

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE

1 Corinthians

Replying to questions and issues
relating to the evangel as presented
by Paul in Romans

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2011.

“For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also,
in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class ...”
1 Corinthians 15:22

*All Scriptures taken from the Concordant Literal New Testament
and the Concordant Version of the Old Testament unless otherwise noted.
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About the Author

Paul begins by identifying himself as the writer of this letter (1:1) Let us recall the commission Paul received on the road to Damascus: *He is a choice instrument of Mine, to bear My name before both the nations and kings, besides the sons of Israel.* (Acts 9:15-16) And we know from Acts that Paul did go first to the synagogues to proclaim Christ to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. Peter, John, James and other New Testament writers had a commission to Israel only. Paul alone was commissioned to go to the Gentiles.

We cannot assume Paul's message to the Gentiles was the same as the message proclaimed by the others unto Israel. Paul stressed that the gospel he proclaimed was not received from man, *but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.* (Galatians 1:11-12) If he preached the same gospel, why would he not have studied under the Twelve who had heard and observed Christ Himself during His earthly ministry? And why would Paul refer to his proclamation as "my evangel" instead of "the evangel?" (Romans 2:16; 16:25-26). Paul notes that he had been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, and Peter had been trusted with the evangel of the Circumcision. (Galatians 2:7). He did not say that his was the evangel to the Uncircumcision; but of the Uncircumcision. It was a different message, and this can be clearly seen if we examine the details. Paul is the only one to have mentioned the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, or the expectation of the body of Christ in the celestials in Ephesians 2:6. Israels' expectation was always upon the earth, not in the celestials or heavens.

Paul was abandoned by nearly all at the end of his ministry (see 2 Timothy 1:15; 4:16; Acts 21:20). Note in the Acts passage that when Paul returned to Jerusalem he was opposed not by unbelieving Jews, but by believing Jews who were zealous for the law – a clear signal that Paul's message was different than that of the Twelve, and as a result Paul was opposed by Jewish *believers*.

Paul, in his writings, refers to a mystery that had been previously concealed, but which he was now revealing as God had instructed him. ... *His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, **to complete the word of God** ... the **secret** which has been **concealed** from the eons and from the generations, yet now was **made manifest** to His saints ...* (Colossians 1:24-16) ... *by revelation the secret is made known to me ... the secret of the Christ, which, in other generations, is not made known to the sons of humanity ...* (Ephesians 3:3-5)

Clearly Paul was commissioned to address a group not previously addressed by the Twelve (the Gentiles), with a different message that had been revealed to him not by man but by Christ Himself.

Introduction

1 CORINTHIANS 1:1

What can we learn from the letter's introduction?

Paul identifies himself as the author (1:1), and the letter is directed to: *The ecclesia of God which is in Corinth ... together with all in every place who are invoking the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ...* (1:2)

Generally translated “church,” **ecclesia** in the Greek literally means *called-out-ones*. The called-out-ones of God would be those whom God has called out from humanity to serve some purpose. The *called-out-ones* may not always be the same group from one age to the next. During Jesus' earthly ministry the called-out-ones were believers among Israel. Paul introduced an ecclesia with a different make-up ... the body of Christ, which included Jews and Gentiles on an equal basis.

Paul describes the ecclesia in 1:2 as *hallowed* in Christ Jesus, called saints. Both **hallowed** (*hagiazō*) and **saints** (*hagion*) are from the same Greek root word most often translated *holy*. When *holy* refers to people, it is often translated *saints*. The ecclesia are those made holy or *set apart* by God.

*In everything you are **enriched in Him**, in all expression and all knowledge ... not deficient in any grace, awaiting the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1:5) As we await Christ to come and snatch us away (1 Thessalonians 4:17), to extricate us out of the present wicked eon (Galatians 1:4), we are not lacking in any grace; and we are enriched in Christ in all things.

No schisms

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10

Strife had entered the ecclesia, with some saying, “I am of Paul” and others, “I am of Apollos.” (Much like the denominational differences, and the differences between individual churches today.)

Paul entreats the ecclesia ... *that all may be saying the same thing, and there may be **no schisms** among you, but you may be **attuned to the same mind** and to the same opinion.* (1:10) Schism is not eliminated by simply consenting, without debate, to the loudest voices in the ecclesia ... but ALL members of the ecclesia should be *attuned* to the same mind and opinion; that being the mind of Christ. We should not be lobbying for our opinions as to the things of God. All within the ecclesia, the body of Christ, should be working together to understand the mind of God as revealed in His word.

Remember that in Paul's day there was not a Baptist Church, a Methodist Church, etc. There was simply one ecclesia. They met together in smaller groups, or ecclesias, often in peoples' homes, and likely very informally at times, but all were a part of the single ecclesia. How complicated and divided the ecclesia has become in our present world of denominations, independent churches, articles of religion, membership covenants, rituals and ceremonies. How the ecclesia has been systematized, fragmented and split apart ... far from the unity Paul called for.

The evangel

1 CORINTHIANS 1:17

Paul's commission is to bring the evangel ... not to baptize. *Christ does not commission me to be baptizing, but to be bringing the evangel...* (1:17)

But what about "The Great Commission" found in Matthew? *Going, then, disciple all the nations, baptizing them...* (Matthew 28:19) While most believers in the Church today see "The Great Commission" as *their* commission, obviously Paul does not. He is not commissioned to be baptizing. "The Great Commission" is actually taken out of context today. It speaks to Israel discipling the nations, as will be done in the end times upon the earth (see Revelation). It does not speak to the church today at all. We have a different commission ... not the one found in Matthew 28.

The evangel is the power of God "to those called." The word of the cross is ridiculed as stupidity by those perishing, but *to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* (1:18) To the Jews, who seek signs, the evangel is a snare. To the nations, who seek wisdom, the evangel is stupidity. But *to those who are called the evangel is the power of God and the wisdom of God...* (1:24) Only those who are called recognize the evangel as the power of God.

God has chosen the weak ... the ignoble ... the contemptible (in the eyes of the world) ... so that **no flesh at all should be boasting**. (1:30) And those who are called ... the ecclesia to whom Paul directs his letter ... are **in Christ Jesus**. *He became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance...* (1:30)

In bringing the evangel **Paul did not come with superiority of word or wisdom**. He simply proclaimed Christ crucified (2:1). Paul came **in weakness**, fear, trembling ... and **he did not use the persuasive words of human wisdom**. Instead the evangel was proclaimed with a demonstration of spirit and of power ... *that your faith may not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.* (2:5)

Much of what Paul states here concerning the evangel is a re-statement of his presentation in Romans. It is God's power and righteousness (Romans 1:16;

3:21). It is deliverance (3:24). There is no room for boasting (3:27). As Paul prepares to address some issues within the Corinthian ecclesia, he begins by reminding them of his evangel.

Maturity is needed

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6

We speak wisdom among the mature ... but not wisdom of this eon ... God's wisdom in a **secret**, *wisdom which has been **concealed**, which God designates before – before the eons, for our glory...* (2:6) If wisdom “not of this eon” is being spoken, how can we understand? *To us **God reveals** ... through His spirit...* (2:10) Humanity is only acquainted with things pertaining to humanity. No one knows that which is of God except the spirit of God. (2:11)

We have been given the spirit of God ... *that we may be perceiving that which is being graciously given to us by God...* (2:12) ... *Who knew the mind of the Lord? Who will be deducing from Him? Yet we have the mind of Christ.* (2:16) Only those called ... those who have eyes to believe ... those who have been given the spirit of God ... can understand spiritual things.

BUT ... you are fleshly. Despite the fact that God has revealed, and the believers have the holy spirit and should be able to understand ... *I could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to minors in Christ.* (3:1) How does Paul discern that these believers are fleshly, and unable to understand spiritual things? *Where there is **jealousy** and **strife** among you, are you not fleshly and walking according to man?* (3:3) ... *For whenever anyone may be saying, 'I, indeed, am of Paul,' yet another, 'I, of Apollos,' will he not be fleshly?* (3:4) Division is the manifestation of man's walking according to the flesh. Men were being elevated and followed, creating divisions much like those seen in the Church today (I follow the Methodists ... I follow the Baptists ... etc).

Based on what Paul is saying here, **we should not expect the more advanced truths** that he would share with the mature, which we find in his later “perfection epistles” (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians).

We are just fellow workers. On the subject of elevating one person over another (Paul or Apollos, for example), Paul points out that all are simply fellow workers. *I plant, Apollos irrigates, but God makes it grow up.* (3:5) ... *Each will be getting his own wages according to his own toil. For God's fellow workers are we. God's farm, God's building, are you.* (3:8)

There is only one foundation. *According to the grace of God which is being granted to me, as a wise foreman I lay a foundation, yet another is building on it. Yet let each one beware how he is building on it. For other foundation can no one lay beside that which is laid ... Jesus Christ.* (3:10) As

God's fellow workers **build upon the one foundation:** *If anyone is building on this foundation gold and silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, each one's work will become apparent, for the day will make it evident, for it is being revealed by fire. And the fire, it will be testing each one's work – what kind it is. If anyone's work will be remaining which he builds on it, he will get wages. If anyone's work shall be burned up, he will forfeit it, yet he shall be saved, yet thus, as through fire.* (3:13) The works of a believer will be evaluated by God at some future time (see Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). We note that the absence of good works does not jeopardize one's salvation, but it will affect the wages (rewards) received.

Remember who you are

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to remember who they are as members of the ecclesia. *Are you not aware that **you are a temple of God** and the spirit of God is making its home in you?* (3:16)

Do not corrupt the temple of God, for *If anyone is corrupting the temple of God, God will be corrupting him, for the temple of God is holy, which you are.* (3:17)

Don't delude yourself ... don't presume to be wise ... *the wisdom of this world is stupidity with God.* (3:18)

Let no one be boasting in men (3:21). *Thus let a man be reckoning with us – as **deputies of Christ**, and **administrators of God's secrets**.* (4:1) An administrator should seek to be found faithful (4:2) and is examined by the Lord, and is not concerned with how he might be examined by men. (4:3)

From these remarks we can develop some idea of the issues within the ecclesia at Corinth that prompted Paul to write this letter.

Do not judge before the season

1 CORINTHIANS 4:5

A close parallel to Romans 2, Paul here speaks to the issue of judging our fellow brethren. *Be not judging anything before the season, till the Lord should be coming, Who will also illuminate the hidden things of darkness and manifest the counsels of the hearts. And then applause will be coming to each one from God.* (4:5)

God will judge at the appropriate time (when the Lord comes). We who believe will appear before the dais of God to give an account for our actions (see Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10). Then reward ("applause") will come from God.

Do not be “puffed up”

1 CORINTHIANS 4:6

Perhaps we judge one another because we presume to know things beyond what God has revealed ... beyond what is written. *Be learning **not to be disposed above what is written**, that you may not be puffed up, one over the one, against the other.* (4:6)

What you have was given to you, so there are no grounds for boasting (4:7).

Paul points out the differences between what he is modeling, and what he is seeing in the Corinthian believers. **You are** ... prudent ... strong ... glorious (4:10). **We are** ... stupid because of Christ ... weak ... dishonored ... hungering ... thirsting ... naked ... buffeted ... unsettled ... toiling ... working with our own hands. (4:10) *Being reviled, we are blessing; being persecuted, we are bearing with it; being calumniated, we are entreating.* (4:12) ... **Become imitators of me.** (4:16)

Dealing with immoral behavior

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1

Paul has warned against judging before the season. But now he will show us there is a place for judging within the ecclesia, at least in matters concerning immoral behavior. Paul tells the Corinthians, **There is prostitution among you**, and such prostitution (which is not even named among the nations), so that someone has his father's wife. (5:1) Rather than mourning the immoral behavior in their midst, the ecclesia is “puffed up” ... apparently having justified the behavior thru reason.

Remove the one committing this act (5:2) ... *Give up such a one to Satan for the extermination of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* (5:5) We note that the discipline of the immoral brother is not vindictive, but toward the goal of his salvation. Correction is brought to the Body of Christ, and the welfare of the individual being disciplined is considered. This expresses God's heart ... that none are punished endlessly, and that correction is accomplished.

Addressing matters of immorality within the ecclesia also serve **to preserve the ecclesia** itself. *Are you not aware that a little leaven is leavening the whole kneading? Clean out, then, the old leaven...* (5:6)

Do not commingle with the wicked brother. *I write to you ... not to be commingling with paramours. And undoubtedly it is not as to the paramours of this world, or the greedy and extortionate, or idolaters, else, consequently, you ought to come out of the world. Yet now I write to you not*

to be commingling with anyone named a brother, if he should be a paramour, or greedy, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner. With such a one you are not even to be eating. (5:9) **Judge only inside the ecclesia.** These actions against the one with immoral behavior relate only when the behavior is found within the ecclesia, not in the world outside the ecclesia. *What is it to me to be judging those outside? You are not judging those within! Now those outside, God is judging.* **Expel the wicked one from among yourselves.** (5:12) In the Church today the reverse seems to be more prevalent. Sin within the Church is tolerated ... and sin in the world outside the Church is condemned (abortion, homosexuality, etc.).

Settling disputes within the ecclesia

1 CORINTHIANS 6:1

Disputes were taking place within the Corinthian ecclesia. *Brother is suing brother, and this before unbelievers!* (6:6) Believers will one day judge the world and messengers (6:2). **Is there not one able to judge within the ecclesia?** (6:5) Bad enough that there are lawsuits within the ecclesia. **Would it not be better if you are injured, or cheated?** (6:8) *But you are injuring and cheating, and this to brethren!* (6:8) It would seem appropriate that if a dispute arises in the ecclesia, another Believer should be asked to mediate. And if resolution is not possible, the aggrieved party should drop the dispute and suffer loss, rather than to bring disgrace to Christ by litigating the matter before unbelievers. Everything the believer does should be done to glorify God.

Admonishing the believers to deal with one another justly, Paul points out: *Are you not aware that the unjust shall not be enjoying the allotment of God's kingdom? Be not deceived. Neither paramours, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor catamites, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, no revilers, no extortioners shall be enjoying the allotment of God's kingdom.* (6:9) Paul is not talking here about an eternal destiny of heaven or hell. If *enjoying the allotment of God's kingdom* refers to "going to heaven," what part does faith play in this passage? Only man's works are discussed.

Knowing that salvation comes by grace through faith (God's gracious gift), Paul is stating as an example to believers that without God's grace that was given to them these behaviors would have prevented them from participating in the kingdom that is to come upon the earth. This would have been their expectation before the revelation Paul brought concerning their destiny in the heavens. This kingdom allotment does not, then, pertain to them ... Paul is simply pointing out those things that please and displease God, to encourage proper behavior within the ecclesia. In other words, "You know that those of the world exhibit these behaviors and will not enter the kingdom, so you who have been saved by God's grace should not exhibit these behaviors as they are objectionable to God. You should know better!"

This interpretation is supported by verse 11. *And some of you were these, but **you are bathed** off, but you are **hallowed**, but you were **justified** in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.* (6:11) Paul reminds the believers that they are not as those of the world. They are not unjust as those who will not enjoy the allotment of God's kingdom. They are just (or justified). They were called and hallowed. Paul asks them to remember this as they live their life within the ecclesia.

Having been hallowed and justified ... **All is allowed me, but not all is expedient.** *All is allowed me, but I will not be put under its authority by anything.* (6:12) All may be permitted through our freedom in Christ, but not all things operate for our good ... and we should be aware of those things that may addict us and cause us to be under their authority.

Coping with fleshly passions

1 CORINTHIANS 6:13

The body is for the Lord, not prostitution (6:13). *Are you not aware that your bodies are members of Christ? Taking, then, the members of Christ away, should I be making them members of a prostitute?* (6:15) ... *Are you not aware that he who joins a prostitute is one body?* (6:16) ... *Now he who joins the Lord is one spirit. Flee from prostitution.* (6:18) ... *He who is committing prostitution is sinning against his own body. Or are you not aware that **your body is a temple** of the holy spirit in you, which you have from God, and **you are not your own**? For you are bought with a price. By all means glorify God in your body.* (6:19)

Just as in Old Testament times, God dwells in His temple, and that place is hallowed by God's presence. As the holy spirit indwells the Believer, his body becomes God's temple. Our bodies are no longer ours, but God's. Like the temple of old in Jerusalem, nothing should be permitted to enter God's temple that would defile it.

Deal with passions thru marriage. *It is ideal for a man not to be touching a woman. Yet, because of prostitutions, let each man have a wife for himself and each woman have her own husband.* (7:1)

A wife is not to be separated from her husband. *Yet if she should be separated also, let her remain unmarried or be conciliated to her husband. And **a husband is not to leave his wife.*** (7:11)

As for **marriage to unbelievers** ... A believer with an unbelieving spouse should not leave the spouse, if he/she approves of making a home with him. (7:12) *The unbelieving wife is hallowed by the brother...* (7:14) ... *Yet if the unbeliever is separating, let him separate.* (7:15)

It is better to remain as you were when God called you. Whether circumcised or uncircumcised (circumcision is nothing) ... slave or free ... (7:18) *Each one, in what he was called, brethren, in this let him remain with God.* (7:24) ... *You are bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. You have been loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. Yet if you ever should be marrying, also, you did not sin.* (7:27)

The unmarried can be fully focused on pleasing the Lord. *The unmarried one is solicitous about the things of the Lord, how he should be pleasing the Lord. Yet he who marries is solicitous about the things of the world, how he should be pleasing his wife...* (7:32)

Love builds up

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1

*Now concerning the idol sacrifices: We are aware that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up, yet love builds up.*** (8:1)

Knowledge always falls short. *If anyone is presuming to know anything, he knew not as yet according as he must know.* (8:2)

Love is the important thing to God. *If anyone is loving God, this one is known by God.* (8:3)

Do not become a stumbling block

1 CORINTHIANS 8:4

An idol is nothing ... *there is no other God except one.* (8:4) ... *There is **one God**, the Father, out of Whom all is ... and **one Lord**, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is...* (8:6)

[Sidenote: In Romans 11:36 Paul wrote that all is out of God. Similarly we see in 1 Corinthians 8:6 that all is out of God (He is the *source* of all things), and all is through Christ (He is the *channel* of all things). God deals with mankind only thru Christ, and even creation was carried out thru Christ. Christ is the way to the Father, and the only means thru Whom we can know God.]

But not all have this knowledge (8:6). *Some are eating of an idol sacrifice and ... their conscience, being weak, is being polluted.* (8:7)

Don't let your rights become a stumbling block to the weak (8:9). *Will not the conscience of him who is weak be inured to the eating of the idol sacrifices? For the weak one is perishing also by your knowledge; the brother because of whom Christ died.* (8:10)

*In thus sinning against brethren, and beating their weak conscience, **you are sinning against Christ.** (8:12)*

***We must give up rights so as not to snare a brother.** Wherefore, if food is snaring my brother, I may under no circumstances be eating meat for the eon, lest I should be snaring my brother. (8:13)*

Paul's example: All things to all men

1 CORINTHIANS 9:1

***As an apostle, Paul could have insisted upon certain rights.** Have only I and Barnabas no right not to be working? Who is warring at any time supplying his own rations? (9:6) ... The Lord also prescribes that those who are announcing the evangel are to be living of the evangel. (9:14)*

***But he forfeited rights for the sake of the evangel.** ... Nevertheless we do not use this right, but we are forgoing all, lest we may be giving any hindrance to the evangel of Christ. (9:12)*

***Paul was entrusted with an administration.** Woe to me if I should not be bringing the evangel! For if I am engaging in this voluntarily, I have wages, yet if involuntarily, I have been entrusted with an administration. (9:17)*

***He brought the evangel without expense** ... so as not to use up my authority in the evangel. (9:18)*

***I enslave myself to all,** that I should be gaining the more. (9:19) **To all have I become all,** that I should undoubtedly be saving some. (9:22)*

***Racing for an incorruptible wreath.** Every contender is controlling himself in all things; they, indeed, then, that they may be obtaining a corruptible wreath, yet we an incorruptible. (9:25)*

***Disciplining my body.** Thus am I racing, not as dubious, thus am I boxing, not as punching the air, but I am belaboring my body and leading it into slavery, lest somehow, when heralding to others, I myself may become disqualified. (9:26)*

Facing Trials

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1

Paul reminds the ecclesia that **the majority of their fathers fell in the wilderness** (10:5). This *became types of us, for us not to be lusters after evil things, according as they also lust. Nor yet be becoming idolaters, according as some of them...* (10:6) ... *Nor yet may we be committing prostitution ... nor putting the Lord on trial ... nor murmuring.* (10:8)

When facing trials ... *No trial has taken you except what is human. Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are able, but, **together with the trial**, will be making **the sequel** also, to enable you to undergo it.* (10:13) God does not provide an *escape* from trials, as some Bible translations will tell us. If we escaped our trials, we would not need to be enabled to “undergo” them. Instead God provides a *sequel* ... a positive conclusion to the trial. Ours is not to seek escape from trials, but grace to endure. And we can contemplate the positive outcome that the trial is designed to produce.

We have freedom ... but consider others

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23

All is permitted, but not all is edifying (10:23). Let one not seek his own welfare, but **the welfare of another** (10:24). By way of example: *If anyone of the unbelievers is inviting you, and you want to go, be eating everything that is placed before you, examining nothing because of conscience. Yet if anyone should be saying to you, 'This is a sacred sacrifice,' do not eat, because of that one who divulges it, and conscience. Yet conscience, I am saying, not that of yourself, but that of another.* (10:27)

*Whether you are eating or drinking, or anything you are doing, **do all for the glory of God.*** (10:31)

And **become not a stumbling block** to Jews as well as to Greeks and to the ecclesia of God, according as I also am pleasing all in all things, not seeking my own expedience, but that of the many, that they may be saved. (9:32) Some may see “that they may be saved” as an inference that *all* will not be ultimately saved. Let us keep in mind what Paul means in this letter when he uses the term *saved*. Remember from Romans that mankind is headed toward a future day of God’s judgment, when His indignation will be unveiled. The believer will be *saved* from that coming day, as his faith is reckoned as righteousness. But we must remember that even the coming indignation is intended to accomplish God’s overall objective ... the reconciliation of all, that He might become All in all (we will see this in 15:28). So for Paul, to be *saved* is to be saved from the day of indignation. But in the end, *all* will be reconciled, and saved from what orthodoxy claims is an eternal torment.

God's hierarchy

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

God is the head of Christ (11:3)

Christ is the head of every man (11:3)

Man is the head of the woman (11:3)

Man is inherently the image and glory of God (11:7)

Woman is the glory of the man (11:8)

Woman was created out of man (11:8)

Woman was created because of the man (11:8)

Man and woman are not apart from each other. As the woman is out of the man, thus the man is through the woman. (11:11)

Yet all is of God. (11:12)

Courtesies when coming together

1 CORINTHIANS 11:17

*You are **coming together, not for the better...** (11:17) ... I am hearing of **schisms** ... (11:18)*

*At your coming together in the same place, it is not to be eating **the Lord's dinner**, for each one is getting his own dinner before in the eating, and one, indeed is hungry, yet one is drunk. (11:20) ... Whoever should be eating **the bread** or drinking **the cup** of the Lord **unworthily**, will be liable for the body and the blood of the Lord. Now let a man test himself first, and thus let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (11:27) ... For he who is eating and drinking unworthily is eating and drinking **judgment to himself**, not discriminating the body of the Lord. (11:29) ... Therefore many among you are infirm and ailing, and a considerable number are reposing. For if we adjudicated ourselves, we would not be judged. Yet, being judged, **we are being disciplined by the Lord**, that we may not be condemned with the world. (11:31)*

Now comes the bottom line: **So that, my brethren, when coming together to eat, be waiting for one another.** (11:33)

You are the body of Christ

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1

Concerning spiritual endowments/gifts (12:1) ... *To each one is being given the manifestation of the spirit, with a view to **expedience**.* (12:7)
 "Expedience" would mean that which is appropriate, or which is promoting one's interests ... in this case the interests of God.

Paul provides a list of gifts given through the spirit (12:8) ... the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, graces of healing, operations of powerful deeds, prophecy, discrimination of spirits, species of languages, translation of languages. *All these one and the same spirit is operating, apportioning to each his own, according as He is intending.* (12:11)

The body is not one member, but many ... not all are an ear or an eye (12:14). **God places the members in the body as He wills** (12:18). ... **All members are necessary.** *Yet now there are, indeed, many members, yet one body. Yet the eye can not say to the hand, 'I have no need of you' ... but God blends the body together, giving to that which is deficient more exceeding honor... (12:20) ... that there may be **no schism** in the body, but the members may be **mutually solicitous for one another.** (12:25) ... And whether one member is suffering, all the members are sympathizing, or one member is being esteemed, all the members are rejoicing with it. (12:26)*

Paul **lists the various members** God has placed in the ecclesia ... *first apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, thereupon powers, thereupon graces of healing, supports, pilotage, species of languages.* (12:28) **Not all members are the same.** *Not all are apostles. Not all are prophets ... yet be zealous for the greater graces.* (12:29)

*And still I am showing you **a path, suited to transcendence.*** (12:31) “Transcendence” is a state of being or existence above and beyond the limits of material experience. Compare the list of spiritual gifts found here with the list in Paul’s later revelation in Ephesians 4:11. Could the difference be accounted to Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 12:31 ... “a path suited to transcendence?” In the later list, some of the “lesser” gifts (powers, healing, languages) are omitted. **The termination of some gifts is foretold** in 1 Corinthians 13:8.

Remember that Paul could not share deeper spiritual truths with the Corinthians as they were not mature (3:1). Yet Paul was able to share these secrets with the more mature believers (Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 3:14; Colossians 1:28; Colossians 4:12). Furthermore, Paul “completed” the Word of God as noted in Colossians 1:25 ... so there would appear to be no longer a need for prophecy to provide a word from God. Miracles and healings were manifestations that accompanied the kingdom evangel, as signs of what was to come when the kingdom came upon the earth. But the expectation of the body of Christ is not upon the earth. We do not look for Christ to come to reign upon His throne in Jerusalem ... that is Israel’s expectation. We listen for the trumpet to sound, and for Christ to snatch us away and meet us in the air, to take us to be with Him in the celestials.

Could it be that by the time Paul wrote to the Ephesians, some of the gifts had ceased ... accounting for their absence from the Ephesians list?

A note concerning the church today. The “church” is not the many ecclesiastical organizations that exist ... but a single invisible unified Body of Christ ... comprised of all who have the spirit of God. All the members of the invisible Body are dependent on one another, with each equipped to perform different functions ... all toward the edification of the Body. No one can choose his place within the Body. We should instead seek to discover our place as determined by God.

Love is most important

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1

Without love I am nothing. *If I should have prophecy and should be perceiving all secrets and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so as to transport mountains, yet have no love, I am nothing.* (13:2)

Love is ... patient ... kind ... not jealous ... not bragging ... not puffed up ... not indecent ... not self-seeking ... not incensed ... not taking account of evil ... not rejoicing in injustice, yet is rejoicing with the truth ... forgoing all ... believing all ... expecting all ... enduring all (13:4).

Some gifts will cease. Prophecies will be discarded, languages will cease, knowledge will be discarded ... but *love is never lapsing.* (13:8)

Whenever maturity may be coming, *that which is out of an installment shall be discarded.* (13:10) We remember that Paul had previously accused the Corinthians of being less than mature. From what Paul has written we discern that they were fighting over “lesser gifts” and are lacking in love.

At present we are observing by means of a mirror, in an enigma, yet then, face to face. At present I know out of an installment, yet then I shall recognize according as I am recognized also. (13:12)

Yet now are remaining faith, expectation, love – these three. Yet the greatest of these is love. **Be pursuing love.** (14:1)

Be zealous for spiritual endowments

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1

Prophecy is preferred over languages ... it is speaking to men for edification, consolation and comfort ... edifying the ecclesia. (14:3)

Languages speak not to men, but to God ...edifying one’s self ... unless he may be interpreting that the ecclesia may be edified. (14:2) ... *if you should not be giving an intelligible expression through the language, how will it be known what is being spoken?* (14:9)

Seek to the edification of the ecclesia (14:12).

Languages without interpretation do not edify. *Let him who is speaking in a language pray that he may be interpreting. For if I should be praying in a language, my spirit is praying, yet my mind is unfruitful ... you, indeed, are giving thanks ideally, but the other is not edified.* (14:13) ... *In the ecclesia, do I want to speak five words with my mind, that I should be instructing others also, or ten thousand words in a language?* (14:19)

Become mature. (14:20)

What is the purpose of languages and prophecy? *Languages are for a sign, not to the believers, but to the unbelievers. Yet prophecy is not for the unbelievers, but for believers.* (14:22) Again I ask, since Paul “completed” the Word of God (Colossians 1:25) is prophecy needed to bring the Word of God to believers? And do languages still serve a purpose as a demonstration to non-believers? Or could it be that both of these gifts have now ceased, as Paul foretells in 13:8?

Seek to edify when coming together

1 CORINTHIANS 14:26

Let all occur to edification. (14:27) **God is not for turbulence, but peace, as in all the ecclesias of the saints.** (14:33) Let all occur **respectably and in order.** (14:40)

The evangel

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1

*Now I am making known to you, brethren, the **evangel which I bring to you,** which also you accepted, in which also you stand, **through which also you are saved.*** (15:1)

It concerns Christ's death and resurrection ... *that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures...* (15:3)

There were numerous witnesses to His resurrection ... *He was seen by Cephas, thereupon by the twelve ... thereupon by over 500 brethren at once, of whom the majority are remaining hitherto ... thereupon by James, thereafter by all the apostles.* (15:5)

Paul was also a witness. *Yet, last of all, even as if a premature birth, He was seen by me also. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not competent to be called an apostle, because I persecute the ecclesia of God. Yet, in the grace of God I am what I am...* (15:8) If Paul is the last of all to see

the risen Christ, why does he refer to his experience as **a premature birth** instead of an “after-the-fact” occurrence? While many others had seen the risen Christ, Paul’s case was different, and it signaled a new direction God was taking. While the others (disciples) were seeking after and following Christ, Paul was Christ’s enemy. He persecuted the ecclesia of God. Paul’s experience was as a “premature birth” in terms of GRACE! In the past, the kingdom evangel went to the sheep of Israel, requiring repentance. Paul had no repentance ... he was Christ’s enemy. Yet it was GRACE that found Paul and caused him to become an apostle, and God’s instrument.

Paul is a different kind of apostle, called to proclaim a different evangel. His message was not, “Repent, for near is the kingdom.” The kingdom had been rejected, and its coming delayed. Paul now proclaims directly to the Gentiles a new evangel, founded purely on grace ... *Be conciliated to God ... for God was in Christ conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them.* (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

Some were saying there is no resurrection. *How are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? Now if there is no resurrection of the dead...*

- *Neither has Christ been roused*
- *Our heralding is for naught*
- *Your faith is for naught*
- *We are false witnesses of God*
- *You are still in your sins*
- *Those who sleep in Christ have perished*
- *More forlorn than all men are we* (15:12)

Yet now **Christ has been roused** from among the dead, **the Firstfruit** of those who are reposing. (15:20)

The resurrection of all

1 CORINTHIANS 15:21

Since, in fact, through a man came death, through a man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. (15:21) For even as, **in Adam, all are dying**, thus also, **in Christ, shall all be vivified.** (15:22)

Yet each in his own class (and here we see **the order of the resurrection**):

- *The Firstfruit, Christ;*
- *Thereupon those who are Christ’s in His presence;*
- *Thereafter the consummation...* (15:23)

Paul describes this final stage of the resurrection; **the consummation.** *Whenever He (Christ) may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, Whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and*

power. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy being abolished is death. For He subjects all under His feet ... Whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to (God) ... That God may be All in all. (15:24)

As Paul speaks of the consummation, he speaks of things not revealed by God thru those proclaiming the kingdom evangel ... not even John when he penned that which Christ revealed to him in the book of Revelation. For any who might conclude that Revelation is the latest revelation from God as to His plans for future times, consider the following:

In Revelation 22:5 we read of His slaves who are reigning, and in Revelation 21:24 we read of kings of the earth. But in 1 Corinthians 15:24 we are told of a time when all sovereignty, authority and power are nullified.

In Revelation 21:5 we see Christ seated on the throne. But in 1 Corinthians 15:28 we read that Christ will reign UNTIL all enemies are under His feet, at which time He Himself becomes subject to God the Father.

In Revelation 21:8 we read that the lake of fire is in operation, and it is referred to as the “second death.” But in 1 Corinthians 15:27 we read that the last enemy, death, is abolished.

In Revelation 22:2 we read of leaves on the tree which are for the “cure” of the nations. This implies bodies that are in need of the leaves to sustain health. But in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 we read of an incorruptible body.

In Revelation 21:12,14,24 we read of the twelve tribes, the twelve apostles (which would not include Paul) and the nations outside the city, respectively. But in Galatians 3:28 Paul speaks of no distinction between Jew or Greek ... and we see no distinction anywhere in 1 Corinthians 15.

Revelation has a distinct Jewish character. It is a continuation of the kingdom evangel to the sheep of Israel, after the body of Christ has been removed from the earth (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13). Revelation speaks of a physical realm, when the kingdom comes upon the earth ... much like our present world, but with Christ reigning and keeping evil in check. But 1 Corinthians 15 is very obviously referring to a spiritual realm, with no corruption, reign or power. All are subjected. There are no enemies, no death, no sin, no rebellion. The purpose of the eons has been achieved, and God is now All in all.

Revelation speaks of the final age (eon) upon the earth. 1 Corinthians 15 (the consummation) speaks of a time after the ages have concluded ... when God's purpose of the eons (Ephesians 3:11) has been accomplished.

How will the dead be raised?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:35

Some were questioning how the dead could be raised. *But someone will be protesting. How are the dead being roused? Now with what body are they coming?* (15:35)

It will be a different kind of body. *You are not sowing the body which shall come to be, but a naked kernel, perchance of wheat or some of the rest. Yet God is giving it **a body according as He wills**, and to each of the seeds its own body. Not all flesh is the same flesh, but there is one, indeed of men, yet another flesh of beasts ... There are bodies celestial as well as bodies terrestrial.* (15:37-38)

*Sown in corruption, dishonor, infirmity ... a soulish body ...
Roused in **incorruption**, glory, power ... a spiritual body* (15:42)

*The first man, Adam, became a living soul;
The last Adam a vivifying Spirit.* (15:45)

First the soulish, then the spiritual (15:46).

An incorruptible body will be needed in the kingdom. *Flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption.* (15:50)

*A secret to you am I telling! We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet **we shall be changed**, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumping, and the dead will be roused **incorruptible**, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on **immortality**.* (15:51)

So ... Superabound in the work of the Lord

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

In light of the complete reconciliation of all things that Paul has described, and the incorruptible bodies that will be given, Paul now encourages the Corinthian believers as they live in the present situation. *So that, my beloved brethren, become settled, unmovable, superabounding in the work of the Lord always, being aware that your toil is not for naught in the Lord.* (15:58)

Closing

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1

Paul refers to a collection for the saints. *On one of the sabbaths let each of you lay aside by himself in store that in which he should be prospered... (16:2)* This collection would be taken by Paul to the saints who were in need in Jerusalem. It is an illustration of how the body works together when some are in need.

We might ask why Paul refers to “one of the sabbaths” if he has proclaimed freedom from the law? We must remember that Paul has noted the immaturity of the Corinthians, and the fact that he must speak to them as “minors in Christ” (3:1). And we remember that Paul speaks of forfeiting his rights for the sake of a weak brother. For these reasons Paul may be speaking to them in terms relating to their world, and in this case relative to their observance of the sabbaths. Remember also that some of the Corinthians were followers of Apollos (3:4). In Acts 18:25 we learn that Apollos was versed only in the baptism of John, at least until Priscilla and Aquila expounded the way of God to him more accurately. It could be, then, that at this point in time many of the Corinthians were following the teachings of Apollos, and it could be that Apollos was still teaching observance of the sabbaths. Recognizing the immaturity of the Corinthians, Paul speaks to them as minors, keeping in mind their recognition of the sabbaths.

Paul speaks of his **plans to visit** ... expecting to stay some time if the Lord permits. (16:8) He will remain in Ephesus till Pentecost, *for a door has opened for me, great and operative, and many are opposing.* (16:9)

Closing Admonitions: *Watch! Stand firm in the faith! Be manly! Be staunch! Let all your actions occur in love!* (16:13)

Greeting you are ... *the ecclesias of the province of Asia ... Aquila and Prisca, together with the ecclesia of their house ... all the brethren* (16:19). Here we see reference to multiple ecclesias that are a part of the one ecclesia (the body of Christ). At least in the case of Aquila and Prisca, their ecclesia either was a group that met at their home, or those living in their house and who are referred to as *the ecclesia of their house*. Either way we observe the simplicity of the ecclesia in that day, in contrast to the many churches built upon the traditions of man in our day.

EPILOGUE.

In Romans, Paul presented the evangel entrusted to him. Despite man's inability to be righteous, God *imparts* His righteousness. The believer is justified and reckoned righteous. The goal of Romans was to define proper doctrine.

The ecclesia at Corinth had issues they were dealing with, and this letter to the Corinthians addressed those issues.

- There were schisms, and immaturity.
- Some in the ecclesia were judging others.
- Matters of immoral behavior were not being addressed.
- Some were puffed up with knowledge, but lacked love.
- There were disputes occurring in the ecclesia, and some were even filing lawsuits in the secular courts.
- Some exercised their freedoms even when creating stumbling blocks for others.
- Some faced trials.
- When the ecclesia gathered some were discourteous to others.
- There was a misuse of spiritual gifts.
- Some disputed the resurrection of the dead.

We might say that Romans presents doctrine, and 1 Corinthians elaborates on that doctrine and addresses practical issues and questions.

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