I John 5:6 puts a special emphasis on the blood.

Hebrews 9:22-25 says, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others.” Again, the emphasis is on the blood. Christ brought His blood into heaven and offered it on the altar as the atonement for our sin. This took place on resurrection day, because He told Mary at the tomb, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father” (John 20:17). Yet, that night, Jesus told His disciples, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have” (Luke 24:39). How did Jesus offer His blood on the altar in heaven on resurrection day when His blood came out of His side on the cross? (John 19:34). Jesus was dead, and there is no record of anyone catching the blood. The answer is that there is life in the blood, and so the blood of Christ could cry to the Lord, as it did with Abel (Genesis 4:10). (Does Christ’s blood join our bodies when we die, or does this happen at the rapture?)

We do know that Jesus went to hell to pay for our sins, but He did not suffer corruption there (Psalm 16:10). It makes sense, then, that the storage place of the body is in the ground. Since the blood has life, Jesus’ blood and body were taken by God into the earth. He could then go to hell and pay for our sins. He did not suffer corruption there because His blood is pure. Then, when He ascended to the Father, after He had risen from the dead, He took His blood into the holy of holies in heaven and offered it as atonement for our sin. II Timothy 2:8 says, “Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” In other words, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ raised Christ from the dead, just like it does us, because God saw that Jesus’ pure blood had paid for our sins and the justice of God was satisfied. (Isaiah 53:11 says, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.”)

Now, remember that Jesus was “made...sin for us” (II Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, when Jesus died on the cross, He was made sin for us, because Jesus cried, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). Jesus’ body and soul went into hell. Christ’s blood was applied to that sin, and it was the full payment or propitiation for sin (Romans 3:25-26; I John 2:2). God’s justice was satisfied. God then raised Jesus from the dead by faith in Jesus’ own blood, giving Him a glorified body.

For us, we are told that we are “now justified by His blood” (Romans 5:9). We are told that Jesus was “set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25). We are told that it is in Jesus that “we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14). The conclusion is that God “made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things

unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20). In referring to Israel, Revelation 1:5 says that “Jesus Christ...loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own blood.”

Tying all of these things together, the conclusion is that, the way we are “changed” at the rapture is that our bodies have the blood of Christ applied to them “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (15:52), which results in “our vile body...[being] fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Philippians 3:21). This “working” is “the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:19-20). In other words, once the blood of Christ is applied to our vile flesh, it instantly washes us of our sin, taking away the curse of sin, making us the reflection of the glory of God.

For the dead in Christ, the blood is applied to their bodies in the storage facility, wherever that is, and they come out of their graves with glorified bodies. Remember Psalm 16:10 that God would not allow Jesus to suffer corruption. It is the same for the dead in Christ. God has preserved their bodies from being corrupted in the grave. Yes, I know that bodies decay, but that must just be a shell. The real bodies go to God upon death, and He preserves them until the rapture for the believers, when Jesus fashions these bodies like His glorious body.

Once Jesus has done this with the dead in Christ, “the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible” (15:52). In other words, they have corruptible bodies, but they do not suffer corruption because God preserves them. Then, when the vile bodies are changed to glorified bodies, they will have incorruptible bodies.

Why does Jesus wait to do this until the rapture? Why doesn't He give believers their glorified bodies when they die? Philippians 3:21 says, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Note that this verse mentions body in the singular, not in the plural. I Corinthians 12:27 says, “Ye are the body of Christ.” The body is not complete until all of its members are there. All of its members are not there until “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Romans 11:25). Therefore, when this takes place, Jesus changes all of the bodies of believers, both dead and alive, to be like His glorious body.

Then, Jesus descends “from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (I Thessalonians 4:16). The souls and spirits of dead believers in the body of Christ come with Him. He sounds the trumpet, and the dead are raised incorruptible (15:52), so that their glorified bodies join with their souls and spirits in the air. Then, Jesus sounds the trumpet again, and the bodies, souls, and spirits of alive believers are caught up together to meet them in the clouds. We then “meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:17), meaning that the Lord's body is now complete.

It is the alive believers who rise “at the last trump” (15:52). “The last trump” refers to the second trumpet blast. The first blast raises the dead in Christ, while the second blast raises those who are alive and remain, and this second trumpet blast is “the last trump.” It is very important to understand this, because people will tell you that “the last trump” refers to the seventh trumpet blast in Revelation 11:15. However, that is a completely different context, which is used to try to say that there is no rapture. We have already shown that the rapture and the second coming are two, separate events, and so we know that the last trump cannot be referring to the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11:15. Those trumpets refer to God’s judgments. The two trumpets of I Corinthians 15:52 refer to God’s victory over sin for the body of Christ.

With regard to Israel, Jesus said, “The sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out” (John 10:3). He leads them to His Father’s house for the marriage supper of the Lamb. With regard to the body of Christ, Jesus blows the trumpet twice, once for dead believers and once for alive believers, and we come to meet the Lord in the air. This is because Israel has eternal life on earth, while we have eternal life in heaven. Therefore, if you make “the last trump” be the seventh trumpet blast, you create much confusion and a whole lot of problems in trying to explain everything else regarding the rapture, the second coming, and the eternal resting places of both Israel (the earth) and the body of Christ (the heaven).

15:53 Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8 say that the Lord God Almighty is “holy, holy, holy” (One “holy” for each member of the Godhead). God would not allow His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to suffer corruption (Psalm 16:10). Therefore, He certainly will not allow Himself to suffer corruption. This means that, before we go to heaven, “this corruptible must put on incorruption” (15:53).

We have already seen that all members of the body of Christ must be saved before Christ can fashion us “like unto His glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). At the same time, corruptible cannot be in the presence of God and live. This is why the dead in Christ are “absent from the body” when they are “present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8). They are “earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with [their] house which is from heaven” (II Corinthians 5:2).

When this happens, mortality is “swallowed up of life” (II Corinthians 5:4). This is the last part of 15:53, which says, “this mortal must put on immortality.” God made Adam to live forever. When Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, his soul died (Genesis 2:17). He was now under the curse of sin. As time went on, his body would work toward perishing (II Corinthians 4:16). He would have less mobility, less strength, less brain power, and more pain. Therefore, God had compassion on him and took the tree of life away from him so that his body would also die (Genesis 3:22-23). In other words, Adam was now mortal.

Adam had a dead soul in a live body, and God gave him a body to match his soul. The body of Christ has live souls in dead bodies; therefore, God will give us bodies to match our souls. All you have to do is read Romans 7, and you will know that

our dead bodies severely limit our ability to serve God. When Christ saved us, He did it so that we could bring God glory and share God's love for all eternity. Therefore, we must also have our mortality "swallowed up of life" (II Corinthians 5:4)—Christ's abundant life. This is why Paul says, "This mortal must put on immortality" (15:53).

15:54 Paul quotes Isaiah 25:8. The context is Israel in the kingdom, but the Holy Ghost through Paul applies it to the body of Christ being raptured up to heaven. This is when the body of Christ, as a whole, finally has complete victory over death. Right now, "sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Note that, right now, we are not under the law, but sin not having dominion over us is still future. The reason is because we still have these vile bodies. Romans 6:9 says "death hath no more dominion over" Christ. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." "Sin SHALL not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14), because "death is swallowed up in victory" "when this mortal SHALL have put on immortality" (15:54).

We still sin in our flesh and so death still works in us. However, when we put on incorruption, our sin nature is gone. Then, we can put on immortality, because death, due to sin being gone, is swallowed up in victory. God would not let Adam live forever when sin was working in him. The opposite will be true for us: God will not let us live in vile bodies forever when Christ's life is working in us. Praise the Lord!

Note that 15:53 and 15:54 are very similar in that they both say that: 1) This corruptible puts on incorruption, and THEN 2) This mortal puts on immortality. Everything God says in His Word is true, but, when He repeats Himself, I think He wants us to pay particular attention to what He just said. With this in mind, corruptible putting on incorruption may refer to us leaving behind the sin nature and putting on Christ's nature, while mortal putting on immortality may refer to us receiving our glorified bodies.

15:55 This verse is sort of a quote of Hosea 13:14, which says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." As with Isaiah 25:8, this quote was originally for Israel, but the Holy Ghost has applied this one to the body of Christ, as well. The Lord Jesus Christ destroys death and the grave in order to redeem believers from death. Therefore, there is no sting from death, and the grave has no victory.

15:56 This verse teaches that sin gains strength from the law. Now there is nothing wrong with the law. In itself, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12). The problem is with me. "The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). The moment that Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man had a sin nature. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). I am sold under sin as part of my flesh.

When the law of the conscience came upon me, the sin nature within me took “occasion by the commandment” and “wrought in me all manner of concupiscence” (Romans 7:8). Therefore, “the strength of sin is the law” (15:56). “For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me” (Romans 7:11). If the sin nature uses the law to kill us, then why did God give us the law?

The reason is because God did not make you to be innocent; He made you to bring glory to Him and share His love through you for all eternity. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). I must first accept God’s love before I can give out His love. I cannot receive His love until I recognize I am a sinner and trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for my sin (15:3-4). Then, God’s love is commended to me. However, if I never recognize my need for God to save me, I will never accept His love.

Since no good thing dwells in my flesh (Romans 7:18), I need something good, i.e., the law, to show me that I am not good. “But sin, **that it might appear sin**, working death in me by that which is good; that sin **by the commandment** might become exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:13). God gave the law so that my sin nature would use it to sin even more so that my sinful condition would exceed my self-righteous pride so that I would recognize that I am a sinner and turn to God to save me. God giving us the law is like giving an alcoholic all of the free alcohol he can have. The alcoholic will drink so much alcohol that he will either recognize he has a problem and seek to be free from alcohol, or he will overdose on alcohol and die. Either way, the alcoholic, with unlimited access to alcohol, is forced to see his problem and decide to get help or to continue in his alcoholism.

Similarly, we all have a sin problem. Since “the sting of death is sin” (15:56) and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), sin will kill us all. However, since we are all sinners, we are not likely to recognize our sin problem. Therefore, God has to give us complete access to sin by giving us the law, so that we will sin so much that we will finally admit our sin problem and turn to God for the answer, or we will wallow in our sin and die anyway. At least by giving us the law, God gives us a fighting chance to recognize our sin and turn to God for salvation.

Also, by giving us the sin nature when we are born, God gives us more of an opportunity to be saved. If we were born in innocence, like Adam was, we would first have to make the choice to sin, which we would all do, eventually. Then, we would be given the law, like Adam, and we would have to learn how bad our sin problem really is before we would be saved. By starting off with the sin nature, we have our whole, conscience lives, to recognize our sin problem and be saved.

In summary, “the sting of death is sin” (15:56), which means we all die, because “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Therefore, God gives us the law so that sin will have more strength (15:56) so that sin “might appear sin” so that my sin will exceed my pride so that I will recognize it (Romans 7:13) and turn to God for the answer.

15:57 The answer to my sin problem is found in this verse. “God...giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Just like the alcoholic who admits he has a problem and looks for a solution, the sin-a-holic should admit his sin problem and look for the solution. We know that we are worthy of the judgment of God, which is death, due to our sin problem (Romans 1:32). We also know that God created us, and He has eternal power (Romans 1:19-20). Therefore, when we recognize our sin problem, we should turn to God for the answer.

Acts 17:27 says that, if we seek the Lord we will find Him, because God “is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). This means that, when I recognize my sin problem and turn to God for the answer, He will make sure I find it. The answer is in the first part of this chapter: “That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (15:3-4). When we believe this gospel, God gives us the gift of eternal life, even though the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The reason we get eternal life is because Christ became the curse of sin under the law for us (Galatians 3:13) by being made sin for us, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21). This is how “God...giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (15:57).

15:58 “Therefore” tells us that, because God has already given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, this verse is true. First, we are “beloved brethren.” Ephesians 1:6 says that we are “accepted in the beloved.” Matthew 3:17 tells us that the beloved is the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are accepted in Christ. Because all believers have been taken out of Adam and placed into Christ, we are “brethren.” Family members usually have a tough time trying to get along with each other, but, when we let Christ live in us, there are no problems, because Christ always does the will of God, i.e., He never sins.

Second, we are to be “stedfast, unmoveable.” “Stedfast” first appears in the Bible in Ruth 1:18. Naomi tried to get Ruth to go back to her home country, after Ruth’s husband had died. However, Ruth “was stedfastly minded” to go to Israel (Ruth 1:18). She said, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16). In other words, she had made up her mind, and nothing would move her from that position. This is how we are to be concerning the victory over sin that God has given us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The world will say, “Just do your best, and you will be okay.” (The NIV has changed “study to show thysself” to “do your best to present yourself” in II Timothy 2:15.) Churchianity will say, “Do your best to keep the commandments, and you will be rewarded by God.” God says a resounding NO to both of these. God says to be “stedfast, unmoveable” in trusting in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sin. Ephesians 6:13-14 says, “And having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your lions girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.” Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Do not let the world, Churchianity, family, friends, or anyone else change your mind to make you think that victory comes from your flesh, no

matter how small the part your flesh plays. Be “stedfast, unmoveable” in the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14).

When I stand fast in the victory that God has given me through the Lord Jesus Christ, I will be “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (15:58). When I glory in my flesh, then I am self-serving, rather than Christ-serving. Ephesians 2:8-10 says that we receive the faith of Christ as the gift of God in order for us to “walk” in the good works that God has for us in Christ Jesus. Note that it does not say that we “do” the good works, but that we “walk” in them. In other words, we read and believe God’s Word and the Holy Ghost teaches it to us (2:9-13). The result is that we are “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” Then, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:16-17), and we use the mind of Christ to judge all things in a spiritual manner (2:15-16). As such, the faith of Christ works in us, and the result is that we are “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (15:58).

However, if we think that our flesh plays even a small part in us earning or maintaining our salvation, then we are not “stedfast, unmoveable” in the victory that God has given us through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are so worried about our own salvation, which has already been settled, that we allow our flesh to get in the way, deceiving us into thinking that we are serving God through our own good works. Then, we are failing in our own works, rather than “abounding in the work of the Lord” (15:58).

The reason that we want Christ living in us, is because our “labour is not in vain” only if it is “in the Lord” (15:58). Paul started out this chapter by saying that the Corinthians are “saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain” (15:2). That verse is saying that, when you keep in memory the cross of Christ, then you will let Christ work in you. But, if you choose to glory in your flesh, then you have believed in vain. This does not mean that you lose your eternal life in heaven, but it does mean that Christ’s abundant life (John 10:10) does not work through you, because you have chosen to operate in your flesh, rather than walking in the Spirit.

Paul says that God’s grace to him “was not in vain,” because he allowed the grace of God to labour through him (15:10) in getting people saved and coming to the knowledge of the truth. Because Paul knows that “the gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16), and that power brought Christ out of hell without suffering corruption (Psalm 16:10) and set Him at God’s right hand far above all powers (Ephesians 1:19-21), Paul is “stedfast, unmoveable” (15:58) in Christ’s resurrection power working through him, rather than trying to serve God in the energies of his flesh. Therefore, it is the resurrection of Christ that lets the Corinthians know that their “labour is not in vain in the Lord” (15:58), which is why I Corinthians 15 is Paul’s longest chapter.

The vast majority of Churchianity walks around in their own flesh, because they are not “stedfast, unmoveable” in the resurrection power of God

through our Lord Jesus Christ, which works in all believers, who allow Him to work in them. May it not be so with us!

I Corinthians 16 – God Treats Us Like Adults

16 Paul says that giving should be planned out (vs. 1-2), rather than giving because you feel like you have to or in order to look good to others (II Corinthians 9:7). Paul wants to spend the upcoming winter months with the Corinthians (v. 6). Hopefully, by then, they will have applied this letter to their lives, so that he can rejoice with them, rather than having to correct them in person (4:21).

Paul would like to send this letter with Apollos, because he is an eloquent man (Acts 18:24), but he will send it with Timotheus instead (vs. 10-11), because Apollos' will was not to go to Corinth at that time (v. 12). This shows that God treats us as adults (v. 13), capable of making our own decisions, instead of praying for God's perfect will for our lives, as Churchianity likes to do. Paul closes this epistle by reminding the Corinthians that it is God's love coming through them that is the most important aspect of their lives (vs. 14, 22, and 24).

16:1-2 The epistle to the Galatians does not contain instructions about giving. This probably means that Paul gave verbal instructions to those in Galatia, when he was there in Acts 18:23. The order is to set aside money to give on the first day of each week, according as God has prospered them. My guess is that they got paid at the end of each week at their job. They were to then deduct all of their expenses and then give what they want from what was left over. If God had greatly prospered them, they could give more. If God had not given them a lot that week, they were to give less or nothing at all.

This collection was for the poor saints in Jerusalem. They were poor because Jesus told them to "sell that ye have" (Luke 12:33). The reason is that because, beginning with John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 3:2, 4:17). This is because the 69th week of Daniel ended when the Messiah was killed, which meant that, in Israel's prophetic time clock only one week of years remained. This one week is the seven-year tribulation period (Daniel 9:24-27). Halfway through the tribulation period, the Antichrist will institute the mark of the beast. Those, not taking the mark of the beast, will not be able to participate in the economic system (Revelation 13:16-17). They are not to take the mark, or else they will have their place in the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). Instead, they are to spend the whole 7 years of the tribulation period preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5-8,23).

Since their full-time job will be to preach the gospel and they cannot use their economic goods in the last half of the tribulation period, they might as well sell all that they have and use those resources to be able to travel throughout Israel, preaching the gospel. And, that is exactly what they did. Acts 2:44-45 says, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts 4:34-35 says, "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were

possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

When Stephen was stoned to death in Acts 7, Jesus stood up and set aside the nation of Israel due to their unbelief (Acts 7:51-56). He then called Saul/Paul to begin the dispensation of grace. Therefore, God did not restore the kingdom again to Israel (Acts 1:6). It is still future. This resulted in the saints in Jerusalem being poor. It was probably hard for them to get a job since they had separated themselves from the apostate nation. Therefore, they needed financial help. This is why Paul asked the various churches in the body of Christ to help them out.

Regarding giving in the dispensation of grace, II Corinthians 9:7 says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." Grace giving is not out of compulsion. If you give because you think you have to or you want to look good to others, then you are giving according to your flesh. This type of giving, no matter how gracious it is, will not be rewarded by God, because it is done in the flesh, not in the Spirit. Basically, they are to create a budget and decide what to do with any excess. If they want to help out the poor saints in Jerusalem as a way of having Christ's love come through them, they should give the amount that they have purposed in their heart to this collection.

Paul wants them to do this on a weekly basis so that they do not give emotionally. He does not want any collections to be made while he is there, because then people would be giving to impress Paul, which would be out of emotions. What a contrast this is with how Churchianity has people give today! They try to plead with you and maybe even have some of their richer members state aloud what they are giving so that they can make you feel guilty if you do not try to match what they are giving. This is fleshly giving. It may result in more money in the collection plate, but it results in no reward by God. Jesus said, "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:3-4). In other words, if you do things to be seen of men, you have your reward of men (Matthew 6:5). If you do things out of God's love coming through you, the Lord will reward you. Knowing this, Paul has them set aside on a weekly basis what they are giving so that emotions will not be involved so that they are rewarded by God for whatever they give. The fact, that most of Churchianity plays on people's emotions when it comes to giving, shows that they are only concerned with increasing their bank accounts in this world, rather than leading people to receive spiritual rewards.

16:3-4 I Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Following after money is such a temptation that Jesus gave the money that he received to a known thief to handle it (John 12:4-6, 13:29). That way, Judas Iscariot would steal it all, and Jesus and the disciples would not be tempted with money.

This is why Jesus could say, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head” (Matthew 8:20). Instead, Jesus relied upon rich women to meet His expenses on a daily basis. (Luke 8:1-3 says, “And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with Him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance.”)

Knowing the temptation that money can give someone, Paul left specific instructions on bringing the money to Jerusalem. He asked for the Corinthians to put in writing who would be bringing the money to Jerusalem. Given how carnal the Corinthians were (3:3), they may not have had someone they could have completely trusted, and so Paul says that he would even go to Jerusalem with the person with the money to ensure that all of the money went to the saints in Jerusalem, rather than being pocketed by that person or lavishly spent by that person on the way to Jerusalem.

16:5-7 The good news is that, if Paul says that he will accompany the person with the money to Jerusalem, it means that Paul will finally come and visit the Corinthians. He said earlier that he did not want to come to them just yet, because he did not want to be harsh with them in person. This is why he wrote this letter. Now, he is hoping that the letter will change them to where they are walking in the Spirit, rather than in the flesh. As such, he can then come and rejoice with them, rather than having to scold them in person for their carnality. (“Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” (4:21).)

In Acts 19:21, Luke says that Paul “purposed in the spirit” to go “through Macedonia and Achaia” and then “to go to Jerusalem.” He does this in Acts 20:1-21:17. Acts 20:2 mentions that Paul went into Greece, and Corinth is in Greece. Paul says that he planned to winter there (16:6), and Acts 20:3 says that Paul stayed in Greece for three months. However, he did not stay with the Corinthians, according to II Corinthians 1:23. Instead, he wrote II Corinthians to them around this time, because he still would have had to use a rod of correction, rather than coming to them in love.

Paul says that he will be with the Corinthians “if the Lord permit” (16:7). Christians talk about God has a perfect will for you, and a “permissive” will. They say you should pray for God’s perfect will in your life, but that, if you do not do it, hopefully, you are at least in His permissive will. This is ridiculous! I have a free will to do whatever I want to do, and the Lord will permit me to do it, even if He does not want me to do it. Therefore, there is no such thing as God’s “permissive” will for your life.

The only reason Paul says “if the Lord permit” is because he had a special calling on his life. A dispensation of the gospel was committed unto him (9:17) to share

with all unsaved people (compare Acts 9:15 with Galatians 2:7). Romans 15:16 says that Paul is “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God.” By the time he writes Romans, he has covered half of the world, which was from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Romans 15:19). By the time he gets to Spain (Romans 15:24), he will have declared the gospel to the whole civilized world. Paul hopes to see the Corinthians before he gets to Spain, but the Lord may not permit him, meaning that the Lord may lead him to go somewhere else first. We see, from Colossians 1:23, that he has completed sharing the gospel with the whole world by then, which is why the book of Acts ends with him dwelling in his own hired house (Acts 28:30-31). Even so, the Lord gave Paul the freedom to make his own decisions on how he would get the gospel to the whole world.

Today, we are not commissioned by the Lord in this way. We are to be ambassadors for Christ wherever we go, and it is up to us to decide how to accomplish this. We do not pray for God to lead us and then seek to have “peace” about this decision. Rather, we use logic to figure out how we reach people with the gospel and with sound doctrine. In other words, God treats you like an adult. You are capable of making your own decisions. If you make sinful choices, God does not stop you from doing so, because God’s love “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (13:7). Besides, we are chastened of the Lord when the world judges us for being hypocrites (11:32), and so the Lord does not punish us physically, financially, or in any other way when we make bad choices.

16:8-9 In addition to not wanting to come to the Corinthians with a rod, he also does not come at this point because he has a great opportunity at Ephesus. Paul had previously taught in the synagogue at Ephesus for three months (Acts 19:8). Then, he taught in Tyrannus’ school in Ephesus for 2 years, resulting in “all they which dwelt in Asia [hearing] the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:9-10). Paul ends up not going to Ephesus. Instead, he sent for the elders of the church in Ephesus to come to him in Miletus (Acts 20:17), and he warns them to watch over the believers in Israel, because people will try to steal them away into unbelief (Acts 20:18-35). This explains the “many adversaries” there (16:9). Therefore, the “great door and effectual” opened unto him (16:9) was the opportunity to speak to the believers in Ephesus to warn them not to go into apostasy.

Note how Paul has the freedom, as an adult son of God (Galatians 4:6-7), to make his own decisions on what he will do. He does not pray for God to lead him as a “weaned child” (Psalm 131:2), even though the gifts of the Holy Ghost are still in operation at this time because God’s written Word was not completed yet. Why, then, does Churchianity, which has God’s completed Word, do these things?!

16:10-11 In his flesh, man judges things by the outward appearance. This is why so many people today “play church.” They go to church, smile, say great things, and everyone thinks they are good Christians, but the inside is different. Jesus told the Pharisees, “Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:27-28). This is what Churchianity is all about.

I Samuel 16:7 says that “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” Remember that the Corinthians are carnal (3:3). Therefore, the danger is that they will look at Timothy, see his youth, and automatically assume that he does not know what he is talking about. Paul even tells the Corinthians, “Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s” (II Corinthians 10:7). A person is Christ’s because he has been forgiven of his sins, not because he looks good outwardly.

How many times does someone reject right division because the person talking of right division does not have a cemetery (seminary) degree, is not a pastor of a church, or, in Timothy’s case, does not look old enough to know what he is talking about?

Timothy is first mentioned in scripture in Acts 16. He is identified as “the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:1). We are told that his grandmother, his mother, and Timothy himself have “unfeigned faith” (II Timothy 1:5). Paul sees this young man as someone who has not been ruined by the world but knows the scriptures well. He is also able to witness to both Jews and Gentiles, since he is half Jew and half Gentile. Therefore, Timothy is a great help to Paul as he ministers the mystery gospel to both Gentiles and Jews (Acts 9:15).

However, man automatically assumes that a young man cannot instruct him in the things of God. No one wants an 18 year-old doctor, lawyer, or president, because they do not have the maturity needed to do the job. Similarly, no one wants a young pastor. In fact, the Bible often says that it is the old men who should be listened to, rather than the young ones. “With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding” (Job 12:12). “Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old” (Proverbs 23:22).

However, true wisdom comes from God. I Corinthians 1:25 says, “The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” Psalm 119:100 says, “I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.” I Corinthians 2:9-16 says that the Holy Ghost teaches us believers the things of God, and that unbelievers cannot know these things. Since Timothy has been a believer since he was a child (“That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures” (II Timothy 3:15)), he knows more than the Corinthians, even though they may be older than him. The conclusion is that, in general, older people are wiser than younger people. However, if the younger people have read and believed God’s Word while the older ones have not, then the younger ones are the wise ones, because they have the wisdom of God in their inner man. This is why, eight verses after Job 12:12 tells us that wisdom is with the ancient, Job says that God “removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of

the aged” (Job 12:20). Therefore, Paul tells Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers” (I Timothy 4:12).

Since the Corinthians are carnal, Timothy may be afraid to come to them, because they will not respect him, due to his young age. This is why Paul tells the Corinthians that, “if Timotheous come, see that he may be with you without fear....Let no man therefore despise him.” (16:10-11). Paul says that he is expecting to see Timothy there in Corinth when he comes. This will be a test of the Corinthians’ carnality. They already have “ten thousand instructors in Christ” that they accept (4:15). They want people to come to them with cemetery degrees, as evidenced by Paul having to ask them, “Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you” (II Corinthians 3:1). If people have these degrees, they “suffer fools gladly....For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face” (II Corinthians 11:19-20). So it is today. Bible believers, who can teach God’s Word to edify Christians in the inner man are kicked out of Churchianity. Meanwhile, Churchianity does all five things mentioned in II Corinthians 11:20. They suffer men to: 1) Bring them into the bondage of the law, 2) Devour them by having them fall from grace and follow the red letters rather than God’s words to us today in Paul’s epistles, 3) Take their money by putting a tithing system on them that is not for us today, 4) Exalt themselves by bragging about their degrees, knowledge of original Bible languages, and scholarly excellence, and 5) Smite them on the face. They smite them by taking away their face from beholding the face of Jesus Christ in believing God’s Word rightly divided, and causing them to look at faulty translations or change God’s Word to match man’s views. (This comes from II Corinthians 3:18 and 4:6, which says, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” And “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Combined, these verses tell us that our face beholds the face of Jesus Christ when we read God’s Word in belief. However, Churchianity comes along and smites our believing face, spiritually speaking, with modern translations, changing the Bible with the Greek and Hebrew, and replacing the commandments of the Lord to us today found in Paul’s epistles (14:37) with “the rudiments of the world” and “the commandments and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:20,22).)

16:12 Timothy may have been a little timid about sharing the things of God due to his youth (II Timothy 1:7-8). By contrast, Apollos was “an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures” (Acts 18:24). They probably both knew sound doctrine equally well, but the Corinthians were more likely to listen to Apollos over Timothy, due to the Corinthians judging on the outward appearance. This is why Paul “greatly desired [Apollos] to come unto you with the brethren” (16:12). However, “His will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time” (16:12).

This verse should leave Churchianity scratching their heads. Churchianity says that they want to be smack dab in the center of God's will. They talk about praying to know God's will, listening for God's still, small voice, feeling a "burning in the bosom" with God leading them in a certain direction, and looking for God's guideposts of life to lead them "as a weaned child" (Psalm 131:2). Then, when you do something that they do not think is in God's will for you, they throw in Jesus' prayer of "not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42) to guilt you into following their will for you life, er, I mean, "God's will for your life."

Here, we have Paul. He is "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). He was called by the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to give the gospel to all unbelievers (Acts 9:15). "A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto" him (I Corinthians 9:17). He greatly desires that Apollos come to the Corinthians, because he is afraid that they will despise Timotheus' youth. But, it is Apollos' will, not Paul's will or God's will, for Apollos not to come. Yet, Paul does not say, "as the apostle of the Gentiles I command you," or "you are not in the will of God by not going to the Corinthians." Instead, Paul simply says, "he will come when he shall have convenient time" (16:12), and Paul moves on. In other words, Paul treats Apollos like an adult.

This shows how God treats us as adults in the dispensation of grace. "Thou are no more a servant, but a son" (Galatians 4:7). Paul trusts that Apollos has something different to do to serve the Lord, and Paul knows that "God...ALWAYS causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge in EVERY place" (II Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, Paul does not sweat it, chide Apollos, or try to guilt him into going to Corinth by cloaking his guilt trip in Christianese. Instead, he says that Apollos will come when he can, and I trust the Christ in Timotheus to do the job. Paul may "beseech" people to do things (Philemon 9-10), but he does not command them, because "ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). How wonderful it is to be living in grace, rather than in the law. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Galatians 5:5).

16:13-14 As we just mentioned, as believers in the dispensation of grace, God treats us like adults. The commandments, in this verse, bear this out. They are to "watch" what is going on, spiritually speaking. We are in a spiritual battle, and so we need "the whole armour of God" in order to win the victory. We are told that we are "to stand" in truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the Word of God, and prayer (Ephesians 6:11-18). When we do that, we pull down the strong holds of Satan, both in our minds and in other people's minds (II Corinthians 10:4-5). Therefore, we are to watch for things that are against the armour of God, namely lies, wickedness, strife, unbelief, vain philosophies, and using our fleshly mind (These are the opposites of truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the Word of God, and prayer.).

When we do that, we "stand fast in the faith," and we are strong (16:13). Strength has to do with spiritual strength. When we read and believe sound doctrine in

God's Word, we are "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and we are rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:16-17). This is how we "quit you like men" (16:13). In this context, "quit" means to fully perform our duties as adult sons of God. Children ask their parents what to do, but adults make their own decisions. We can be spiritual adults when we "stand fast in the faith" (16:13). We then "fight the good fight of faith." This is how we "lay hold on eternal life" right now (I Timothy 6:12).

The reason we can do this is because God has given us His completed Word. He has already "abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Ephesians 1:8). When we get sound doctrine in the inner man, then we are rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:17). If we then use the mind of Christ in making decisions, "all [our] things [are] done with charity" (16:14), meaning that God's love comes through us to others. This is why Paul says that "God...always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, we need not wait around for God to open a door, for us to feel peace in our hearts, and have confirmation that our decision is God's will for us by following the guideposts of life. Rather, we can get the sound doctrine in our inner man and make our own decisions based upon that doctrine. That is what spiritually mature Christians do. We then trust God that Christ's love will come through us, regardless of the situations or the outcomes.

16:15-16 We are told that Stephanas was "the firstfruits of Achaia" (16:15). We have mentioned that Corinth is in Greece. Achaia was another name for Greece, and so Paul is simply saying that Stephanas was one of the first people saved when Paul went to Corinth. In fact, II Corinthians is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia" (II Corinthians 1:1).

We usually think of addictions as bad things, but they can also be good. Here, the house of Stephanas is said to "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (16:15). This is a good addiction. God's will is for "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). A lot of times, churches talk about getting souls saved and do not spend much time doing in-depth Bible studies. In fact, most churches give a false gospel and define souls being saved as people who regularly attend their church. They put people under the law and under guilt so that they will spend their whole lives going to their church and giving the church money in hopes that they may make it into heaven.

However, when you have already believed the gospel, you can concentrate on the second part of God's will, which is getting people to come unto the knowledge of the truth. This would be "the ministry of the saints." This is very important because the higher positions in heavenly places are only filled with believers who have advanced sound doctrine built up in their inner man. The longer we go without believers being capable of filling these positions, the longer it will be before the rapture takes place. Sadly, most of Churchianity today does not have this addiction, and so there is a great need to edify saints with sound doctrine. This is why I focus on getting believers to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Stephanas must have seen this need and has made it his goal to get saints to grow in sound doctrine. In 1:16, Paul says that he baptized the household of Stephanas. This shows that Stephanas wanted every fleshly barrier between him and others to be removed so that he could get sound doctrine to them. 16:17 tells us that Stephanas' addiction to the saints resulted in him helping out Paul.

Note that Paul says "I beseech you" (16:15), rather than "I command you." As we have previously mentioned, because God treats believers like adults and not like children, it is up to the Corinthians to decide what they will do. Because the Corinthians are carnal (3:3), they need to listen to those who come to them from Paul to help them walk in the Spirit. As mentioned before, Timotheus is young, which means they may not follow what he says. Therefore, Paul beseeches the Corinthians to submit themselves unto "every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth" (16:16). Age does not matter, but spiritual maturity does matter. If Paul sends someone to the Corinthians, they can rest assured that that person has the spiritual maturity to get the Corinthians out of their carnality, if they will only listen to him. They need to listen to Timothy. However, because they are adults, they need to make their own decision about that. Similarly for us, since Paul is "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13) and has given us sound doctrine for today, we should study and believe Paul's epistles so that we may live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20), rather than following "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

16:17-18 Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus are believers from Corinth, who came to Paul where he was when he wrote I Corinthians. Most King James Bibles say, at the end of this epistle, that it "was written from Phillippi by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus." We must remember that this is not in the original text, which means it may or may not be true. Personally, I go by what the scripture says over what notes added to the scripture say. For example, we know that Hebrews was not written by Paul, yet most King James Bibles say "the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." While we do know that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were with Paul at the time he wrote the epistle, I Corinthians starts out by saying that it is from "Paul...and Sosthenes our brother" (1:1). Therefore, I believe that Paul had Sosthenes write down the words of this epistle, not Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, and Timotheus."

I also think that Paul wrote I Corinthians when he was at Ephesus in Acts 19, since he went into Macedonia in Acts 20:1, which he says, in 16:5, that he was planning to do. Also, Paul says that he has already been to Corinth before (2:1), which happened in Acts 18. Therefore, this would put Paul's writing of I Corinthians in Ephesus in Acts 19.

Paul also mentions the carnality of the Corinthians because he says that the four men supplied "that which was lacking on your part....For they have refreshed my spirit" (16:17-18). I believe he is referring to both spiritual and financial deficits with the Corinthians. Spiritually speaking, Paul was troubled by what was going

on in Corinth with the contentions among them (1:11-12) and the fighting over the Lord's Supper (11:17-21). Financially speaking, he had to take wages of other churches in order to do them service (II Corinthians 11:8).

Fortunately, there were these four men, who refreshed Paul's spirit (16:18). He saw them as the fruit of Achaia, and so he knew that it would not be a waste of time to write this epistle to the Corinthians. This is a lesson for us today. It can be hard to continue to serve the Lord when you do not see fruit, but the time you spend with others in the word is always worth it, because you never know if someone will be saved and/or learn sound doctrine as a result of you letting Christ live in you.

Moreover, when Paul says, "acknowledge ye them that are such" (16:18), it is a lesson for us to acknowledge those who help us in the Lord. I can speak, personally, that it is difficult to make the choice every day to read and believe God's Word and teach it to others. However, when others tell me how much they appreciate my service in the Lord, it encourages me to go on. These four men probably needed encouragement from the Corinthian church since the Corinthians were so carnal. They needed to know that their "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (15:58).

16:19 The churches in Asia were probably established as a result of the two years that Paul spent teaching in Asia. Acts 19:10 says that, during those two years, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." One of the complaints about Paul in Ephesus was "that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands" (Acts 19:26). Unfortunately, the worship of the queen of heaven was prevalent in Asia (Acts 19:27), and it appears that, before Paul died, these churches turned back to worshipping her, since Paul says at the end of his life that "all they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (II Timothy 1:15). However, at the time of the writing of I Corinthians, the churches of Asia were still hanging on.

Aquila and Priscilla were a husband and wife team, who helped Paul (Romans 16:3), from Acts 18 to the end of Paul's life (II Timothy 4:19). Initially, they were in Italy and fled to Corinth when there was a persecution of Jews in Rome (Acts 18:1-2). Paul lived with them in Corinth, because they were all tentmakers (Acts 18:3). When Paul left Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila went with him to Ephesus (Acts 18:18), and so it makes sense that Paul wrote I Corinthians from Ephesus in Acts 19, since Priscilla and Aquila were there with him. They salute the Corinthians, since they used to live in Corinth.

Note that there is a church in their house (16:19). Christians gathered in someone's house to fellowship over the scriptures and food. They did not go to a church building.

16:20 Paul mentions greeting others with "an holy kiss" four times (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26). This was probably a way of greeting each other, like we would shake someone's hand. Paul

is the only one to mention “an holy kiss” in the Bible. I think this is because believers, in the dispensation of grace, are “holy and beloved” (Colossians 3:12), and so a kiss among brethren is holy. A kiss among unbelievers would not be holy.

16:21 Some epistles had been written by other people to churches, and they claimed to be written by Paul. When Paul wrote, he usually had someone write down the words for him. The reason is probably his poor eyesight from being stoned. Paul wrote Galatians himself, because of these forgeries, and he mentions how large he wrote due to his poor eyesight (Galatians 4:15; 6:11). In most epistles, Paul would sign the end of the epistle to show that it was from him. This is what this verse means.

16:22 “Anathema” means accursed, and “Maran-atha” means come Lord Jesus. Romans 8:28 says that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” And these are the ones that God foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified (Romans 8:29-30). The moment we recognize our sin and trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sin, we receive the love of God (Romans 5:8). We then love God. I John 5:19 says, “We love Him, because He first loved us.” Even if we walk in the lusts of our flesh, we still love God because we have the Spirit of God given to us. We then “groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). Therefore, when Paul says “if any man love not the Lord Jesus” (16:22), it is like saying, “If any man has not believed the gospel.” “Let him be anathema” (16:22) means “let him be accursed.” This does not mean that we should not share the gospel with unbelievers. It just means that, we should have no fellowship with unbelievers, and we cannot force people to believe. If they refuse to believe, we just have to let them be accursed.

This makes a tough world to live in, when Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), and he has people operating by his course (Ephesians 2:2). Believers are in the minority, and so we cry “Maran-atha” or “come, Lord Jesus” (16:22).

16:23 As mentioned, when we walk in our flesh, which we all do at times, the spirit within us groans, waiting to receive our glorified bodies (Romans 8:23), and so we need “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” to be with us (16:23), as Romans 5:20 says, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

16:24 I Peter 4:8 says, “Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” We have already seen how sinful the Corinthians are. This is probably why Paul ends this epistle with, “My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.”