

1 Corinthians

1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of the Messiah Jesus through the will of God, and Sosthenes the brother¹ **1:2** to the gathering of God that is in Corinth,² to those who have been set apart in the Messiah Jesus,³ called set apart ones,⁴ with all who truly call upon the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah in every place—theirs and ours—⁵ **1:3** grace to you and shalom from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Messiah.⁶

1:4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God that was given to you in the Messiah Jesus,⁷ **1:5** that in him you were enriched with everything, i.e., with the whole message and all knowledge,⁸ **1:6** just as the proof of the Messiah was established in you,⁹ **1:7** so that you are not lacking in any gift as you eagerly await the revealing of our Lord Jesus the Messiah,¹⁰ **1:8** who will also establish you as uncondemned until the goal (ἔως τέλους) in the day of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.¹¹ **1:9** God is faithful, through whom you were called for the purpose of participating in His Son, Jesus the Messiah, our Lord.¹²

1:10 And I encourage you, brothers, in light of the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah,¹³ that you all speak the same thing and that there be no rifts among you,¹⁴ but that you be outfitted properly with the same mindset and with the same way of thinking.¹⁵ **1:11** For it was explained to me by those from Chloe concerning you, my brothers, that rivalries exist among you.¹⁶ **1:12** And I mean this, that each of you is saying, on the one hand “I am with Paul,” and on the other hand “I am with Apollos,” “I am with Kephas,” “I am with the Messiah.”¹⁷

1:13 Has the Messiah been divided? It wasn’t Paul who was crucified for you, was it? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?¹⁸ **1:14** I thank God that I baptized none of you except Krispus and Gaius,¹⁹ **1:15** so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.²⁰ **1:16** Now I also baptized the household of Stephen. I do not know if I baptized any of the rest.²¹ **1:17** Besides, the Messiah did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the good news, not by means of the “wisdom” of the message, so that the cross of the Messiah may not be rendered void.²² **1:18** For the message of the cross, on the one hand, is preposterous to those who are being destroyed, and, on the other hand, it is the power of God to us who are being saved.²³ **1:19** For it has been written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will declare invalid the intelligence of the intelligent <Isaiah 29:14>.²⁴

1:20 Where is the sophist? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age?²⁵ Has not God shown that the wisdom of the present realm is moronic?²⁶ **1:21** In other words, because, in the midst of the wisdom of God, the world did not come to know God through their wisdom,²⁷ God was pleased through the foolishness of the official announcement to save those who believe.²⁸

1:22 For, indeed, Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek for wisdom,²⁹ **1:23** but we proclaim a crucified Messiah, on the one hand scandalous to Jews, and on the other hand moronic to Greeks.³⁰ **1:24** But to those who are the called,³¹ both Jews and Greeks,³² the Messiah, the power of God and the wisdom of God,³³ **1:25** because God’s foolishness is wiser than men, and God’s weakness is stronger than men.³⁴

1:26 In addition, notice your calling, brothers. There are not many wise according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many well-born.³⁵ **1:27** Instead, God has chosen the foolish people of the world, so that He may embarrass the wise, and God has chosen the weak people of the world, so that He may embarrass the strong. **1:28** And God has chosen the unbecoming and rejected people of the world, the people that are not, so that He may invalidate the people that are.³⁶ **1:29** His purpose is that no flesh may brag before God.³⁷

1:30 Now, because of Him, you are in the Messiah Jesus,³⁸ who became wisdom for us from God, and justification, being set apart, and redemption,³⁹ **1:31** so that, just as it was written,

Let him who brags brag about the Lord <Jeremiah 9:24; Judges 7:2; 1 Samuel 2:3,10>.⁴⁰

2:1 And as for me, when I came to you, brothers, I came not with superiority of reasoning or wisdom when I announced to you the mystery of God.⁴¹ **2:2** For I proposed to know nothing among you except **Jesus the Messiah and him crucified**.⁴² **2:3** And I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling,⁴³ **2:4** and my reasoning and my proclamation were not in the midst of persuasive reasonings of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power,⁴⁴ **2:5** in order that your belief may not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.⁴⁵

2:6 But we do speak a wisdom among those with *the goal* (ἐν τοῖς τελείοις), however a wisdom not of this age, nor from the rulers of this age, who are passing away.⁴⁶ **2:7** Instead, we speak the wisdom of God, that has been hidden in a mystery, wisdom which God predestined before the ages for our glory,⁴⁷ **2:8** wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has grasped. For if they had grasped it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.⁴⁸

2:9 But just as it was written,

Things which the eye did not see, which the ear did not hear, and which did not enter into the heart of man, things which God prepared for those who love Him <cf. Isaiah 64:4; 52:15; 65:17>.⁴⁹

2:10 Indeed, God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit.⁵⁰ For the Spirit examines everything, especially the deep things of God.⁵¹ **2:11** For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man in him? Thus, also, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.⁵² **2:12** And we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God,⁵³ so that we may know the things graced to us,⁵⁴ **2:13** things which also we speak, not by means of reasonings taught from human wisdom but by means of reasonings taught from the Spirit as we explain spiritual things to those who are spiritual.⁵⁵ **2:14** But a natural/unspiritual man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to him. And he is unable to grasp them because they are judged spiritually.⁵⁶ **2:15** However, the spiritual man properly judges all things, while he himself is judged by no one.⁵⁷

2:16 For who knows the mind of the Lord? Who will instruct Him <cf. Isaiah 40:13>?⁵⁸

But we have the mind of the Messiah.⁵⁹

3:1 As for me, brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual men but as fleshly men, as infants in the Messiah.⁶⁰ **3:2** I gave you milk to drink, not food, because of your limited ability then. Besides which, you are now still unable.⁶¹ **3:3** You are still fleshly, because, in so far as there is envy and rivalry among you, are you not fleshly and conducting yourselves according to man?⁶² **3:4** For when someone says, "I am with Paul," and another, "I am with Apollos," are you not fleshly?⁶³

3:5 What then is Apollos, and what is Paul? Servants through whom you have believed, even to each person as the Lord has given.⁶⁴ **3:6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.⁶⁵ **3:7** Consequently, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth *is everything*.⁶⁶ **3:8** Now, he who plants and he who waters are one.⁶⁷ Yet, each one will receive his own wage according to his own labor,⁶⁸ **3:9** because we are God's co-workers. You are God's field, God's building.⁶⁹

3:10 According to God's grace that was given to me,⁷⁰ I laid a foundation as a wise expert builder,⁷¹ and another is building on it.⁷² However, let each one beware of how he builds on it,⁷³ **3:11** because no one should lay a foundation other than the one that is valid, which is Jesus the Messiah.⁷⁴ **3:12** And if someone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw,⁷⁵ **3:13** each person's work will become evident, for the day will make it clear,

because it will be revealed by means of fire. And the fire itself will make obvious what sort of work has belonged to each person.⁷⁶ 3:14 If someone's work which he has built on it remains, then he will receive a wage.⁷⁷ 3:15 If someone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss. Now, will he himself be saved? Well, it would be in this manner as through fire.⁷⁸

3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple, and God's Spirit dwells in you?⁷⁹ 3:17 If someone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, because God's temple is set apart, which is what you are.⁸⁰

3:18 Let no one deceive himself. If someone appears to be wise among you in this age, let him become a moron, in order that he may be wise.⁸¹ 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolish before God, because it was written,

The one who traps the wise in their craftiness <Job 5:13>.⁸²

3:20 And, in addition,

The Lord understands the reasonings of the wise, that they are empty <Psalm 94:11>.⁸³

3:21 Therefore let no one boast in men.⁸⁴ For everything is linked to you, 3:22 whether Paul, or Apollos, or Kephas, whether the present world, or life, or death, whether things present or things to come. All things are linked to you.⁸⁵ 3:23 And you are linked to the Messiah, and the Messiah is linked to God.⁸⁶

4:1 As a result, let someone consider us as the Messiah's subordinate assistants and managers of the mysteries of God.⁸⁷ 4:2 In this regard, moreover, it is to be sought among the managers that each one be found trustworthy.⁸⁸ 4:3 However, it is of little or no importance to me that I be examined by you or by human judgment. In fact, I do not even examine myself.⁸⁹ 4:4 For I am aware of nothing against myself, but I have not been justified by this. Instead, he who examines me is the Lord.⁹⁰ 4:5 Therefore, do not judge someone before the time⁹¹—until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and manifest the intentions of hearts.⁹² And then each one's praise will come from God.⁹³

4:6 Now, brethren, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your sakes, in order that, in regard to us, you may learn that which is not beyond what has been written, so that no one of you may be conceited in favor of one against the other.⁹⁴ 4:7 For who would evaluate one of you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? And if you indeed received, why do you brag as though you did not receive?⁹⁵ 4:8 You already have eaten your fill; you have already become rich; independently of us you have become kings.⁹⁶ Indeed, I wish you were kings, so that we may also be kings with you.⁹⁷

4:9 For I think God has appointed us apostles last, as those sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the present realm, both to angels and to men.⁹⁸ 4:10 We are morons for the Messiah's sake, but you are wise in the Messiah. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honored, but we are dishonored.⁹⁹ 4:11 Up to the present hour, we are hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless.¹⁰⁰ 4:12 And we toil, while working with our own hands. While being insulted, we bless. While being persecuted, we endure.¹⁰¹ 4:13 While being slandered, we encourage. We have become as the refuse of the present realm, the dregs of everyone up until this point.¹⁰²

4:14 I am not writing these things to make you ashamed, but to warn you as my beloved children.¹⁰³ 4:15 For if you have countless teachers in the Messiah, nevertheless you do not have many fathers, because, in the Messiah Jesus, I gave birth to you through the good news.¹⁰⁴ 4:16 Therefore, I encourage you, become my imitators.¹⁰⁵ 4:17 For this reason, I sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways, which are in the Messiah, just as I teach everywhere in every gathering.¹⁰⁶

4:18 Now some have become conceited, as though I were not coming to you.¹⁰⁷ **4:19** But I will come to you soon, if the Lord is willing, and I will know not the reasoning of those who have become conceited, but their effectiveness.¹⁰⁸ **4:20** For the Kingdom of God does not exist by means of reasoning but by means of effectiveness.¹⁰⁹

4:21 What is your desire? That I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness.¹¹⁰ **5:1** Sexual immorality between unmarried people (πορνεία)¹¹¹ among you is being heard everywhere, and sexual immorality between unmarried people (πορνεία) of such a kind that does not exist even among Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.¹¹²

5:2 And you have become proud and not mourned instead, so that the one who practices this deed is "removed from your midst."¹¹³ **5:3** As for me, while, I am, on the one hand, absent in body but, on the other hand, present in spirit, I have already reached a decision, as though I were present, about the one who is thus doing this.¹¹⁴ **5:4** When you are gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and with my spirit, along with the effectiveness of our Lord Jesus,¹¹⁵ **5:5** you should hand over such a one to the adversary for the "destruction of his flesh," in order that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.¹¹⁶

5:6 Your bragging is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole lump of dough?¹¹⁷ **5:7** Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new lump of dough, just as you are without yeast.¹¹⁸ For, indeed, our Passover lamb, the Messiah, was slaughtered,¹¹⁹ **5:8** so that we may celebrate the feast, not with old yeast, i.e., not with the yeast of evil and wickedness (κακίας καὶ πονηρίας), but with the unleavened bread of a single-minded commitment and truth (εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας).¹²⁰

5:9 I wrote to you in my letter not to get tangled up with unmarried people who engage in sexual immorality (πόρνοις)¹²¹—**5:10** certainly not at all with the unmarried people who engage in sexual immorality of this present realm's system (τοῖς πόρνοις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου)—neither with those who act beyond proper boundaries, nor with those who live by their insatiable desires, nor with idolaters, since, therefore, you were obligated to come out of the present realm's system.¹²² **5:11** And now I have written to you not to get tangled up with someone if he is a so-called brother—¹²³ whether an unmarried person of sexual immorality (πόρνος), a person who acts beyond proper boundaries, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or someone who lives by his insatiable desires—and not to eat with such a one.¹²⁴

5:12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Should you not judge those who are inside?¹²⁵ **5:13** But God will judge those who are outside.¹²⁶

Remove the evil person from among yourselves <Deuteronomy 13:5>.¹²⁷

6:1 Does anyone of you really think that it is appropriate, when he has a complaint against another person, to solicit a legal decision from the unjustified and not from the ones who are set apart.¹²⁸ **6:2** Or do you not recognize that set apart ones will provide legal decisions for the world?¹²⁹ So, if the world is judged in association with you, are you not those who are competent for the smallest legal cases?¹³⁰

6:3 Do you not recognize that we will provide legal decisions for messages? Then how much more things that pertain to daily life?¹³¹ **6:4** Therefore, if you have disputes regarding issues of daily life, do you appoint as judges these people who have no merit within the gathering?¹³² **6:5** I say this to your shame.¹³³ Is there not one wise person among you who will be able to make a decision between someone and his brother?¹³⁴ **6:6** But brother goes to court against brother and this before unbelievers.¹³⁵

6:7 Therefore, it is already a complete failure for you, because you have brought lawsuits against one another.¹³⁶ Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be swindled?¹³⁷ 6:8 But you are doing the wronging and swindling, and this to brothers.¹³⁸

6:9 Or do you not know that those who do wrong will not come into possession of the Kingdom of God?¹³⁹ Do not deceive yourselves. Neither the sexually immoral (πόρνοι), nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who give in to homosexuality, nor those who pursue homosexuality,¹⁴⁰ 6:10 nor thieves, those who act beyond appropriate boundaries, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor those who live by their insatiable desires will obtain possession of the Kingdom of God.¹⁴¹ 6:11 And some of you were these kinds of people. But you were washed. But you were set apart. But you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus the Messiah and by means of the Spirit of our God.¹⁴²

6:12 All things are permissible for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are permissible, but I will not be dominated by anything.¹⁴³ 6:13 Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food. But God will do away with both of them.¹⁴⁴ However, the body is not for sexual immorality (τῇ πορνείᾳ), but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.¹⁴⁵ 6:14 Now, God both raised the Lord and will raise us up through His power.¹⁴⁶

6:15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of the Messiah? Therefore, shall I remove the members of the Messiah and make them members of a prostitute (πόρνης)? May it never be.¹⁴⁷ 6:16 Or do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her, for it says,

The two shall become one flesh <Genesis 2:24>.¹⁴⁸

6:17 And he who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with him.¹⁴⁹

6:18 Flee sexual immorality (τὴν πορνείαν). Every sin (πᾶν ἁμάρτημα) that a man commits involves moving away from his body. Nevertheless, he who commits sexual immorality (ὁ δὲ πορνεύων) sins (ἁμαρτάνει) towards his own body.¹⁵⁰ 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit in you, whom you have from God, and you do not belong to yourselves?¹⁵¹ 6:20 You were bought with something valuable.¹⁵² Therefore glorify God by means of your body.¹⁵³

7:1 Now concerning the things which you wrote, is it good for a man not to “touch” his wife?¹⁵⁴ 7:2 Well, on account of the existence of instances of sexual immorality (διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας), let each man “have” his wife, and let each woman “have” her own husband.¹⁵⁵ 7:3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise let the wife fulfill her duty to her husband.¹⁵⁶ 7:4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does, and, likewise, the husband does not also have authority over his body, but the wife does.¹⁵⁷ 7:5 Do not deprive each other, except for a time by mutual consent, so that you may devote yourself to prayer and return to your previous state, in order that the adversary not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.¹⁵⁸ 7:6 I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.¹⁵⁹

7:7 And I wish that everyone were as I am, but each one has his own gift from God—one in one way, one in another.¹⁶⁰ 7:8 And I am speaking to the unmarried and to widows, in that it is good for them if they remain as I also am.¹⁶¹ 7:9 But if they cannot control themselves, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn.¹⁶²

7:10 Nevertheless, I command those who have married (not I but the Lord) that a wife not be separated from her husband.¹⁶³ 7:11 And if she indeed is separated, let her remain unmarried, or let her be reconciled to her husband. Thus, neither the husband nor the wife should be abandoned.¹⁶⁴

7:12 And to the rest I say (not the Lord), if a certain brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he should not abandon her.¹⁶⁵ 7:13 And for a wife, if a certain one has an

unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she should not abandon him.¹⁶⁶ **7:14** For the unbelieving husband has been set apart for divine purposes by means of his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been set apart for divine purposes by means of the brother.¹⁶⁷ Otherwise, you see, your children are “unclean,” but now they are set apart.¹⁶⁸

7:15 But if the unbelieving one leaves, let him/her leave. The brother or sister has not been bound as a slave in such cases, but God has called us in the context of shalom.¹⁶⁹ **7:16** For how do you know, wife, if you will save your husband, or how do you know, husband, if you will save your wife?¹⁷⁰

7:17 In general, as the Lord has distributed to each person, just as God has called each person, in this manner let him live.¹⁷¹ And this is how I give instructions in all the gatherings.¹⁷² **7:18** If someone was called while circumcised, let him not become uncircumcised. If someone has been called in a state of uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised. **7:19** Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.¹⁷³

7:20 Let everyone remain in this—in the calling in which he was called.¹⁷⁴ **7:21** Were you called as a slave? Let it not be of concern to you. Nevertheless, if you indeed can become free, take advantage of it.¹⁷⁵ **7:22** For the one who, as a slave was called by means of the Lord, is the Lord's freedman. Likewise, the one who, as a freedman was called, is the Lord's slave.¹⁷⁶ **7:23** You were bought with something valuable. Do not become slaves of men.¹⁷⁷ **7:24** Brethren, let everyone remain in this with God—in that in which he was called.¹⁷⁸

7:25 Now, concerning young women of marriageable age, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as a believer, having been shown mercy by the Lord.¹⁷⁹ **7:26** Therefore, I think this to be good on account of the present distress, that it is good for a man to be thus¹⁸⁰—**7:27** you have been bound to a wife, do not seek being set free. You have been set free from your wife, do not seek a wife. **7:28** But if, indeed, you marry, you are not sinning (οὐχ ἥμαρτες). And if a young woman of marriageable age marries, she is not sinning (οὐχ ἥμαρτεν). But those who are such will experience affliction with respect to life here on earth, and I would like to spare you.¹⁸¹

7:29 And I say this, brethren, the season has been shortened.¹⁸² From now on, indeed, those who have wives may be as those who do have not,¹⁸³ **7:30** and those who weep may be as those who do not weep, and those who rejoice as those who do not rejoice, and those who buy as those who do not possess anything,¹⁸⁴ **7:31** and those who use the present realm as those who do not make full use of it, for the way of life of this present realm is passing away.¹⁸⁵

7:32 And I want you to be free from care.¹⁸⁶ The one who is unmarried cares about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. **7:33** But the one who is married cares about the things of the present realm, how he may please his wife, **7:34** and his attention is divided. And the unmarried woman and the young woman of marriageable age cares about the things of the Lord, in order that she may be set apart in both body and spirit. But she who has gotten married cares about the things of the present realm, how she may please her husband. **7:35** But I say this to your own benefit, not to impose restrictions on you but for what is good and that you may be undistractedly in constant service to the Lord.¹⁸⁷

7:36 But if anyone thinks he is behaving dishonorably toward his young woman of marriageable age [fiancée?] [daughter?], if she is past her prime [if his passions are strong?], and thus he [she?] is obligated to become [her husband?] [someone's wife?], let him do what he desires. He is not sinning (οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει). Let them get married.¹⁸⁸ **7:37** And he who stands firm in his heart, while not having an obligation, but he has authority over his own will, and he has decided this in his own heart—to keep his own young woman of marriageable age [fiancée?] [daughter?], he will do well.¹⁸⁹ **7:38** Therefore, indeed, the one who marries [gives in marriage?] his own young woman of marriageable age [the one who marries his own fiancée?] [the one who gives in marriage his daughter?] does well, and the one who does not marry her [does not give her in marriage] will do better.¹⁹⁰

7:39 A wife is bound for as long a time as her husband is living. But if her husband falls asleep, she is free to marry whom she wants, only in the Lord.¹⁹¹ **7:40** But she is happier, according to my opinion, if she remains as she is. And I think I also have the Spirit of God.¹⁹²

8:1 Now, concerning things that have been sacrificed to pagan gods.¹⁹³ “We know that everyone has knowledge.” Knowledge results in pride, but love builds people up.¹⁹⁴ **8:2** If someone thinks he has come to know something, he has not yet come to know as it is necessary to know.¹⁹⁵ **8:3** But if someone loves God, he is known by Him.¹⁹⁶

8:4 Therefore, concerning eating food that has been sacrificed to pagan gods. We know that there is no god in the created reality, and that there is no God except the One.¹⁹⁷ **8:5** For if, indeed, there are things which are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are actually many “gods” and many “lords,”¹⁹⁸ **8:6** nevertheless, for us there is the one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him.¹⁹⁹ And there is one Lord, Jesus the Messiah, in light of whom are all things, and we exist in light of him.²⁰⁰

8:7 But not all have such understanding.²⁰¹ And some, through being previously accustomed to a pagan god, eat as if it is food that has been sacrificed to a pagan god, and their understanding becomes contaminated, because it is weak.²⁰²

8:8 However, food will not present us to God. We are neither deficient if we do not eat. Nor are we better off if we do eat.²⁰³ **8:9** But be careful lest somehow this right of yours becomes for the weak a stone which makes them trip.²⁰⁴ **8:10** For if someone sees you, who has knowledge, dining in a pagan god’s temple, will not his understanding, because he is weak, be built up towards eating food which has been sacrificed to pagan gods.²⁰⁵ **8:11** Then, by means of your understanding, the one who is weak is destroyed, the brother on account of whom the Messiah died.²⁰⁶ **8:12** And, thus, by sinning against the brothers and assaulting their weak understanding, you are sinning against the Messiah.²⁰⁷ **8:13** Indeed, if food brings about the downfall of my brother, I will in no way eat meat into the age, so that I do not bring about the downfall of my brother.²⁰⁸ **9:1** I am not free.

Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?²⁰⁹ **9:2** If I am not an apostle to others, nevertheless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.²¹⁰

9:3 My defense to those who question me is this²¹¹—**9:4** do we not have the right to eat and drink?²¹² **9:5** Do we not have the right to bring along a sister as a wife as even the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Kephass?²¹³ **9:6** Or do I only and Barnabas not have the right not to work?²¹⁴ **9:7** Who at any time serves as a soldier by paying his own expenses? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Or who shepherds sheep and does not eat from the milk of the sheep?²¹⁵

9:8 I am not speaking these things strictly according to man, am I? Or, indeed, does not the Torah speak of these things?²¹⁶ **9:9** Because in the Mosaic Covenant it has been written,

You shall not muzzle the ox while it is threshing <Deuteronomy 25:4>.

Is it about oxen that God is mostly concerned?²¹⁷ **9:10** Or is it speaking certainly in our interest? For it was written for us that the one who plows must plow in hope, and the one who threshes must thresh in hope of sharing the crop.²¹⁸

9:11 If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it a big deal if we reap material things from you?²¹⁹ **9:12** If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more?²²⁰ But we have not exercised this right. Instead, we endure all things, in order that we may not cause any hindrance to the good news of the Messiah.²²¹

9:13 Do you not know that those who perform the temple services eat the things of the temple, i.e., that those who apply themselves at the altar share in the altar?²²² **9:14** Thus, also, the Lord commanded those who proclaim the good news to obtain their living from the good news.²²³ **9:15** However, I have not made use of any of these things. And I did not write these things so that it may be thus with me.²²⁴ For it is better for me rather to die than someone render my boast empty.²²⁵

9:16 For if I proclaim the good message, I have nothing to brag about, because the necessity imposes itself upon me. For may I be damned if I do not proclaim the good news.²²⁶ **9:17** Now, if I do this willingly, I have a wage. But if I do it against my will, I have been entrusted with the responsibility of managing this role.²²⁷ **9:18** Therefore, what is my wage? That, when I proclaim the good news, I may offer the good news free of charge, in order that I not make full use of my right within the good news.²²⁸

9:19 Now, while being free from everyone, I have enslaved myself to everyone, in order that I may gain many more of them.²²⁹ **9:20** Indeed, I have become like a Jew to Jews, so that I may gain Jews. I have become like one under the Covenant to those who are under the Covenant, even though I myself am not under the Covenant, so that I may gain those who are under the Covenant.²³⁰ **9:21** I have become like one who is outside the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Covenant to those who are outside the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Covenant, while I am not outside God's jurisdiction but inside the Messiah's jurisdiction, in order that I may gain those who are outside the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Covenant.²³¹ **9:22** I became weak to those who are weak, so that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that I may save at least some of them.²³² **9:23** And I do everything because of the good news, in order that I may become a fellow participant in it.²³³

9:24 Do you not know that those who run in the stadium, on the one hand, all run. However, on the other hand, only one receives the trophy? Run in such a way that you win.²³⁴ **9:25** And each one who engages in the contest exercises self-control in all respects. Therefore, on the one hand, they engage in it so that they may receive a perishable wreath. However, on the other hand, we engage in it for an imperishable wreath.²³⁵ **9:26** Hence, I run in such a way as not as one who has no fixed goal. I box in such a way as not beating the air.²³⁶ **9:27** But I treat my body roughly, and I bring it under my control, lest, somehow after proclaiming the message to others, I myself would be unqualified.²³⁷

10:1 Now I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,²³⁸ **10:2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,²³⁹ **10:3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **10:4** and all drank the same spiritual drink,²⁴⁰ because they were drinking from the spiritual rock that was following them, and the rock was the Messiah.²⁴¹ **10:5** Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, because they were killed in the wilderness.²⁴²

10:6 And these things became examples for us, so that we should not strongly desire evil things as they indeed strongly desired.²⁴³ **10:7** And do not be worshipers of idols as some of them were,²⁴⁴ as it is written,

The people sat down to eat and drink, and they stood up to amuse themselves <Exodus 32:6>.²⁴⁵

10:8 In addition, let us not prostitute ourselves (πορνεύωμεν) as some of them committed sexual immorality (ἐπόρνευσαν), and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.²⁴⁶ **10:9** And let us not test (ἐκπειράζωμεν) the "Messiah" as some of them tested him, and they were destroyed by the snakes.²⁴⁷ **10:10** And do not grumble (γογγύζετε) as some of them grumbled, so that they were destroyed by the destroyer.²⁴⁸ **10:11** Consequently, these things happened to them by way of

example, and they were written for our instruction, for whom the goals of the ages (τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων) have arrived.²⁴⁹

10:12 Therefore, let him who thinks he stands watch out lest he fall.²⁵⁰ **10:13** No test has seized you except what is common to humanity,²⁵¹ and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able, but, along with the test, He will indeed produce the outcome, so that you will be able to endure it.²⁵²

10:14 Therefore, ones whom I love, flee from worshiping idols.²⁵³ **10:15** I am speaking as to the wise.²⁵⁴ Discern what I am saying.²⁵⁵ **10:16** As to the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the sharing in the blood of the Messiah? As for the bread which we break, is it not the sharing in the body of the Messiah?²⁵⁶ **10:17** Because there is one bread, we, the many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.²⁵⁷

10:18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not the ones who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?²⁵⁸ **10:19** Therefore, what am I saying? That meat offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?²⁵⁹ **10:20** Yet, that which they sacrifice, they sacrifice to second-rate deities and not to God, and I do not want you to become sharers in second-rate deities.²⁶⁰

10:21 You cannot drink the Lord's cup and the cup of second-rate deities. You cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of second-rate deities.²⁶¹ **10:22** Or shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not more powerful than He is, are we?²⁶²

10:23 All things are permissible, but not all things are morally helpful. All things are permissible, but not all things make for moral improvement.²⁶³ **10:24** Let no one seek what is his but that which belongs to another.²⁶⁴ **10:25** Because of your understanding, eat everything that is being sold in the meat market without asking questions,²⁶⁵

10:26 for the earth and its fullness belong to the Lord <Psalm 24:1>.²⁶⁶

10:27 If someone from the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you wish to go, because of your understanding, eat everything that is placed before you without asking questions.²⁶⁷ **10:28** However, if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," do not eat on account of the one who informed you and because of understanding.²⁶⁸ **10:29** Now, I am not speaking of his own understanding but of that of the other one.²⁶⁹ So why is my freedom decided by another's understanding,²⁷⁰ **10:30** and, if I partake on the basis of grace, why am I denounced concerning that for which I give thanks?²⁷¹

10:31 The upshot of all this is, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.²⁷² **10:32** Cause no damage to the Jews, the Greeks, and the gathering of God,²⁷³ **10:33** just as, indeed, I please everyone with everything I do, not seeking my own benefit, but that of the many in order that they may be saved.²⁷⁴

11:1 Be imitators of me just as I also am of the Messiah.²⁷⁵ **11:2** I do praise you that you have remembered all things of mine.²⁷⁶ Indeed, just as I delivered to you, you are holding on to the content of the instructions handed down to me.²⁷⁷

11:3 And I want you to know that the Messiah is the head of every husband, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of the Messiah.²⁷⁸ **11:4** Every husband, while he is praying or speaking as a prophet, if he has something on his head (κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων) dishonors his "head."²⁷⁹ **11:5** And every wife, while she is praying or speaking as a prophet on behalf of God with an uncovered head (ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ), dishonors her "head," because she is one and the same as a woman whose head has been shaved (τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ).²⁸⁰ **11:6** If a wife does not have her head covered, let her also shear herself.²⁸¹ But since it is socially unacceptable for a wife to shear herself or shave herself, then let her cover her head.²⁸²

11:7 On the one hand, a husband-man is not obligated to cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God. On the other hand, the wife-woman is the glory of the husband-man,²⁸³ 11:8 because husband-man was not from the wife-woman, but the wife-woman was from husband-man.²⁸⁴ 11:9 In addition, the husband-man was not created on account of the wife-woman, but the wife-woman was created on account of the husband-man.²⁸⁵ 11:10 Therefore, the wife is obligated to have something that demonstrates her authority on her head on account of the *angeloi*.²⁸⁶

11:11 Nevertheless, neither is a wife independent of her husband, nor is a husband independent of his wife in the Lord.²⁸⁷ 11:12 because just as the wife was from the man, thus also the husband exists with a view to his wife. And all things are from God.²⁸⁸

11:13 Judge among you for yourselves. Is it appropriate for a wife, whose head is uncovered, to pray to God?²⁸⁹ 11:14 And does not the natural course of things itself teach you that? On the one hand, a husband-man is a disgrace to himself if he wears long hair,²⁹⁰ 11:15 and, on the other hand, a wife-woman honors herself if she wears long hair, because long hair has been given to her instead of a covering?²⁹¹ 11:16 However, if anyone thinks it is appropriate to be a maverick, we have no other practice, and neither do the groups that belong to God.²⁹²

11:17 Now, while commanding this, I do not praise you, because you are coming together, not for the better, but for the worse.²⁹³ 11:18 For, in the first place, I hear that, when you come together by means of the gathering, there exist divisions amongst you. And, in part, I believe it.²⁹⁴ 11:19 For there must indeed be factions among you, in order that those who demonstrate genuine evidence may become clearly seen among you.²⁹⁵

11:20 Therefore, when you come together, it is not to eat the Lord's supper for the same purpose.²⁹⁶ 11:21 For, when you eat, each one goes ahead to have his own meal,²⁹⁷ and there is the one who is hungry, and there is the one who is drunk.²⁹⁸ 11:22 What! Do you not have houses for eating and drinking? Or do you consider of little value God's gathering and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? In this I do not praise you you.²⁹⁹

11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread,³⁰⁰ 11:24 and after giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."³⁰¹ 11:25 Likewise, also he took the cup after they ate and said, "This cup is the New Covenant because of my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."³⁰² 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.³⁰³

11:27 Consequently, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in a dishonorable manner shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.³⁰⁴ 11:28 But let a man evaluate himself, and, in this way, let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.³⁰⁵ 11:29 But he who eats and drinks eats and drinks condemnation to himself, if he does not evaluate the body correctly.³⁰⁶ 11:30 Because of this, many of you are weak and sick, and you fit the description of those who are sleeping.³⁰⁷

11:31 However, if we evaluate ourselves correctly, we are not condemned.³⁰⁸ 11:32 Instead, even though we will be judged, we are instructed by the Lord, so that we are not condemned along with the world.³⁰⁹ 11:33 Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.³¹⁰ 11:34 If someone is hungry, let him eat in his own house, so that you do not come together for judgment [in a condemnatory fashion].³¹¹

And as for the remaining things, I will provide instructions when I come.³¹²

12:1 Brothers, I do not want you to lack understanding concerning spiritual things.³¹³ 12:2 You know that, when you were a Gentile people, however you were being led along, you were were being led toward speechless idols.³¹⁴ 12:3 Therefore, I make known to you that no one, when

speaking by means of the Spirit of God, says, "Jesus is damned." And no one is able to say, "Jesus is Lord" except by means of the Holy Spirit.³¹⁵

12:4 In addition, there are varieties of things that are graciously bestowed, but the same Spirit.³¹⁶

12:5 And there are varieties of serving, but the same Lord.³¹⁷ 12:6 And there are varieties of activities, but the same God, who works all things in everyone.³¹⁸

12:7 Now, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for that which is beneficial.³¹⁹ 12:8 For, on the one hand, to one is given the message of wisdom through the Spirit, and, on the other hand, to another is given the message of knowledge according to the same Spirit.³²⁰ 12:9 To a different person is given belief by the same Spirit,³²¹ to another the bestowings of healings by the one Spirit,³²² 12:10 to another the activities of powerful things,³²³ to another prophetic sayings,³²⁴ to another the ability to distinguish between spirits,³²⁵ to a different person various kinds of languages,³²⁶ while to another the translation of languages.³²⁷ 12:11 The one and the same Spirit creates all these things as He allots to each individual just as He intends.³²⁸

12:12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, thus also is the Messiah.³²⁹ 12:13 As a result, also, by one Spirit, we all were baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or freemen, and we all were made to drink of one Spirit.³³⁰ 12:14 For, certainly, the body is not one member but many.

12:15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason a part of the body.³³¹ 12:16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason a part of the body.³³² 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where would be the sense of smell?³³³ 12:18 But, as it is, God has placed the members, each one of them in the body just as He desired.³³⁴

12:19 Therefore, if all of them were one member, where would be the body?³³⁵ 12:20 Instead, on the one hand, there are many members, while, on the other hand, there is one body.³³⁶ 12:21 Consequently, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you." Nor again can the head say to the feet, "I do not need you."³³⁷ 12:22 Rather, much more, the members that seem to be less important are necessary.³³⁸ 12:23 And to those members of the body that we think are less honorable we grant more abundant honor, and our unrepresentable members have more abundant presentability,³³⁹ 12:24 whereas our more representable members have no need of this.³⁴⁰

But God has composed the body so as to give more abundant honor to the member that is inferior,³⁴¹ 12:25 so that there may not be dissension within the body. Instead, the members may have the same care for one another.³⁴² 12:26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.³⁴³

12:27 Now, you are the body of the Messiah and members among members.³⁴⁴ 12:28 And God has placed them in the gathering—first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then powerful deeds, then gifts of healings, helpful deeds, guides, kinds of languages.³⁴⁵ 12:29 Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all do powerful deeds, do they?³⁴⁶ 12:30 Not all have gifts of healings, do they? Not all speak with languages, do they? Not all translate these languages, do they?³⁴⁷ 12:31 Nevertheless, be committed to the greater gifts.³⁴⁸

And I will show you a still more important way.³⁴⁹ 13:1 If I speak with the languages of men and *angeloi*, but I do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.³⁵⁰ 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophetic sayings and I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all belief so as to move mountains, but I do not have love, I am nothing.³⁵¹ 13:3 And if I give away all my possessions, and if I give up my body to brag about it, but I do not have love, I accomplish nothing.³⁵²

13:4 Love is patient. Love is kind. It is not envious. Love does not heap praise upon itself. It does not have an exaggerated self-conception.³⁵³ **13:5** It does not behave dishonorably. It does not seek its own things. It is not irritated in a destructive way. It does not dwell on evil.³⁵⁴ **13:6** It does not rejoice over unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.³⁵⁵ **13:7** It endures all things. It believes all things. It eagerly expects all things. It endures all things.³⁵⁶ **13:8** Love never comes to an end.³⁵⁷

In contrast, whether we are talking about prophetic utterances, they will cease, or languages, they will stop, or knowledge, it will cease,³⁵⁸ **13:9** because we know in part, and we utter prophetic sayings in part.³⁵⁹ **13:10** Yet, when the completion of the goal (τὸ τέλειον) occurs, the partial will cease.³⁶⁰

13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, thought as a child, reasoned as a child. But when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child.³⁶¹ **13:12** Now we see indirectly in a mirror, but then face to face. Currently, I know in part, but, then, I will know fully just as I indeed have been known.³⁶² **13:13** Indeed, now abide belief, hope, love—these three things, and the greatest of these is love.³⁶³

14:1 Pursue love, and be committed to spiritual things, especially that you may utter prophetic sayings.³⁶⁴ **14:2** For he who speaks in a language is not speaking to men but to God, because no one understands him. Instead, he is speaking mysteries by means of the Spirit.³⁶⁵ **14:3** In contrast, he who utters prophetic sayings to men speaks edification, encouragement, and comfort.³⁶⁶ **14:4** He who speaks with a language builds himself up, but he who utters prophetic sayings builds up the gathering.³⁶⁷

14:5 Now, I do desire that all of you speak with languages, but even more that you utter prophetic sayings. Indeed, he who utters prophetic sayings is greater than he who speaks with languages, unless he were to explain what he is saying, so that the gathering may receive edification.³⁶⁸ **14:6** And, brothers, if now I come to you speaking with languages, what value will I be to you if I do not speak to you either by way of revelation, or knowledge, or a prophetic saying, or teaching?³⁶⁹

14:7 Likewise, when inanimate things make a sound, whether a flute or a lyre, if they make no distinction in their tones, how will what is being played by the flute or the lyre be understood?³⁷⁰ **14:8** If, for example, a trumpet makes a strange sound, who will prepare himself for battle?³⁷¹ **14:9** So also you who speak with a language, if you do not utter intelligible speech, how will that which is being spoken become known, because you will be speaking into the air.³⁷² **14:10** There are ever so many different sounds of languages in the world, and none is without meaning.³⁷³ **14:11** Consequently, if I do not grasp the meaning of the sound of a language, I will be a foreigner to the one speaking, and the one speaking will be a foreigner to me.³⁷⁴

14:12 Thus also you, because you are zealots of spiritual things, be committed to the edification of the gathering, in order that you may maximize your efforts.³⁷⁵ **14:13** Therefore, let him who speaks in a language pray that he may translate what he is saying,³⁷⁶ **14:14** because, if I pray in a language, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.³⁷⁷ **14:15** So what should I do? I should pray with my spirit, and I should also pray with my mind. I should sing with my spirit, and I should also sing with my mind.³⁷⁸ **14:16** Since if you give thanks and praises with your spirit, how will he who occupies the position of the unlearned say Amen to your thanks, because he does not know what you are saying?³⁷⁹ **14:17** On the one hand, you are thanking God well, but, on the other hand, the other person is not being built up.³⁸⁰

14:18 I thank God that I speak with languages more than all of you.³⁸¹ **14:19** However, in the gathering, I desire to speak five words with my mind, so that I may indeed instruct others, than countless words in a language.³⁸²

14:20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Instead, be children with respect to evil, while being adults in your thinking.³⁸³

14:21 In the Old Testament, it was written,

“I shall speak to this people by those who use strange languages and by the lips of foreigners, and yet they will not listen to Me,” says the Lord <Isaiah 28:11>.³⁸⁴

14:22 Consequently, languages are for a sign—not to believers but to unbelievers, while uttering prophetic sayings is not for unbelievers but for believers.³⁸⁵

14:23 Therefore, if the whole gathering comes together at the same time, and everyone speaks in foreign languages, and those who are unlearned or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are crazy?³⁸⁶ **14:24** Instead, if all of you utter prophetic sayings, and a certain unbeliever or unlearned person comes in, he will be reproved by all of you. He will be called to account by all of you.³⁸⁷ **14:25** The hidden things of his heart will be exposed, and thus he will fall on his face and worship God, proclaiming, “God is truly in your midst.”³⁸⁸

14:26 Therefore, brothers, what is the right way? When you gather together, each one has a psalm, another has something to teach, another has a revelation, another has a foreign language, and another has a translation. Let all things happen for the purpose of building up each other.³⁸⁹

14:27 If someone speaks in a foreign language, let it be by two or at the most three people, and each in turn. And let someone translate.³⁹⁰ **14:28** However, if there is no translator, let him remain silent in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God.³⁹¹ **14:29** And let two or three of those who utter prophetic sayings speak while the others are discerning.³⁹² **14:30** But if something is revealed to another who is seated, let the first be silent.³⁹³

14:31 For you are all capable of uttering prophetic sayings one at a time, so that all may learn and all may become persuaded.³⁹⁴ **14:32** Indeed, the spirits of those who utter prophetic sayings are subject to those who utter prophetic sayings.³⁹⁵ **14:33** Besides, God is not a God of disorder but of order.³⁹⁶

As in all the gatherings of those who have been set apart,³⁹⁷ **14:34** let the wives be silent in the assemblies, because it is not permitted for them to speak. Instead, let them show respect, just as the Torah says.³⁹⁸ **14:35** But if they desire to learn something, let them inquire of their own husbands at home, for it is morally unacceptable for a wife to be talking in the midst of the gathering.³⁹⁹

14:36 Or has the message of God come forth from you, or has it come to you alone?⁴⁰⁰ **14:37** If someone thinks himself to be a person who utters prophetic saying or to be spiritual, let him understand that the things I am writing to you are an instruction of the Lord.⁴⁰¹ **14:38** And if someone does not acknowledge this, he is not acknowledged.⁴⁰² **14:39** Therefore, my brothers, pursue uttering prophetic sayings, and do not forbid people to speak in foreign languages.⁴⁰³ **14:40** Indeed, let all things happen in an appropriate way and in an orderly way.⁴⁰⁴

15:1 Now, I make known to you, brothers, the good news that I proclaimed to you, that you also received, on the basis of which also you have stood,⁴⁰⁵ **15:2** through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to that message which I proclaimed to you, unless you believed in vain.⁴⁰⁶ **15:3** For I delivered to you of first importance what I in turn had received, that the Messiah died for our sins (ὕπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν) according to the scriptures,⁴⁰⁷ **15:4** and that he was buried, and that he was raised from the dead on the third day according to the scriptures,⁴⁰⁸ **15:5** and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve.⁴⁰⁹ **15:6** Then he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at one time, of whom most remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.⁴¹⁰ **15:7** Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,⁴¹¹ **15:8** and last of all, as though to a miscarriage, he appeared even to me.⁴¹²

15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the gathering of God.⁴¹³ 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace towards me has not been for nothing. Instead, I have toiled more than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God with me.⁴¹⁴ 15:11 Therefore, whether I or those others, thus we proclaim, and thus you believed.⁴¹⁵

15:12 If the Messiah is being proclaimed as having been raised from the dead, how are some of you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?⁴¹⁶ 15:13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even the Messiah was raised from the dead.⁴¹⁷ 15:14 And if the Messiah was not raised from the dead, then our proclaiming it is vacuous, and your belief is vacuous.⁴¹⁸ 15:15 In addition, we are found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised from the dead the Messiah, whom He did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised.⁴¹⁹ 15:16 If the dead are not raised, not even the Messiah has been raised.⁴²⁰ 15:17 And if the Messiah has not been raised, your belief is useless. You are still in your sins (ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν).⁴²¹ 15:18 Therefore, indeed, those who have fallen asleep in the Messiah are lost forever (οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο).⁴²² 15:19 If we have hoped in the Messiah in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.⁴²³

15:20 However, the Messiah was raised from the dead—the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.⁴²⁴ 15:21 For since death is through a man, indeed resurrection from the dead is through a man.⁴²⁵ 15:22 For just as all men die in Adam, thus also all men will be made alive in the Messiah,⁴²⁶ 15:23 and each in his own turn—the first fruits, i.e., the Messiah, then those who belong to the Messiah at his grand appearance (ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ).⁴²⁷

15:24 Then comes the end when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when He abolishes all rule, and all authority and power.⁴²⁸ 15:25 For He must reign until He places all of his enemies under his feet.⁴²⁹

15:26 The last enemy being destroyed is death,⁴³⁰

15:27 for he puts all things in subjection under his feet <Psalm 8:6>.⁴³¹

When it says, “All things have been put in subjection,” it is evident that this means except the One who puts all things in subjection to him.⁴³² 15:28 And when all things have been put in subjection to him, then also the Son himself will be in subjection to Him who put all things in subjection to him, in order that God may be all things in all things.⁴³³

15:29 Otherwise, what will those who were baptized because of the dead do? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized because of them?⁴³⁴ 15:30 Why then are we in danger every hour?⁴³⁵ 15:31 On the basis of the boasting that I do in you, which boasting I have because of the Messiah Jesus our Lord, I die daily.⁴³⁶ 15:32 If from strictly human motives I fought with wild beasts in Ephesus, what did that profit me? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.”⁴³⁷ 15:33 Don’t be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”⁴³⁸ 15:34 Sober up for uprightness’ sake, and do not commit sin.⁴³⁹

Some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.⁴⁴⁰ 15:35 But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they appear?”⁴⁴¹ 15:36 Fool, that which you sow does not bring about life unless it dies.⁴⁴² 15:37 And that which you sow, you do not sow the “body” that it will become, but bare grain, perhaps of wheat or something else.⁴⁴³ 15:38 And God gives to it a “body” just as He desires, indeed to each of the seeds its own “body.”⁴⁴⁴

15:39 Not all organic material is the same organic material, but there is one of men, another organic material of animals, another organic material of birds, and another organic material of fish.⁴⁴⁵ 15:40 There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. Nevertheless, on the one hand, the greatness of the heavenly ones is one, and, on the other hand, that of the earthly ones is another.⁴⁴⁶

15:41 The brightness of the sun is one, the brightness of the moon is another, and the brightness of stars is a third, for star differs from star in brightness.⁴⁴⁷ 15:42 Thus, also, is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in a condition of decaying. It is raised in a condition of not decaying.⁴⁴⁸ 15:43 It is sown in a condition of lack of acclaim. It is raised in a condition of acclaim. It is sown in a condition of weakness. It is raised in a condition of power.⁴⁴⁹ 15:44 A natural body is sown. A spiritual body is raised. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one.⁴⁵⁰

15:45 Thus, it is also written,

The first man, Adam, came into existence as a living being <Genesis 2:7>.⁴⁵¹

The last Adam as a life-producing spirit.⁴⁵²

15:46 Nevertheless, the spiritual is not first, but the natural. Then the spiritual.⁴⁵³ 15:47 The first man was out of the earth—made of dirt. The second man out of heaven.⁴⁵⁴ 15:48 As was he who was made of dirt, so also are those who are made of dirt. And as is he who is heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.⁴⁵⁵ 15:49 And just as we have born the image of him who was made of dirt, we also will bear the image of him who is heavenly.⁴⁵⁶

15:50 This I say, brothers, that flesh and blood are not able to inherit the Kingdom of God, and that which is in the condition of decaying does not inherit the condition of not decaying (οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ).⁴⁵⁷ 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery. Not all of us will be put to sleep, but we shall all be changed (πάντες οὐ κοιμηθήσόμεθα πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα).⁴⁵⁸ 15:52 in a moment, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised in a condition of not decaying. **Indeed, we shall be changed** (καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα).⁴⁵⁹ 15:53 For it is necessary for that which is in the condition of decaying to put on that which is in the condition of not decaying (τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν) and that which is subject to death to put on that which is not subject to death (καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν).⁴⁶⁰

15:54 When that which is in the condition of decaying has put on that which is in the condition of not decaying (ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν) and that which is subject to death has put on that which is not subject to death (καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν), then will come about the statement that has been written,

Death is swallowed up in victory <Isaiah 25:8>.⁴⁶¹

15:55 Death, where is your victory? Death where is your goad <Hosea 13:14>?⁴⁶²

15:56 The goad of death is sin (ἡ ἁμαρτία), and the power of sin is the Covenant (ὁ νόμος).⁴⁶³ 15:57 But thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus the Messiah.⁴⁶⁴

15:58 Therefore, my brothers whom I love, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not worthless in the Lord.⁴⁶⁵ 16:1 And concerning the collection for those who are set apart, just as I commanded the gatherings in Galatia, you also do likewise.⁴⁶⁶ 16:2 Every Sabbath, each one of you should set aside for himself and save as much extra as he has gained, so that, when I come, the collections need not happen.⁴⁶⁷ 16:3 And when I arrive, I will send whomever you approve with letters to carry your gracious gift to Jerusalem.⁴⁶⁸ 16:4 And if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.⁴⁶⁹

16:5 And I will come to you whenever I pass through Macedonia, because I am passing through Macedonia.⁴⁷⁰ 16:6 And if it turns out, I will remain with you or even spend the winter with you, so that you may send me on my way wherever I go.⁴⁷¹ 16:7 For I do not want to see you now just in passing, because I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.⁴⁷² 16:8 But I will

remain in Ephesus until Pentecost,⁴⁷³ **16:9** because a large and active door has opened for me, and there are many who are opposing me.⁴⁷⁴

16:10 But if Timothy comes, be careful that he has no reason to be fearful among you, because he is doing the work of the Lord as I also am.⁴⁷⁵ **16:11** Therefore, let no one disrespect him. But send him on his way with shalom, so that he may come to me. For I am waiting for him with the brothers.⁴⁷⁶

16:12 Concerning our brother Apollos, I have greatly encouraged him, so that he may go to you with the brothers. However, he was not willing to come now. Instead, he will come as soon as he finds the opportunity.⁴⁷⁷

16:13 Remain alert. Stand firm in your belief. Be brave. Be strong.⁴⁷⁸ **16:14** Let all of you be in a condition of love.⁴⁷⁹

16:15 And I exhort you, brothers. You know Stephen's household, that they were the firstfruits in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to serve those who have been set apart,⁴⁸⁰ **16:16** so that you also should arrange yourselves under such as these and everyone who works and labors with them.⁴⁸¹ **16:17** And I rejoice in the appearing of Stephen, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, because they are supplying what is lacking on your part.⁴⁸² **16:18** For they refresh my spirit and yours. Therefore give recognition to such as these.⁴⁸³

16:19 The gatherings of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you warmly along with the gathering in their home.⁴⁸⁴ **16:20** All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.⁴⁸⁵

16:21 The greeting is with my own hand, Paul's.⁴⁸⁶ **16:22** If someone does not love the Lord, let him be damned. Our Lord, come!⁴⁸⁷ **16:23** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.⁴⁸⁸ **16:24** My love be with all of you in the Messiah Jesus.⁴⁸⁹

¹ Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφός – Sosthenes, along with Crispus, were leaders of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth. They both had converted to Christianity, and Sosthenes was beaten by the Jews in front of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, when the Jews had brought Paul before him and accused him of violating the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Acts 18:1-17). Sosthenes must have joined Paul on his third missionary journey so that now, two to five years later around the spring of A.D. 55 in Ephesus, Paul writes this letter to the Corinthians. It is interesting that Paul mentions only Sosthenes, because this makes for a different tone and flavor from 2 Corinthians, where Paul's co-author is Timothy. While 2 Corinthians is certainly one long defense of Paul's apostolic authority by Paul and Timothy, the latter being someone Paul considers a legitimate apostolic worker alongside him, 1 Corinthians is similarly a defense of his authority (cf. 9:3), as well as *the apostolic message and its ramifications and implications*, in the midst of addressing various issues within the Corinthians Christian community, so that Sosthenes, as a member of this community who is traveling with Paul, lends support to the importance of clearing up these issues. These are issues where the Corinthian Christians are simply not thinking through very well what the fact of Jesus as the crucified Messiah means in certain specific situations. Paul will begin with the problem of factions within the Corinthian Christian community and imply throughout the letter that this misunderstanding of the apostolic message and of him as a true apostle has led to their drawing incorrect conclusions about how to live their lives as Christians. Paul will eventually end up in Corinth during this trip, but before he does so, he will have written four letters to the Christian community in this city. 1st Corinthians is actually his second letter to them (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:9), and 2nd Corinthians is his fourth letter to them (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:3,4,9; 7:8,12). Unfortunately, we do not have the first and third letters that he wrote.

² τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὐσῇ ἐν Κορίνθῳ – “Church” has become such a hackneyed and pedestrian term in both the broader American culture and narrower Christian culture, that I am choosing to use a completely different word to translate ἐκκλησία. Thus, you see the phrase “the gathering of God” that also reflects the genitive of possession or even source of τοῦ θεοῦ. Paul is writing to the group of people who have been changed inwardly by God and are now believers in Jesus of Nazareth as the biblical Messiah, Son of God, and king of both Israel and the eternal Kingdom of God. Thus, these Christians belong to God as His chosen people—eternally speaking.

³ ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – Paul is referring to his Corinthian readers as people who, he hopes, have been changed inwardly and, thereby, become members of the group that are submitting themselves to Jesus' kingship currently and will do so later in the eternal Kingdom of God. They have been set apart and made special by God in their relationship of authentic belief in Jesus as the Messiah, a belief that issues from a changed heart.

⁴ κλητοῖς ἁγίοις – Just as God summoned Paul and changed him inwardly to be an “apostle” of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, so also He summoned and changed Paul's Corinthian readers to be both set apart from the rest of humanity and believers in Jesus as the Messiah. They are set apart with respect to their fundamental desire, which is no longer to rebel against God, but to be obedient to Him in the midst of their continued sinfulness. They are also set apart in their belief system, which is biblical instead of pagan and polytheistic.

⁵ σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν – God has set apart not only the Corinthian believers, but also all human beings who acknowledge the “name,” i.e., all that is involved with the person of Jesus as the Messiah as “Lord,” ruler, and king over the created reality as appointed by God, who has designated him the Anointed One by virtue of his being the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant and, therefore, the Son of God. Thus, Jesus is “Lord” of Paul, Sosthenes, the Corinthian believers, and all other believers throughout the human race. God has called all these believers to submit inwardly to Him, and they truly call on God to rescue them from His condemnation through Jesus' advocacy and to rule over them through Jesus in the eternal Kingdom of God.

⁶ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Paul wishes the Corinthian believers to continue to experience God's favorable purpose of bringing about the eternal realm of shalom, a wholesome and good life characterized by moral perfection for them. This comes from God as the ultimate source of all things, especially the good things of belief and the promise of eternal life, and Paul would have this grace and shalom come from Jesus as the Messiah, because he will be the very means for God to complete the process of giving full grace and eternal shalom to believers on the basis of his role as High Priest at the final judgment. In addition, God is the Father of believers as their source of existence and belief.

⁷ εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – ἐν = within the sphere and context of the Messiah Jesus, to those who are in association with Jesus the Messiah. Paul is grateful that God has given His grace, i.e., a gift, to the Corinthian Christians, within the sphere of the Messiah Jesus, which means that they are rightly related to Jesus and to God through the work of God's grace within them. And Paul goes on to state what this *charis* and gift is.

⁸ ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει – Paul had spent at least 18 months teaching the Corinthians the biblical message. Surely, he provided them from it as complete an understanding of God's project as an apostle could provide in that time. Paul is implying that what they first learned was enough to draw on to allow them to realize that the problem he is about to mention of their dividing themselves by following certain teachers is not a logical ramification of the biblical message.

In addition, he mentions that the message he presented to them is what has enriched them and therefore is the grace or

gift that God has given these Corinthian Christians as mentioned in v. 7. Cf. 1 Corinthians 14 regarding Paul's emphasis on intellectual understanding of the truth.

Paul likes to use terms such as "everything" to refer to knowledge and understanding of the Messiah. Cf. Colossians 1:19 where he uses the word "fullness" (τὸ πλήρωμα) to refer to a complete understanding of God's eternal purposes where the Messiah is at the center of these purposes.

⁹ καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν – Paul had spent enough time with the Corinthian Christians to see for himself the proof of God's using the message he was teaching in the process of causing them to become authentic believers, such things as belief in Jesus as the Messiah and love for his believers (cf. 1,2,3 John), as well as the gifts, i.e., the charismata (cf. v. 7 and chapter 12), that they experienced.

Nevertheless, he is going to mention several practical issues that they are misunderstanding in spite of how well he taught them. These are all good examples of how we sinful human beings can misapply the truth of the gospel, regardless of how well we have come to know it. This is why it is so important to continue learning the Bible and thinking through exactly what are its implications in our lives.

¹⁰ ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – God has given to these Corinthians whatever they need to aid them inwardly, especially the message that Paul taught them over the course of 18 months, in their journey of persevering in belief toward the goal of the eternal Kingdom of God. Indeed, this message also should provide them with how to think through what to do in specific situations in their lives such that their behavior would reflect the ideas that God has set forth in the biblical documents. This is while they eagerly await the second coming of Jesus to set up, first, the earthly Kingdom of Israel and, then, the eternal Kingdom of God. It seems that the Corinthians have felt that they were missing out on something that would make their Christian experience fuller and more complete. Paul says that this is not the case. They have all they need to survive the judgment, except obviously the perseverance of their belief in a crucified Messiah, which he is encouraging them to have.

He is also implying that Jesus alone as the one human being who is the Messiah and incarnate God is to be their focus, not other human beings, regardless of how authoritative they may be, such as Cephas (Peter) and himself as genuine apostles.

Uses of ἀπεκδέχομαι – eagerly await

Rom. 8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

Rom. 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Rom. 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

1Cor. 1:7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Gal. 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Phil. 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Heb. 9:28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

1Pet. 3:20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

¹¹ ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Jesus' "day" is when he returns to stand at the judgment so to speak and thereby to intervene for believers before the Father. And he will affirm believers as having the necessary inward qualifications at the end of this process, in order to ensure that they are not judged guilty by God but, instead, welcomed by Him into the eternal Kingdom of God. Obviously, this is a hugely important part of his role as the Messiah.

It is God alone who will establish believers in their faith and obedience until the goal of entering the Kingdom of God.

¹² πιστὸς ὁ θεὸς δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν – God is faithful to His promises to cause those in whom He has worked to persevere in their belief and to share in the knowledge and understanding of reality and of Jesus specifically with Jesus himself in order to obtain their own entrance into eternal Kingdom of God.

In addition, God is the very means by which the Corinthian Christians were summoned by the biblical message's being presented to them, and He is the one who has worked within them to cause them to believe it. The purpose was for them to participate now and later in all that Jesus the Messiah is about as Lord and King of the eternal Kingdom of God according to the Davidic Covenant, i.e., as God's Son. Just as Jesus lived as a believer in God with the outcome of his reaching his goal of being the King of the eternal Kingdom of God, so also the Corinthian Christians live as believers looking forward to their goal of being subjects of Jesus in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Thus, rather than the outcome of their lives being up to them, the Corinthians can count on God to be faithful to His choosing them to cause them to reach the expected outcome of eternal mercy and life.

¹³ παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – This verse introduces the first of three issues that Paul addresses in chapters 1-6 as a result of hearing about them from Chloe's people. They are:

1) The Corinthian Christians' being dismissive of Paul and his message in the light of their desire for status and position that has led them to diminish the significance of Jesus as the crucified Messiah (chapters 1-4)

2) A man's sexual relations with his father's (second) wife as dishonoring of not only God but also his father (chapter

5)

3) Judicial, moral, and legal disputes between Christians and their going to unbelieving, pagan judges in the Roman court system for a ruling on their disputes, instead of using a wise, fellow Christian to guide them in loving and forgiving one another even if they never actually settle the dispute (chapter 6).

Then, in chapters 7-16, Paul speaks to issues about which the Corinthians have written him and which obviously are of concern to them and they are not sure how to handle them –

1) Physical contact between men and women (7:1-24)

2) How fathers should handle the issue of their virgin daughters and their getting married (7:25ff.)

3) Eating meat sacrificed to idols and pagan gods and assorted issues (8:1ff.)

4) Spiritual gifts within a Christian community and issues related to their culture (12-16)

Paul's whole purpose in life is now "in the light" of all that Jesus of Nazareth is and does, i.e., that he is his Lord/King and the Messiah, i.e., the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. Likewise, Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to live their lives in the light of Jesus's existence and their participating with him in God's project of bringing about the eternal Kingdom of God.

¹⁴ ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα – While it is tempting for us to think that Paul is exhorting the "church" to hold to the same doctrinal statement written by the church leaders, especially that includes, for example, the trinity, Paul's concern here in this letter is that the Corinthians are finding themselves divided over the human being to whom they are giving the most allegiance, e.g., Paul, Apollos, Kephas (Peter), and Jesus (cf. v. 12)—while also claiming to be Christians.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 2-4.

Certainly, Paul wants all Christians to agree on all points of biblical theology, but differences in this area, especially after the apostles have long since disappeared from the earth and are no longer available in person for consultation on points of doctrine, but only through the documents of the New Testament, are much less problematic than Christians' granting allegiance to any other human being besides Jesus, e.g., to a senior pastor and the elders of their "church," to an assembly of leaders of a denomination, or to a pope. As long as Christians exhibit true, biblical patience and grace in the process of working out together the proper understanding of the apostolic message of the Bible in the midst of their belief in Jesus as the Davidic King/Advocate, their other "doctrines" are not problematic. This is also true as long as they do not use them to define what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus. Therefore, "the same thing" which Paul wants them "all [to] speak" is, "I am with the Messiah, so that he is my teacher and leader through the apostolic message, making all other teachers and leaders merely tools in God's hands to point people to Jesus ONLY." Notice in v. 12 that the men to whom the Corinthians are granting their loyalty are not the kind of people to start such rivalries. This demonstrates that people's natural tendency is to form rivalries *even if there is no leader who is trying to garner their loyalty to him*. This also indicates that, down through church history, leaders who do want people's loyalty have preyed on this human tendency and exploited it for their own selfish purposes.

Corresponding to the point that Paul is making here, it is important to recognize that the so-called Pastoral Letters of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus do not justify the notion of senior pastors, because these letters are not about Timothy's and Titus' being pastors and the primary leader of a church, but about their being assistants to a living apostle, Paul. Indeed, there is no biblical justification for the concept of a senior pastor. Plus, the whole idea of a pope, bishop, pastor, minister, or priest makes no sense in the light of the fact that since the 2nd century, we have been living in a situation where there are no living apostles, with whom any of the above can consult in order to ensure he understands the biblical message accurately. For anyone since the apostles to think that he understands the Bible well enough to be an authority on it is to "seat himself in the chair of the" apostles just as the Pharisees of Jesus' day "seated themselves in the chair of Moses," which Jesus points out is completely inappropriate (cf. Matthew 23). Indeed, Jesus condemns the Pharisees for doing so.

The two words σχίσμα and ἔρις (v. 11) are synonymous, while the latter includes the notion of actually fighting with others over one's manner of thinking for the purpose of winning an argument and destroying the opponents' sect, division, and group. Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:17ff.

¹⁵ ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ – Paul's concern here is that the Corinthians are diverting their primary allegiance from Jesus to some other human being, e.g., himself or Apollos or Kephas (Peter) (cf. v. 12). He wants them to be of the same mindset regarding Jesus and thus be outfitted properly intellectually. There is no more important person to follow within the created realm than Jesus, the Messiah and King of Israel and of the eternal Kingdom of God.

Again, this is not about everyone in the local church agreeing on the church's doctrinal statement. This is about having the humility to pursue biblical theology while genuinely grasping the seriousness and accuracy of one's sin in the light of Jesus' death and resurrection that makes him our only true teacher and leader.

¹⁶ ἐδελώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν – Not only are the Corinthian Christians divided on to whom they give their primary allegiance, but they are also bickering among themselves and competing with one another for the honor of having the most fit and popular leader and group. This has created an adversarial environment in which true biblical love among people cannot exist, because the Christians are more concerned about looking and feeling superior to other Christians than actually caring for them.

The New Testament mentions Chloe only here. Thus, it is impossible to know exactly what relationship Chloe has to the Corinthians.

¹⁷ λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ – Paul was the first to present the NT message to the Corinthians around A.D. 52, and he did so for 18 months (cf. Acts 18 & 2 Corinthians 10:14). Apollos started his Christian service in Ephesus and then went to Corinth where he was very helpful in teaching the Christians and refuting the non-believing Jews. This letter was probably written only a year or two after he had been to Corinth. Κηφᾶ (𐤒𐤍𐤏𐤔) is used 9X in the NT to refer to Peter. The word is of Chaldean origin. It means rock, like the Greek Πέτρος. But how did Peter become known to the Corinthians? Probably by means of believing Jews of the Circumcision Party type, who claim that Peter is the ultimate leader of the apostles because he resides in Jerusalem where he can obey the Mosaic Covenant most completely (cf. Galatians). Besides the erroneous allegiance to Paul, Apollos, and Peter mentioned here, some of the Corinthian Christians are viewing Christianity correctly, so that they are most loyal to Jesus and not to Paul, Apollos, or Kephas.

Thus, the main problem with the others is that they are adding *allegiance to an earthly leader* to their definition of what it means to be a true follower of Jesus as the Messiah. In other words, they are not abandoning their faith in Jesus, but they are adding to it as a means to demonstrate their faith in Jesus. Paul will say in chapter 3 that anyone who intentionally and aggressively promotes such a notion deserves to be condemned eternally by God. This is similar to the situation in Galatians where they were adding the performing of the Mosaic Covenant to their worship of Jesus as that which legitimized their worship of Jesus as the Messiah. Therefore, it is possible to add misinformation and bad practices to the gospel naively, but if people are doing this aggressively, so that they exclude authentic believers in Jesus as the Messiah from their group, then they are most likely exhibiting hearts of rebellion against God, not hearts of belief (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16,17).

¹⁸ μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός· μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε – In vs. 13-19 Paul is declaring that his purpose in preaching the gospel is not to make disciples for himself, but to make disciples of Jesus. Jesus gets “divided” when people lose sight of their allegiance to him as their future king in the eternal Kingdom of God, i.e., the only human being to whom it is worth remaining committed, and when they display loyalty to their church, their pastor, and their “Christian” organization and its endeavors to the detriment of their granting grace and mercy to others. No other human being besides Jesus can intervene on their behalf at the final judgment. Thus, it makes no sense to grant loyalty at any level to any other human being—except to learn from the apostolic authors who were commissioned by Jesus to be his authoritative spokesmen. But to form groups based even on these spokesmen is clearly wrong, as Paul is demonstrating here.

In the case of the Corinthian Christians, the ritual of baptism has become a mark of Christianity as it gets connected to who actually performed the ritual with the new believer, e.g., Paul and Apollos.

Kephas (Peter) must have become a possibility for attachment because of his reputation as the most important apostle among the Jews in Jerusalem. Somehow, this got conveyed to these mostly Gentile Corinthian Christians, and they latched on to Peter as their leader of choice, distinguishing themselves from “followers” of Paul.

¹⁹ εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ] ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον – With this statement, Paul can deny that the ritual of baptism ought to lead to some sort of special status for him in the midst of the Christianity of the Corinthians. As he will go on to explain, if he has any special status in connection with anyone, it is because of the “moronic” ideas that he as an authoritative spokesman, i.e., apostle, has conveyed to them leading to their genuine belief in Jesus as the Messiah. However, again, it is the *message and the object of the message, Jesus*, that is more important than the messenger, even though an accurate understanding of the message requires receiving it from only those chosen by Jesus to be authoritative and accurate, i.e., the apostles.

But this is also Paul’s point. All the apostles are equally authoritative, thus refuting any idea that the Roman Catholic Church has had of elevating Peter above the rest. This means that the RCC has misinterpreted Matthew 16:18 and Jesus’ statement to Peter, “I also say that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.” Jesus is referring not to the person Peter, but to the Father who has revealed correctly Jesus’ identity as the Messiah to him. In other words, does it really make sense, with all the references in the gospels of Jesus’ urging people to see God the Father as THE person to obey and follow, that he would state that people all follow a man, especially a sinful man, the pope, and someone other than himself? Not in an eternity!

²⁰ ἵνα μὴ τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ἐβαπτίσθητε – Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, a remarkable responsibility within the created reality. This is what his human existence is all about and stands for. However, even this responsibility and all that it means for Paul himself as an existing, human being pales in comparison to Jesus’ responsibility as the Messiah and what is involved with his human existence. Here, too, we have the first indication of the fact that the Corinthians were emphasizing outward religious rituals to authenticate their Christianity. Paul is going to say that understanding the NT message and responding to it with genuine, intellectual belief is more important than external ceremonies, especially because people, both Greeks and Jews, are naturally hostile to the truth.

²¹ ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφάνῳ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα – Paul thinks again and realizes that he did baptize some others besides Krispus and Gaius. It is good to see that his human memory required time to work like ours. And this even in the midst of being an accurate and authoritative spokesman for the Messiah.

The upshot of what he has just described is that people were making themselves students of the person who baptized them, even if the baptism was “in the name of Jesus,” i.e., to identify ultimately with Jesus as a person’s Messiah and

High Priest. For example, John the Baptist had disciples even after Jesus had identified himself as the Messiah, and then Jesus and his disciples baptized people who became his students (cf. John 3:22-36). But even if a person became a student of Paul after he baptized him, it would be for the purpose of fundamentally learning about Jesus, not Paul.

²² οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλέν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλὰ εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ – Notice the emphasis that the Corinthians were placing on the external ritual of baptism, even to the point of giving their loyalty to the one who had baptized them above giving it to Jesus as the Messiah—even while claiming to follow Jesus and after being so well taught by Paul a few years earlier (cf. v. 5). Thus, the fickle and undependable nature of the human mind, even for divinely changed people who have become authentic believers in God and His Messiah.

Whenever Christians place so much importance on external issues such as rituals, place of worship, the group with whom they meet, and the pastor of their “church,” they are missing the point of the NT message of a Crucified Messiah (as Paul will go on to explain). The unifying element of Christianity is “the cross of the Messiah.” Its message, which communicates the absolute moral depravity of human beings and the remarkable grace and mercy of God binds people together more strongly than any other tie that is possible among human beings. To the extent that Christians create divisions and separate groups that communicate an important difference between them and other groups within Christianity, to this extent they do not understand the meaning of the cross of the Messiah. Thus, Paul was willing to employ the ritual of baptism as part of the process of even Gentiles’ becoming believers in Jesus, but it was completely insignificant in comparison to inward belief in the Messiah from a changed heart.

Here, also, Paul refers to the fact that the Greeks were all about making sense of the created reality through their philosophical pursuits and providing each other with an explanation of reality that would be intellectually and emotionally attractive—that which they called σοφία = wisdom. Does the crucifixion of the king of Israel and of the eternal Kingdom of God to the effect that human beings are morally incapable of pleasing God make sense to the average Greek philosopher or citizen who has lived in the polytheistic and philosophical environment of Greece? No. Will the concept of a Crucified Messiah not offend the average Greek? Certainly, as it does any sinful human being who prides himself in his performance and acquired wisdom and understanding of reality (cf. Paul’s experience in Athens in Acts 17). The message of the crucifixion of the Messiah does not sound like *conventional* and acceptable human wisdom. Instead, Paul is saying that it is *biblical* wisdom, a radically different wisdom from that of both the Greeks and the Jews. In addition, it is true and pregnant with meaning for sinful human beings, as Paul will go on to explain. Apparently, though, what did sound like a good idea to these Greek Corinthian Christians was to grant their loyalty to an earthly leader, whom they considered to be wise and learned in regard to “truth,” as that which validated their faith in Jesus and gave them the greatest status in the Christian community.

Man’s tendency is to try to find a way to make an unattractive message attractive to the world and to gravitate towards the smartest person they know as that which makes their faith genuine. This is what Paul calls “wisdom”—instead of sticking with the apostolic message of the cross and its profundity. Therefore, adding to or changing the offensive message of the cross in order to make it unoffensive only distorts and makes the message vacuous and empty. Paul will go on to say in chapter 3 that these efforts, in fact, destroy the community of believers, i.e., the “temple of God,” so that God will destroy the person who aggressively and selfishly leads others in engaging in these efforts.

²³ ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν – Why does Paul feel that he needs to make this strong contrast here? Probably as a legitimate warning to these Corinthians that continued obsession with their factional pursuits, which is an inappropriate addition to the NT message of a Crucified Messiah, will result only in proving that they are not authentic believers. Paul probably also wants to instruct them further regarding that which they have come out of and repudiated by becoming believers in Jesus as the Messiah. The fundamental truth about human beings is that we are offended by the message of the cross that says to us that we are incapable of pleasing God in and of ourselves, while the death of the Messiah is fundamentally the basis of any sinful human being’s salvation. Plus, those who reject this truth and the message of Jesus as the Messiah will be destroyed eternally. Those who embrace the message will discover just how powerful God is in transforming them into morally perfect beings who live eternally. The cross signifies not only how condemned we are before God because of our deep sinfulness, but also how vital Jesus is as our advocate at the judgment. In all societies of history, political, social, economic, etc. power has been a mark of superiority. God’s use of power through the weak showing of Jesus’ submitting to his enemies’ putting him on the cross is radical and offensive to the pride and conventional wisdom of man.

²⁴ γέγραπται γάρ· ἀπολὼ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω – Isaiah 29:14, יִבְיֹחַ וְיִבְיֹחַ וְיִבְיֹחַ וְיִבְיֹחַ וְיִבְיֹחַ (LXX – καὶ ἀπολὼ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν κρύψω) – A warning by God around 720 B.C. to Judah and Jerusalem that He will take their apparent wisdom and demonstrate just how foolish it is by destroying the city by means of the Babylonians. We human beings take ourselves way too seriously and think that we are so smart and capable when, especially in the midst of our sinfulness, we are so foolish and unintelligent. In the final analysis, God will show us just how foolish we are, if we do not change our minds and embrace His truth and wisdom.

²⁵ ποῦ σοφός ποῦ γραμματεὺς ποῦ συζητητὴς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου – Speaking of wisdom as that which gives value to us as human beings—at least in our own eyes, so that we find the smartest person we can, according to our

presuppositions and assumptions about reality, to lead us, Paul is going to compare the wisdom of the world with that of God to demonstrate that the latter is the only true wisdom and understanding of reality and that results in salvation from God's wrath, condemnation, and destruction.

[In vs. 20-31 he is saying that his purpose is not to proclaim dazzling wisdom to which the entire world will naturally be attracted, but instead to proclaim the foolishness of the gospel, i.e., that a crucified and executed king is everyone's savior, ruler, and teacher.

Sophists in the Greek culture were itinerant tutors who claimed to be able to instruct people's children in how to be wise in both their understanding and their behavior—for a price.

Scribes were Jewish experts in the Old Testament, who also claimed to be able to instruct people in the wisdom of God and probably sought students who would pay for their instructional services within Judaism.

Debaters of this age probably refers to those within Greek culture whom we would label as philosophers, who had settled on an explanation of reality and could argue it as well as could be expected. Maybe they provided their philosophical services for a price also, meaning that all three of these kinds of smart people in the 1st century Roman Empire not only sought loyal followers, but also made their living from teaching them the conventional wisdom of their day. In this way, Paul is comparing these three categories of teachers and wise men to the current tendency in the Corinthian church to grant divide themselves into groups based upon their preferred apostolic-like wise teacher.

Paul is also asking for anyone of these three kinds of men to offer his explanation of reality in the light of the ideas that God has made available to the world through Jesus' appearance. The implication is that each of these three men will fail in demonstrating himself truly wise, because none of them will take into account the core of God's ideas that are of the Messiah, especially the crucified Messiah, as Paul will go on to show.

In our day, Paul might have used the words professor, Rabbi, and postmodern philosopher/literary critic and sociologist who really thinks that he has a grasp on the meaning of being a human being. In each case, these people would not include the Jewish crucified Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and his instructions about life in his explanation of reality.

²⁶ οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου – All the wisdom that mankind has attempted to put forth apart from the true, biblical message, e.g., the ideas of the Greek philosophers and the ideas of misguided Jewish Bible students (and, thus, any misguided "Christian" Bible students—and, by extrapolation, all the university professors of our day who ignore the Bible), is not only relativized by God's plan for the Jewish Messiah to suffer death on a cross in order to qualify for his role as intercessor and King, but it may even be refuted.

In our day, Paul could write, "Where is the scientist? Where is the politician? Where is the successful businessman? Where is the Rabbi? Where is the university professor? Where is the sociologist? Where is the critical race theorist? Where is the seminary professor? Where is the mega-church pastor? ..." Our culture overall and the Christian culture within it consider all these kinds of people to be the wise ones of our age. But Paul would call them fools if their worldviews are not based fundamentally on the whole Bible and especially the death of Jesus as the Messiah and all that his death means so that, in the final analysis, nothing else really matters. Thus, Paul is saying, show me a wise man in this age, and God will show him to be much less than impressive once we understand the wisdom of God in a crucified Messiah, king, and priest to which the whole Bible points.

In addition, in Paul's day, these were probably people who intentionally sought to draw others to themselves as followers. In fact, their very livelihood depended on acquiring as many paying customers as possible. Therefore, Paul is not only contrasting these worldly people's wisdom with the biblical message. He is also contrasting their strategy of garnering financial and loyal supporters with the biblical methodology that involves only Jesus and his typically unpaid authorized spokesmen, the apostles—who are willing to present their information for free if this preserves one of its central points of the free grace of God towards sinners who deserve His condemnation and destruction.

²⁷ ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν θεόν – I am taking the ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ phrase not as referring to means but to context. Human beings exist in the midst of God's wisdom, as taught by the creation and by His spokesmen through the Bible. But they are unwilling to seek God on their own, because they are in rebellion against Him. In the midst of all the Greek philosophers and Jewish Bible scholars, who had speculated and tried to describe how to understand reality up until Paul's own day, there had been no one who had actually understood God. None of them was seeing exactly what God was communicating, especially now that Jesus had appeared and suffered death on the cross. They were stuck in their own "wisdom," which was simply abject foolishness.

²⁸ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας – Paul is saying that God has used the apparent moronic, preposterous, and foolish nature of what the cross communicates and what was announced through Jesus and now the apostles to save from eternal condemnation those who grasp and believe His truth. And this truth is that we are all sinful and must humbly appeal to God for His mercy in order to escape eternal destruction. In addition, now that Jesus as appeared, this truth also includes his life, death, resurrection, and ascension with all that they mean. It is this salvation from God's condemnation to which Paul is referring in the next verses when he talks about God's power that is weaker than the strongest man. Escaping God's eternal condemnation is going to require a humanly insurmountable ability by sinful human beings. In fact, it will require God's own transcendent power of changing sinners inwardly through the apostolic message, belief in the message, and Jesus' advocacy for authentic believers based upon his death on the cross.

²⁹ ἐπειδὴ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν καὶ Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν – The Jews and Greeks of Paul’s day provide good examples of mankind’s natural hostility towards the biblical truth. The atmosphere of inquiry that exists in Paul’s world is where Jews are actually rightly looking for biblical signs to indicate that the Messiah has appeared while Greeks are actually rightly looking for a good, rational explanation that allows them to think that they completely understand reality. However, in both cases, their pursuit of wisdom ends with their rejecting Jesus—because of the hardness of their hearts, which renders them unwilling to accept all the truth of the Bible.

The irony is that Jesus provided multiple miracles to confirm his being the Messiah, and Paul is providing plenty of opportunities for the 1st century Jewish and Greek world to hear about the rational ideas of Jesus as the Messiah, but this does not help people who are ultimately rebels against God. In our day, “Christians” are similarly looking for accurate doctrinal statements or popular political pathways, but by trying to find them from popes, seminary professors, councils, creeds, traditions, and even popular Christian leaders who are more concerned about their prestige than the truth, rather than relying on the apostolic documents of the Bible only for their explanation of Christianity, they demonstrate their own hostility to God.

³⁰ ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον, Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον, ἔθνεσιν δὲ μωρίαν – In the previous verse, Paul mentioned the Jews and the Greeks, two groups that constitute two religious perspectives. The first perspective of the Jews is an erroneous OT perspective, i.e., false Judaism, while the second is an erroneous pagan/philosophical perspective, i.e., false secular ideology. In contrast to these two groups, Paul uses the first plural pronoun “we” to refer to Christians who hold the truthful biblical perspective. Paul is saying that the focal point of the Christian message is the death on a cross of the Davidic king of Israel as a supposed criminal, whereby his death demonstrates our own condemned position before God and inability to please him by our own efforts.

Such a message is offensive and nonsensical to Jews who believe that their Messiah should be simply a conquering king who affirms them as the people of God who have earned God’s blessings on the basis of their inherent obedience to the Mosaic Covenant.

It is also nonsensical to philosophically minded Greeks who are simply looking for how all the stuff of the cosmos can make for a “good” life in the present (and only) realm (and, thus, to “Christians” for whom the cross is not enough but must be superseded by accurate doctrinal statements). Ultimately it is offensive to all prideful human beings who want to hear that they have the wherewithal to please God, whether through their religious performance, their intellectual pursuits, their moral pursuits that they believe make them better than others, or their strong adherence to traditions and universally accepted doctrines.

Thus, Paul is basically saying that Jesus was a loser, indeed one of the biggest losers in the world, because he failed to acquire wide acclaim in his day, conquered no territories, and, in fact, so offended people that they charged him with criminal behavior and executed him.

³¹ αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς – This is the second kind of people in the world—those whom God “calls” and summons to hear the message of biblical truth and changes them inwardly so that they become receptive to it, so that they hear the call of God and authentically believe His “foolish” message. Thus, they do so because of God’s miraculous inward work of changing their hearts. These are the ones who have been appointed to eternal life by God.

³² Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν – God’s project involves drawing both Jews and Gentiles into His eternal kingdom through their belief in Jesus as the Crucified Messiah. Implied is that Greeks do not have to become Jewish to believe in the Jewish Messiah properly.

³³ Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν – The Messiah is the focal point of the creation and of the apostolic message. Consequently, authentic believers understand that the really smart thing to do in this life is to believe in Jesus as the eternal king of the Kingdom of God and as their advocate at the judgment, so that God may powerfully raise them from the dead and transform them into morally perfect beings. Thus, the whole idea of a crucified (and resurrected) Messiah should satisfy the criteria of the Jews who are looking for powerful miracles and signs in order to verify the Messiah and of the Greeks who are looking for wisdom to verify the correct explanation of the nature of reality.

³⁴ ὅτι τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σοφώτερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ θεοῦ ἰσχυρότερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων – As perceived by worldly people, God and His Messiah look foolish and weak. Thus, no speculative, scientific, or supposedly biblical notion that sinful man comes up with holds a candle to the sheer beauty intellectually of the message of the cross. In addition, no activity on man’s part that is so powerful, humanly speaking, holds a candle to the power that God will exercise in raising sinful sinners from the dead and transforming them into morally perfect beings who will exist for all of eternity.

Yet, God looks weak in comparison to man by virtue of the fact that His Messiah was executed by man, indeed sinful and rebellious man. Thus, He looks foolish in comparison to man because His message includes allowing man to exercise his power over the Messiah by executing him, so that God did not use His power to stop man from committing such great evil. In other words, man’s sin appears more powerful than God’s goodness.

We sinful human beings are just naturally drawn to other human beings who appear strong and wise, but the fact is that if they are not humble servants of God and open to and steeped in the entirety of biblical knowledge and wisdom, which they wholeheartedly believe, then they are idiots and fools.

³⁵ βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλήσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς – Paul continues the same theme of v. 25 of ironic reversal. Not only is the message of the Bible and the Messiah that

which is offensive and rejected by people, but also are the people whom God has chosen to represent Him in the religious and intellectual (even political) cultures of the 1st century Roman Empire. They are the no names and the last people one would think could be a good source of truth and wisdom—like the brick layers of Copenhagen for Kierkegaard in 19th century Denmark.

God has changed the hearts of people in Corinth who are not considered the most intellectual, the most powerful politically, the members of the social elite, or bona fide followers of the Mosaic Covenant who would be pleasing to God (according to false Judaism). God's "followers" are the least desirable of society from a worldly and secular perspective. Therefore, they probably have the least sense of belonging to the thriving community and city of Corinth, a cosmopolitan city, so that in Corinth the concept of a "celebrity Christian" was an oxymoron. However, they, like all human beings, want to be intellectually and culturally respectable in their city, but the gospel is not helping them to be cool and accepted by their fellow Corinthians. Instead, it has done the opposite, so that they have become intimidated by unbelievers and are tempted to change the message into one that is more attractive, e.g., by promoting charismatic and smart (?) teachers as their leaders, along with religious practices such as baptism, instead of promoting the raw message of the gospel of Jesus as the crucified Messiah by itself.

³⁶ ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τὰ ἰσχυρά, καὶ τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ – Is Paul presenting a standard theological principle that has been truth throughout Christian history? Should we look at church history and figure that all the powerful, brilliant, and successful Christians within the church and in their particular culture were usurpers?

Not entirely. But it does make sense that we grasp the importance of humility and a willingness to be rejected by the overall culture and society in which Christians live—if this is what God has planned for them in the light of how Paul presents these ideas. Indeed, we should remember that the quintessential unbecoming person who has been rejected by the world and its unbiblical culture is Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter from an obscure city in Galilee. Therefore, when we arrive in the eternal Kingdom of God, we may find that most of the people were the obscure, powerless, and less than intellectually stellar citizens of the world. Similarly, Kierkegaard, promotes the notion of the situation of contemporaneity in Practice in Christianity, of being willing to be as abased and rejected by the world as Jesus was. Here is the sign of authentic Christianity, and it is certainly not the victorious Christian life by virtue of its being praised and adored by unbelievers!

³⁷ ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ – As I have said in the previous endnote, Paul here seems to be providing us with a window into God's mind that His plan is to choose more people for His eternal kingdom who would be considered to be the less successful in the world, in order to demonstrate to the rest of humanity who crave respectability and prestige above truth how foolish they are to place so much emphasis on what we consider to be important in the present realm in contrast to what God considers important?

Nevertheless, there are a relatively large number of supposed Christians who are prosperous, successful in the world, and even powerful in American history? Or is American Christianity a false Christianity? And what should we think of American Christianity's proclivity towards setting forth successful athletes, politicians, and business men as model Christians? In other words, why would we think that people would be attracted to successful Christians, in a worldly sense, when their leader was a loser Jew who was executed by the people of his day?

Therefore, it seems wise to interpret Paul as teaching here that the underdogs of society as authentic Christians will gain eternal life according to God's plan, while certainly unbelievers who are at the top of their cultures and societies through their power, wealth, and intellectual respectability will miss out of eternal life. God is the ultimate in being prestigious, so that rejecting Him and His king, priest, and prophet Jesus is eternally devastating, while those who do embrace Him brag about only Him and not themselves. This allows, too, that there will be successful people in their culture who will also be successful in their faith in God and Jesus as the Messiah—while also demonstrating a humility and repentance for their sin than can come from only the miraculous work of God within them.

³⁸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – Once again, Paul emphasizes that authentic Christians are properly associated with Jesus as the Messiah because of what God has done—choosing them before He even brought the creation into existence and working within them through His Spirit to change their hearts, not because of what they have done for God or for themselves. God's haven chosen us as His people is the most important thing in our entire existence.

"In the Messiah Jesus" = belonging to him and participating in the group who are his people who will inherit eternal life through God's grace, mercy, and use of Jesus as their advocate and intercessor at the judgment.

³⁹ ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἁγιασμός καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις – Jesus is the very embodiment of wisdom about reality and life for us Christians in contrast to the wisdom claimed by Greeks (and the Jews for that matter who are misinterpreting the OT). Greek philosophers can speculate and Jews can study OT Torah all their lives, but neither will acquire the level or benefit of wisdom that comes from understanding Jesus.

In addition, there are no issues more important to learn about than forgiveness from God and acquiring a standing before Him where one's destiny is assured of participating in the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, including eternal life ("justification"), being set apart by God within humanity ("sanctification" in the NAS95), and the means by which God brings these about through Jesus as our propitiatory offering to God and as our advocate at the judgment to

needing to comprehend for an accurate understanding of God and reality. Thus, Paul is not promoting being anti-intellectual but being an advocate of understanding God through the most important piece of information about Him, that He has introduced a crucified Messiah into reality, and this man is the very focal point of all human history on into eternity.

⁴³ *κἀγὼ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς* – It may seem to us astonishing that the apostle Paul was fearful in his presentation of the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah. He lived his life with so much courage. Nevertheless, he too was intimidated to be in a place where human brilliance and erudition were required for people to be willing to listen to a person, especially when he knew that the centrality of his message was the offensive concept of a crucified king and Messiah.

And Paul knew the possible consequences of being mistreated and rejected like Jesus. Indeed, he had fairly recently experienced such treatment in Philippi and Thessalonica before he arrived in Corinth. And he was human like all the rest of us and would not have relished suffering and pain, even though he could see the divine purpose in it and rejoice in it with biblical appreciation for the story that God is telling and for the sake of his own belief (cf. Romans 5:3ff.).

⁴⁴ *καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως* – Paul did not intend to persuade the Corinthians with his finely developed reasoning and logical argumentation from all the available data of his day and that could be gathered apart from the Hebrew scriptures. In other words, his goal was not to match wits with the wisest Greek philosophers of his day. Instead, he presented them the very simple (yet profound) idea of this Jewish man who qualified to be the Jewish King and Priest through his execution, and he merely backed it up with what God did through him, i.e., miracles of healing people, along with probably the miracle of new believers' speaking about God in a language that they did not naturally know (cf. Acts 10:44-47 and Cornelius' family; Acts 14:3 in Iconium; Acts 14:10 in Lystra; 1 Corinthians 12, etc.). These miracles, as when Jesus performed them, were intended by God to affirm the apostles' authority and message to the various people to whom they presented it. The obvious implication is that most of the people of the city of Corinth were not persuaded by the miracles and continued to reject Jesus as their King and Priest, just as most of the Jews in Israel in Jesus' day rejected him in spite of all the miracles that God performed through him. And why would anyone ignore the clear evidence of the miracles which God produced in the midst of Paul's proclaiming the gospel? Because God had not changed their hearts, which therefore remained hardened to the truth.

There are other places in the NT where "signs and wonders," i.e., miracles, are associated with the power of the Spirit of God (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4). Paul will go on to say that, as far as the rest of the world is concerned, he is a moron for claiming that the very simple idea of a "crucified Messiah" is at the heart of a correct explanation of reality. Nevertheless, who could deny the miracles and their intended effect by God, except other morons who simply desired to continue rebelling against God. Therefore, another miracle that occurred when Paul presented the message of Jesus as the crucified Messiah to the Corinthians was God's making them receptive to the truth and convincing them to believe it, in spite of the fact that their natural response would to reject it.

⁴⁵ *ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ* – Only two possible sources and flavors to ideas—that which has its origin in and meaning derived from human beings who have assimilated the data of the world around them *while being committed to their moral rebellion against God and without taking into account the biblical message*, so that they are unwilling to accept ideas from God, and that which has its origin in and meaning derived from God who conveys it to human beings through the apostles and confirms it with miracles.

Paul is clearly interested in only the latter and is encouraging the Corinthians to abandon their divisive and competitive efforts that are partially based on whom they consider to be the smartest teacher, because these, by definition, are of the former category where people are more concerned about the appearance of brilliance and wisdom than they are about the truth. And he wants the Corinthians to keep the apostolic message pure and uncontaminated by the world, so that they live out its implications correctly and believe it as a result of the affirming proof that God provided through the miracles.

A very possible logical inference from this is that after the disappearance of all the apostles, God confirms their message through the written record of the miracles He produced through them while they were alive. Thus, it would not be God's intent to display later through non-apostolic spokesmen of the NT message as many miracles as He did during Jesus' and the apostles' proclamation of it. In other words, the Greek culture of Paul's day was completely devoid of miracles by God, while our culture in our day is filled with the written record of Jesus' and his apostles' activities and words. Consequently, God wants us to examine the documents of the NT to gain confidence in the truth in order to believe it rather than rely on miracles by Him apart from the written documents.

⁴⁶ *σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, σοφίαν δὲ οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων* – The verb *καταργέω* comes from *κατα* and *αργέω*, the latter of which means stop doing something, slack off, become idle, while the former probably is an intensifier. The same idea is found in 1 John 2:8 where "the darkness is passing away" (*ἡ σκοτία παράγεται*). The *παρά* of this word is probably an intensifier also, so that the meaning is the same. Same with 1 John 2:17 where "the present realm is passing away, and its strong desire" (*ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία * αὐτοῦ*). Only the gospel is eternal, and Paul would not want the Corinthians to throw their lot in with religious rulers and their ideas that are only temporary and will naturally miss out on God's promise of eternal salvation and life.

It is not as though Paul would say that the apostolic message of Jesus as crucified Messiah should not be categorized as

“wisdom.” Indeed, he believes that it is. However, this “wisdom” does not involve strictly things and data within the created reality *without taking into account God and His revealed ideas through the Bible, through Jesus’ instruction, and through the teaching/writings of his apostles*. Nor does it involve depending upon governmental rulers with their power (except Jesus and his Messianic Kingdom of course) or religious rulers with their apparent wisdom, even from their study of the OT, to ensure that everyone lives it out, especially because these same rulers and their governments and religions are merely temporary. Only Jesus and his government and religion will be eternal, starting with the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel on earth in the millennial kingdom and ultimately in another eternal realm that God will create (cf. Revelation 20-22). Nevertheless, God will show even Jesus’ earthly government to be far superior to any others that have ever existed in this temporary realm.

Thus, Paul says that he conveys the “wisdom” of the crucified Messiah to those whose goal corresponds to this wisdom, i.e., the goal of God’s eternal mercy and living in the Kingdom of God of the next realm. The reason why these people have this goal is because God has chosen for them to do so and has changed them inwardly to recognize the wisdom of the gospel and to embrace it as the most profound information ever available to mankind.

Also, Paul switches in 2:6-16 from the first-person singular to the first-person plural. He seems to be expanding the limits of those who speak of the wisdom of God in the form of the ideas about the Jewish Messiah, Jesus, to include the other apostles and apostolic co-workers. It would make sense that he does this in order to add just that much more weight to what he is saying about the importance of this message of a crucified Messiah and to defend himself as a bona fide apostle of Jesus.

⁴⁷ ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην. ἣν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν – Mystery = that which God revealed through the words of the Hebrew scriptures, so that it remained relatively hidden until the Messiah actually appeared, Jesus of Nazareth, especially because even the best OT scholars of Jesus’ and Paul’s day (and before them) failed to see the fact that the OT taught that the Messiah would have to die. Therefore, God predestined and planned before the creation for the story of history to proceed the way it did with the Jewish scriptures speaking of this crucified man who would become the very center of the created reality, Jesus the Messiah, and then for this information to become available as it did through Jesus’ appearance and his apostles proclaiming it—along with the miracles they performed and then the written documents which they produced. The result for the apostles is their future moral perfection as citizens of the eternal Kingdom of God, i.e., their obtaining the greatest possible feeling of personal well-being in eternity through God’s transforming them into morally perfect people (cf. Romans 5:1ff.).

⁴⁸ ἣν οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἔγνωκεν· εἰ γὰρ ἔγνωσαν, οὐκ ἂν τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης ἐσταύρωσαν – The rich and powerful within the world, both within the Jewish religion and within the Roman government, misunderstood Jesus’ message of his being the Messiah, because, if they had grasped and appreciated its full significance for themselves, i.e., as that which would make Jesus their own “Lord of glory,” the person who would provide them with the way to obtain forgiveness by God and the greatest feelings of personal well-being through moral perfection in the eternal Kingdom of God, they would not have participated in the execution of Jesus as a criminal. This is obviously only in theory, because God wrote the story in such a way that Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, and others rejected Jesus’ message and crucified him, which was actually necessary in order for the Messiah to qualify for his eternal role as King and Priest.

⁴⁹ ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται ᾧ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὐς οὐκ ἤκουσεν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, ἡτοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν – Paul is saying in 2:9-16 that his purpose is to teach only what God has taught him that aligns with what Jesus knew of God, so that those to whom God gives eyes and ears to see and hear this information can embrace it for the sake of their eternal salvations and lives.

This is not a direct quote from the Septuagint. Therefore, Paul is providing an interpretation of Isaiah 52:15; 64:4; 65:17 and all the OT as a major theme, that God will grant understanding to those who previously did not understand to the effect that only those who truly love God, which itself is caused by God because He prepared them to do so, will grasp His message about Jesus as Messiah, recognizing its significance above all ideas put forth by man. Therefore, God, the OT, Isaiah, and Paul are all speaking metaphorically.

This is also further evidence by Paul that he has not simply collected data readily available to the Greeks in their geographical location and then reasoned through the data to proclaim to them THE understanding of reality that is correct. Instead, his idea of a crucified Messiah comes from only God and His revealing it to Him as an apostle—which Paul goes on to say. He is using Spirit-inspired understanding to communicate to Spirit-prepared hearers. Paul knows that he cannot convince people who are not inwardly changed and prepared by God through His Spirit. This is the dynamic that exists between God and sinners. He makes the choice to change them, and then they respond to Him to believe the truth and live it.

⁵⁰ ἡμῖν δὲ ἀπεκάλυπεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος – cf. John 12-15—God has persuaded the apostles of the truth of the message of Jesus as the Messiah through His operation within the created reality, which is His Spirit. Thus, God has also made them the authoritative spokesmen for Jesus after his ascension into heaven as Jesus said He would in the Upper Room discourse and was revealed by Peter’s first sermon in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. The Spirit connected the dots for Peter and has done so for Paul (and the other apostles). He has given them insight into the gospel message by granting them deep understanding of it.

⁵¹ τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐραυνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ – This almost seems a bit strange for Paul to say, because the Spirit of God is God. Therefore, of course, God knows all the deep things that God is thinking. Thus, Paul speaks of the Spirit of God as that aspect of God that grasps what He is thinking and planning, and he calls these things “the deep things of God,” referring to the fact that they cannot be discovered simply by examining the data of the world *outside the writings of the Bible*.

Thus, the Spirit of God is God at work within the creation. Of course, therefore, God within the creation seeks to know everything about everything that exists, which is the same as saying that God knows everything because He is God. He especially knows the most important things about Himself and His plan for the created reality. In other words, God is a thoughtful person, who then reveals the important information about Himself and His plans to the apostles as Jesus’ authoritative spokesmen for their communicating these to the rest of mankind. And He does so through Jesus’ having taught them and through the existing OT.

It is also possible that “the deep things of God” are the thoughts of God that do not get included in what He reveals to the apostles. Nevertheless, the Spirit of God knows God so well that He knows all of what God is thinking, even if God never reveals to the apostles and mankind all that He knows and understands. In fact, it is only logical that the transcendent God knows a lot more than any created human being can know.

⁵² τίς γὰρ οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ; οὕτως καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ – The important thing is to climb inside God’s mind and see exactly what He is thinking and planning. Paul uses the analogy of the “spirit” of a human being to illustrate what God has done with respect to His thoughts and plans. Just as the “spirit” of a man is that living, cognitive element that is most aware as possible of what a person is thinking, planning and who he is, so also the “Spirit” of God is most aware of who God is and what He is all about as the Creator of this and the future eternal reality.

Therefore, to the degree that it is possible to be intelligently aware of all that comprises oneself, particularly his thoughts and his plans, it is a human being’s “spirit” that does so. In addition, other people cannot really know exactly what is going on inside another person, because they are not in him like the person’s very “spirit.” In the same way, God’s “Spirit,” who is operating within the creation and, therefore, different from His transcendent being, while also being inside God (because He is God!), is intelligently and correctly aware of His thoughts, plans, and actions, so that He communicates exactly who He is, thus making Him, His character, and His plans known to the apostles as God’s authoritative spokesmen.

As a result, not only does each one of us human beings know himself better than other human beings know him, but God knows Himself likewise, indeed, even better than we know ourselves. In this way, Paul is stating that the work of the Spirit of God in revealing “the deep things of God” to apostles is absolutely necessary in order for the apostles to learn exactly what God wants them to know about the Jewish Messiah through the Jewish scriptures. No other person can know God as well as God does, and God has led the apostles to know Him more accurately and authoritatively than any other people through their study and understanding of the Jewish scriptures.

⁵³ ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου ἐλάβομεν ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ – The apostles’ learning about reality does not come, for example, from the intellectual pursuits of Greek speculative philosophers whose data is only that which they see around them *apart from the Jewish Bible*, so that their “truth” about the nature of reality is not accurate and correct. This constitutes knowledge that is in line with “the spirit of the world,” or as we would say, “the spirit of the age” = the attitudes, ideas, and interests of the prevailing culture, i.e., what is interesting to unbelievers but probably not to God and should not be to His followers. Instead, the apostles’ understanding is from God *and the Jewish scriptures* through His work within them as promised by Jesus in John 12-17. This constitutes knowledge that is in line with the “Spirit of God.”

The false Judaism of Paul’s day, which emphasized the Mosaic Covenant incorrectly with either Jesus as an add-on or as someone who was totally rejected as the Messiah, was another example of the “spirit of the world” at that time.

⁵⁴ ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν – The purpose of God’s interacting with the apostles through His Spirit is to persuade them of the truth that has been given to them so that they may pass this truth on to others. This persuasion and becoming convinced of the correct interpretation of the Jewish scriptures is graced and given by God to the apostles so that they have proper insight into God’s message to sinful mankind. Thus, Paul must also be implying that the “deep things of God” that the Spirit is revealing to the apostles (if this is what he means) actually come from the Hebrew scriptures, because it is these to which the NT authors are constantly referring as the *written* basis of their knowledge.

And the fact that God has graced true knowledge to them means that sinful human beings cannot acquire it in and of themselves. God must definitely give it to them.

⁵⁵ ἃ καὶ λαλοῦμεν οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ’ ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος, πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντας – There is a set of ideas that is completely separate from the world’s imagined set (or sets) of ideas that has (have) come strictly from data distinct from the Jewish scriptures. Only the apostles know this most important set of ideas accurately because of the Spirit of God’s work of convincing them of an accurate interpretation of the Jewish scriptures and giving them insight into this message. And only those who have experienced God’s inward change will be attracted to it, recognize it for what it is, truth, and then embrace it as such for the sake of their own eternal salvations from God’s justice and condemnation. The apostles and people with authentic inward change are the same ones whom Paul mentioned in v. 6, the *teleoi* (τελείοι). They are both inwardly changed by God and given the

new goal of God's eternal mercy as foundational to their human existence.

Again, Paul is arguing that the work of the Spirit of God is the only way that this happens.

An important implication is that we should never alter the gospel message in order to make it more attractive to our culture, e.g., to modern man. Perhaps we use different words to communicate it, but we do so with the purpose of conveying the same ideas, and all the same ideas, that the apostles understood to comprise the gospel.

⁵⁶ ψυχικός δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ ὡρῖα γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται – The truth of reality that God has instructed the apostles to present to the world cannot be truly known and grasped by sinful human beings apart from God's miraculous, inward work within them. This basic principle is vital to keep in mind when considering the prospect of another human being's authentically embracing the biblical message. Paul has been explaining that, in spite of his own human effort to convey the biblical message as clearly and completely as possible to the Corinthians, ultimately *his* methodology, charisma, and intellectual acumen are not what convince people to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Instead, it is God's work within them that does, in the midst of God's using Paul simply is a tool of the communication of His ideas.

In other words, we do not choose to believe the gospel, and then God responds to us with the Spirit of God and His power. God chooses us (before the creation of the universe), and then we respond to Him (after He has worked in our inner beings).

The biblical truth must be “judged spiritually,” meaning that it must be analyzed by sinful human beings who have the Spirit of God operating within them, and then they believe and embrace it as authentic Christians. See next note.

⁵⁷ ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει τὰ πάντα αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται – The authentic inward person can properly discern, judge, and appreciate the difference between truth and error, because, by the work of God's Spirit within him, he not only desires to use his brain appropriately over time to evaluate ideas, but he actually does so—to only a degree of course, if he is not an apostle.

On the other hand, other people, and Paul is probably referring to unbelievers here, never appropriately discern and appreciate exactly what is going on with an authentic believer, because the unbelievers do not want to acknowledge the apostolic truth of God. In other words, the unspiritual man refuses to accept and appreciate not only the apostolic ideas of Jesus as the Messiah, but also the authentic believers who themselves actually do so.

⁵⁸ τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν (Isaiah 40:13, Septuagint – τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, καὶ τίς αὐτοῦ σύμβουλος ἐγένετο) – The key to human wisdom is not to seek to tell others what is the truth based upon one's own industrious intellectual, academic, and, in our day, scientific work, using only data outside the Bible, but to seek to be taught by God through His writings that now include the apostolic message of the New Testament. No one can educate God in what is the nature of reality and how He (or we) ought to act within it. Only God can educate us through the Bible and the curiosity and motivation given us by the Spirit of God within us.

⁵⁹ ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν – In the light of the fact that no human being has enough wisdom to educate God, God has actually educated the apostles. Jesus understood God better than anyone, which understanding has been imparted to the apostles by the Spirit of Truth who has given them such remarkable insight into what they have learned from Jesus and the OT scriptures. Therefore, this is quite a bold but true statement by the apostle Paul—that the other apostles and he, along with Sosthenes and Timothy (cf. 4:16 and Acts 18:5) as his close traveling apostolic co-workers and associates, understand the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah as well as Jesus did himself when he was on earth. And this is the point, that the Corinthians need to listen to Paul and the apostles for their understanding and right living of the truth. Therefore, this cannot be said of non-apostolic Christians, who, by definition, lack complete and accurate understanding of the NT message. Nevertheless, all Christians should pursue an apostolic knowledge and understanding, even if they never achieve it in the present realm. Pastors, teachers, and priests since the days of the apostles should see their jobs as pointing their fellow Christians to the apostles and not to themselves. And they should have the humility to admit that much of their theology may be incorrect and in need of correct by even their students. And this includes seminary and Bible school professors and teachers.

Again, Paul is implying that the Corinthians' competitive and divisive efforts are of a kind whereby they are placing themselves above Jesus and the apostles. In other words, no apostle is going to encourage Christians to pick a particular teacher as their focal point in Christianity as if the Christians should become these teachers' disciples. It is Jesus and the message with him at the core of the message, albeit given through only the apostles, that must be people's focal point, so that no one becomes a disciple of an apostle or anyone else, but only a disciple of Jesus.

⁶⁰ Κἀγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ' ὡς σαρκίνοις, ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ – This past tense verb “was not able” seems best to be associated with the past tense verb “when I came to you” in 2:1, referring to the first time Paul appeared in Corinth around A.D. 52 and started proclaiming the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah. It also fits with 3:3 that they are “still fleshly.” Thus, Paul taught the gospel to these Christians with the thought in mind that he was speaking to abject rebels against God, whom God might change in their inwardness and cause them to become authentic believers. Yet, after believing in the gospel, they remained quite immature and unable to grasp the gospel well during his entire 18 month stay. Now, he has noticed that these relatively new believers still do not have the ability to connect certain dots of the NT message, which is causing them to behave like non-Christians and even abject rebels against God. They are competing with one another for the smartest and most articulate teacher. And Paul is calling them “fleshly” (σαρκίνοι) instead of “spiritual” (πνευματικοί).

This means that an immature and “fleshly Christian” is at risk of demonstrating that he is not a Christian at all and,

therefore, will incur God's eternal condemnation, if he continues in this state of dullness towards the apostolic message. But this also has to be the case because the Spirit of God has not made him open and receptive to the things of God. Two options for where these Corinthian Christians are in their faith,

1) true believers but very immature, still, or

2) still in the process of becoming true believers with the possibility that they will not finish this goal.

Paul does not know which option is correct for these Corinthians. Who would, but God Himself? But, of course, he is hoping for the first option.

⁶¹ γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρώμα· οὐπω γὰρ ἐδύνασθε. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἔτι νῦν δύνασθε – When Paul was first with the Corinthians for 18 months (Acts 18:1-17), he was not able to teach them to the depth that he had wanted because of their inability to grasp all that he was teaching. Now, the problem is that, in five years, they have not grown much beyond that point—that they can think through the ramifications of the gospel for themselves. Thus, the long letter! Paul is not talking about such things as eating meat sacrificed to idols and typology (in chapters 8 & 10 respectively), as the core of the gospel. Instead, these people are not able to grasp the full implications of Jesus' being the crucified Messiah, for example, as to whether or not Gentiles can be genuine followers of Jesus without taking on all the requirements of the Mosaic Covenant? The answer, of course, is, Yes!, but these Corinthian Christians are having trouble grasping this fact.

This same issue also comes up in 2 Corinthians. Indeed, this was something all the Christians in the 1st century Roman Empire had to work through. But the Corinthian Christians are having trouble understanding the subtleties of God with respect to the cross of the Messiah.

⁶² ἔτι γὰρ ῥαρκικοὶ ἐστε. ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζήλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοὶ ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε – The competitive atmosphere among the Corinthians was the tipoff to their behaving like “fleshly” unbelievers and non-Christians. Human beings crave the respectability and respect that comes from showing off who they are as leaders, and the bigger, better, stronger, more popular the leader is, the better they feel about themselves. They also crave the respectability that comes from showing off who their leaders are.

In addition, the respectability that people obtain means that they have more status. And this is instead of finding their sense of well-being in God alone. Thus, Paul still sees way too much worldliness and ignoring of God in their lives, as demonstrated by the factions and their willing acceptance of them. He is not sure they are genuine believers.

⁶³ ὅταν γὰρ λέγῃ τις· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἕτερος δὲ ἐγὼ Ἀπολλῶ, οὐκ ἄνθρωποι [σαρκικοὶ] ἐστε – Choosing to define one's Christianity by what person (institution, organization, movement, program, etc.) one is following, other than by Jesus alone, in order to gain more status than other people have is to adopt the mindset of the world and to behave like a abject rebel against God. Paul is basically asking rhetorically, “By creating rival communities based upon human capabilities, such as intellectual ability, charisma, and speaking ability, within the overall Christian community, are you not acting like unbelievers?” For these criteria are qualities which human beings can have apart from a changed inwardness by the Spirit of God and authentic belief and understanding of the biblical message that can following from the inner work of the Holy Spirit.

Here Paul is including Apollos as an apostolic worker because he knew that he had been teaching the NT message very accurately (cf. Acts 18:24-19:1).

Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

⁶⁴ Τί οὖν ἐστὶν Ἀπολλῶς; τί δὲ ἐστὶν Παῦλος; ἡ δὲ διακονία δι' ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε, καὶ ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν – In this section of vs. 5-23, Paul is saying that it is all about God, not about his servants (διάκονοι) such as Apollos and him when it comes to both the ability of a human being to communicate the gospel and the effect that each teacher of it has on the people who hear it from him. As a result, any boasting in man or human beings' taking credit for the quality and quantity of the gospel message in other people is meaningless and even rebellious towards God, while acknowledging God's primary role and boasting about Him alone, is what Christianity is all about. People, even the apostles, are not a big deal. Only God is! Because people are merely God's servants and not God!

God alone has given to Paul and to Apollos these positive effects of people who believed the message of the NT when they proclaimed it. Therefore, neither Paul nor Apollos can take any credit.

⁶⁵ ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα, Ἀπολλῶς ἐπότισεν, ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἡύξανε – This is the key to Paul's argument about avoiding being loyal to human leaders (and to human institutions). Allegiance to people and being impressed with their skills and abilities is foolishness, even if we are talking about apostles, as well as the fact that it's divisive within the group who all claim to believe in the one true God. Therefore, it is allegiance to God alone that matters, regardless of the tools (e.g., people) whom He uses to increase our understanding of Him. Cf. v. 7.

⁶⁶ ὥστε οὐτε ὁ φυτεύων ἐστὶν τι οὐτε ὁ ποτίζων ἀλλ' ὁ ἀυξάνων θεός – There is no valid and justifiable status as a human being other than *being acted upon by God*. Being taught by the apostle Paul, who himself is merely a used servant of God, is nothing in comparison to the work which God does, including inwardly changing sinful human beings.

I have added the words “*is everything*” in italics to finish Paul's thought. If Paul and Apollos are basically “nothing” as they perform their function within the created reality and teach the NT message, then God is *everything* as He creates the entire story of history, changes people's hearts, and moves them to embrace the NT message with authentic belief that He also causes to persevere within them.

⁶⁷ ὁ φυντεύων δὲ καὶ ὁ ποτιζὼν ἓν εἰσιν – This has to be some sort of idiomatic expression in the Greek language and that culture. I think that Paul is saying that both Apollos and he are “one” in their goal, which is to present the truth of Jesus as the Messiah to people so that, through the work of God, they become authentic believers. In other words, Paul does not deny that Apollos and he are on the same page biblically and theologically, but he is affirming that they are merely tools being used by God, who is the ultimate shaper of and unifying factor in the Christian community.

⁶⁸ ἕκαστος δὲ τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν λήμψεται κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον – Nevertheless, God views Paul and Apollos as distinct servants, who are individually accountable to Him and who will be treated individually at the judgment for their service to God so as to receive a wage/reward for this service according to how faithful they were in discharging their responsibility to proclaim the message of the gospel of Jesus as the Messiah.

⁶⁹ θεοῦ γὰρ ἔσμεν συνεργοί, θεοῦ γεώργιον, θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴ ἔστε – The fact that Apollos and Paul are “God’s co-workers” is their oneness. Their message, goal, and intent is exactly the same—to glorify God and to see the people who will obtain the Kingdom of God believe in the gospel of Jesus as the crucified Messiah.

Here also Paul uses the metaphor of a “field” (γεώργιον) and a “building” (οἰκοδομὴ) to describe the people of God who are authentic believers in the good news of Jesus. Thus, the Corinthian Christians are the “building” that God is constructing. This is God’s project, along with adding all other believers throughout Christian history to this “building.” Paul and Apollos, because they are apostolic workers, are God’s co-workers, and, by virtue of the message, which is the construction tool they wield by proclaiming it for people’s intellectual benefit and to which they respond with belief.

⁷⁰ κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι – God gave to Paul the responsibility and role to act as an authoritative spokesman for Jesus, i.e., as the one and only apostle to the Gentiles. God also provided him with the opportunity to study anew the OT for fourteen years in order to learn it correctly and establish himself in all the existing biblical theology that was available. In addition, God has given to Paul the effect of his proclaiming the biblical truth, which is genuine believers in this truth such that they will acquire eternal forgiveness and life from God.

All of this is God’s “grace” and gift to Paul in this context to equip him to proclaim the good news of Jesus as the Messiah and to see the fruit of it.

⁷¹ ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα – Here Paul uses the building metaphor to refer to one of two options—

- 1) the apostolic message which was not only the accurate truth of Jesus as the Messiah, but also that which he has proclaimed mainly the Gentiles as directed by God in his role
- 2) the apostolic message and the people who authentically believed it and only it, so that they with their understanding and belief became the foundation of the building. Thus, Paul laid the foundation of truth-believing Corinthians, even if he was not able to convey as much truth as he had hoped after spending a total of 18 months with them (cf. Acts 17,18). In the light of the next metaphor, that of the temple of God, which it seems best to interpret as the genuine, Corinthians Christians, #2 is the better option here.

In addition, Paul calls himself a “wise expert builder,” because he knows that God has taught him well through the work of His Spirit during the 14 years that he restudied the OT in order to learn it correctly. Consequently, he is building the building and temple of God with appropriate people who have grasped the gospel intellectually and correctly and who have the proper inwardness to believe it authentically.

⁷² ἄλλος δὲ ἐποικοδομεῖ – As an apostolic co-worker, Apollos continued constructing the building, perhaps being an instrument of an increase both in truth-believing Corinthians and in better-understanding current believers. Apollos was simply performing the role of a good teacher following in Paul’s apostolic footsteps of proclaiming only the apostolic message and its implications in people’s lives. Thus, anyone else after Paul and Apollos is doing the same as long as he is sticking to the truth and not veering off into worldly ideas, such as ascribing loyalty to human teachers as was the case in Corinth according to “those from Chloe” (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10ff.).

As a result, we see here that both the message presented by Paul and the people who hear this message and respond positively to it are the bricks of the building which comprises true “believers” in the gospel.

⁷³ ἕκαστος δὲ βλέπω πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ – Paul is now warning against anyone’s presenting a message that draws undue attention to human beings other than the apostles and their message, which is to draw attention away from God and the Messiah, thus creating immoral divisions within the community of believers (or for that matter, any other kind of error that takes the focus off Jesus and puts it on someone/something else, e.g., the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Galatians) or “signs and wonders,” i.e., miracles (in some modern charismatic/Pentecostal churches) or the growth and survival (appearance of success) of the church institution (also in most modern churches, where the church becomes more important than the biblical Jesus).

Notice that Paul does not simply call the division causing teachers bad teachers. Perhaps, this is because he does not want to sound too authoritarian in his analysis of them. Therefore, he calls attention to the content of their message, that anyone who claims to have been taught by Paul and the apostles, so that this person can purportedly convey accurately the apostolic message, needs to be very careful that this is exactly what he is doing.

⁷⁴ θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρά τὸν κείμενον, ὃς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός – I think that Paul uses δύναται with a sense of moral obligation, i.e., “should.” During the 18 months of his stay in Corinth, Paul did lay the foundation of the Corinthian Christians and their theology, while he and they focused on Jesus as the Crucified Messiah. Thus, he would never lead people to ascribe allegiance or loyalty to him or any other human being as the Corinthians are now viewing him, Apollos, and Peter. (cf. Acts 18). Here, also, the building metaphor refers to the truth

and the people who embrace the truth with authentic belief. Unity in a Christian community is found in the common theme of Jesus as the Messiah, not in any other theme.

⁷⁵ εἰ δέ τις ἐποικοδομεῖ ἐπὶ τὸν θεμέλιον χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, λίθους τιμίους, ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην – Continuing with how Paul is using the metaphor in this paragraph, these are physical materials that are figurative of the correspondence to biblical truth of the ideas being presented by the teachers who have come along after Paul, along with the people who believe these ideas, so that they are conducting their lives in an appropriately moral manner.

Clearly, the Corinthians' current teachers are leading them astray, because they have become focused on declaring their loyalty to their leader of choice, e.g., Paul, Apollos, Peter, et al., instead of to the whole of the apostolic message as presented by all the apostles and that focuses on God and Jesus as the Messiah as the only unifying factor for them.

Thus, the question is, what kind of people are becoming members of this Christian community in Corinth, those focused on Jesus alone (gold, silver, precious stones) because this is the message they are hearing and to which they are attracted (gold, silver, precious stones) or those focused on some other element, whether presented in the Bible or not (wood, hay, straw) because they may be hearing about the central issue of Jesus but they are being distracted by other elements being taught that take the focus off Jesus (cf. Galatians, Romans, and the Mosaic Covenant for both Jews and Gentiles), which is a kind of worldly wisdom (as Paul talked about in chapter 1).

⁷⁶ ἢ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει...καὶ ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ αὐτὸ δοκιμάσει – There are at least two options for “fire” and the “day” when the “fire” appears—

1) Any time of current existence for the gathering of Christians in Corinth, e.g., persecution from non-believers, that tests the authenticity of their faith

2) The final judgment of God that will also reveal the authenticity of their faith

The more profound is #2, and I think that this is what Paul means. He is using “fire” to refer metaphorically to the scrutinizing, final judgment of God that will reveal to what degree a teacher taught the apostolic, NT message that produced unity instead of disunity within the Christian community (or unity around something other than Jesus, e.g., a political or lifestyle agenda that is contrary to biblical morality). In other words, there will be an eternal effect of a teacher's message and the kind of people it produced as the “building” that was constructed. If the people who received the teacher's message focus strictly on the correct meaning of a “Crucified Messiah” during the course of their lives, so that they remain unified with all other authentic believers, then the teacher and the people will be saved. If the people who received the teacher's message add to the notion of the Crucified Messiah with allegiance to individual apostles or non-apostolic individuals (or some other element, e.g., the Mosaic Covenant, miracles, a political agenda, or a lifestyle agenda that is contrary to biblical morality), because they feel it necessary to define what it means to be a *bona fide* disciple of Jesus by this addition, then they and the teacher risk incurring God's eternal condemnation. They both, the teachers and the learners, are all misunderstanding the meaning of God's grace and the truth of the message of Jesus as the Messiah.

⁷⁷ εἴ τινος τὸ ἔργον μενεῖ ὁ ἐποικοδόμησεν, μισθὸν λήμψεται – If God's judgment reveals that the teacher not only had authentic belief, but also pursued proclaiming biblical truth in line with the apostolic message, instead of some variation of it that really was not the truth, and the effect was that people focused strictly on the meaning of a “Crucified Messiah,” so that they demonstrated that they had authentic belief, then the teacher will receive the wage of the satisfaction of knowing that people obtained eternal life by virtue of the information that he taught. In other words, the “work” in this verse is basically the teaching of the apostolic message or not—along with the people who heard the message and its effect on them. If God can say, “What you taught and believe will go on into eternity along with the people who embraced the message of the ‘Crucified Messiah,’” then the authentically inward teacher will have the satisfaction of knowing that he was a conveyor of truth.

⁷⁸ τινος τὸ ἔργον κατακαήσεται, ζημιωθήσεται, αὐτὸς δὲ σωθήσεται, οὕτως δὲ ὡς διὰ πυρός – If the judgment reveals that the teacher did not either have authentic belief or pursue the biblical truth in line with the apostolic message, then, the teacher will suffer loss characterized by the disappointment of seeing people rejected by God instead of welcomed by Him into eternal life. However, there is the question of the possibility of the teacher's having authentic belief without having taught the accurate, apostolic message and still being saved, because it is not entirely a person's doctrine that saves him. Only the judgment will tell (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:5). In addition, Paul is not so presumptuous as to judge each man's heart, even on the basis of what they are currently teaching. Only God can do this. Therefore, Paul is allowing for errors in understanding and teaching by teachers of the biblical message such that they still could obtain eternal salvation while damaging the faith of others—I guess.

This kind of teacher was immature in his understanding the implications of the gospel, yet he had a heart to be saved himself. We simply cannot pin down exactly what God is doing in any individual's life and the effect the person is having on others. But the truth of this will come out at the judgment, which it is important for us to wait for with great patience and humility. This was the case even for the apostle Paul.

⁷⁹ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν – The Corinthian Christians as a group are all together a sacred dwelling of God built by the inward work of God's Spirit within the created reality and on earth.

Therefore, they should pursue setting apart everything about themselves for the purpose of serving God, including, and especially in this context, their intellectual understanding of the NT message that affects the way they live and interact with one another and that should result in their being united in allegiance to Jesus alone as the “Crucified Messiah” and not to some other human leader. Thus, they will reflect the values, character, and nature of God as the Spirit of God

dwells in and directly affects them individually and collectively.

For the Corinthians, to split the community of authentic believers in Jesus the Messiah by different individuals adhering to different teachers and thereby defining their unity by that specific leader instead of by Jesus alone is to “destroy” the “temple” of God.

⁸⁰ εἴ τις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει, φθερεῖ τοῦτον ὁ θεός· ὁ γὰρ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιός ἐστιν, οἳτινές ἐστε ὑμεῖς – Therefore, if someone intentionally corrupts a group of Christians by selfishly and, therefore, rebelliously presenting worldly information in place of the NT message, especially as is happening here in Corinth where they are subscribing to a message that is dividing them into factions loyal to individual leaders, then God will corrupt him in the sense of eternally destroying him.

This is similar to what Paul says at the beginning of his letter to the Galatians where he is adamant that those who add to the message of a Crucified Messiah such notions as following the Mosaic Covenant in order to make oneself worthy of His blessing, thinking that it defines a person as a true disciple of Jesus as the Messiah, risks being eternally condemned for perverting the NT message.

Here in Corinth, the addition to the NT message that is being made is the notion of attaching oneself to earthly leaders as that which defines a person as a true disciple of Jesus. Paul says that these additions are like changing the structure of and even destroying the Jerusalem temple, which would be unthinkable under the Mosaic Covenant where God gave explicit instructions on exactly how the original tabernacle ought to be built and maintained as His dwelling place among the Jews.

Therefore, any kind of distortion of the gospel that leads people away from demonstrating the values, character, and nature of God as their primary focus through belief in Jesus makes the teacher susceptible to “destroying God’s temple” and incurring God’s eternal condemnation and destruction, not His salvation and life in the Kingdom of God.

⁸¹ Μηδεὶς ἐαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω· εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, μωρὸς γενέσθω, ἵνα γένηται σοφός – Paul is aware of how easily someone can start out with the apostolic message and eventually corrupt it into something worldly that actually sounds good and attractive to people, especially because of mankind’s incurable tendency toward religious activity that feels validating to him and toward needing to identify themselves with one individual. In addition, as sinners, we are all susceptible to our craving for attention, respectability, and prestige among other human beings. Therefore, we can easily change the biblical truth to something that tickles people’s ears and draws them to us rather than to God.

Thus, people who act and speak in line with “this age,” by rebelling against God, will also promote ideas that are in line with “this age,” in that these ideas will be false and contrary to the biblical message. In Corinth, this happened as people blended the NT message with elements of Greek philosophy and sophistry in that geographical location that resulted in creating factions according to what “teacher” each student wanted to follow. Paul has been declaring and declares explicitly here that true wisdom is found in eschewing these tendencies and becoming a fool who claims allegiance to God alone, His Messiah, and the apostolic message. In other words, those who are “wise” according to the predominant culture that is hostile to biblical need to exchange the culture’s wisdom for the foolishness of the gospel and become a “moron” for Jesus. Then, he will truly be “wise” in the best way—wise for the sake of obtaining God’s eternal mercy and life.

⁸² ἡ γὰρ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου τούτου μωρία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ἐστίν. γέγραπται γάρ ὁ δρασσόμενος τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτῶν – cf. Job 5:13 – ὁ καταλαμβάνων (קָלַח – qal act part ms, catch, overthrow) σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ φρονήσει (LXX) – Spoken by Eliphaz the Temanite, God overtakes and puts an end eventually to the advice and wisdom of foolish, worldly people who present as truth that which is actually falsehood. Paul’s point is that mankind consistently chooses to create ideas that sound wise and helpful to himself but that are foolish and destructive, especially eternally.

Because of our sinfulness, our tendency is to look both in the world and in ourselves without taking into account the transcendent Creator and human beings’ sinfulness, thus concluding in our opinion that what “works,” i.e., what produces or will produce “success” and happiness according to our self-deceived definition, is that which is contrary to God’s truth in the Bible, e.g., an increase numerically in the number of people who follow an idea, an increase in happy and satisfying feelings in line with our sensuous and physical desires for people, and a reduction in physical, emotional, and psychological pain and suffering, the presence of miracles on a constant basis, etc. However, according to Paul, this is foolishness, because the only proper definition of success is understanding the meaning of a Crucified Messiah and having enduring belief in this concept in the midst of a world that is hostile to it.

⁸³ καὶ πάλιν κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν σοφῶν ὅτι εἰσὶν μάταιοι (Ps. 94:11, LXX – κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι εἰσὶν μάταιοι (לְנַפְחַת – breath) – Psalm 94 is about God’s judging and destroying the proud and wicked, those who remain in complete rebellion against Him and His people. Paul uses this quote to bolster his point that corruption of the NT message not only empties the message of its meaning, making it as vacuous as atheism itself, but also will result in eternal destruction by God of the person who changes it. Thus, to cause factions within the community of believers by encouraging people to follow a certain teacher (or using some other earthly element to unify people, e.g., a church building, an organization’s programs, an organization’s liturgy, a doctrinal statement which by itself points people to something other than the Bible for an explicit statement of that which they believe, a political agenda, or a cultural agenda) is to incur God’s wrath and destruction, not His

approbation. For example, I once heard church leaders strongly demand that the women in their church not attend meetings that were outside the programs in this specific church, because, they said, this is what the women “ought” to do. Paul is calling this kind of thinking “the wisdom of this world” and “empty,” so that the result will be that God will “punish,” i.e., even destroy anyone who believes, speaks, and acts like this.

⁸⁴ ὥστε μηδεὶς καυχάσθω ἐν ἀνθρώποις – Again, here is the corruption of the NT message that is occurring among the Corinthian Christians, assigning such importance to human teachers, even to apostles and apostolic workers, as to lead people to divide into groups based upon their favorite teacher for status’ sake and as the very means of their thinking of themselves as *bona fide* disciples of Jesus. Thus they are taking the focus off Jesus, the Crucified Messiah, as their sole human leader. They are defining and validating their Christianity according to their earthly, non-Messianic leaders. Consequently, any extolling and enthusiastic praising of human beings that even hints at producing a rivalry between followers of Jesus the Messiah invalidates the NT message and makes the teacher liable to eternal destruction.

⁸⁵ πάντα γὰρ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν εἴτε Παῦλος εἴτε Ἀπολλῶς εἴτε Κηφᾶς, εἴτε κόσμος εἴτε ζωὴ εἴτε θάνατος, εἴτε ἐνεστῶτα εἴτε μέλλοντα: πάντα ὑμῶν – Whereas the Corinthians are choosing to link themselves to only certain worldly things, i.e., particular teachers, Paul states that anything and everything is already linked to them, including those teachers of the apostolic message to whom they are not choosing to be linked, because they are opting for factionism instead of unity. In other words, the Corinthians need to be willing to consider the relationship and connection between themselves and all apostolic teachers, plus all things and concepts within the created reality that are part of the transcendent God’s eternal project and eventually bringing about the permanent realm of the Kingdom of God.

⁸⁶ ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δὲ Θεοῦ – Because God is the source of existence of everything within the creation, because Jesus is the Davidic king and ruler over all the creation by virtue of his being God’s proxy, and because the Corinthians are subjects of Jesus, the Corinthians are linked to everything that God has created and over which Jesus rules. Therefore, to disassociate themselves from certain apostolic teachers of the NT message for status and rivalry’s sake is to deny God as the Creator and purposeful author of His project, the eternal Kingdom of God. In other words, human beings love to let others know about their connection to other human beings of power, fame, skill, and success, while God admires only the equal connection of all created things to all other created things, which, in turn, are equally connected to a crucified and executed king, Jesus the Messiah, as the ruler of the whole creation. And, he, in turn, is connected to the transcendent creator, God. This connection for the Messiah, in turn, connects his followers to God in the midst of His whole creation, so that they do not have to make up an extra-biblical connection that is both worldly and rebellious against God and His plans and purposes.

Therefore, to be connected to everyone who is an authentic believer in Jesus is to be connected to Jesus and to God, the transcendent author of all reality. This is to live as a true disciple of Jesus.

⁸⁷ Οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιζέσθω ἄνθρωπος ὡς ὑπηρετάς Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων Θεοῦ – Paul continues showing his and other apostolic teachers’ insignificance in comparison to God and His Messiah in order to convince his readers to find their unity in only God, the Messiah, and the message of the cross. Certainly Paul may be the greatest theologian who ever lived, apart from Jesus himself, but allegiance to him or any other apostolic teacher should pale in comparison to allegiance to God and His Messiah. And the problem is not Paul, as some think, but the offensive nature of the message of the gospel, which requires the Spirit of God to make a person attracted to it. In addition, each teacher of the gospel has a distinctive role within God’s project of building His Church, the real Church of changed-heart sinners throughout history and the world, who become genuine believers in Jesus as the Messiah and advocate for obtaining God’s mercy and eternal forgiveness.

God had consistently been revealing in the OT His plan (“the mysteries of God”) to create a future cosmos with Himself as its ruler in the form of a human being, the Jewish Messiah. After Jesus appeared and fulfilled his role as the Crucified Messiah, the apostles (along with men such as Apollos whom the living apostles were convinced were teaching the apostolic message—cf. Acts 18:24ff. where Priscilla and Aquila teach Apollos in Ephesus) authoritatively proclaimed what Jesus had taught them. It is this NT message that is disclosed accurately from the mind of God through the OT, Jesus, and the apostles and then confirmed by God when He causes people to believe it by changing their inwardness.

ὑπηρετάι – cf. Luke 1:2.

⁸⁸ ὥδε λοιπὸν ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις, ἵνα πιστός τις εὑρεθῇ – In Paul’s day, a slave who was the manager of his master’s household would be severely punished if he was found guilty of mismanagement, thus not carrying out the instructions of his master. Likewise, Paul and the other apostles as authentic believers, who were commissioned by Jesus to be apostles and who, as long as they were alive, trained others in the apostolic message as their very close contemporary associates, would find themselves in an *eternal* predicament if they failed to proclaim this message accurately by changing it into something worldly.

Therefore, Paul’s motive in carrying out his responsibility as an apostle is not to become popular and to draw people to himself (as seemed to be happening in the minds of the Christian community of Corinth) but to see Jesus leader of all the followers of his message. Paul is a tool in God’s hands, and the message he presents is what he wants others to embrace, not him, so that they ultimately embrace Jesus and God, the transcendent Creator. This is what makes Paul trustworthy.

⁸⁹ ἐμοὶ δὲ εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐστιν, ἵνα ὑφ’ ὑμῶν ἀνακριθῶ ἢ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας: ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ἐμάντων ἀνακρίνω – Ultimately, Paul is not concerned about being found by men to be faithful and accurate to the apostolic message or

accused of being selfish. He is concerned about only what God thinks of him. And he knows that he is not morally perfect and that there is always some simple humanness and sinfulness involved in his being a human being and even performing his apostolic duties. Thus, he wants to be found “faultless,” i.e., uncondemned, and be granted mercy at the final judgment of God, regardless of what people think of him in the present realm and regardless of what sinfulness is found within him as an ordinary, mortal, mistake-making, and sinful human being.

Paul uses the word ἡμέρα in 3:13 to refer to God’s final judgment. Here, with the adjective ἀνθρωπίνος, he is using it to refer to human judgment. Indeed, he does not even bother to “judge” himself, but he leaves this completely up to God on the final day, who, in spite of his sinfulness, will grant him mercy because he has fulfilled the condition of being an authentic believer in Jesus as the Messiah. And all that Paul wants to do in the present realm is pursue obedience to God’s truth with every fiber of his being.

In other words, Paul’s obsessing with his own moral and immoral condition will do no good, because, as he writes in Romans 7 & 8, his justification and salvation from God’s condemnation is completely an operation of God through Jesus’ death and the Holy Spirit’s work within him. As a result, Paul’s human responsibility is to proclaim the good news of Jesus as the Messiah clearly, accurately, and completely—while realizing that he remains a sinner who is in desperate need of God’s eternal mercy.

⁹⁰ οὐδὲν γὰρ ἑμαυτῷ σύνοιδα, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ δεδικαιώμαι, ὁ δὲ ἀνακρίνων με κύριός ἐστιν – As implied in the previous verse, Paul is leaving up the complete judgment of himself to God through Jesus as his Lord and Advocate at the judgment. God will also be the one who justifies and forgives him. In addition, even when he is not aware of something explicit that he has done wrong, this does not impress him, because he knows that God’s evaluation of him is based upon His looking at his inwardness that remains sinful in his flesh and yet that He has changed his heart and mind. He is a sinner in his defining moral essence, while he is good in the fundamental desires of his new heart.

Therefore, being evaluated by the pseudo-apostles and the Corinthians who are being influenced by them has no significance for him, because it has no bearing on his eternal destiny. Only God’s evaluation counts.

Thus, Paul wants no “loyalty” from people apart from their embracing the apostolic message that he presents them and their believing in the Crucified Messiah. If only we all could live like this, holding tightly to the truth instead of being so affected by people’s opinions of us and wanting to be known as associating with the popular people, including the popular pastors and their churches.

⁹¹ ὥστε μὴ πρὸ καιροῦ τι κρίνετε – There will be a season (καιρός) of judgment when God calls every human being to account before Him. This implies that not even Paul would presume to know each and every person’s eternal destiny. Only God knows this. It will be on the basis of God’s judgment of people when Jesus returns, along with the first resurrection, and when the millennial kingdom ends, along with the second resurrection, that the Corinthians will be able to judge these same people, only in the sense that they will observe God’s evaluation of human beings, which they then can adopt.

⁹² ἔως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος, ὃς καὶ φωτίσει τὰ κρυπτά τοῦ σκότους καὶ φανερώσει τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν – Because, ultimately, a person’s judgment and moral evaluation by God is a matter of the condition of his heart, whether or not it is characterized by authentic belief, Paul encourages his readers not to presume to assess another human being’s spiritual condition (τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν), i.e., as to whether or not it is biblically authentic. These are the “hidden things of darkness” (τὰ κρυπτά τοῦ σκότους) because they are inside a human being where no one else can see—except God. Thus, it will be the final judgment by God that determines a person’s eternal destiny and not anything that a human being, even Paul, would presume to know beforehand.

In other words, I do not think that Paul is using “darkness” to refer to the source or presence of evil within people, but simply to the place that cannot literally be seen within human beings, which is the same as their “hearts,” whether their “darkness” and “hearts” are good (circumcised by the Spirit or God) or evil (still as they were when they were born).

⁹³ καὶ τότε ὁ ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἐκάστῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ – There is nothing wrong with applauding one another as human beings for our accomplishments in the present realm. However, there can be an immoral content injected into our mutual applause by virtue of our inherent sinfulness, whereby we become obsessed with getting and giving applause in order to feel comfortable with ourselves. However, the biblical message states that only God’s praise is worthwhile, especially eternally worthwhile.

Cf. Romans 2:29, “But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.” Here, Paul is stating the theologically obvious, that the affirmation of being appropriately human comes from the Maker of human beings, not from other human beings. To be affirmed ultimately by created beings who derive their characteristics from another being, i.e., God, is nothing in comparison to having the Maker evaluate me.

This is comforting for authentic Bible teachers who may be accused by others of having impure motives, because yes, everyone is a combination of their sinful flesh and their good hearts, so that Bible teachers simply need to keep doing what they are doing in spite of their not being morally perfect, while also repenting of any pride, arrogance, and selfishness when God makes them aware of it. Hopefully this will allow them to guard against changing the gospel to make it more attractive so that they can become more popular and socially and intellectually respectable as pastors and Bible teachers.

⁹⁴ Ταῦτα δέ, ἀδελφοί, μετεσχημάτισα εἰς ἑμαυτὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν δι’ ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθῃτε τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν γέγραπται, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐνὸς φυσιοῦσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἐτέρου – Three options for what Paul means by “what has

been written” –

1) The Old Testament

2) NT-like documents by other biblical authors that the Corinthians possess

3) Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, and maybe just this letter and what he has said so far.

I think that #3 makes the most sense. Paul wants his readers to consider carefully what he is writing in this letter, because every word and every sentence is important for understanding the gospel.

Thus, Paul is looking back on his argument and basically saying that the biblical message, and what he has said in this letter so far, is stating that God deserves all the praise for any greatness found in man. To go beyond this message and ascribe greatness to ourselves on the basis of our self-accomplishments and talents, apart from taking into account that we receive everything from God, is just plain evil. If anyone would seem to have the right to brag about his accomplishments, it would be an apostle like Paul or one who is definitely proclaiming the apostolic message accurately like Apollos. Thus, Paul has used the two of them as examples of mere servants who are basically nothing in comparison to God (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:5-7). By doing so, Paul hopes to stop the competitive attitudes and actions of the Corinthians. By measuring their Christian worth on the basis of their teachers, the Corinthians are doing so by using creatures instead of the Creator and His icon, Jesus the Messiah. This use of human teachers as the measure of a person’s value as a Christian is worldly at best and diabolical at worst.

In addition, the Corinthians have taken what Paul has taught them and “gone beyond it” by thinking they now actually know better than Paul, so that they are resistant to him and his message. Indeed, as Paul goes on to say in the next verse, they consider themselves superior to him.

Paul uses the word *φουσιώω* (=to have an exaggerated self-image and self-conception) only six times in 1 Corinthians and once in Colossians. Obviously, the Corinthian gathering of Christians have become conceited and arrogant about their supposed status and superiority as they identify with certain Christian teachers and pursue more aggressively certain practices, such as speaking in tongues and foreign languages (as chapters 12-14 point out).

⁹⁵ τίς γάρ σε διακρίνει; τί δὲ ἔχεις ὁ οὐκ ἔλαβες; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔλαβες, τί καυχᾶσαι ὡς μὴ λαβὼν – Paul is asking the Corinthians if it really makes sense that they grant one human being the status of true, authentic greatness based on this person’s accomplishments and talents when everything he does and has is a gift from God? In this case, the Corinthians have received all they know of the truth from Paul, but now they are criticizing him and consider themselves more knowledgeable than he is! How quickly even Christians think that their Christianity is something they alone have done instead of God’s having caused them to do it, even that they are more knowledgeable of the gospel than these apostles (Paul, Peter) and their apostolic co-workers (Apollos). To overlook the dynamic that exists between the Creator and the creature, between the Author of the cosmic story and the characters within the story, is to ignore the most fundamental element of the nature of reality. And to overlook the significance of being taught by an apostle so that one starts criticizing him while thinking that he has superior knowledge in comparison to that of the apostle, is also a distorted view of reality.

⁹⁶ ἤδη κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ, ἤδη ἐπλουτήσατε, χωρὶς ἡμῶν ἐβασιλεύσατε – It could be that Paul is assuring the Corinthians that they do not need any higher status in the present realm than what they already possess, that they have achieved from God the status of “kings” (especially “kings” to come in the future when Jesus returns) through His providing them with the knowledge and understanding of the biblical message and by His changing them inwardly independently of being associated with any other human beings, including the apostles but, obviously, except for Jesus. But another option is that Paul is being ironic, because in v. 14 he tells the Corinthians that his intent is not to shame them, but it is to admonish them. They think that they are full, rich, and have become kings—of the gospel, and more knowledgeable than Paul. However, of course they have not.

I lean towards the first option, that Paul wants these Christians to consider their current status and destiny, that it is full, rich, and king-like because of what God has done within them and will do with them in the future.

⁹⁷ καὶ ὄφελόν γε ἐβασιλεύσατε, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν συμβασιλεύσωμεν – Indeed, Paul is looking forward to his own existence in the first part of the eternal Kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom on this earth, where he will reign with Jesus over all of it. Therefore, he would not mind at all if God would bring an end to the present realm, so that all believers could enjoy this role and status with Jesus in this first part of the Kingdom of God. Cf. Romans 5:17, “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

⁹⁸ δοκῶ γάρ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν ὡς ἐπιθανατίους, ὅτι θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις – With the first-person plural pronoun, Paul has been referring vaguely and specifically, depending upon the context, to all the apostles, to himself as an apostle, and to Apollos as an apostolic co-worker. Here, he uses the very word “apostles” (τοὺς ἀποστόλους), among whom he is included, i.e., “us apostles.” Paul is saying that the Christians who ought to have the most status, the apostles, actually have the least status, because God has slated them for the worst public mistreatment, persecution, and even perhaps execution in the present realm as a result of other people’s sinfulness and inherent hostility to the biblical message (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 6:4-10). Thus, the apostles, along with Jesus of course, became an appropriate object lesson of the reception of the gospel by the world to all thinking beings within the created reality, to men and angels, and of God’s intentions and purposes for those who embrace the truth in the present realm. The most important people, Jesus and the apostles, became most

dispensable and mistreated. Should not the Corinthians consider themselves likewise instead of viewing themselves as superior the way they are now?

⁹⁹ ἡμεῖς μορφοὶ διὰ Χριστόν. ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ· ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰσχυροί· ὑμεῖς ἐνδοξοί, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτιμοι – As the vanguard of the proclamation of the NT message, the apostles typically are the first to encounter the opposition of rebellious humanity, who consider them morons, fools, and “last” as persons of status.

Paul could be saying that those who respond positively to the apostles and the apostolic message are treated less harshly by the world than the apostles, at least in the case of the Corinthians, so that the Corinthians have become wise, strong, and honored in the world compared to the apostles who appear to be fools, weak, and dishonored by the world. However, the better option in the light of v. 14 is that Paul is being ironic. The Corinthians think that they are wise, strong, and honored (by each other and the false apostles of chapter 11), when they should consider themselves as following in the footsteps of the apostles and being “morons for the sake of Christ,” slated for mistreatment by the world like the apostles—if they genuinely hold to the truth of the apostolic message.

¹⁰⁰ ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ πεινώμεν καὶ διωκόμεν καὶ γυμνιτεύομεν καὶ κολαφιζόμεθα καὶ ἀστατοῦμεν – Now Paul narrows his definition of “apostles” to his traveling associates, like Sosthenes, and himself, and he lists the difficult experiences that they have had because of the apostolic responsibility that God has given to him. Harsh treatment by unbelievers (and even by the natural elements of the creation – cf. chapter 11) simply comes with the territory of being an apostle.

Cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 6:3-10; 11:21-33.

¹⁰¹ καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν· λοιδορούμενοι εὐλογοῦμεν, διωκόμενοι ἀνεχόμεθα – Continuing with the list of experiences that his apostolic co-workers and he have encountered, Paul considers it important to mention that they have not been financially dependent on the Corinthian and other Christian communities. In addition, they have sought to encourage people who speak ill of them to embrace the message of Jesus as the Messiah in order to qualify for eternal life. They also persevere in their own belief while being treated with hostility and violence by non-believers.

¹⁰² ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ πεινώμεν καὶ διωκόμεν καὶ γυμνιτεύομεν καὶ κολαφιζόμεθα καὶ ἀστατοῦμεν καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν· λοιδορούμενοι εὐλογοῦμεν, διωκόμενοι ἀνεχόμεθα, δυσφημούμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν ὡς περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν, πάντων περίφημα ἕως ἄρτι – Here is a nice list of how lowly in status Paul and the other apostolic co-workers find themselves in the present realm. In the midst of people telling lies about them, they treat it like water off a duck’s back and continue to promote the truth about Jesus and encourage others to believe it. In the world’s eyes, the apostolic co-workers and Paul are the scum of the earth, the dregs of society, and the refuse that needs cleaning up from a dirty floor and discarded—according to the world! Again, what is being examined by the Corinthians in order that they pick which Bible teacher they follow and according to whom they define their Christianity when they are so harshly treated by the rest of the world and unbelievers?

¹⁰³ οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς γράφω ταῦτα ἀλλ’ ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νοουθετῶν – Paul can see that someone might want to interpret what he is saying as his attempt simply to get the Corinthians to feel bad about themselves. However, he assures them that his statements and explanations are merely informative and exhortative, to help and encourage the Corinthians to live out the NT message accurately, to stop thinking of themselves as superior to the apostles (or to anyone else) and then to be willing to follow their example and become rejected by the world as they are. Plus, Paul feels particularly close to the Corinthians because they originally became believers through his efforts and actions as the first one to present to them the ideas about Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, which he will mention in the next verse.

Acts 18 presents the story of Paul’s initial interaction with the Corinthians.

¹⁰⁴ ἐὰν γὰρ μυρίους παιδαγωγοὺς ἔχητε ἐν Χριστῷ ἀλλ’ οὐ πολλοὺς πατέρας· ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα – Paul does have a special relationship with the Corinthians, because he was the first to proclaim the NT message to them, as explained in Acts 18, and they responded with belief. As a result, he feels responsible for their spiritual well-being, even though he is the first to admit that only “God causes the growth” (3:7). But having the right information about God and Jesus as the Messiah is still vital for the spiritual health of those who embrace the gospel.

Paul also is saying that many people have come to them to teach them about Jesus, but this does not diminish or eliminate the kind of relationship that he has with them as the first person to speak to them about this. He is their spiritual father and they are likewise his spiritual children. Thus, having many teachers is good. And having Paul as their spiritual “father” is good, too, as they consider how they should continue living out their Christianity before God. And all this is “in the Messiah,” which is to say within the context of everyone’s association with Jesus as the Messiah.

¹⁰⁵ παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε – Because Paul was the first human being to speak to the Corinthians about the Jewish Messiah, and on the basis of what he has been saying about himself regarding being an authoritative apostle, he wants them to imitate him. This is pretty gutsy on his part, but only because he is an apostle. It would not be appropriate for anyone else to encourage people to model their Christianity and obedience to God, because none of the rest of us can say with 100% confidence that we are following the pure apostolic message, the exact same one that Jesus himself would teach if he were on earth now.

Thus, Paul wants them to shun any need for status, praise, and applause from man as a means to feeling good about

themselves. Paul has accepted the lowest status available to human beings as granted by human beings, because he is serving the person with the highest status *within* the creation, Jesus the Messiah. And Paul wants the Corinthians to imitate him to the point that they are willing to be mistreated by the world as both Jesus and he have been.

¹⁰⁶ Διὰ τοῦτο ἐπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον, ὃς ἐστὶν μου τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν καὶ πιστὸν ἐν κυρίῳ, ὃς ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω – Perhaps the Corinthians interpreted Paul’s sending Timothy as a ploy to garner their loyalty and draw followers of Apollos and Kephas away from these other teachers. But Paul’s purpose was to encourage them to imitate him for the sole purpose of following Jesus as the Messiah. Timothy was not a ploy. He was an apostolic co-worker and messenger.

Timothy was also like the Corinthians, in that Paul was the first to present the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah to him. As a result, Paul became his spiritual father. Paul considers Timothy to understand the apostolic message as well as he does and to be as faithful to the task of presenting it to the Gentiles as he is. Lastly, Paul supports the consistency of Timothy’s message and actions with the consistency of his message and actions wherever he goes and in whatever Gentile group he serves for the sake of Jesus as the Messiah.

Again this is all “in the Lord” and “in the Messiah,” i.e., in conjunction with Jesus as the most important person in the history of the cosmos. It is he whom people follow, not any of his “teachers” and/or “apostles.” The latter only convey the message about him and then get out of the way for each individual to believe in and obey Jesus as God’s Messiah.

¹⁰⁷ ὥς μὴ ἐρχομένου δέ μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐφυσιώθησάν τινες – Some of the Corinthians, perhaps considering who really looked like a strong leader worthy to follow, thought that Paul was weak, especially because he had not come to them again for a while. Therefore, in their minds, he was too weak to come to them himself and seek their loyalty. Thus, he was not worth following if he was not going to be a strong leader. Maybe they think that they will probably never see Paul again.

As a result, Paul thinks of these misguided Christians as have a exaggerated view of themselves, as if they, and not he, are the experts in the gospel of Jesus as the Messiah.

¹⁰⁸ ἐλεύσομαι δὲ ταχέως πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ, καὶ γνώσομαι οὐ τὸν λόγον τῶν πεφυσιωμένων ἀλλὰ τὴν δυνάμιν – Paul puts the onus on God, and rightly so. He always wants to visit the various Christians who have become such through his carrying out his responsibility as the apostle to the Gentiles. However, God is the one who is ultimately directing his steps and leading him where He wants Him to go. As a result, if it truly is the will of God, Paul will get back to Corinth as soon as possible.

In addition, Paul has been emphasizing the importance of knowing the correct, apostolic message of a Crucified Messiah that does not accommodate any worldly ideas of competing leaders based upon the loyalty that they can solicit from their followers. This knowledge requires proper reasoning, so that Paul sounds as though he is contradicting himself here by saying that thinking/reasoning is not important. However, he is saying that reasoning alone is not that of which the Kingdom of God consists. It consists of both right thinking and the effect of right thinking—right living that can occur only if God causes it by the working of His Holy Spirit within human beings. Therefore, when Paul comes, if the Corinthians are pursuing their divisive tendencies of following different human teachers instead of following only Jesus, then they are clearly mistaken with respect to the biblical message. This is what he will be looking for. He wants them to demonstrate the effectiveness of the apostolic message by their being unified in their following Jesus and carrying for each and every one of them together as a group, so that they see each other as equally qualified for entering the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns.

Cf. chapter 3:5-17 and building on the foundation of Jesus the Messiah with people who end up being wood, hay, and straw or gold, silver, and precious stones. Also, cf. chapter 5 and 1 Corinthians 14:14 regarding the fruitfulness of the mind of the teacher, whether he is accurately and clearly conveying the apostolic message or not with its effect of allegiance solely to Jesus and to no other human being.

Or Paul could be referring to God’s displaying His power through the apostles only by means of miracles. Are those who think they are superior to Paul performing miracles that verify their apostleship? Obviously not, and so when Paul comes again to Corinth, this will be a clear difference between him and them. These miracles provide Paul with the credentials which he needs to affirm that he is a true apostle and therefore were for that time period only. Now Bible teachers should point other students of the Bible to Paul and his fellow apostles along with their credentials of the miracles. This should be sufficient, rather than thinking that God must credential present day teachers and Christians with these same kinds of miracles.

But I still think that the first option above is correct. In addition, it is more coherent with 4:21. Paul wants to see an effect of the message of their teachers that is centered in Jesus and his teaching through the apostles and thereby unites the believers in their following one leader—Jesus! He does not want to see people wandering away from one another through allegiance to different teachers and wandering off into behavior that is not in accordance with the gospel of Jesus, the latter being what Paul goes on to address in the ensuing chapters.

¹⁰⁹ οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει – Repeating the same idea as in the previous verse.

¹¹⁰ τί θέλετε; ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματι τε πραΰτητος – This verse begins the second of three issues which Paul is addressing, having heard about them from Chloe’s people. This involves a man who is having sexual relations outside of marriage with his father’s (second) wife as something which dishonors not only God, but also the father (and the Corinthian Christian community).

It is the Corinthians’ choice as to what Paul’s response to them will be when he arrives in Corinth. If they obey the

apostolic message and follow only one leader, Jesus the Messiah, then he can be gentle and encouraging toward them. If they obey the false message of the false teachers and divide up on the basis of which teacher they prefer, then he will have to rebuke them for their error and foolishness. And if they choose not to deal with the following issue, also, then Paul will have to chastise them lovingly rather than being able to be gentle towards them. Plus, there are eternal ramifications for not dealing properly with their sin. Again, God will destroy anyone who allows sin to lead a community of believers away from God and following Jesus as the Messiah.

¹¹¹ πορνεία – Transliterated, this word is *porneia*, from which it can be seen that we get our word pornography. Considering all the 24 verses where this word is used in the NT, it always means sexual immorality, i.e., sexual intercourse between two people who are not married.

Here is another example, besides the competitive factionism which Paul has discussed in chapters 1-4, of how not grasping well the implications of having Jesus the Messiah as the foundation of the building of theology and people results in improper living by Christians and a distorted view of biblical morality. And at the route of condoning any sin is pride and arrogance, as Paul points out in the context.

¹¹² Ὅλως ἀκούεται ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία, καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔσται, ὥστε γυναικὰ τινὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν – So Paul now moves on to a second problematic issue that he has heard about from Chloe's people within the community of believers at Corinth. Nevertheless, because of the flow of chapters 1-6, he is indicating that this issue exists because they have chosen to compete with one another through their allegiance to various human teachers and the status each one offers. The result is that they have clouded their moral judgment on how they should live their lives. Notice that Paul does not use a δὲ or a καὶ as he begins a new topic (cf. 6:1,12). And somehow even he has heard about this case of immorality.

Possibilities for what the problem is –

- 1) a son is having sexual relations with his father's second wife, i.e, with his stepmother, who in that culture probably was a young woman anyway
- 2) a son has married his mother (Oedipus?)
- 3) a son has married his stepmother.

Option #1 seems the most likely, but whatever the case, it would be hard to shock the citizens of Corinth with something that they would consider immorality because of the existing moral climate that encouraged temple prostitution and condoned homosexuality. So this had to be something really strange.

Here, "Gentiles" probably refers simply to pagans, those who worship false gods and have categorically rejected biblical morality. Paul is saying that the immoral conduct of this young man who is dishonoring both his father and his stepmother in this manner, is something pagan idolators would not even accept. EBC – a man has married his stepmother, while "rabbinic law allowed such a marriage by a proselyte, because his becoming a proselyte broke all bonds of relationship."

What about the NT message would provide these people with a rationale for such immoral behavior's being acceptable before God? Probably nothing unless it were some weird conclusion from the commandment to love one another, and this young man and sharing is father's wife (or having a new "wife") results in their all believing that they are doing just exactly this. However, it does seem that Paul is intimating that this immoral behavior has come about because of their competing with one another on the basis of their favorite teachers. As a result, it has become a matter of status for the whole community. Perhaps this is a wealthy family, while most of the Corinthian Christians are rather poor and humble, and they all are willing to turn a blind eye because they are excited to have a citizen of such prominence in their Christian community who is bringing respectability and prestige to them. And this is preventing them as even authentic believers from seeing morality clearly, even though they are all claiming to be followers of Jesus as the Messiah.

Whatever the correct details are, it certainly is disappointing that "Christians" are acting in and condoning such immoral behavior that unbelievers would not even allow in that culture.

¹¹³ καὶ ὑμεῖς πεφουσιωμένοι ἐστὲ καὶ οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐπενθήσατε, ἵνα ἀρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας – Cf. **Genesis 35:2**, So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments (LXX – ἄρατε τοὺς θεοὺς τοὺς ἄλλοτριούς τοὺς μεθ' ὑμῶν ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν)."

Cf. notes at 5:13 regarding statements in Deuteronomy indicating that the Israelites were supposed to eliminate, even execute, anyone who contaminated the community of Israel with their willful rebellion against God, in order to keep the community free from external immorality.

In this case in Corinth, Paul is not talking about executing the immoral man but confronting his immoral behavior and him within the context of the NT message of forgiveness, mercy, and eternal life. This community of probably mostly Gentile Christians is not a political nation, and it is not the Jewish political nation. It is an eclectic group of like-minded followers of a crucified Jewish king whose kingdom will be set up in eternity at the end of the present realm, even while the Jewish believers look forward to God's fulfilling His promise to their ethnic group to establish the Kingdom of Israel on their land when the Messiah returns. Thus, Paul is speaking metaphorically and referring to making it clear to this man that what he is doing is not biblically acceptable. In addition, it is the pride of claiming to belong to the group with a particular teacher as its identifying mark that is leading the whole community of believers in Corinth to allow the pride and arrogance to affect their moral judgment, so that they are avoiding the step of being genuinely and

lovingly disappointed in this man's immoral behavior. Thus, they too are not living out the gospel correctly. The inference is that anything that distorts the apostolic message so as to elevate human structural elements of the Christian community, such as people dividing themselves according to their favorite teacher, etc., will also distort their moral judgment.

The word φουσιώω = be arrogant, proud is used three times in chapter 4 in regard to the divisive teachers. Here, the community's "pride"/"arrogance" has led them to rationalize obvious sin instead of confronting it and getting rid of it to the extent that they can. Or at least calling it for what it is—sin.

¹¹⁴ ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, τ ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον – Assuming that Paul's information is correct, he has concluded that the man's sexual immorality should be dealt with appropriately, as though Paul were actually there in Corinth to do so. This is another way that he is exercising his apostolic authority. In other words, the fact that Paul has reached a decision about what to do means that the Corinthian Christians should reach the same decision—because he is an apostle! A Christian who is not an apostle could not say this with the same weight of importance in this matter.

¹¹⁵ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ – Here is Paul putting it explicitly. He wants the Corinthian Christians to think of the apostolic, NT message from Jesus that calls for genuine repentance along with pursuit of morality in light of God's eternal mercy. He also wants them to act on this message, which would be to behave in such a way that it is as though he, Paul, is present with them. Indeed, it would be as though Jesus is there, too, because the apostolic message presented by the apostle Paul carries the same weight as if Jesus himself were present and speaking. Thus, Paul wants these Christians to adopt all the same values and standards of behavior as those of Jesus. This is the to act "with the effectiveness of our Lord Jesus (σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ)," where δύναμις is not power per se, but the effect of the "power" of the gospel message in exhorting people to pursue biblical morality and avoid sin as much as possible.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 4:19.

¹¹⁶ παραδόναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου – Traditional interpretation is that this refers to at least excommunication from the community and eventually physical death as the consequence of this young man's immoral behavior. An interpretation that makes more sense in the light of the apostolic message of God's mercy is that Paul is talking about considering this young man an unbeliever who needs to face into the depth of his sinfulness like any other human being—whether or not he is actually an unbeliever. If and when this young man grasps the seriousness of his immoral behavior, he will become humble and repentant of all his fleshly immorality, with the result that he will appeal to God for eternal mercy.

This naturally is Paul's hope for this person. Therefore, Paul is speaking metaphorically about "handing the person over to Satan" for the "destruction of his flesh." Also, to hand someone over to the adversary is simply to assume that the person is being willfully rebellious toward God in league with the ultimate rebel, Satan (the spirit of the age, i.e., Satan and the influence that he has had in the world such that there has always been a large collection of rebellious human beings with their effect of creating an atmosphere within societies whereby people are encouraged to rebel against God). Therefore, Paul wants this person to acknowledge just how evil he is, in accordance with Satan's plans and purposes to lead people away from God in their sinful behavior, and then to repent of his sin for the sake of his eternal salvation.

Is Paul possibly referring to the Flood event? Cf. Genesis 6:17.

EBC – "Though Paul teaches church excommunication here and a deliverance to Satan for physical punishment with a view to repentance, he does not say that the man should divorce his stepmother. This would be in accord with the scriptural teaching that marriage is an indissoluble bond (Gen 2:24)." [What?]

¹¹⁷ Ὅτι καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν. οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ἔζυμοι – Are the Corinthian Christians bragging about this man's immorality? Probably not. It makes more sense in the context that their arrogant boasting about which teacher they are following is spilling over into other areas of life in their community. The result is that they are not dealing properly with this particular immorality, because their pridefulness and competitiveness have clouded their moral judgment and made them insensitive to immorality and its ultimate consequences. Plus, this man must be bringing a level of respectability to their Christian community because of his social status and wealth, which is leading to their bragging about having him as a member of their group. See v. 2 regarding their being "proud."

Their arrogance is like yeast in a lump of dough. A little yeast spreads throughout the whole lump, leavening it, and will cause it to rise when it is baked. In this case, their arrogance has spread throughout their entire Corinthian Christian community, changing it into one that does not properly recognize immorality and the distortion of the apostolic message that has occurred.

¹¹⁸ ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην, ἵνα ᾗτε νέον φύραμα, καθὼς ἐστε ἄζυμοι – The Corinthians have chosen to act with a worldly mentality (leavened bread) with respect to not only their teachers but also this particular situation of sin within their Christian community. Thus, Paul encourages them to abandon their worldliness in order to obey God properly, i.e., to be unleavened bread themselves and to separate themselves intellectually, spiritually, and morally from the world that is in rebellion against God.

Paul uses the metaphor that God required of the Israelites the night before they left Egypt and during the celebration of the Passover from that point on. Cf. Exodus 12:14, 15, "Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to Yahweh; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. Seven

days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.”

Obviously, Paul has taught these Corinthian, Gentile Christians about the exodus from Egypt along with the Mosaic Covenant and its meaning, using the concept of being cut off from the people of Israel to illustrate being cut off from the eternal Kingdom of God for people who reject the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah. Paul, therefore, expects his readers to draw upon what he has taught them on this subject. He wants them to interpret his exhortation in such a way that they respond properly to obvious rebellion against God on the part of this young man and even on their part by eliminating the distortion of the apostolic message with its accompanying arrogance from their thinking, so that they can perform clear, moral judgment. In this way, not only is their thinking pure, so to speak, but so also is their behavior.¹¹⁹ καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἔτύθη Χριστός – Paul goes on to use the Passover metaphor to label Jesus as the NT sacrificial lamb whose blood provides escape from the angel of eternal death, just as the blood of the Passover lambs in Egypt that was smeared on the doorposts of the Israelites’ homes saved them from the angel of physical death that God brought about in the whole land of Egypt. It is this that should motivate the Corinthian Christians and Paul to pursue morality at the highest biblical level as that which exemplifies their changed hearts with authentic belief.

¹²⁰ ὥστε ἐορτάζωμεν μὴ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ μηδὲ ἐν ζύμῃ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀζύμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας – Continuing with the Passover metaphor, Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to celebrate Jesus’ sacrificial death on their behalf and the resultant blood that saves them from eternal condemnation by their single-minded pursuit of following only Jesus as their teacher through the apostles as his authoritative spokesmen. Just as the Israelites celebrate the Passover without leaven in their bread, so also the Corinthian Christians should celebrate Jesus without the “yeast of evil and wickedness” in their behavior. It is following only Jesus’ teachings and putting only him on a pedestal that will result in the proper pursuit of repentance, morality, and identifying and dealing with any kind of sin for exactly what it is. This is in contrast to the intellectual and moral distortions brought about by their arrogantly dividing themselves according to their favorite teachers.

¹²¹ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις – In an earlier letter, which we do not have, Paul had encouraged the Corinthian Christians not to be like-minded and like-acting with people of the world who were not concerned about evil and immorality. Therefore, this is actually 2 Corinthians.

¹²² οὐ πάντως τοῖς πόρνοις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἢ τοῖς πλεονέκταις καὶ ἄρπαξιν ἢ εἰδωολάτραις, ἐπεὶ ὠφείλετε ἄρα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελεῖν – Paul emphasizes the importance of not imitating the lifestyles of immoral people in the present realm by listing particular ways that people willfully engage in rebellion against God. Then, Paul reminds the Corinthians that they were obligated to abandon the sin in their own lives that corresponded to the behavior of their culture, the worldly religious system of unbelievers, when they first became believers in Jesus as the Messiah. Just as the Israelites physically left Egypt and its pagan idolatry, so also Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to leave the worldly thinking of their pagan culture and adopt only the ideas of the New Testament message of Jesus as the Messiah.

The πλεονέκταις are so self-absorbed and selfish that there are no boundaries to their getting what they want. It means to act and live beyond the appropriate moral boundaries that God has established for us in the Bible. Cf. 1 Corinthians 5:10,11; 6:10 and Ephesians 5:5.

The ἄρπαξιν are so controlled by their insatiable physical desires that they pursue satisfying them without any regard to biblical morality.

The εἰδωολάτραις seek to find satisfaction in only the things of the creation and not in the Creator.

¹²³ νῦν δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι ἐάν τις ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος – Paul wrote a previous letter regarding staying clear of the worldly thinking and behavior of their culture. Now he is writing to them in this letter to stay clear of the thinking and immoral behavior of a supposed, individual Christian within the Christian community who is pursuing the same kind of immorality as the world. Thus, because of their moral obligation to abandon the mindset and lifestyle of abject unbelievers in the world who are willfully rebelling against God with sinful behavior, the Corinthians are likewise being exhorted by Paul not to condone the mindset of this individual who claims to be a Christian and, yet, is willfully pursuing immorality.

Cf. 2 Thess. 3:14 – If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not get tangled up with him (καὶ μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι αὐτῷ), so that he will be put to shame (ἵνα ἐντραπῇ).

The word συναναμίγνυμι both here and in 2 Thessalonians 3:14 means to join in someone’s activity by condoning it and even supporting it through being in relationship with the person such that it seems clear that one has no problem with the way the person is acting.

¹²⁴ ἢ πόρνος ἢ πλεονέκτης ἢ εἰδωολάτρης ἢ λοιδόρος ἢ μέθυσος ἢ ἄρπαξ, τῷ τοιούτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν – Paul again lists various examples of immorality in the Corinthian culture.

Again, πλεονέκτης and εἰδωολάτρης and ἄρπαξ mean the same as above.

The word λοιδόρος means slanderer to lie about other people’s behavior to make it seem as though they are immoral, when in fact as Christians they are probably very moral.

The word μέθυσος refers to someone who is using alcohol to dull their inner pain instead of facing into their sin, repenting before God, and seeking His forgiveness and strength to deal with their pain without resorting to drugs.

Two possibilities for what Paul means by not eating with a so-called brother who is clearly pursuing immorality. In the light of the fact that sharing a meal in that culture was considered an act of genuine friendship and like-mindedness

Continuing with the theme of misperception of good and evil on the part of prideful, divided people, who have created rivalries within their Christian group by following particular human teachers, Paul asks the Corinthians if they really think that it is in line with the gospel to take their intra-Christian-community conflicts to non-believers for a proper legal decision. It must be that their pride and arrogance in their competing with one another on the basis of their teachers is also obscuring the moral judgment when it comes to how they should deal with those whom they consider to have hurt them within the Christian community. Therefore, Paul is also encouraging them to subdue their pride by implying that only people who have been inwardly changed by God have the ability to discern properly the biblical and actual difference between good and evil and settle any differences between Christians who have hurt one another in some way.

¹²⁹ ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ ἄγιοι τὸν κόσμον κρινούσιν – Paul now says explicitly that a divinely changed inwardness provides Christians with the ability to see clearly what is good and what is evil in the present world. Indeed, the inference is that only Christians can do this relatively accurately, because continued commitment to rebelling against God will also lead to a misunderstanding of morality.

Or, if the verb is future and referring to the millennial kingdom, then Paul is saying that believers will act as judges during the kingdom while reigning with Jesus (cf. Revelation 20:4-5, 4 ...and they came to life and reigned with the Messiah for a thousand years (καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη). 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.).

I am inclined to think that the second option is correct, that Paul is encouraging the Corinthian Christians to settle their legal disputes among one another in the light of the role that they will play in the restored Kingdom of God when Jesus returns and they help settle legal disputes among sinners during that period of time on the present earth.

¹³⁰ καὶ εἰ ἐν ὑμῖν κρίνεται ὁ κόσμος, ἀνάξιοί ἐστε κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων – Paul’s argument to these Corinthians is that, because they are on the same page as the One who understands justice, goodness, and evil the best, God, they should be able to settle conflicts between themselves as they continue to consider what is good and right. It is not that they themselves will provide the final judgment of the world, but that their kind of insight that comes from God’s changing them and therefore belongs to God Himself will be the standard by which God will provide this final judgment.

Thus, these Corinthian Christians will have the divinely given insight to understand where the world is being obedient to God and where it is not, morally speaking, and will exercise a level of judgment in this regard during the restored Kingdom of Israel. Then why not now do their own evaluation of their disputes among one another, so that they settle these matters properly?

Paul also refers to their complaints against one another as small, indeed the smallest, compared to the issues that God will address at the final judgment that will determine people’s eternal destiny.

¹³¹ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ἀγγέλους κρινόμεν, μήτι γε βιωτικά – The word ἀγγέλους is not easy to interpret—angels, messengers, or messages? Assuming the “messages” pertain to the truth of sinful human beings’ eternal destiny and are the expressions of truth that “set apart ones” should have more ability to discern and understand than unbelievers, this seems more coherent with the previous statement.

Thus, believers have the ability to evaluate relatively accurately (completely accurately if they happen to be apostles!) the messages of those who claim to bring biblical truth to them. Therefore, why should they not be able to discern good and evil in the midst of the normal things that arise in the lives of human beings, so that they can provide an appropriate decision when the matter involves a dispute between believers in their Christian community?

Cf. Luke 9:51,52 regarding his use of ἀγγέλους for “messengers.” Also Cf. 2 Chronicles 36:15,16. Consequently, ἀγγέλους = messengers is a metonymy for the messages which messengers present.

Even though the tense is future, Paul is talking about the content of truth in comparison to the complaints and disputes in the everyday lives of the Corinthian Christians. They constitute a kind of messenger similar to the Genesis passages to which Paul refers in 1 Corinthians 11, especially v. 10.

¹³² βιωτικά μὲν οὖν κριτήρια ἐὰν ἔχητε, τοὺς ἐξουθενήμενους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, τούτους καθίζετε – Paul wonders why the Corinthian Christians would want people, who have no desire for understanding the biblical definition of good vs. evil and right vs. wrong, so that they are rejected by God, to help them settle their *moral* disputes with one another. The pagan, unbelieving judges of the Roman court system operate on the basis of completely different moral values from the Corinthian Christians. This makes them much less capable of helping authentic Christians to settle their moral differences with one another.

¹³³ πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λέγω – Paul explicitly says that their situation should be, in the final analysis, embarrassing when it comes to their general purpose in life as Christians, who are intended to follow Jesus only and not earthly teachers, as well as to settle their own disputes because of the intellectual and moral capability that they have been granted by God—in contrast to the moral intellectual capability of unbelievers.

¹³⁴ οὕτως οὐκ ἐνὶ ἐν ὑμῖν οὐδεὶς σοφός, ὃς δυνήσεται διακρίναι ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ – Paul says that it is as though they all lack sufficient wisdom to discern between good and evil, which is completely contrary to the effect that God has on people when He changes them inwardly. There has to be at least one Christian among them who can provide good advice and moral counsel in their disputes with one another.

¹³⁵ ἀλλὰ ἀδελφὸς μετὰ ἀδελφοῦ κρίνεται καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἀπίστων – Christians are relying on non-Christians to mediate in moral matters and conflicts between them. This makes no sense to Paul in the light of what God does to

sinful human beings when He changes their inwardness and, thereby, grants them an openness and desire to discern authentic good and evil in their own lives, i.e. in the lives of Christians.

¹³⁶ ἤδη μὲν οὖν ὅλως ἥτιςμα ὑμῖν ἐστὶν ὅτι κρίματα ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν – Certainly Paul would not claim that seeking justice when wronged is immoral. Therefore, it must be the whole atmosphere that the Corinthian Christians have created by competing with one another through choosing teachers, ignoring or rationalizing obvious sin, and now dragging each other before unbelieving judges to settle their legal disputes.

Therefore, it is not their seeking to right their wrongs that concerns him. It is probably the harsh and critical, in other words, unforgiving, environment that they have created in their desperate need to get justice.

Thus, by bringing their disputes before non-believers in hopes of each one winning the case, they have already moved into a lose-lose situation, regardless of who wins the court battle. He is saying that allowing disagreements between themselves to escalate into full-blown disputes that result in going to court among unbelievers reveals their lack of desire to love and forgive one another, whether or not they win their disputes and are vindicated for their opinions or actions.

¹³⁷ διὰ τί οὐχὶ μάλλον ἀδικεῖσθε διὰ τί οὐχὶ μάλλον ἀποστερεῖσθε – Paul's apostolic perspective is that it is better for Christians to submit to being wronged by other Christians, rather than making such a huge deal out of their conflicts with one another that they become harsh and critical towards their fellow Christians and even seek justice by asking unbelievers to determine who is right and who is wrong, and to decide what to do to settle the situation. This antagonistic and combative atmosphere is just wrong in that they have allowed their conflicts to escalate to this point and taken such measures outside the community of believers.

Therefore, overall, it is better to experience injustice in the present realm than seek justice among fellow believers by having non-believers mediate between believers, because God will balance the scales of justice in the end at the final judgment. In addition, it is better to practice love and forgiveness as God has done so towards us.

¹³⁸ ἀλλὰ ὑμεῖς ἀδικεῖτε καὶ ἀποστερεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ἀδελφούς – Paul is labeling these Christians' aggressive pursuit of settling their intra-Christian-community disputes with unbelievers as their judges as treating each other unjustly and engaging in swindling and cheating one another, because they are ignoring what God has done within them when He granted them the desire and ability to learn the biblical understanding of good and evil, which enables them to settle their disputes themselves.

He also implying that unbelievers will not discern entirely correctly what is just in this situation involving two Christians, so that the result will necessarily be some level of injustice and fraud.

¹³⁹ ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν – Here Paul draws on all three issues of chapters 1-6 and says that the Corinthians' dismissive attitude towards him, their cavalier attitude towards the sexual immorality of the man of chapter 5, and their rivalistic and combative behavior of chapter 6 are not only clouding their moral judgment, but also causing them to look like abject unbelievers who are rebelling against God. Their aggressively bringing lawsuits against one another where unbelievers are their judges is not only immoral, but it is also leading to their misdiscerning the moral quality of certain other behaviors.

One of the important concepts that authentic believers are supposed to grasp with such clarity is that they will do all they can to avoid evil and wrongdoing in their lives and keep themselves from mistreating others. Otherwise, they will not obtain life in the eternal Kingdom of God, whether they are harsh towards them, even if they have wronged them, or they mistreat them by engaging in any one of the sinful actions which Paul will go on to list in this verse and v. 10 that include the issues of chapters 1-5.

The Kingdom of God is based upon goodness and mercy, and authentic Christians should pursue these relentlessly in the present realm. The inference that Paul's readers can draw from what he is saying is that the way that they are treating each other is bad enough to call into question the authenticity of their belief, because their behavior is no different from that in which they engaged out of rebellion against God before they became believers.

A cavalier towards any sin is disqualification from the Kingdom of God, so that Christians should make sure that they pursuing acting in line with God's moral commandments in all areas of their lives.

¹⁴⁰ μὴ πλανᾶσθε· οὐτε πόρνοι οὐτε εἰδωλόλατραι οὐτε μοιχοὶ οὐτε μαλακοὶ οὐτε ἀρσενοκοῖται – Our natural tendency as sinful human beings is to convince ourselves that our personal evil is not as bad as it is. Thus, we willfully deceive ourselves to our eternal destruction.

πόρνοι = sexual immorality between unmarried persons

εἰδωλόλατραι = looking to the creation instead of the Creator for our sense of well-being in this realm

μοιχοὶ = sexual immorality when married

μαλακοὶ = those who passively give in to homosexuality; there is not excuse for not aggressively avoiding any sin

ἀρσενοκοῖται = those who actively pursue homosexuality

A catamite is a boy kept for homosexual practices by an older but young man. A pederast is the young man who engages in homosexual activity with a younger boy. This practice seems to have been accepted within Greek culture even prior to the first century A.D.

¹⁴¹ οὐτε κλέπται οὐτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοιδοροὶ, οὐχ ἄρπαγες βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν – The Corinthians' prideful and competitive behavior is as immoral as the litany of immoral behaviors that Paul presents here, some of which even non-believers would admit are immoral. Thus, their pursuit of loyalty to human beings other than Jesus has distorted their whole perspective on morality.

κλέπται = those who steal the property of others—money, status, reputation, etc.

πλεονέκται = those who act beyond the proper boundaries of biblical morality

μέθυσοι = those who use alcohol to dull their inner pain and thereby lose control of their moral faculties

λοιδοροί = those who speak ill of others, typically by lying about them to put them down and build themselves up

ἄρπαγες = those who give in to their sensual and physical desires that lead them to act immorally rather than exercising self-control

People who do not work to avoid these sins by means of Holy Spirit who has changed their hearts will not qualify to enter into the eternal Kingdom of God.

¹⁴² καὶ ταυτὰ τινες ἦτε· ἀλλὰ ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλὰ ἡγιασθητε, ἀλλὰ ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν – Paul is drawing to a close this discussion of their dismissive attitude towards him, the man's sexual immorality, and their harsh intra-Christian-community lawsuits by commenting that one of the ramifications of his argument is that only a radical change of inwardness brought about by the Spirit of God will authentically lead a person to recognize and admit the sinful nature of all the things in the list that he provides here. Compare Jacques Ellul's argument in *Propaganda* that the masses can be convinced that murdering their "enemies," i.e., those who disagree with them, is moral and good.

Paul is encouraging his readers to wake up and adopt a proper perspective on morality by reminding them that, if God truly has changed their inwardness, then they are different people from who they were. They each could point to at least one of the words that Paul had used in this list to categorize themselves before they became believers in Jesus as the Messiah (and how they are actually acting now or at least condoning such action). But now, supposedly, God has changed their hearts, and they are forgiven by Him and oriented toward pursuing goodness and shunning evil.

Thus, they should avoid both the arrogance of loyalty to human teachers, condoning sexual immorality, and mistreating each other by antagonistically bringing lawsuits against one another to the extent that they are allowing non-believers to settle their intra-Christian-community disputes and even engaging in such disputes at the level they are.

They obviously should also continue avoiding any of their pre-Christian behavior that Paul lists in these verses and the ones in 5:10-11.

¹⁴³ πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπὸ τινος – This statement in v. 13 seems completely contradictory to what Paul has been saying—that *not* all things are permissible for Christians. Therefore, he must be switching gears and commenting on another issue that needs addressing within the Corinthian Christian community—the intensity with which some of the Corinthian Christians are pursuing satisfying all their physical needs, especially their sexual desires, which, in turn, is resulting in sexual immorality by visiting houses of prostitution, even temple prostitutes, which is obviously contrary to biblical morality. But the Corinthian Christians are taking God's gracious forgiveness for all sins a bit too far, similar to Paul's argument in Romans 6—that it can appear but is incorrect that God's abundant grace and forgiveness releases Christians from any boundaries on their moral behavior. Indeed, the more they sin, the more grace they can receive from God and make Him look God as the all-forgiving God.

The statement "all things are permissible" must be what the Corinthians are claiming for themselves as they misinterpret the significance of God's complete and eternal forgiveness, while the statement "but not all things are helpful" is Paul's statement. Yes, sexual immorality can be forgiven, but pursuing it is not helpful as that which is in line with the truth of the gospel. The same goes for "but I will not be dominated by anything," meaning that avoiding the satisfying of certain immoral passions is in line with the gospel. Plus, becoming obsessed with even things that are not moral in and of themselves, e.g., food (as Paul will go on to talk about), is not helpful either—since God is going to do away with our entire physical beingness and give us new and immortal bodies in the Kingdom of God. So, if I end up starving to death in the present realm in accordance with God's story for me, then I will learn in the process not to obsess on food and physical existence either.

¹⁴⁴ τὰ βρώματα τῇ κοιλίᾳ καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει – Paul mentions one example of a helpful thing within the creation, food. However, the Corinthians are viewing it in the same way they are looking at sexual intimacy—simply a satisfaction of a physical need and where it is permissible to obsess on it, too. Paul agrees that God will destroy the body, but this does not mean that the Corinthians should take what sounds like a Platonic or Neoplatonic view of the body (it really does not matter in comparison to the importance of a person's soul or spirit) and conclude that sexual intimacy is no different from eating food. God is going to do away with this particular physical beingness of us sinful human beings and provide us with as brand new one that will be morally perfect and eternal.

¹⁴⁵ τὸ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῇ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι – On the other hand, while eating food is not a moral issue, certainly sexual intimacy is, and it is immoral outside the context of marriage between a man and a woman. As a result, God cares about what we do with our bodies—because we will continue to be embodied beings in the eternal Kingdom of God, as he does on to say.

¹⁴⁶ ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ τὸν κύριον ἡγείρεν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξεγερῇ διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ – Paul makes it clear that our physical bodies are indeed important, because God raised Jesus' physical body from the dead and gave him an immortal body that will last into eternity. Similarly, He will do the same for us. In other words, a person within the created reality cannot be a person apart from a "body" (cf. Platonism; in other words, there is no separate "soul" of a human being; there is only his existence as a person with mind, body, and existence). Thus, those, who both use their

bodies sexually in a way that corresponds to how Jesus uses his new body as the king of the eternal Kingdom of God and have an authentic desire for eternal mercy, will be raised from the dead and granted eternal life as Jesus was—by the same “power” of God, because it is only God who can raise people from the dead and cause them to exist again. Paul is implying that this is because true believers understand the significance of Jesus’ death, that it is a clarification of the profound problem of their sinfulness and moral depravity, as well as a didactic tool that demonstrates the ramifications of the immoral use of their physical bodies, while also being the avenue by which Jesus qualified to be their high priest and successful advocate/helper at the judgment.

As a result, we must wait for God to use His power when He wants to accomplish His final plans for us, which is to grant us eternal life. We cannot bring this about ourselves.

¹⁴⁷ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; ἄρα οὖν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσω πόρνης μέλη; μὴ γένοιτο – Paul describes the believer’s orientation toward mercy and goodness as being joined to the Messiah like the parts of a human body to the body itself. This is how closely tied to Jesus’ own purpose, pursuits, values, and intellectual perspective on reality Christians are supposed to be. They should march in lockstep with Jesus in all these matters as they make decisions in their lives. The problem among the Corinthian Christians is that they have taken the wonderful news of God’s grace and forgiveness and wrongly concluded that bodily passions are all equal and deserving of being satisfied in whatever manner a person desires.

Thus, they condone the pagan practice of temple prostitution or just prostitution per se.

¹⁴⁸ [ἢ] οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ὁ κολλώμενος τῇ πόρνῃ ἐν σώμα ἔστιν; ἔσονται γάρ, φησὶν, οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν – LXX, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν – By quoting Genesis 2:24 that is in the context of the “marriage” of Adam and Eve, Paul is revealing that there is a profound relationship between sexual intercourse and marriage, i.e., between a man’s and woman’s deciding to commit themselves to one another such they share the entirety of their lives as intimately as possible. The implied idea is that a husband cannot pursue physical intimacy with another woman and claim that it is moral to do so, because God has designed the creation to contain both together. Therefore, a person cannot separate physical/sexual intimacy from heterogeneous marriage, and vice versa. To do so is to rebel against the Creator and His design for the present reality. This is why it was easy for Paul to include those who give in to and pursue homosexuality in his list of v. 9.

A husband is saying to his wife, “I care about you to the same degree that I care about myself” (cf. Ephesians 5). Therefore, to say to a prostitute through sexual relations with her, “I care about you to the same degree that I care about myself” is for the husband to lie to his wife, which is a distortion and violation of the marital vow and the divine design of marriage.

See also chapter 7 for how this notion will be helpful to Paul’s discussion there.

¹⁴⁹ ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνεύμα ἔστιν – By believing in Jesus as the Messiah, a sinful and morally depraved human being is committing himself to think and act as Jesus did—within the context of the biblical truth, values, and morality. Thus, Paul says that, just as there is a oneness that exists in a marital relationship between husband and wife, there is a oneness that exists in an authentic believer’s relationship with Jesus as the Messiah. The oneness in a marital relationship involves a united commitment to God and to work through all the different experiences that a husband and wife will encounter together, along with a loyalty and faithfulness to one another that remains solid and unbroken, including sexually. The oneness with the Messiah involves a united commitment to work through all of a human being’s experiences with the same mindset as the Messiah towards moral issues, which the Corinthians are not doing by distorting the message of God’s grace and forgiveness and rationalizing their sin, including their arrogance by pursuing loyalty to other human beings as an important part of how they define their Christianity.

¹⁵⁰ Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν. πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ὃ ἐὰν ποιήσῃ ἄνθρωπος ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος ἔστιν ὁ δὲ πορνεύων εἰς τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα ἁμαρτάνει – A person cannot disobey God with his actions without engaging with other people or things in the creation. If he steals something, the something is outside his body, and the person from whom he stole is also. If he murders someone, the person is outside his body. As a result, his sins of actions that involve other people are such that he moves away from his body and towards them.

However, if he commits sexual immorality, while the other person is outside his own body, there is a sense in which his actions are towards his own body because of the special nature of the marital relationship. The oneness of a marital relationship means that sexual immorality involves actually doing evil towards himself, not just away from himself. This is because of the theological (and psychological?) relationship within marriage as Paul just quoted in v. 16 from Genesis 2:24, that two bodies are viewed as one by God within a marriage—because of their inner commitment to Him and to each other (supposedly). Thus, sexual immorality for a married person involves breaking the unity of the marital relationship that should be maintained in faithfulness to his spouse while also maintaining a faithfulness to his own body.

Or another way of saying this is that murder is always murder, while sexual intimacy is not immoral unless it involves someone outside the context of marriage. A person moves away from himself in the midst of murder and intentionally harms another person, while a person moves towards himself in the midst of sexual intimacy with his wife (while also moving towards her—in righteousness)—as he maintains a oneness and unity with her. However, a person moves towards himself also in the midst of sexual intimacy with someone other than his wife (while also moving towards her in unrighteousness) by breaking the theological bond of unity that exists with only his wife.

While of course it is appropriate to flee every sin, regardless of what it is, Paul is emphasizing fleeing from sexual

immorality because of its analogous nature to a Christian's relationship with Jesus as his Lord whose commandments and instructions are directing him.

¹⁵¹ ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστὶν οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐαυτῶν – Another way to argue the importance of pursuing sexual morality as Christians is to liken a Christian's body to the temple in Jerusalem, because God can be said to dwell in each. If God has invaded the temple of Jerusalem, particularly the Holy of Holies, it would not be appropriate to turn it into a brothel. Analogously, because God has invaded our beings and changed our hearts, then He has the right to expect us to treat our bodies sexually as He commanded the Israelites to treat the temple in Jerusalem, as a holy place where He dwells and which is the focal point of our worship of Him. In other words, we cannot worship God appropriately if we are not also using our bodies appropriately—sexually, in particular, in this context.

In addition, our relationship with Jesus is like that of a slave owner who has bought a slave at the market. As a result, we do not “own” ourselves as though we have the right to direct our lives any way we want—even though God's grace will cover all sins and provide us with eternal forgiveness, if it comes down to that.

¹⁵² ἡγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς – Jesus has “bought” us as his slaves with a great price, the most valuable “commodity” in the creation, i.e., his life through death on the cross. Consequently, Paul is asking his readers to consider the “price” that Jesus paid to qualify to be our advocate at the judgment—his death on the cross. God and Jesus has “purchased” us for the eternal Kingdom of God through Jesus' death. God owns us and has the right to command us how we should use our bodies. Also, we should recognize that we are God's slaves, subject to Him and to morality and not to anyone or anything else *per se* (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:14).

¹⁵³ δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν – So it seems that sexual immorality with prostitutes, harsh conflicts, and arrogant associations with popular teachers, had become fashionable within the Corinthian Christian community as a result of distorting the gospel. Paul is arguing that none of these, especially sexual immorality in the immediate context, is consistent with following Jesus as the eternal Messiah, and he wants them to change their thinking and their behavior accordingly.

They should act as slaves of the Messiah and not as slaves of their physical desires, regardless of how strong their desires are and of how wonderful and conquering God's grace is.

¹⁵⁴ περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε, καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι – This begins another part of the letter, where Paul is responding to questions sent to him from the Corinthians in a letter.

Perhaps there is some sort of Platonic influence where these Christians have decided that the material world is evil so that physical contact is also evil. This is in the midst of their desire to obey the gospel and to do what is good and right. Assuming that “touch” is a euphemism for sexual intercourse, this makes sense of how the Corinthians could become confused about the appropriate behavior of a Christian in a highly sexually immoral city such as Corinth, even after a full 18 months of being taught by Paul a few years earlier, such that they had to write to Paul and ask him if Christian men should not be involved sexually with any woman (γυναικὸς) outside of the relationship of marriage.

They could also be thinking that a kind of sexual asceticism and abstaining from sexual intercourse altogether was good, moral behavior, even for married couples (ἀνθρώπῳ and γυναικὸς), in the light of all the forms of sexual immorality that existed in Corinth and in the light of “the present distress” (cf. v. 26 – διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην). In other words, if the “flesh” harbors many strong desires that naturally lead people into sin, then perhaps abstaining from fulfilling any physical desire is the proper way to obey God. Interestingly enough, this concern of theirs would be in the midst of allowing their strong desire to adhere to a popular teacher while also settling their differences before unbelieving judges and even judging Paul and his co-workers are part of their lives.

So how does the Corinthians' concern about abstaining from sex within marriage make sense in the light of Paul's exhortation at the end of chapter 6? How could the Corinthians be condoning pagan temple prostitution for Christians while at the same time thinking about prohibiting appropriate conjugal physical relations for Christians? It must be that *some* of the Corinthian Christians were doing the former while *others* were doing the latter. It was the latter who wrote Paul asking the questions which he is answering here, while he heard about the former along with the problem of competition in the midst of many teachers (cf. chapters 1-4). This all demonstrates how difficult it is to keep straight exactly what is biblical morality in a culture that has long been highly immoral and fairly new Christians have come out this culture. In other words, it demonstrates how difficult it is for Christians to remain completely loyal to biblical morality in any culture, because all cultures, by definition, are fundamentally in rebellion against God. The level of Satanic influence in the world and the level of sin within all human beings naturally lead cultures away from God and not towards Him. Only His grace leads them towards Him.

It does make sense that in Paul's explanation that follows, γυναικὸς actually refers to the “wife” of a husband and not to another woman.

¹⁵⁵ διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχτω καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχτω – cf. NIDNTT regarding πορνεία in the ancient world and Corinth. In the light of the fact that Corinth was a highly sexually obsessed city and, therefore, the many ways in which sexual immorality was expressed in Corinth, and, of course, in the light of the biblical design of marriage, every man and woman should be involved sexually with his/her spouse (cf. vs. 3ff.), which is what the word “have” refers to. By using the word πορνείας, Paul is recognizing how strong the sex drive is and wants to put it in its proper context—marriage, which is as good and right thing designed and given by God. Therefore, he is saying that it is precisely because there is a myriad of instances and kinds of sexual immorality that

exist in Corinth, it is a very appropriate demonstration of biblical morality that husbands and wives “touch” each other—only!! The unique loyalty of husbands to wives and of wives to husbands sends a wonderful message of the truth to the culture that it is way off base, while the Christians are genuinely following the commandments and instructions of God.

¹⁵⁶ τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρί – In addition, marriage contains within its design a biblical and moral obligation for spouses to be involved sexually with one another—only. Therefore, even in a highly immoral culture such as Corinth, a person should not think that, by abstaining from sexual intercourse, he/she is treating his/her spouse morally and sending a biblical message to the culture. Instead, it is the opposite. Proper, biblical physical contact between husbands and wives is an appropriate manner of teaching the culture about God and biblical morality.

¹⁵⁷ ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ἡ γυνή – To bolster his argument that husbands and wives have a sexual obligation to one another, Paul states the fact in terms of personal authority, that neither spouse has ultimate authority of his/her body. Instead, the ultimate authority, humanly speaking, lies with the other spouse. Therefore, a husband cannot use the excuse that he is pursuing morality and biblical spirituality by withholding sexual intimacy from his wife, and vice versa, especially in the light of Genesis 2:24 (cf. 1 Cor. 6:16 above) where it is said that they become “one flesh.” They are no longer independent of one another but become so united that they, in a sense, have authority over each other’s physical bodies. It also makes sense that Paul is saying that ultimately God has authority over both the husband and the wife because He is the one who has invented and designed marriage to be exactly as initially described in Genesis 1 and 2—to highlight and demonstrate the unifying dynamic of the marriage and the exclusive nature of the relationship that is similar to the unifying dynamic of Jesus’ relationship with each Christian and the exclusive nature of this relationship (cf. Ephesians 5:21ff.)

¹⁵⁸ μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, εἰ μὴτι ἂν ἐκ συμφώνου πρὸς καιρόν, ἵνα σχολάσῃτε τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε, ἵνα μὴ πειράζῃ ὑμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν – However, it is not altogether immoral to abstain from sexual intimacy for a period of time within a marriage, if it is for purposes of reflection on the truth of God and one’s relationship with God (=prayer).

However, it is also interesting that Paul is concerned about their being tempted to sin *after* they have reflected on the truth of God. Not even this can eliminate the effects of our continued sinfulness and moral depravity! Paul says at much in Romans 7 about the good that he wishes to do while doing the very opposite. It also points to the highly sex-oriented culture of Corinth, that along with the inherent sinfulness and natural lack of self-control in each and every Corinthian Christian who had been a full-fledged devotee of the culture, the situation was highly problematic for them to the extent that they might succumb even to temple prostitution as in the case of those in 1 Corinthians 6. Thus, working on one’s relationship with God is good, but not to the point in marriage of succumbing to sexual immorality when sexual intimacy in marriage is actually God’s design for this unique relationship. Seems obvious, but Paul still states it. In addition, Satan’s goal is to encourage Christians towards rebelling against God and sexual immorality, even prostitution in the Corinthian culture, which is already filled with both.

¹⁵⁹ τοῦτο δὲ λέγω κατὰ συγγνώμην οὐ κατ’ ἐπιταγὴν – Paul does not want to come across as though he is laying down a directive but merely offering advice. Yet, the principle of divinely invented marriage stands with its inherent purpose of sexual intimacy along with the prohibition of sexual immorality that is the flip side of the coin, i.e., with the concept of marital unity and fidelity mentioned first in Genesis 2. Therefore, even a time by mutual consent of abstaining from sexual intimacy for spiritual purposes is not necessarily ideal, and Paul simply concedes to their particular situation in Corinth that may not exist among other Christian communities.

¹⁶⁰ θέλω δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἐμαυτὸν· ἀλλὰ ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως – Paul is implying a second question here, What about marriage itself? Is it in line with biblical morality, or is it wise in the light of the highly sexualized culture in Corinth? And this question could have arisen due to some sort of Platonic influence of repudiating anything having to do with the material and physical world.

Paul’s answer is that, just like everything else in life, a person’s marital status is a gift from God, whether married or single. Paul’s gift is to be single in order to fulfill his apostolic obligation (which may be different from today for those who are NOT apostles). He acknowledges that others may have the gift of being married. However, in the light of the present distress, Paul would advocate remaining single like him (cf. v. 26 – διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην – I used to think that this was referring to the short time in which Jesus is possibly returning, but would not Paul be aware of the concepts of the Olivet Discourse which indicate that the time will be long between his first and second coming?). This is not a moral commandment, but a statement from an apostle about the wisdom of taking on the responsibility of a marital relationship in the current situation.

¹⁶¹ λέγω δὲ τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις, καλὸν αὐτοῖς ἔαν μείνωσιν ὡς καὶ γώ – Paul clarifies that his “wish” is for the unmarried and widows. In the light of the present distress (v. 26 – διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην), Paul encourages the single people to remain single, i.e., in the marital status in which they find themselves now.

¹⁶² εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμησάτωσαν, κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι – I think there are two options for what “burning” is. 1) Burning with sexual passion that naturally results in sexual activity. 2) Burning as a metaphor for the effects of the “fire” of eternal destruction due to God’s judgment, wrath, and condemnation.

1) Because marriage is the only context within which a human being should express his/her sexual passions, Paul

encourages single people, who are having trouble controlling their sexual desires in the highly charged sexual climate of Corinth, to get married—in spite of the present distress (v. 26). He does not want them to remain in a state of burning with passion if they lack the self-control to avoid sexual immorality, which would be sin.

2) Because marriage is the only legitimate context for physical and sexual intimacy, Paul encourages single people to get married rather than risking allowing their lack of self-control to take them down the path to God's condemnation and eternal destruction—assuming they would abandon their faith, the ultimate sin, if they succumbed to such profound lack of self-control.

This is the second time that Paul has either directly referred to the Corinthian Christians' lack of self-control (v. 5 regarding the married) or at least implied it (here regarding the singles). Even though self-control is a fruit of the Spirit of God (cf. Galatians 5:22,23), Paul allows for the possibility that certain Christians may truly want to get married for the context in which they fulfill their sexual desires. This would be for those who cannot resolve in their minds that God has given them the gift of singleness, but instead He has given them the gift of marriage. Either to avoid the immediate sin of sexual immorality or the future sin of abandoning their faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

Paul would not want anyone to be someone who they are not, in violation of God's "design" for them.

¹⁶³ Τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος, γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ χωρισθῆναι – Just as Jesus taught, divorce to become single (as if this is what God wants a person to be after getting married) does not make sense. Paul exhorts the Corinthians with an actual moral commandment that is based upon the biblical concept of marriage to which he referred explicitly in 6:16 by quoting Genesis 2:24. They should view marriage as a lifetime commitment, regardless of the spiritual condition of their spouses, the sexual thinking of their culture, or the Platonic thinking surrounding them, whether both of them are Christians (vs. 10,11) or one of them is a non-Christian (vs. 12-14).

The fact that Paul addresses the instance of a wife's leaving her husband may point to a newly acquired perspective on the part of women in the Corinthian Christian community to the effect that they were equal in status before God. Thus, they may feel it legitimate to initiate separating from or even divorcing their husbands just as husbands have felt it legitimate to do so in the male chauvinistic Corinthian culture.

As a result, no one can use Christianity as an excuse to become single after having gotten married. Thus, neither the husband nor the wife should be abandoned or left.

¹⁶⁴ ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῇ, μενέτω ἄγαμος ἢ τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγήτω καὶ ἄνδρα γυναῖκα μὴ ἀφιέναι – Why would she become separated from her husband? Probably for some weird reason of pursuing abstinence as a means to proclaim the truth of the gospel to the Corinthian culture (?), as this seems to have happened among the Christians in Corinth. Or perhaps because of circumstances stemming from the present distress or just from the marriage being bad, e.g., her husband beats her.

Paul is saying, do not let the bad circumstances prevent marriage from continuing to be honored as a divinely given relationship within the created order whereby a man and a woman commit themselves to one another for life, implying that they should work at making their marriages good ones. Keep working at the relationship *as much as possible*, and remain married *as much as possible* by continuing to work on the marriage, which obviously requires mutual participation and agreement to do so.

The last part of this verse is weird syntax—two accusative nouns with a passive infinitive.

¹⁶⁵ Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος· εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον καὶ αὕτη συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἀφιέτω αὐτήν – A third question is being addressed here, "What about marriages where one of the spouses is not a believer?" In the light of the important moral nature of belief and marriage, should not the Christian leave the non-Christian in order to remain pure in their pursuit of obedience to God? His recommendation, which is not a moral commandment, because it does not come from God, is that these couples remain married if the non-Christian is desirous of doing so.

It is helpful to remember that this counsel is being given within the context of a Gentile, Christian community, not within the nation of Israel who are naturally under the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Covenant, where it would certainly be appropriate for a Christian and a non-Christian to remain married—in their culture where marriages were arranged, as they probably are also in the Corinthian culture.

¹⁶⁶ καὶ γυνὴ 'εἴ τις' ἔχει ἄνδρα ἄπιστον καὶ οὗτος συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτῆς, μὴ ἀφιέτω τὸν ἄνδρα – same as the previous verse.

¹⁶⁷ ἡγιάσται γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ ἡγιάσται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ – According to Genesis 2, the marriage of a man and woman is such an important part of the created order that the Corinthian, mixed marriages of believers with unbelievers are still appropriate, biblical relationships. The divine purpose for which an unbelieving spouse has been set apart is marriage, which is an invention of God, not man. Being in a marital relationship with a believing spouse does not make the unbelieving spouse a Christian. It just places the unbeliever in a biblically and morally designed situation. This is what Paul means by the unbeliever's being "set apart" for divine purposes" by being married to a believer.

Indeed, I guess that this would be true of two married unbelievers, thus allowing us to encourage unbelievers to remain married too.

¹⁶⁸ ἐπεὶ ἄρα τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀκάθαρτά ἐστιν, νῦν δὲ ἅγια ἐστιν – If the mixed marriage of an unbeliever with a believer were to break up, it would prevent the children from growing up in an environment that has been divinely purposed by God, i.e., in the context of a marriage between a man and a woman where the children are "set apart." It

would be as though they are “unclean,” i.e., illegitimate. A broken marriage makes the children “unclean,” i.e., it places them in a situation that is not the way God ultimately intended for things to be, as if they are illegitimate. This is the same way that leprosy in ancient Israel made a Jew “unclean” (Leviticus 13:3 – **נִמָּא**, **מֵאִיִּנּוּ**) (cf. Leviticus 13:11, **נִמָּא**, **אַكَθάρτος**) by placing him in a situation that was not the way God ultimately intended for things to be—where the “unclean” person is separated from the community of the nation of Israel.

Thus, the mixed marriage does not make the children Christians. But it still places them in a biblically and morally designed situation of having two parents who are raising them.

¹⁶⁹ εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται, χωρίζεσθω οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφὴ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις· ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός – Paul does not want to give the impression that it is impossible for a Christian to live a “holy,” i.e., set apart and Christianly appropriate life, if the unbelieving spouse chooses to abandon his/her Christian mate. Does it really make sense that the “light” of the Christian spouse should always co-exist with the “darkness” of the unbelieving spouse? God’s plan for a sinful and morally depraved human being is to be at peace with all people as much as possible and to be at peace with Him, which may involve the unbelieving spouse’s deciding that he/she simply cannot handle being around the believer. The disturbance of being in the presence of truth is just too great.

God has not called us to make everything perfect in this life, even as Christians. Therefore, the Christian relies upon what God has done within him, i.e., his changed inwardness, for what truly provides him with being “set apart” from the world. The external circumstances of marriage, despite the fact that it is a divinely designed relationship, is not what really makes a person an authentic Christian. It is the person’s changed heart which does in the midst of looking forward to the shalom of eternal life.

Thus, Paul is not elevating marriage to an absolute level in the present reality. Circumstances of sin may lead to it’s not being possible in some people’s lives.

¹⁷⁰ τί γὰρ οἶδας, γύναι, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις; ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις – It sounds as though the Corinthian Christians were under the impression that keeping their unbelieving spouses tied to them in marriage would eventually force their spouses to convert to Christianity. Paul says no. We do not know what effect ultimately we will have on any other human being, including our spouses. The spiritual condition of a human being is ultimately God’s responsibility and determined by Him, not by us.

¹⁷¹ εἰ μὴ ἐκάστῳ ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος, ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, οὕτως περιπατεῖτω – Paul is addressing a fourth question, Should the Christian eliminate everything from his past life so that “all things become new” for him in the light of his new faith? Paul says, no.

God, the author of the story of the creation and human history, is the cause of each believer’s own story and role within the creation. Therefore, whatever a person was doing, as long as it was not immoral, when God caused him to become a believer, it makes sense to Paul that the person continue doing this and not change his life, especially “on account of the present distress” (cf. v. 26 – διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην).

¹⁷² καὶ οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι – Generally speaking, Paul’s encouragement to all Christians in all groups and gatherings of Christians in other cities is not to make any radical changes in their lives even though there has taken place a radical inward change within them by virtue of God’s causing them to become authentic believers in Jesus as the Messiah.

The inward change should be taken in stride with the life that one is presently living, obviously apart from immoral behavior that should be halted (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

¹⁷³ ἡ περιτομὴ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστὶν, ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ – With one statement, Paul relativizes outward, religious rituals in comparison to inwardness and God’s causing human beings to have a fundamental desire for His forgiveness and morality in the eternal Kingdom of God, which Paul must have taught the Corinthians during his more than 18 months of time with them in two visits. Outward rituals are meaningless if authentic inwardness is missing. And even if it is not, outward rituals are fundamentally less important than authentic inwardness. So if a person was a Jew when he became a believer, then Gentilizing his life is not necessary. Same with those who became believers as Gentiles. They do not have to become Jewish in their manner of life. This is Paul’s point in his letter of Galatians.

¹⁷⁴ ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἣ ἐκλήθη, ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω – Again, here is the general principle of remaining where one is in life after God causes the person to become a Christian— as long as the position, status, behavior is not immoral.

¹⁷⁵ δοῦλος ἐκλήθη, μὴ σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ’ εἰ ὅκαὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρησαί – Even though making changes is not necessary as a new Christian, neither is avoiding change when it is possible and advantageous.

¹⁷⁶ ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν, ὁμοίως ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἐστὶν Χριστοῦ – It is always possible to view a situation as it currently is (as long as it is not immoral) as one which fits with being a Christian. A slave in the Roman Empire was free with respect to his sin and its eternal consequences on account of God’s grace and mercy through Jesus. A free person in the Roman Empire was nevertheless a slave of Jesus the Messiah and fully obligated to obey him, just as a slave would obey his master in the 1st century.

¹⁷⁷ τιμὴς ἡγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων – cf. 6:24 – 2nd time Paul mentions that they were bought with something valuable. This is Paul’s rationale for any new Christian remaining in the position and status they are currently possess. Their ultimate allegiance is to Jesus (God) so as to set them free to remain in their current position

and status. Jesus' death as the Messiah becomes the governing principle for a Christian, who recognizes that he/she ultimately is a slave of God and of morality, not of anyone or anything else *per se*.

¹⁷⁸ ἕκαστος ἐν ᾧ ἐκλήθη, ἀδελφοί, ἐν τούτῳ μενέτω παρὰ θεῷ – Thus Paul emphasizes his answer to this fourth question for a third time by saying this (cf. vs. 17 & 20). The general principle is not to think that Christianity can only be lived by making amoral changes in one's life. Certainly, moral changes are necessary, but not amoral changes such as becoming free when one is a slave or becoming anything else as if some change is necessary in order for a person to be a genuine Christian.

¹⁷⁹ περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἡλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι – Again, there is no really right or wrong way for young, single women to go, but Paul looks at the present situation with its “distress” and concludes that staying single is better—in spite of the divine design of the created reality which includes marriage between a man and a woman (cf. Genesis 2). Jesus never commented on this issue, but Paul has an apostolic understanding of the gospel that allows him to speak of its implications with authority.

¹⁸⁰ νομίζω οὖν τοῦτο καλὸν ὑπάρχειν διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην – This seems to be the governing concept in this whole discussion of marriage, men, and women. Something is occurring—

1) either in Corinth where the presence of a highly sexualized culture may make it seem as though staying away from physical intimacy is the best option for Christians, or common and natural persecution from unbelievers in Corinth, 2) or in the world, i.e., the time in which Jesus possibly is returning and which will be filled with the attack on Israel by the Man of Lawlessness, but even Paul must know that Jesus' return is after a long period of time, 3) or in human existence in general, i.e., that it is hard, that leads to its making sense that people not get married, especially if they have been “gifted” with singleness.

The third option may make the most sense, that life is just hard, and if people want to reduce its difficulties to a minimum, they will remain single as Paul goes on to explain.

But the first option is possible where Paul is hoping to save young women from the heartache of unfaithful husbands who are tempted in the pagan Corinthian culture beyond their level of self-control.

We simply do not know exactly what “the present distress” is.

¹⁸¹ εἰάν δὲ καὶ ᾧ γαμήσης, οὐχ ἡμαρτεν, καὶ εἰάν γῆμι ἡ παρθένος, οὐχ ἡμαρτεν θλίψιν δὲ τῇ σαρκὶ ἔξουσιν οἱ τοιοῦτοι, ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῶν φείδομαι – Marriage is difficult, no matter how godly people are, because two morally depraved sinners are going to share their sinfulness with each other and daily bump into each other's sinfulness. Thus, in general, life is difficult, but if a person is married, then stay married, while if a person is not married, then it is just as appropriate to remain single.

¹⁸² τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν – Compared to eternity, the time we spend on this earth and even the time that this present earth exists is relatively very short. Therefore, Paul is talking about a subjective shortening of time, not an objective one. He is referring to what will be short for Christians—their life on this earth in comparison to their existence in eternity.

As a result, he is describing the perspective that Christians should have about life on this earth, which is ultimately going to disappear soon from an eternal standpoint, so that only the eternal Kingdom of God will exist. And it is to this that Christians should be looking and striving, instead of attempting to get all we can from the standpoint of genuine human pleasure out of this life. The Kingdom of God will be so incredibly wonderful that it will put all experiences in this life, no matter how enjoyable, to shame as to their being satisfying and fulfilling.

¹⁸³ ὅτ' οὐ λυσιτελεῖ, ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες γυναῖκας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες ὦσιν – The Kingdom of God looms so large in our lives as Christians that none of the elements of this life exist in comparison to it, once it arrives. Again, these elements will all pale in comparison.

¹⁸⁴ καὶ οἱ κλαίοντες ὡς μὴ κλαίοντες καὶ οἱ χαίροντες ὡς μὴ χαίροντες καὶ οἱ ἀγοράζοντες ὡς μὴ κατέχοντες – The same as above, that all the experiences of this life, both positive and negative, will find their fulfillment so to speak in the eternal Kingdom of God, not in their immediate effects in this life. We need to think of ourselves as going through all the different kinds of possible experiences in the present realm for the sake of qualifying to enter into the eternal Kingdom of God.

¹⁸⁵ καὶ οἱ χρώμενοι τὸν κόσμον ὡς μὴ καταχρώμενοι παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου – Only that which is permanent and eternal is worth having in the final analysis, and nothing in this world is. Those who use the present realm to find their fulfillment by ignoring He who transcends it, God, will find themselves unsatisfied. They find all their worth and significance in the stuff of the present realm. Not only will they lose all use of the present realm, but also their destruction by God because of their rebellion against Him will make it seem as though all their use of this world was for nothing. It will not provide them with salvation from God's condemnation, thus revealing how comparatively worthless everything they grabbed from the world was to them. If something that people “have” in the present realm does not contribute ultimately to their obtaining eternal life, then it can be considered relatively worthless in comparison to things that do contribute to acquiring God's eternal mercy and salvation.

The bottom line is that this realm is temporary and needs to be considered in the light of God's project whereby He will destroy it and create a new heavens and a new earth for all eternity.

1 John 2:8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away (παράγεται) and the true Light is already shining.

1 John 2:17 The world is passing away (**παράγεται**), and also its strong desires; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

¹⁸⁶ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμους εἶναι – Knowing how difficult life is in the present realm, Paul is certainly not averse to avoiding unnecessary pain and suffering and expresses to the Corinthian believers that this is his perspective. If diving into existence in some specific setting in the present realm brings heartache, then why go there if it can be avoided?

¹⁸⁷ τοῦτο δὲ πρὸς τὸ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν σύμφορον λέγω, οὐχ ἵνα βρόχον ὑμῖν ἐπιβάλω ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ εὖσχημον καὶ εὐπάρεδρον τῷ κυρίῳ ἀπερισπᾶστως – Again, Paul has no intention of laying down the law on whether or not to marry. Nor is he saying that marriage is bad. He is only saying that those who are single have the freedom to pay attention to only their own obedience to the gospel, when those who are married have a loving obligation to their spouses to pay attention to them (and to their sinfulness!). Therefore, because eternity is a long time, limiting one's possible sources of suffering while looking forward to eternity is no bad thing. If getting married were a moral mandate from God, then even Paul would have gotten married. But he chose to stay single (like Kierkegaard) to focus all his time, energy, and resources on the gospel.

¹⁸⁸ εἰ δὲ τις ἀσχημονεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ νομίζει ἂν ἢ ὑπέρακμος καὶ οὕτως ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι, ὃ θέλει ποιεῖτω, οὐχ ἀμαρτάνει, ᾧ γαμείτωσαν – This paragraph is difficult to translate, because there are various meanings of certain words, each of which could fit in the context. As a result, there are two obvious options as to whom Paul is addressing himself—

1) A man who has the possibility to marry a young woman

2) A father who has the possibility to give his marriageable daughter in marriage

Paul is saying in this verse that the person who wants to get married, if this is really what he desires to do, should do so—even though this may make for a more difficult experience in the present realm. Just be prepared to handle all the vicissitudes of life that come with marriage.

¹⁸⁹ ὃς δὲ ἔστηκεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἐδραῖος, μὴ ἔχων ἀνάγκην, ἐξουσίαν δὲ ἔχει περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου θελήματος καὶ τοῦτο κέκρικεν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ καρδίᾳ, τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον, καλῶς ποιήσει – The point seems to be the same. As long as a man can say that that he can exercise self-control in the midst of the current circumstances, then “keeping” his fiancée/daughter the way he would like to, i.e., marrying the fiancée or saying no to his daughter's getting married is ok.

The goal is to serve the Lord, regardless of what circumstances a person may choose to be in.

¹⁹⁰ ὥστε καὶ ὁ γαμίζων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον καλῶς ποιεῖ καὶ ὁ μὴ γαμίζων κρεῖσσον ποιήσει – In Paul's opinion, it is better to be able to serve God without being distracted by the responsibilities of marriage. The most important thing in life is to persevere in belief and serve God, not to satisfy all our earthly desires. And the freedom to do the former is greater outside of marriage—in spite of God's having invented marriage and families as part of the design of the creation.

But this is also in the light of the “present distress” in Corinth.

¹⁹¹ γυνὴ δέδεται ᾧ ἔφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς· ἂν δὲ κοιμηθῇ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἐλευθέρᾳ ἐστὶν ᾧ θέλει γαμηθῆναι, μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ – Paul is answering another question. Two people should definitely remain married as long as they both are alive. But if the husband, who is probably older in the Corinthian culture, dies, the widow is welcome to marry again. However, it is also better to marry an authentic believer, if she desires to keep her sources of possible distractions and difficulties in life to a minimum. However, there again is no mandate here, even in spite of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, which is talking about false apostles, not men and women in marriage.

¹⁹² μακαριωτέρᾳ δὲ ἐστὶν ἂν οὕτως μείνῃ, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην· δοκῶ δὲ κάγῳ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν – Again, Paul firmly believes that he understands God and His purposes pretty well so that remaining single in the light of the “present distress” and eternity is not a bad idea as an important implication of the gospel (“I think I have the Spirit of God”). However, it is not a moral commandment, just as marriage is not either.

Of course Paul has the Spirit of God within him. Thus, he must be writing this with a wry smile on his face.

¹⁹³ περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων – Paul now moves on to a second question presented to him by the Corinthians and a subject which needs further explaining and clarifying for them, that of things that the pagan worshipers in their city use to sacrifice to their gods and that end up for sale as food in the local market. Is it permissible for Christians to eat food that has been used to worship false gods? As in other situations, for example the weaker/stronger brothers in Romans 14 where the former is a Jewish believer and the latter is a Gentile believer, there are two groups involved in this issue. But, here, the weaker brother is the Gentile believer who just can't get over the fact that eating food sacrificed to idols feels like worshipping this idol, and the stronger brother, who has truly moved on to a monotheistic perspective and does not feel a thing when he eats food sacrificed to idols except being physically satisfied.

¹⁹⁴ οἶδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γινώσκουσιν ἔχοντες ἢ γινώσκουσιν φυσιοῖ, ἢ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ – Paul could be switching to the first-person plural to refer to himself and Sosthenes as apostolic co-workers, who understand the situation in the Corinthian Christian community. Or Paul could be quoting the question in the letter sent to him, that the faction who want the freedom to eat food sacrificed to idols anytime they want claim that all the Corinthian Christians, both weaker and stronger brothers, honestly believe that everyone in the Corinthian Christian community knows that monotheism is the only correct understanding of reality. Therefore, the “everyone” (πάντες) here refers to all the Corinthian Christians who were taught by Paul for the 18 months that he spent there (cf. Acts 18). If everyone knows the truth, then what is the big deal if people do something that appears sinful but is actually not? Good question.

However, Paul still identifies a danger in inherently sinful Christians, that they can take their accurate knowledge and use it to bolster their pride, thus thinking even privately that they are superior to others, and that it is a good thing to demonstrate their superiority. Therefore, proper knowledge and understanding of reality can be either a good thing or a bad thing. If it leads a person to make better choices so that they are truly loving God and others, biblically speaking, then it is good, because it provides other people with a clear opportunity either to become believers and be saved from God's condemnation and destruction (cf. 9:22,23;10:31-33) or to become more fortified in their belief in God and His Messiah, resulting in their persevering in their belief, which will permit them to reach their goal of eternal life. However, if accurate knowledge of the gospel simply makes a person self-righteous and conceited so that he acts contrary to it when he may also be acting in line with it at a certain level, e.g., by eating food offered to gods who do not exist—but in front of people who do not have the level of understanding that the mature Christian has, then it is bad, because he is not using his knowledge in a loving way (cf. 8:2). Therefore, good knowledge, which is not accompanied by wise love (cf. 10:15), is worthless—eternally speaking, and if a person continues using his knowledge inappropriately, then he risks incurring God's wrath and condemnation, not His mercy (cf. 10:22). This, then, is a variation on the same theme as Paul confronted in chapters 1-3. In both cases people are taking the knowledge of the gospel and distorting it for prideful purposes, which is problematic when it comes to the actual outcome of a person's life (cf. 3:10ff.).

¹⁹⁵ εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἔγνωκέναι τι, οὐπω ἔγνω καθὼς δεῖ γινώσκειν – Paul is saying that the telltale sign of prideful knowledge is that a person believes he is right without applying this knowledge in a loving way. Thus Paul always knew that he was right—as an apostle and authoritative spokesman for the Messiah, but even his believing he is right without the humility and patience to listen to others and genuinely consider that he may be wrong in *how he is applying* his knowledge would be wrong.

¹⁹⁶ εἰ δέ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ – This short sentence sums up the real issue. Being known by God, i.e., to be someone whom God considers to be His child for the sake of eternal life, is more important than having complete, accurate biblical knowledge and certainly displaying it in an unloving way. Thus, to be someone whom God knows in this way results in a person's properly loving God, which, by implication, will include his properly loving other people with his knowledge. He will seek to build people up with his knowledge, even if it means that he does not apply his knowledge as he is theoretically is permitted to do so.

To be known by God is for God to have chosen, foreknown, predestined, and called a person to genuine faith and belief, all of which are more important than for a person to have absolutely correct knowledge and understanding, even about God. Therefore, to know that one is known and loved by God is the most important knowledge. However, Paul is implying that this knowledge should also lead a Christian to love God, his fellow Christians, and non-believers appropriately in situations where there is a definite choice of what to do, e.g., in the case of eating food that has been sacrificed to pagan gods in the worship of them, the example which dominates chapters 8-10.

¹⁹⁷ περὶ τῆς βρώσεως οὖν τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, οἵδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἰδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς – vs. 4-7 are about knowledge, while 8:8-10:33 are about love.

Here Paul states that he basically agrees with the group that wants the freedom to eat food sacrificed to idols anytime they want. An idol that sits in the Greek temple of Corinth (or any other temple in the cities of the Roman Empire) is ultimately irrelevant as an object of worship because the god which the idol represents does not exist as a force in the creation which must be worshiped, pleased, or appeased. It is merely a force of nature created and controlled by the one and only God, i.e., the God of the Bible, Yahweh. However, as Paul will go on to argue in vs. 7-13 and in chapter 10, it may not be loving towards other Christians and non-believers to eat food that has been used in the worship of something that is irrelevant and non-existent, because this may affect Christians of weaker adversely.

¹⁹⁸ καὶ γὰρ εἴπερ εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς, ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί – Paul grants that people refer to many forces within the created reality as “gods,” as if these forces are persons who require people to worship and appease them, so that they will then operate and act favorably towards people. They call these elements of the creation “gods” without thinking any higher than them to the transcendent Creator, the one true God.

¹⁹⁹ ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν – The key word here is “one.” As opposed to the *many* gods of pagan idolatry, for Paul and his fellow Christians there is only the one true God who has created the entirety of the created reality and is in control of all the other forces and “gods.” Here, we also see Paul use the term “Father” to refer to God's being the source of everything else that exists. He is not just a force that moves within the creation. He is the Force that causes every element of the creation to exist at every moment. In addition, the purpose for which we human beings exist within the creation is ultimately God. There is no other reason to exist than to demonstrate what God wants us to demonstrate about Him.

²⁰⁰ καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ – The key word here is also “one.” As opposed to the *many* lords or masters to serve of pagan idolatry, for Paul and his fellow Christians there is only the one Lord, Jesus the Messiah, in the light of whom all things, including Paul and his fellow Christians, exist, because God's central project is to make Jesus ruler of the created, eternal Kingdom of God.

This is a different interpretation of the the preposition διὰ, which, for the NAS95, for example, translates “by” and “through” respectively, as if Jesus is the creator of the creation just as much as the Father is. But I think that both this passage and the one in Colossians 1:15ff. are indicating that Jesus is the supreme element of the creation that God the

Father has made, so that Paul is urging the Corinthian Christians to worship God and submit to their Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah and ruler of the eternal Kingdom of God. If they do this, then they will understand the relative importance of the false gods of their culture and the reason for loving their fellow Christians appropriately in the light of their knowledge.

²⁰¹ ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνώσις – The “not all” here refers to only Christians, specifically Christians with a weak understanding of the gospel and reality. Thus, not every Christian in Corinth, having come out of a strictly pagan lifestyle, has thought through the ramifications of biblical theology and adequately grasped the difference between the one true God and pagan gods. Their muscle memory is still oriented to a degree towards linking food sacrificed to idols as part of the very essence of worshiping idols. They cannot separate the food from the worship.

Therefore, their working theology, as opposed to their theoretical theology, is wrong. They still cannot help but think that they are worshiping a pagan idol when they eat food that has been sacrificed to said idol. But does this make them not a Christian? Paul is implying no. Instead their belief (πίστις) or knowledge (γνώσις) is “weak” (ἀσθενέω/ἀσθενής), to use the term which Paul employs in Romans 14 and here in v. 7.

This is obviously true for all of us, that amoral (non moral) activities that we grew up associating with depending on something within the creation for our sense of well-being and feeling the life of existential living remain as such for them even after they become Christians and begin to learn that those activities in and of themselves are not the source of their well-being. Instead, it is the transcendent creator God who always is.

²⁰² τινὲς δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενὴς οὐσα μολύνεται – For some Christians, worshiping false gods has been so habitual before their conversion, that they cannot shake the notion that anything which they do that they used to associate with these false gods, even the amoral activity of eating food which has been used in worshiping them, is going to be an act of disobedience to God—in spite of the fact that false gods do not actually exist and they know this at least at some level of their understanding, because this is what they learned from someone like Paul.

Therefore, Paul can say that their understanding both is “weak” (ἀσθενής) and “becomes contaminated” (μολύνεται) if they were to eat this food in the midst of worshiping only the one, true God, Yahweh. In other words, they think that they are sinning by eating food that has been offered to these false gods, as though they are participating in idol worship, which is forbidden by God—even though food is just food and false gods (and the forces they represent) do not really exist as anything to pay attention to except as part of what God has created for our benefit as human beings.

²⁰³ βρῶμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ· οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα, οὔτε ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν – Paul’s response to this whole issue is that the food is inconsequential to God and thus has no effect on anyone’s relationship with Him and whether or not He is pleased with them. Food (and by extrapolation, where it has come from and whether or not we even survive physically by having food available to us) is not really what God cares about in His evaluation of us as morally depraved and sinful human beings. The kind of food and its use, even if it has been part of a human being’s worshiping false gods, does not affect our relationship with God. It neither helps us obtain His mercy nor prevents us from obtaining it—if all we are talking about is the food, and not how we are treating our fellow Christians with it (cf. 1 Corinthians 11 and the “Lord’s Supper” issue).

Therefore, if we have no food (and die of starvation), this in no way makes our relationship with God worse. And if we have food (and live until we die from other natural causes), this also in no way makes our relationship with God better. Our physical sustenance is not an indication of God’s mercy and promise of eternal life to us. Only His inner work through the Spirit of God that produces both faith and pursuing of moral obedience is.

²⁰⁴ βλέπετε δὲ μή πως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν – However, a Christian, who is still being affected by his past habitual worship of false gods using stuff which he sacrificed to them and then ate, currently lacks the mental ability to disconnect this same kind of food from actual worship of a false god. He would feel as though he is worshiping the god if he were to eat food that has even been used by someone else to worship the god. As a result, he cannot help feeling that he is disobeying his new God, the one true God, Yahweh, and His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth if he eats food that was used to worship as false god.

Thus, Paul is referring to the fact that certain Corinthian Christians are correctly understanding the nature of false gods in comparison to the one true God, but they are using this understanding improperly by thinking that they are free to flaunt their understanding in the presence of believers who have not yet arrived at this level of maturity in their understanding of God and the gospel. In this way, their somewhat accurate knowledge (actually it is incomplete knowledge of the gospel, because it is not properly assessing love for one’s fellow Christians) has resulted in prideful use of this knowledge. They are being evil towards their fellow believers with a weaker working understanding of God, even if they have a somewhat strong theoretical understanding of God.

²⁰⁵ ἐὰν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὸν ἔχοντα γνῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθута ἐσθίειν – Paul asks rhetorically regarding the weaker Christian, that if he sees a stronger Christian eating food that he formerly thought constituted worshiping a pagan god, then he too may be led into the sin of doing so because he lacks the conviction that it is not sin. Thus, he combines worship of God with worship of a false god and cannot escape the conviction that he is still doing the latter, even though theoretically he is not.

²⁰⁶ ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῇ γνώσει, ὁ ἀδελφὸς δι’ ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν – Perhaps surprisingly, Paul is ultimately referring to the destruction of eternal condemnation occurring for the weaker brother, but he is doing so in a

very nuanced way. The weaker Christian does not yet grasp the lack of significance of pagan gods and things used in connection with worshiping them. Thus, Paul is concerned about the weaker brother's being led into dangerous territory where he could possibly completely reject the truth—meaning that he never was an authentic believer in the first place. But why even test this, Paul is asking? To display “sin,” even if the stronger Christian is correct and it is not sin, is thereby not loving towards the Christian who lacks a mature grasp of the nature of reality, because he is still being psychologically, emotionally, and even spiritually affected by the habits of his former life—which could result in his abandoning his belief in the Messiah so that it ultimately results in his eternal ruin and destruction.

And I assume that this could take place in the midst of the “weaker” brother continuing to participate in the Christian community. He does through the motions of doing what the other Christians are doing, but his heart is oriented towards the creation instead of the Creator. Of course, this could happen in our day, too, that people end up worshiping money, fame, power, status, and physical health and existence more than God. They fear the deficiencies of this realm more than God's eternal condemnation.

²⁰⁷ οὕτως δὲ ἀμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν εἰς Χριστὸν ἀμαρτάνετε – Demonstrating immorality in the presence of people who have become convinced that immorality is wrong on the basis of Jesus' death is to commit immorality against them and the Messiah—even if the “immorality” is not actually immoral, but only such in the minds of Christians who yet lack the proper understanding to conclude that the action is not immoral.

It is an assault of “immorality” on their minds, which should now be oriented towards morality on the basis of their new belief in the Jewish Messiah, who suffered death in order to indicate the heinous nature of immorality and sin. It is like saying that Jesus' death is insignificant, when it is true that the false gods and things used in the worship of them are insignificant. But the weak Christian has not yet fully grasped this and could be led into the complete ruin of his faith if he is actually not a true Christian, which no one would want to find out (except perhaps God Himself who is the only one who has the right to test people's faith as He did with Abraham and even Jesus).

This shows the subtlety of the human mind, heart, and will—that they are easily swayed from authentic belief this side of eternal life and becoming morally perfect. In other words, each of us is just a choice away from depending upon the creation as our God instead of God Himself.

²⁰⁸ διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω – Paul is willing to avoid anything that is permissible in the present realm if it ends up possibly putting a brother on the path towards eternal destruction because it is viewed by people as disobeying God because of their immature understanding of the biblical message and could lead them to participate on the basis of some kind of peer pressure, etc.

This is how proper knowledge of being loved and known by God affects a Christian. It allows him to love his fellow Christians by making the choice not to do something that he knows he is permitted to do and, yet, would be viewed as sinful and immoral by Christians with a less mature understanding of the nature of reality—because God loves and knows him. His knowledge of God's knowledge of him is enough in the light of the promise of eternal life and the Kingdom of God.

²⁰⁹ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐλεύθερος οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ – The more I consider the syntax and what Paul is more likely saying in 9:1, the more I think that all the “not” statements go together. “Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?” Thus, Paul is affirming all that he has been saying about Christianity and including his role—that he is not only free to act like a bona fide Christian (as long as he does not bring about the eternal downfall of any fellow Christian), but also he is a true apostle and has been assigned this role and responsibility by Jesus himself, so that these Corinthian Christians belong more to him as their primary teacher than to anyone else—especially when there are false apostles and false teachers who are circulating around the Christian gatherings of Greece and the Roman province of Asia.

As a result, Paul is presenting himself as a good example of someone who foregoes his right to do something, e.g., to eat meat sacrificed to false gods and idols, in order to love his brother. And he will point out other things to which he has a theological right while not exercising this right so as to love people properly, specifically the Corinthian Christians.

Paul begins by asking the rhetorical questions, “Am I not free?” Yes, he certainly is. “Am I not an apostle?” Yes, he certainly is. “Have I not seen the Lord Jesus?” Yes, he has after his resurrection. “Are you not my work in the Lord?” Yes, they are, all meaning that he is an authoritative spokesman for Jesus and therefore important in God's story. Good “teachers” in that Greek society, e.g., the sophists, demanded to be paid for their work. Paul has not demanded to be paid, and this has raised a red flag for some as to whether or not he considers both his message and his work valuable. Certainly he knows that he is providing the Corinthians with the most valuable information in all human history, but how does it make sense that he not demand to be paid for it? His answer is very simple—the core of his information is God's free grace, and he would want to get paid for it *only if the Corinthians accurately understand the concept of divine grace*. But if they do not, then he wants to remain completely independent of them financially. Cf. 2 Corinthians also to the effect that Paul's efforts were constantly being undermined by Jewish false apostles who championed the Mosaic Covenant and accused Paul of being a fraud.

Here, Paul asks if he is not free (because of the foundational concept of grace in his message) to live his life any way he

wants, as long, of course, as he is not committing sin or immorality. Paul will go on to argue that he is free to conduct his days just like any other human being, regardless of their connection to the biblical message, whether they be Jewish and under obligation to the Mosaic Covenant, or non-Jewish and even pagan idolators, *as long as he does not follow anyone in their obvious immorality, sin, and disobedience of God*. And it is this last part that has become of concern to him among the Corinthians, that they are following people who are distorting the gospel and leading them into worldly practices, *even while everyone is claiming to be a believer in Jesus as the Messiah*. In other words, it is perfectly ok for Christians to adapt to any culture, as long as they are wise and loving about doing so (cf. 10:15).

He also reminds the Corinthian Christians that he has personally seen Jesus, in the light of the fact that the false apostles/teachers claim to have been seen and been taught by Jesus. And perhaps they really were associated with him while he was on earth. Paul also reminds the Corinthians that he was the first to present them with the NT message and teach them extensively, indeed for eighteen months (cf. Acts 18:11).

²¹⁰ εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμι· ἡ γὰρ σφραγὶς μου τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ – Even if false apostles are not willing to admit that Paul is an apostle, or if he has not personally taught others the gospel, certainly the Corinthians should admit that he is an apostle to them, because their belief in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah is a clear indication and evidence that God used his proclamation of the NT message to them during the year and six months that he was with them and, therefore, verified his apostleship. Therefore, he is definitely an important person to them (who has the right to exercise his freedom but chooses not to do so in order to love them).

²¹¹ ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν ἐστὶν αὕτη – Paul now begins a series of rhetorical questions to defend his apostleship and right to live as he wants with the freedoms that are the ramifications of the gospel. However, love always trumps his freedoms—even not demanding to be paid for his most valuable work of being an authoritative spokesman for God and the Messiah!

²¹² μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πίνειν – The plural “we” indicates that the questioning of Paul’s apostleship by the false apostles includes the right of even his co-workers such as Sosthenes (cf. 1:1) and Barnabas (cf. v. 9:6) to act as he acts. In the context of chapter 8, it may seem as if Paul is referring to eating and drinking even if the food is not kosher. However, in the light of the fact that this issue is more about his freedom to work without getting paid, it makes more sense to interpret Paul as using “eat and drink” to refer to making a living from his and his co-workers’ work, i.e., to survive physically by being paid for his work like all other human beings in that society. Do Paul and his co-workers not have the right to put food on the table in the light of their most valuable work? Absolutely, and how? By being paid by the Corinthians for their work.

How does Barnabas get included in this discussion when Paul and he had separated from one another before Paul’s second missionary journey and before Paul went to Corinth? In fact, the last we hear of Barnabas in Acts is at this separation in 15:39. He must have continued to travel like Paul and eventually made it to Corinth, thus permitting the Corinthians to get to know him and his reputation as someone well-known among the Jerusalem apostles. He also must have been acting like Paul—not demanding to be paid for his work in order to preserve the purity of the message of God’s grace, etc. At least Paul and he agreed on this, even if they had not agreed on Mark (cf. Acts 15:36ff.)!

²¹³ μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἁδελφῶν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὥς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς – Seems like a strange idea that Paul has to ask the Corinthians if he has the right to marry. But this is probably along the same lines as “eat and drink,” i.e., living like a normal human being in that society, where people naturally get married, even as the other apostles had back in Jerusalem. Or, he could be talking about simply supporting a family through being paid for their work of proclaiming the gospel and the most valuable work in existence—proclaiming the gospel of Jesus the Messiah.

Once again, as in the discussion of 1:10ff., Kephas (Peter) is mentioned as someone with whom the Corinthians are familiar, probably as a result of whatever Jewish Christians have visited Corinth and taught about him and the rest of the apostles in Jerusalem, as well as Jesus’ own brothers who became somewhat prominent leaders within the Christian community in Jerusalem. Peter and Jesus’ brothers were married. Why is Paul so insistent on remaining single? It may seem strange to the Corinthians. Cf. 1 Corinthians 7. He wants to remain unhindered in his responsibilities as an apostle. But he is free to marry and free not to marry, free to support a family, and free not to do so, if he were not to get married. This is the point—his freedom to act as he wants within the boundaries of biblical morality, *because of the foundational concept of divine grace within the gospel*.

²¹⁴ ἡ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι – This sounds as though Paul is being questioned by the Corinthians regarding his receiving his living from the proclamation of the NT message as opposed to the false apostles, who hold other real jobs to make their living. But this seems the very opposite of what typically is the case, for example, in 1 Thessalonians and then 2 Corinthians. Thus, it makes more sense to interpret Paul as asking if Barnabas and he are not free to live life as they wish—either getting paid for their work of presenting the gospel or working outside the context of this work and not expecting the Corinthian Christians to pay them—for the sake of loving the Corinthian Christians.

And why mention Barnabas when Sosthenes is the co-author of this letter (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1) and when Barnabas is not even one of the original apostolic workers who first proclaimed the message of Jesus as the Messiah to the Corinthians? In fact, the last of Barnabas’ being mentioned by Luke in Acts is his separating from Paul at the beginning of his second trip so that Paul takes Silvanus as his primary co-worker instead (Acts 15:39,40). Except for this reference in 1 Corinthians, Paul mentions Barnabas in only Galatians, which was written as much as eight years before

this letter.

Probably, as mentioned in a previous footnote, Barnabas continued to travel and even made it all the way to Corinth, where he revealed not only his understanding of the apostolic message, but also his somewhat prominent role within the Christian communities in Jerusalem and other places. He may have even told the Corinthians of his seeking out Paul in Tarsus and taking him to Antioch where his role as an apostle really got launched after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus as many as fourteen years earlier.

²¹⁵ τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίοις ὀψωνίοις ποτέ; τίς φντεύει ἀμπελῶνα καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐσθίει; ἢ τίς ποιμαίνει ποίμνην καὶ ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τῆς ποίμνης οὐκ ἐσθίει – Paul now wants to ensure the Corinthian Christians that he knows that he does have the right to be paid for his work as an apostle—because it just makes sense on the basis of how human beings normally make a living in all societies. Thus, he uses three normal and familiar vocations where people naturally earn a paycheck so to speak from their work. Soldiers, farmers, and shepherds can pay more attention to what they are supposed to be doing if they get paid financially for their work, rather than having to look for support outside their vocations, which in effect would double the amount of work they are doing. He is arguing that he deserves to earn his living from proclaiming the NT message—even though he will go on to say that he would never think of demanding that people pay him, because this would communicate the wrong message about the gospel of *grace and love*. He is willing to double his work and make a living from some other kind of work—if love calls for him to do so.

²¹⁶ μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ ἢ καὶ ὁ νόμος ταῦτα οὐ λέγει – There is always the possibility that someone, even Paul, could be making this stuff up and speaking strictly from a worldly and, therefore, unbiblical perspective, especially because Paul just used three normal examples within Roman society, which could be judged to be outside the context of the biblical message. However, Paul claims that the Bible, the OT Torah, and he will go on to say specifically the Mosaic Covenant, encourages those who serve God in unique ways within the “religion” of the Bible to receive appropriate and fair compensation for their work, because God has designed reality within the context of the nation of Israel so that those who “work” should receive appropriate compensation from their “work.” In other words, quid pro quo work and financial relationships within Israelite society are good and right. The Jews should not have to rely on people’s charity and their grace to sustain themselves physically. Their labor to serve their fellow Jews deserves fair and just payment in order to sustain themselves. This is true and biblical social justice, not the junk that our culture is pandering that is simply ungodly and atheistic communism and Marxism.

Therefore, Paul is presenting divine wisdom, not human wisdom, that he is setting forth to the Corinthians.

²¹⁷ ἐν γὰρ τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται· οὐ κημώσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ – cf.

Deuteronomy 25:4, Heb – וְלֹא־תִקְחֶם שֹׂרֶץ בְּדִישׁוֹ; LXX – οὐ φημώσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα. κημῶ = muzzle; never used in the LXX, but the noun, κημος, is in Psalm 31:9; Ezekiel 19:4,9. φημῶ = muzzle, silence; used twice in the OT LXX, Deut. 25:4 and Daniel 13:60, a portion that is not a part of the Hebrew text. Paul quotes the LXX almost exactly except for the difference in just two letters, κη vs. φη.

While an ox is working to thresh and separate the grain from the plant in order to aid the Israelites in sustaining their physical lives, they were supposed to let him graze if he stopped to do so while threshing. The point seems to be that something which is laboring for the physical benefit of the Israelites should be allowed to rejuvenate itself when necessary in order to continue to provide them with its abilities so sustain their lives. The ox should be “paid” for his work while he is working, because his work renders him worthy of being paid.

And Paul asks rhetorically if God is more concerned about animals or humans? Obviously, the latter is true, thus allowing him to say in the next verse basically that if an animal should be paid for his work of enhancing a human being’s physical life, then a human being should also be paid for similar work—especially if the work is performed by an apostle who is an authoritative and accurate spokesman for the Messiah where the apostle is enhancing people’s spiritual and eternal well-being.

²¹⁸ ἢ δι’ ἡμᾶς πάντως λέγει; δι’ ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη ὅτι ὀφείλει ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι ὁ ἀροτριῶν ἀροτριᾶν καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν – It is good and right that a laborer share in the fruits of his labor, whether an animal such as an ox, or a human being such as the farmer. If they work to grow food for themselves and others, they should receive a portion of the food as their own “payment” for producing the food. This allows them to concentrate on their main calling and job without doing other work in order to put food on the table and a roof over their head.

Doing that which makes a person worthy of being paid for his work, because it benefits other human beings, is actually a part of the gospel of grace just as it was of the Mosaic Covenant of grace—if a person understands the MC properly, that it was just as much a covenant of grace as the New Covenant is.

²¹⁹ εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπεύραμεν, μέγα εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικά θερίσομεν – But what if the “food” that is produced is “spiritual” in nature, i.e., disseminating the information of Jesus as the Messiah which results in an individual’s embracing this information for the sake of his eternal salvation and entering into the Kingdom of God in the new creation? Does this mean that the laborer, such as Paul or Barnabas, has the right to share only in this food, i.e., in their own understanding of the message and eternal life? Paul says, no. Barnabas and he have the right to share in the Corinthians’ material well-being while they improve their spiritual well-being. This is commensurate compensation of a material nature that permits Paul and Barnabas to continue to exist physically in the present realm and provide the Corinthians with food of a spiritual nature. Thus, he is agreeing with the Corinthians that his not demanding to be paid is a bit strange, but he is foregoing his right for the sake of love towards them!

²²⁰ εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν, οὐ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς – Apparently, the Corinthians have no problem with certain others’ (the false apostles’) demanding to exercise their right to be materially compensated by them for teaching them so-called biblical ideas. Or, he is simply referring to Peter/Cephas and other legitimate gospel teachers whom the Corinthians have willingly supported? In either case, would it not make even more sense that Paul and Barnabas be compensated likewise, because as the first apostolic co-workers to teach the Corinthians, they have resulted in their initially obtaining the promise of eternal mercy and love and are certainly continuing to provide the truth of the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah?

²²¹ ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ – This is the crux of the issues in chapters 8-10—that Paul and Barnabas have not demanded to be paid for their work of proclaiming the NT message, thus not acting in strictly a “knowledgeable” way towards their fellow Christians, but instead in a loving way.

If Paul were to have in mind false apostles who are demanding to be paid for their proclamation of their “gospel,” then he certainly considers his work worthy of being paid also. However, Paul has not demanded payment because he has not wanted to confuse the Corinthians about the nature of the message and its content, i.e., specifically its content regarding the grace of God which cannot be earned, and he has desired to be loving towards the Corinthians by not burdening them with supporting him.

This is always a possible problem within the Christian community, being fairly compensated because someone works and actually deserves to be paid an appropriate wage for his work and the fact that his work involves a message which focuses on *man’s inability to earn a “wage” of mercy and eternal life from God*. God’s grace, His kindness, and His choice to provide forgiveness to evil human beings, who deserve and can deserve ONLY His wrath, condemnation, and destruction, is strictly a free gift to people who cannot pay Him for it. As a result, Paul certainly would rather err on the side of making sure the concepts of grace and love are clearly communicated to people and understood by them, even if it means he has to perform some other task to earn a living and sustain himself physically. He does not want people to think that serving the gospel is simply a means to making a living. It is much more than that. It is a calling from God and His grace, so that if it is necessary on the basis of love to do it without making a living, then this is what someone should do.

²²² οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐργαζόμενοι τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐσθίουσιν, οἱ τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ παρεδρεύοντες τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ συμμερίζονται – Again, Paul affirms that the Corinthians are correct in thinking that he should be paid for his work as an apostle. Cf. Numbers 18, especially vs. 5 and 11, “Thus you [Levites] shall attend to the obligations of the sanctuary and the obligations of the altar, so that there will no longer be wrath on the sons of Israel... *This also is yours, the offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel; I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual allotment. Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it*” (emphasis mine).

God sanctioned the Levites to eat the edible objects that were brought to them by other Israelites to offer to God as part of their worshiping Him. They would first place the food on the altar and then remove it later when they and their families needed to eat. This food, which had been brought by their fellow Israelites, was their wage for working for the other Israelites’ spiritual benefit and for their own spiritual benefit.

As an aside, does this not also say something about the propitiatory value of these offerings? They are basically worth nothing, because they simply get eaten by morally depraved and sinful human beings and then eliminated. The only offering which has genuine eternal propitiatory value is Jesus’ death on the cross, which Christians “eat” metaphorically if they celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem once a year (according to Jesus’ instructions to his apostles the night before his crucifixion).

²²³ οὕτως καὶ ὁ κύριος διέταξεν τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν – Jesus, as the icon of the transcendent God and Creator who instructed the Levitical priests to earn their living from their work as priests, has himself instructed the apostles to earn their living from their work of presenting the NT message of God’s grace and him as the Messiah.

However, Paul is implicitly indicating that this should be the case only when it is clear that the message of God’s free and undeserved grace is getting across to their listeners, which obviously is a tricky issue.

In addition, the question should be asked as to how far historically should this principle extend, e.g., to other Bible teachers who live after the apostles have died and who are not inerrant and authoritative like them? I can see how it might make sense as long as the Bible teacher is merely a discussion leader and claims no authority over his fellow discussers and explorers of the Bible, thus leaving the Bible as everyone’s authority. But this, too, is tricky, because it requires that the ideas of grace and the Messiah remain at the center of the relationship between the leader and the others, while acknowledging that everyone, including the leader, will naturally be guilty of some error, which, in effect, means that no one has any authority over anyone else. In other words, authority in a biblical context makes sense only if the authority is infallible and inerrant. And the Bible alone has this characteristic after the death of the apostles.

Another way to ask this is, “Does it make sense that a fallible teacher of the Bible say, ‘Please, pay me for my error?’” No, because who really is to say that what a pastor or Bible teacher is presenting to people really is benefiting them spiritually? Therefore, any financial compensation that a pastor in Christian history receives must be handled very carefully—both by the giver and by the recipient, that it in no way communicates that the pastor deserves to receive it when he actually may be distorting the message of the grace of God, in spite of his seminary training and ordination.

How can people ensure this is the case? Only by each one individually personally plumbing the depths of someone's thinking on this subject, both that of the one giving financial compensation and that of the one receiving it. And even then, it may be a tough judgment call depending on the personalities involved. In the final analysis, it may be better to be like Paul—not get paid and work outside the context of presenting the gospel of grace. But it should also be the individual choice of the one who is teaching and of those who are being taught. In other words, undue pressure either way from outside any of these individuals should be avoided at all costs.

²²⁴ ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέχρημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων. οὐκ ἔγραψα δὲ ταῦτα, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοί – Paul has not made use of the Mosaic Covenant principle of “paying” the Levites or of Jesus’ instructions to his apostles to be paid for their service of proclaiming the good news about him in order to demand that the Corinthians pay him as the apostle to the Gentiles. Instead, he has stayed away from exercising his right and instituting this principle in his own life. In addition, his writing and explaining this principle to the Corinthians in the previous verses was in no way intended to make them think that they should start paying him now. Paul does not want to come across as demanding to be paid for his labor of proclaiming the NT message. In other words, to get paid is not why he is writing this letter (or any other letter), even if it means not looking legitimate to false apostles, who are using getting paid for their work as a factor which validates them and their message.

²²⁵ καλὸν γάρ μοι μάλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσῃ – Paul would rather die than have any false apostles be able to say, “See, Paul is like everyone else and demands to be paid for this work,” if now he would start being compensated materially by the Corinthians. He would also rather die than have the Corinthians misunderstand the concept of God’s grace and the greater value of love above exercising the freedom to be paid. Instead, Paul wants to be able to “brag” about the NT message’s being that of God’s grace and love and the Messiah whereby no one earns anything from Him, including their earthly subsistence even as an apostle. Thus, God is accommodating a natural human inclination of work and worth (and one which He has instituted in human beings and their cultures) even with His commandment that the Levites eat from the offerings to Him brought to them by their fellow Israelites. It is the same in regard to the gospel and the apostles. But far be it from any apostle to take advantage of this right and natural human inclination at the expense of people’s understanding the concept of God’s grace and the value of love even for Christians.

²²⁶ εἰ γὰρ εὐαγγελίζομαι, οὐκ ἔστιν μοι καύχημα· ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπικεῖται· οὐαὶ γάρ μοι ἐστὶν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι – On the one hand, God has given to Paul the moral and theological responsibility of proclaiming the NT message to the Gentiles as his role on earth. He did not earn this responsibility by extensive study of the Bible and then being ordained by some human seminary. The responsibility to proclaim the message of Jesus as the Messiah to Gentiles was strictly a gift of God’s grace to Paul. Thus, he honestly would be damned to eternal punishment if he did not fulfill this responsibility, because it would demonstrate a fundamental lack of belief in the gospel. How much can one brag about being given a responsibility and role by God through no act of his own which causes him to deserve it? None whatsoever.

Thus, Paul also makes his fulfilling his apostolic duties a moral issue for him. Just as faith without morality is dead (cf. James 1,2), so also Paul’s faith without his performing the gift which God gave him, his apostolic responsibility to proclaim the good news of Jesus to the apostles, is a dead, vacuous, and unauthentic faith.

By extrapolation, all other Christians who do not fulfill the role (spiritual gift, χάρισμα/charisma) that they are assigned by God are guilty of rebelling against God the same as if they are denying both God’s grace and the Messiah. Fortunately, though, their roles are much less involved than an apostle’s, especially Paul’s as the unique apostle to the Gentiles. Consequently, their belief and love of God will also simply involve their living out their lives in the human capacity to which God has assigned them in their Christian communities and their surrounding community. This obviously has been made quite confusing by Christians’ giving themselves roles that are not necessarily legitimate, because they misunderstand both how to interpret passages such as 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 where charismata are listed and then how to apply these passages to themselves (see below in the notes regarding 1 Corinthians 12). It has also been made confusing by pastors’ assigning themselves roles which appear much more authoritative than they should, rendering other Christians’ roles almost irrelevant and trivial—just sitting in the pews once a week and listening to them preach. It has also been made confusing by pastors’ assigning the same authority to themselves as that of the apostles by claiming to be able to discern all the truth in the Bible and the error in other people as if the pastors are inerrant in their understanding of the gospel (cf. Galatians and 1,2,3 John).

²²⁷ εἰ γὰρ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω, μισθὸν ἔχω· εἰ δὲ ἄκων, οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι – There are moments when Paul feels completely good and motivated about proclaiming the NT message and does it willingly without having to force himself at all. When he does so, then he knows that he is receiving a particular “wage,” i.e., the knowledge that he is properly proclaiming the good news of the free grace of God (cf. v. 18).

However, there are also moments when Paul does not feel good and motivated about doing so and he, humanly speaking, has to force himself. When he does so, he knows that he is following through on the responsibility to manage the gift and role which God has assigned him—of being the apostle to the Gentiles. Thus, he is always doing the right thing—whether willingly or unwillingly of sorts. The important thing is that he just do it as his gift from God—and not worry about how willing or much people are paying him.

²²⁸ τίς οὖν μοῦ ἐστιν ὁ μισθός; ἵνα εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὸ μὴ καταχρησασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ – Now Paul gets back to the issue at hand—his not demanding to be paid for his work

as an apostle. This is the only use of ἀδάπανος, which I have translated “free of charge” and means the same thing as *gratis*, in either the NT or the LXX. Paul’s wage so to speak is no wage at all, which sounds bizarre, but which corresponds to the message that Paul is working to present, i.e., THE ONLY message of GOD’S GRACE AND LOVE. Therefore, Paul can say that it is *the freedom to present the information about Jesus as the Messiah without receiving a wage* that is his wage. This is obviously a weird way of thinking of a wage, but, for Paul within the context of the information regarding God’s grace and love, it fits. As he has stated in the previous verses, he has the right to be paid a wage for his apostolic work. However, in the light of the nature of the message, i.e., its focus on God’s grace and love and the Messiah, he has a right not to be paid either, so that it is better that he not exercise the right to be paid than to confuse people about the nature of grace and love.

Only after people truly understand the concept of God’s grace and love would he want to be paid by them for his work. As a result, going back to 9:1, he is free to live his life as he wants, either getting paid or not getting paid, either supporting a family through his work as an apostle or supporting them through other work while carrying out his responsibility of an apostle, etc. This is an important and vital ramification of God’s gracious and loving gift of mercy, the Messiah, belief, and salvation to human beings who deserve only His condemnation and destruction. Their lives must always exhibit the fact that they know that their salvation is strictly a *gift* from God and that other people understand this too (to the extent that they can) and are not led into sin inadvertently because their exercising their freedom and rights becomes confusing to other Christians and also to non-Christians. In other words, their freedom is to choose not to act in a maturely free way but to act in an maturely enslaved way for the sake of love—as Paul will go on to explain in 9:19-23.

²²⁹ ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω – Another way to say what Paul has just written is that he is free from people, meaning that he is free from their being attached to him through paying him a wage. If they are Christians, they are not attached to him. Instead, they are attached to God. They also are free from being associated with him, while they are not free from being associated with God. Indeed, it is their connection with God alone that actually defines their existence as human beings who will receive His eternal mercy—if they are Christians and maintain their faith throughout their lives. Nevertheless, Paul has chosen to be every man’s slave by being obligated by God and to God to proclaim the message to as many people as he can. In other words, he must serve every man by presenting the NT message to every man, even if they do not serve him by compensating him financially. Presenting the message is worth more than making a living from it—as Paul said in the previous paragraph. And Paul’s purpose of making himself a slave of people in his role as the apostle to the Gentiles is to increase the number of people who believe in God’s grace and the Messiah.

²³⁰ καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω – Paul is willing to engage in all the cultural practices that are important to a group of people as long as they are not immoral—for the sake of fitting in with them and presenting them with the good news of Jesus as the Messiah.

For example, 1) he is free to identify himself as a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with those who are the same to help them relax and listen to them as a fellow “Jew.”

2) He is free to recognize that God gave the Mosaic Covenant to the Jews and to obey all its instructions, yet without declaring that following the Mosaic Covenant is both necessary for all believers in the Jewish Messiah and that which makes a person worthy of God’s eternal mercy, in order to gain an audience with legalistic Jews and, hopefully, persuade them to abandon legalism and pursue God’s mercy only through His grace and the crucified Messiah. Nevertheless, Paul would also say that the Jews, as God’s beacon of light to the rest of the world, have an historical obligation to the Mosaic Covenant this side of eternity, an obligation which will finally be fulfilled by all Jews living on the land of Israel during Jesus’ millennial kingdom after his return (cf. Acts, Hebrews, Revelation, and the OT prophets).

Thus, Paul is indicating the same thing as in Galatians and Hebrews, that he is not under the Mosaic Covenant in the sense that Jesus’ death as his eternal priest so relativizes a Jew’s obligation to the covenant that, in comparison, it is as though he has no obligation to it. The fact that no one can find eternal forgiveness and God’s mercy through the Mosaic Covenant, but only through the Messiah’s advocacy, renders the covenant practically irrelevant—eternally speaking.

²³¹ τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ’ ἐννομος Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους – Two things come out of this verse. First, Paul implies that the Jews are still under the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Covenant—at least, historically. Second, Paul implies that the Gentiles are not obligated to the Mosaic Covenant, and, because of the nature of the New Covenant and the whole concept of grace in a ritual free environment, even he can readily forego the Mosaic Covenant’s ritual instructions and not be sinning against God, while proclaiming to the Gentiles the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah.

For example, he can eat food that is not kosher with Gentiles and not be disobeying God as a Jew (cf. Galatians and Romans 14, and even Acts 10), just as he can be eating meat sacrificed to false gods with believing Gentiles and not be disobeying God.

By relativizing the Mosaic Covenant because of its ethnic purpose with respect to the Jews, Paul can dispense with his strict obedience to the ritual commandments of the covenant for the sake of presenting the good news of Jesus as both the Jewish and Gentile Messiah in order to be God’s instrument of bringing about the changing of Gentiles’ hearts so that they become authentic Christians.

²³² ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής, ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω· τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω – Here is the bottom line for Paul, which he repeats in 10:33. He is willing to become like anyone who does not understand the truth of the NT message and its ramifications in order to communicate this message to him, so that people may gain eternal salvation through belief in it, as long as this does not lead Paul into sin and immorality. Thus, Paul's love for God and people always trumps his right to exercise some kind of freedom that would be different from their current cultural or religious mindset. He can practice the Mosaic Covenant with believing (and unbelieving) Jews, who have a weak and immature understanding of the central issues of grace and the Messiah. He can also forego eating food that has been offered to pagan gods with believing (and unbelieving) Gentiles, who have a weak and immature understanding of the lack of existence of these gods in the light of the one, true God and His Messiah (cf. 10:14ff.).

Thus, Paul's purpose is always to engage with people in their lives where they are in their understanding of reality in order to enhance, humanly speaking, the possibility of their becoming authentic believers in God's Messiah and His grace and love that will result in eternal life and mercy for them.

²³³ πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνῶς αὐτοῦ γένομαι – The bottom line for Paul is the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah and of God's grace and love, so that every choice that he makes is a loving one in light of the NT message in order to participate in the truth of the message and its outcome, God's mercy and eternal life for other sinful human beings and for himself. Thus, he is implying what he stated in 9:16, that by wholeheartedly performing his role as an apostle and by lovingly giving up his rights and freedoms as an apostle and authentic Christian, he himself will gain eternal salvation.

Paul will now go on to encourage the Corinthian Christians to be like him, even though they are not apostles (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1). This is to say that they should conduct themselves lovingly at every moment of their lives in such a way that they are fully committed to participating in the outcome of the gospel, which is eternal life, with those of strong belief and understanding and with those of weak (or even no) belief and understanding. All of life for Paul is a moment to live and proclaim the good news of God through Jesus in both his words and his actions.

²³⁴ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες πάντες μὲν τρέχουσιν, εἰς δὲ λαμβάνει τὸ βραβεῖο; οὕτως τρέχετε ἵνα καταλάβητε – Paul now switches gears a bit to say how important righteousness is, that it is those who truly pursue righteousness by loving their fellow Christians who will inherit eternal life. He uses the analogies of running and boxing in the Olympic games to encourage his Corinthian Christian readers to be like him and “do everything because of the good news, in order that [they] may participate in it” (cf. 9:23). He is urging them to remain focused on their goal of the eternal Kingdom of God by avoiding any distraction of sin along the way of life which would prevent them from reaching the finish line and winning the race, even while having an accurate knowledge of the gospel. The tricky aspect of this analogy is that each Christian is the winner of his race, beating out all non-believers for the prize of eternal life. So the Christian is not competing against other Christians. He is competing against non-believers who would attempt to distract him from being out in front of them and finishing the race before them so to speak. And he is competing against himself and his desire to exercise his freedom and his rights instead of loving his fellow Christians. Consequently, in this race, there is no second place for eternal life. Either each “Christian” wins the race and gains the eternal Kingdom of God, or he becomes distracted by the error and sin of non-believers (and his own evil cravings—cf. 10:6ff.) and consequently loses the race and forfeits life in the kingdom. As a result, Paul would have the Corinthian Christians live their Christianity exactly as he does, free from all men and enslaved to all men *within the boundaries of morality and love*, in order that his readers be rescued from God's condemnation and destruction and they do what is best on an existential level to enable others to do the same. Even though the Corinthian Christians are not apostles, they still can participate in non-believers' becoming Christians as God might use them right there in Corinth.

²³⁵ πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκείνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄφθαρτον – Certainly, everyone who competes to win the race in the Olympic games trains and runs in such a way as to win and receive the wreath that is given to only the winner. He focuses on the endline where the first person to cross it is declared the winner. When he does, he receives a wreath of flowers that eventually wilts and deteriorates, so that it is only right after the race and the games that people can tell that he was a winner whenever he wears the wreath. In contrast, Paul says that the wreath which Christians wear after winning their race to the eternal Kingdom of God lasts forever. It never deteriorates, because it is eternal. It is immortal life and moral perfection after receiving God's mercy. Thus, it is important for Christians to train themselves to pursue the wreath of eternal life in order to obtain it.

²³⁶ ἐγὼ τοίνυν οὕτως τρέχω ὡς οὐκ ἀδήλως, οὕτως πυκτεύω ὡς οὐκ ἀέρα δέρω – Paul's every choice in life is with one thing and one thing only in mind, reaching the goal of eternal life by persevering in his believe in God's grace and the crucified Messiah who qualified to be his king and priest. Using a boxing analogy, Paul does not box air. His Christian life is not shadow boxing. It is fighting a real enemy—error and his own evil cravings in the midst of his pride, which, in the first case, is people who claim to be Christians but who are distracted by worldly issues that take their attention off God's grace and the crucified Messiah, as Paul has addressed for example in chapters 1-3, and, in the second case, is people who claim to be Christians but who use their accurate understanding of reality in a prideful manner (cf. chapter 8 and 10:14ff.) by flaunting their freedom and rights instead of loving their fellow Christians.

²³⁷ ἀλλὰ ὑποπιᾶζω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ, μή πως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένομαι – The ultimate opponent in Paul's boxing match is actually not other people and their false ideas. It is himself—his propensity to abandon God and the truth of the gospel and pursue worldly and/or prideful ideas that might appear helpful and good,

whether attaching oneself to a favorite teacher or living out the freedom of the gospel by eating meat sacrificed to idols, regardless of the immature knowledge of his fellow Christians and non-Christians. However, these are unloving towards God or other people, or both. Therefore, Paul pays close attention to what his own moral depravity urges him to do even in the midst of proclaiming the apostolic message which he learned from Jesus and the Old Testament, because there is always the possibility that Paul could actually speak the truth throughout his entire life and yet, as a result of his acting in the worldly ways which he has been addressing in this letter, he would end up disqualified from obtaining God's mercy and gaining eternal life. It would be the case that he spoke the truth, but he did not live the truth, thus demonstrating that his heart was not truly changed so that he had authentic belief.

The goal is to win the race, and the only way to do this is to beat out everyone else and his own pride and arrogance. Paul does this spiritually and morally by proclaiming the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah to all with love, grace, mercy, patience, and forgiveness, so that, in the end, he himself will "qualify" for the trophy of eternal life. He remains diligent to the calling and role that God has given him as the apostle to the Gentiles, while making sure that he lovingly takes into account people's "weak" understanding of the biblical message and communicates its central ideas of both grace and the crucified Messiah. In this way, he is free from all people and enslaved to all people.

²³⁸ οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλῃν ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον – Paul next uses the Jews' experience in the OT when God was leading them from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan as an example of individuals who did not keep their eyes on their goal but got distracted by what their sinfulness was urging them to pursue.

Paul calls these Jews "our fathers" because his Gentile Christian readers in Corinth and he have been grafted into the tree of God's promises to Abraham as he explains in Romans 11. And he says that literally all of them in the Sinai wilderness were "under the cloud," meaning that they were under the observation and protection of God who manifested Himself as an actual cloud hovering over them (cf. Exodus 13 & 14). In Exodus 13, Yahweh was going before them in a pillar of cloud. However, in Exodus 14 when Pharaoh was chasing after them and the people became frightened, the pillar of cloud, i.e., the "angel of Yahweh," moved "from before them and stood behind them" to protect the Israelites from the Egyptians. As a result of God's protection "under" the cloud, all the people went through the Red Sea without being harmed.

These examples will point out that it is entirely possible to be a member of even the group of God's chosen people whom He is rescuing from slavery in Egypt and not be acceptable to God. By analogy the people who claim that Jesus is their Messiah but who are leading the Corinthian Christians to adopt worldly perspectives on certain issues risk being unacceptable to God, thus causing anyone who follows them and who succumbs to the evil desires of their own sinfulness to risk being unacceptable to Him too.

²³⁹ καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ – By traveling under the cloud of God's presence and walking through the Red Sea under Moses' leadership, all the Jews, the Israelites, became associated with Moses and what God was doing with them through him, including their becoming nationally obligated to the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, all the Israelites experienced the same things—the reception of the Mosaic Covenant, living under the care and protection of God while He visibly made Himself obvious by means of the cloud that hung over them during the day, and passing through the parted Red Sea with His protection in order to escape Pharaoh and his army. Thus, to be baptized into Moses was to join with him in God's plans and purposes for the Israelites, because he was leading them every step in what God was doing.

By inference, this is like a Christian's being baptized into Jesus as the Messiah by joining with him in God's plans and purposes for those who believe in him for the sake of obtaining God's eternal mercy. But to be outwardly baptized into Jesus and participate in the community of believers does not seal a person's eternal destiny, because if he gives in to the error of false teachers and his own immoral propensities, he will experience eternal death and God's destruction instead of eternal life.

²⁴⁰ καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα – All the Israelites were ingesting so to speak the plans and purposes of God as they followed Moses who was getting his instructions directly from God. They were intellectually drinking in the experience of God while they received special treatment from Him as He was taking them to the land which He had promised to Abraham and them and his descendants. This should have motivated them to focus their attention on the goal of reaching the land of Canaan under God's care so as not to be distracted by their sinfulness and its evil desires.

²⁴¹ ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός – The God who led the Israelites through the desert and who provided for them had an overall plan to bring about the eternal Kingdom of God with the Messiah as its ruler. Thus, the intent of God for the Jews in the OT was to be at the center of this plan, so that they could and can always say that the Messiah is at the heart of their existences and efforts on earth as they relate to and interact with God, even as they properly pursue obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. But it is not this covenant that ultimately defines the Jews (nor the Gentiles), but it is the New Covenant that does (cf. 2 Corinthians 3 and Hebrews). In this sense "the Messiah" was following them and providing them with what they needed to further God's plans towards the messianic kingdom.

Cf. Exodus 17, Numbers 20, and Deuteronomy 8 and 32 where God provides the Israelites with the sustenance of water from a rock in the desert, and then He is called the "Rock" as the One who led them, provided for them, and even was the very source of their existence. Thus, here in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul refers to the Messiah as the rock and thereby the

center of God's plans and purposes for sustaining the Israelites to the end of their reaching their goal, which we know from Genesis 12 and the rest of the Bible is His making them a "great nation" under Jesus' leadership during the millennial kingdom on this earth and then their living on the eternal earth under Jesus' rule there.

²⁴² ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός· κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ – But here is the lesson for the Corinthian Christians. In spite of the Messiah's being at the center of what God was doing with the Jews even as He rescued them from slavery in Egypt and led them to the land which He had promised to Abraham and his descendants, and in spite of His sustaining them with both water and food (cf. Exodus 16 and the manna with which God provided them), many of the Israelites did not believe Him and experienced various demonstrations of His wrath and justice by dying in the desert, thus failing to reach the goal of entering the land of Canaan. Therefore, simply physically being in the group for whom God is caring does not automatically make a person acceptable to God. There must be a clear demonstration of inwardly embracing the truth of God's grace and the Messiah (in the case of NT believers). Unbelief and adopting worldly and prideful practices, even while claiming to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, will ultimately disqualify a person from obtaining God's eternal mercy and life, revealing the fact that the person never was an authentic believer in the first place.

²⁴³ ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κάκεινοι ἐπεθύμησαν – The rebellious choices and God's responses to them in regard to the OT Israelites so that they did not reach their goal of the land of Canaan should be used by the Corinthian Christians to help them realize what they should not do with respect to the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah or the result will be the same kind of judgment, condemnation, and destruction that God demonstrated toward the OT Jews.

The "evil things" in this case are the worldly and prideful practices which are being encouraged by leaders within the Corinthian Christian community or coming from within the Christians themselves, to the extent that they are choosing favorite teachers to follow or flaunting their freedom (cf. chapters 1-3 and 8-10 respectively), along with criticizing Paul for not demanding to be paid for his apostolic work (cf. chapter 9). In other words, anything desire, thought, or action that is contrary to biblical morality and to the truth of the biblical message, so that to embrace these and live according to them would disqualify a person from God's mercy and eternal life.

²⁴⁴ μηδὲ εἰδωλόλατραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν – Paul is referring to the incident in Exodus 32 when the Israelites were too impatient to wait for Moses to descend Mt. Sinai from his meeting with God, even thinking that he was not coming back at all. As a result, they demanded that Aaron make an image or statue of God that would give them tangible evidence of His existence. In addition, after worshipping the idol and eating a meal as part of their worship, they then left that experience with a sense of joy and satisfaction, something which they had not yet experienced since Moses had gone up on the mountain. It was this that they were craving, basically good feelings from a worshipful experience with a tangible God.

It's not that they rejected God altogether. Aaron even said to them, pointing to the image which he had made, that the image was their God "who brought you up from the land of Egypt." Thus, Aaron and the people had part of their theology correct. God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt. But to think that they could and should make an attractive image of God and represent Him by such was to miss the important point of His being completely unrepresentable by anything except the words and ideas presented by their teacher, Moses (and later by Moses' written documents and other authoritative documents by biblical authors). In addition, to derive good feelings about God from worshipping an idol, which was the natural thing to do in ANE paganism, while "eating and drinking" in honor of their God, i.e., while performing a religious feast on behalf of the God who had brought them out of Egypt, which is certainly good and right to do with a proper perspective, was to add even greater insult in their relationship with God. They basically wanted their experience with God to be a fulfilling and satisfying touchy-feely one from having somehow humanly confined God in a sort of box over which they had a certain level of control, so that they could really come away from it feeling good about God and themselves (cf. פָּקַד and פָּקַד in various OT passages, both translated by παίζω and meaning celebrating and laughing). But this is raw idolatry, much like Christians who craft a worship service with the goal primarily of making people feel good in their relationship with God.

Paul urges his Corinthian Christian readers not to be like these Israelites and engage in idolatry, which would be to misunderstand God and manipulate the created reality in order to produce a good, religious feeling in their relationship with God, while also claiming that Jesus is the Messiah.

The bottom line is that God is a not only a transcendent being, but also the one who creates reality on a continuous basis so that our worship of Him is centered in this and not in what we can "craft" or "make" as human beings.

²⁴⁵ ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πίνειν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν – cf. Exodus 32:6, פָּקַדוּ וְשָׂתוּ וְיָשְׂרוּ לַאֲכָל וְלִשְׁתִּי, LXX – καὶ ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πίνειν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν. In Paul's quote, the aorist active infinitive is πίνειν instead of πίνειν in the LXX. This is from the story of the golden calf where the Israelites reject the transcendent, invisible God and try to make Him immanent, visible, and controllable (?) by means of the image of the golden calf. They crafted and made their own פָּקַד and λατρεία that had not been prescribed by God and would eventually be according to the MC.

It seems the best way to understand פָּקַד (= to laugh) and παίζειν (= to amuse oneself) is "to feel good and congratulate one another in crafting for themselves and providing themselves with an enjoyable religious experience

that made them feel good about themselves.” Therefore, the Israelites’ idolatry was primarily to make them feel good about God and themselves, but it did so at the expense of truth, because it lacked God’s instructions for what their “worship service” should look like. See previous footnote.

Cf. Judges 16:25 where Samson “entertained” the Philistines. Cf. 2 Samuel 6:5,21; 1 Chronicles 13:8;15:29 where the meaning is celebrating before God. Cf. Zechariah 8:5 where it refers to children playing in the streets of Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom. Cf. Jeremiah 30:19;31:4 where it refers to the Jews’ celebrating during the millennial kingdom. Thus, celebrating God and feeling good about God is certainly not wrong, but manipulating the created reality in contrast to God’s specific instructions first in the Mosaic Covenant (all the religious requirements) and second in Christianity (no religious requirements) in order to do so is idolatry. There is a very fine line between employing the artistic gifts of human beings in worshiping God and using their effects as idols whose purpose is primarily to produce enjoyable feelings for the sake of the feelings.

²⁴⁶ μηδὲ πορνεύομεν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες – cf. Numbers 25:1-9. The Israelites in the desert worshiped Baal with the Moabites and participated in sexual immorality with them as part of this worship. God disciplined the Israelites by killing 23,000 of them. Does Paul really have in mind that the Corinthian Christians are either engaging in mass sexual immorality or thinking about doing so? It does not seem likely. Therefore, the point is not to distort any of the biblical truth and think that this is ok with God. The result would be to “fall” like the Israelites and incur eternal death from God’s judgment and condemnation just as the Israelites experienced physical death.

²⁴⁷ μηδὲ ἐκπειράζομεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπειράσαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφεων ἀπώλλυντο – cf. Numbers 21:4-9. By doubting God’s provision of food and water in the wilderness and by hating God’s provision of manna for their sustenance, the Israelites were, in effect, doubting and hating God’s provision of forgiveness, mercy, and provision through the future Messiah and Anointed One in both the millennial kingdom of Israel and the eternal kingdom of all believers.

God has adequately provided for the Corinthian’s salvation with Jesus alone. They do not need to do anything else but believe in Jesus and pursue biblical morality as single individuals who are a community of mutually respecting individuals. To change the apostolic message of the gospel in any way, making it more religiously complex and emotionally satisfying than it is at any moment of a sinner’s individual existence, would be to doubt God’s provision and potentially incur His judgment and destruction. And Paul does not want his readers to do this.

In other words, being willing to receive from God’s hand whatever circumstances and sustenance He brings our way is to believe Him with the kind of belief that it is also believing Him for the future goal and goals that where the Messiah, Jesus, will be present and at the center of these circumstances and sustenance.

²⁴⁸ μηδὲ γογγύετε, καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπώλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ – cf. Numbers 16:41-50. The Israelites complained that it was Moses and Aaron’s fault that some people had died as a result of the rebellion of Korah, and so God killed 14,700 more. But it is not as though God is causing pain and suffering among the Corinthians such that they are now blaming Paul for it. Nevertheless, the lesson is that Paul does not want the Corinthians to doubt God’s having appointed only Jesus’ apostles as authoritative spokesmen on his behalf and incur God’s eternal destruction because they reject the apostolic message by distorting it, adding to it, or ignoring certain parts of it—especially the facts of grace and the crucified Messiah.

²⁴⁹ ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν – All history, especially that of the Israelites in the OT, is a didactic tool for Paul and the Corinthian Christians. In addition, the OT scriptures were written in order to help future generations understand how reality works and that there will be an end to the present realm as God completes His goals for it, starting with the millennial kingdom after Jesus returns and continuing with the new earth and the eternal Kingdom of God. And Paul says that the Corinthians and he live in the last age of the ages before God reaches His goal of the Kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom and then the new, eternal earth.

The lesson is that commitment to God at the level of a person’s heart results in salvation and eternal life, while lack of this commitment, regardless of the religious environment in which one places himself, results in eternal death and condemnation. This is the difference between a religious commitment to any religion, including Christianity, and an intellectual commitment, which is possible to only biblical Judaism and Christianity.

²⁵⁰ ὥστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλέπῃ μὴ πέσῃ – Just as the Israelites thought that it would be legitimate for them to complain to God without any negative consequences, because they were the chosen people of God and “under His cloud” and protection, so the Corinthians should not think that just because they are physically participating in the Christian community of Corinth and outwardly claiming that Jesus is the Messiah that they are completely secure from eternal condemnation. There needs to be viable and authentic evidence of their belief that comes from authentic inwardness, such as eschewing worldly ideas, their own prideful inclinations, and attempts to manipulate their religious experience just to feel good about their relationship with God. Their desire to be vigilant in their adherence to the apostolic message and following this message is vital to their eternal well-being. Otherwise, they will “fall” from their so-called faith and demonstrate that they never had authentic belief in the first place.

²⁵¹ πειρασμός ὅμας οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος – All human beings experience temptations, i.e., circumstances that potentially could lead them away from the truth and into lies and error. These “test” their faith, with God’s desire and plan to authenticate the faith of true believers and Satan’s desire to destroy it. The question is when people are

confronted with error, sin, and hardship that could lead them astray from the sound ideas of the Bible, will they believe God for His truth and faithfulness, or will they reject Him? Will they commit idolatry of sorts, worship the creation or aspects of the creation, engage in immorality, test God's love and faithfulness by rejecting His provision of Jesus alone, or grumble against God for suffering that they or their Christian community are enduring?

²⁵² πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν – In order to remain faithful to His promises to Abraham of the Kingdom of God and eternal life for those who mimic his faith, God creates not only the experience of temptation and testing for the believer, but also the outcome (ἐκβασιν) of the experience. He prevents them from failing the test by causing believers to endure in their faith. Therefore, again we have the combination of God's sovereign grace and man's choosing to believe God at the level of the commitments of his heart are both important to the whole process of a human being's acquiring salvation and eternal life. But, obviously, God's sovereign choice and grace towards authentic believers plays the primary role.

As a result, Paul exhorts his readers to make the right choices in persevering in their belief in the apostolic message along with expressing the comforting idea that God will cause them to do so out of His faithfulness to His promises. He will ensure that the "outcome" (ἐκβασιν) of their lives will be eternal mercy and salvation.

[Hebrews 13:7](#) Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result/outcome (ἐκβασιν) of their conduct, imitate their faith/belief.

I think that "outcome" or "result" makes more sense for the meaning of ἐκβασιν, because Paul's whole outlook on the sinner's journey of faith is that God causes it all to happen as He has planned, so that the outcome is unfailingly eternal life.

²⁵³ διόπερ, ἀγαπητοί μου, φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας – Continuing with all the issues of turning away from the truth of the apostolic message and especially causing weaker brothers to sin by eating meat sacrificed to idols that would distort their understanding of the truth and make them feel as though they are sinning, Paul urges the Corinthian Christian community as a whole to make sure this does not happen, because it would constitute worshiping the creation for those who cannot help themselves think otherwise.

²⁵⁴ ὡς φρονίμοις λέγω – i.e., as to those who have the God-given ability to recognize and embrace the truth because of their changed inwardness, and who already know that false gods do not actually exist (cf. chapter 8) and therefore should also be able to grasp the importance of acting in only a loving way towards their weaker brothers. In addition, he is seeking to pull the weaker brothers along into a stronger view of the gospel whereby they are free to eat whatever food is placed in front of them, because it is just food and there are not such thing as false gods per se. Elements of the creation are powerless and godless in and of themselves, because only God brings them into existence and grants causes them to play the role that He wants within the creation.

²⁵⁵ κρίνατε ὑμεῖς ὃ φημι – Paul wants his readers to use their minds, their "dialectical intrepidity" (Kierkegaard in Concluding Unscientific Postscript) to think about, discern, and recognize what he is saying for what it is—truth! Take what they already understand about the non-existence of false gods and apply it to their social and relational situations in the Corinthian culture, as Paul has been explaining it and will now explain it with respect to eating sacrificial food in front of non-believers.

²⁵⁶ τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστὶν – Paul is referring to the "Lord's Supper" that he will describe in more detail in chapter 11. Like the Israelites in the Old Testament (cf. Exodus 32) and the pagan worshipers of idols of their own culture, these Christians share a meal together before their God as a metaphorical sign of their belief in Him and worship of Him. This then also is an outward sign of their inwardness that involves belief in the NT message of Jesus' death (the "crucified Messiah" – cf. chapters 1 & 2) as the central message of God's granting mercy to people who do not deserve it.

In other words, as they are physically drinking a cup of wine together, they are metaphorically acknowledging that they are doing so as an act of worship of God who sent Jesus to shed his blood on the cross and qualify to be their advocate for God's eternal mercy. Likewise, as they physically eat a meal together, they are metaphorically acknowledging that they are doing so as an act of worship of God who sent Jesus to offer his body on the cross to be their advocate. Thus, they "share" in, i.e., they say they understand the didactic and eternal significance of, Jesus' blood and body that died—they are stuck in inescapable immorality at the core of their nature and deserve God's condemnation and destruction if He does not grant them mercy through Jesus' advocacy. This is a continuation of the OT message whereby the focus is on God's project with respect to the Messiah and his ruling over the eternal Kingdom of God (cf. chapters 1-4). Therefore, it is only God's grace and not their outward acts of worship that pleases God and results in the proper outcome of eternal salvation and life.

²⁵⁷ ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν – When the Corinthians and Paul perform the "Lord's Supper," they eat from one "loaf" of bread, symbolizing that they are united in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, implying also that they are united in their belief that false gods are just exactly that—non-existent, so that it is nonsense to worship them. Thus, they show solidarity with each other on the existence and invaluable importance of Jesus as the crucified Messiah.

But the important thing for the Christians is not the physical eating of the bread (in contrast to what Roman Catholics

and those who think that Jesus prescribed the Lord's Supper believe), it is recognizing the metaphorical nature of the act as a means to demonstrate their authentic inwardness and change of heart by the Spirit of God.

²⁵⁸ βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα· οὐχ οἱ ἐσθιοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου εἰσιν – Here Paul argues his point of how a celebratory meal before one's god constitutes sharing in everything for which that god stands. And he argues it by using the example of the Levitical priests as established in the OT (cf. Leviticus 7). They appropriately participate in the sacrifices to God by the Jews of their bulls and goats by *eating* the meat that was thus cooked by the fires on the altar. If this is seen by all the Jews as *public knowledge* of a person's affirming everything that God stands for and being unified and in solidarity with the entire Jewish nation who are worshiping Yahweh, then so also is the case for pagan worshipers of idols in Corinth with respect to their gods and Christians with respect to Jesus.

Therefore, the issue here is whether or not a Christian can worship God and also participate in eating food offered to the false gods of the Greeks, thinking that the former trumps the latter so that the perception by unbelievers does not matter? Certainly, the Christian is "free" to eat food offered to false gods. But the problem is that weaker brothers struggle with seeing meat sacrificed to idols as just food, and *pagan unbelievers* will misinterpret his actions so that the *truth* of the gospel does not get communicated. And this is always of most concern to Paul, because he is all about people being saved from God's wrath and destruction—especially because he is the apostle to the Gentiles (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:22,23;10:33).

In other words, it is not just what a person does which is not sin, but what their action communicates, if it is in line with what unbelievers do to worship the creation *explicitly* instead of worshiping God. For example, if the culture decided that eating donuts was an important and outward way to become a member the the Superior Class who oppose God and the Bible, then there would be occasions where it would not be appropriate for Christians to eat donuts—both out in public and within a Christian meeting (where "weaker" brothers and sisters might struggle with thinking that the person eating them is sinning), even though eating donuts is not sin per se.

²⁵⁹ τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστίν ἢ ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστίν – Paul has not changed his mind about the theological insignificance of food. He has already said in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 that false gods do not actually exist. Therefore, things sacrificed to them are inherently just the things themselves and not immoral. Food offered to idols is just food. In and of itself, the eating of such food by Christians, who have a proper and biblical understanding of the nature of reality, is not worship of false gods.

However, there is always others' perceptions of what one is doing that actually needs to be taken into account, because the issue is not *what* people are doing in this case, but *why* they are doing it. Are they doing it because they are weak in their faith as Christians or as unbelievers believe that their offering of food to their gods is going to make a difference in how their lives proceed from that point on because the gods will be pleased with their offering and cause good things to happen in their lives? This is what Paul wants to prevent from being communicated by these Christians' actions that are not sin in and of themselves.

²⁶⁰ ἀλλ' ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαίμονιαι καὶ οὐ θεῶ θύουσιν οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι – Here Paul states explicitly the issue and his concern. In some way the Corinthian Christians are communicating that they condone the belief in the false gods of natural forces within the created cosmos, probably by believing correctly that food offered to them is just food (cf. 1 Corinthians 8), but then eating it in front of weak brothers whose understanding is damaged to the point of giving up their faith, or in front of unbelievers who do not have this level of understanding of reality and think that the Corinthian Christians condone and agree with their belief in worshiping the creation instead of the Creator.

²⁶¹ οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων – In line with how I am interpreting the previous verses, Paul is saying that it is not good that a person would *appear* to grant existence both to the one true God and to gods or forces in the creation that are under His control, even while thinking that the false gods as forces of nature are completely under God's control. And it is not good to influence weaker Christians to damage their consciences. Therefore, to eat meat sacrificed to false gods in pagan temples and to eat bread and drink wine in imitation of Jesus and the apostles at the Last Supper should not be performed by Christians *when it is the case that others' (whether weaker Christians or abject unbelievers) perceive that the Christian condones the syncretistic worship of all gods and the existence of all gods, including the God of the Bible.*

²⁶² ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον; μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν – The eventual outcome of trying to serve the one true God and exercising one's freedom in an unloving (and therefore prideful way) by giving the appearance to unbelievers of worshiping false gods (or even trying to remain acceptable to non-believers by participating with them in the worship of their false gods), even though a person firmly believes that false gods do not actually exist, is God's wrath and condemnation at the final judgment—because it communicates the wrong message about God and the gospel. In other words, the prideful "Christian" may not be a Christian at all.

Is this what the Corinthians want to do and think that they can get away with it? Do they somehow consider themselves as more powerful than God from their foolish and unloving human perspective? Paul certainly hopes not. This is why *wisely* "loving one's neighbor" (whether weaker brother or complete unbeliever) is so important in connection with one's belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

²⁶³ πάντα ἔξεστιν ἄλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει πάντα ἔξεστιν ἄλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ – Paul admits (as he did in chapter 8) that it is definitely not immoral to eat meat, whether it comes from an animal that has been sacrificed to a false god or not, because, technically, it is just meat. However, it is important to take into account the human context for deciding whether or not it really is appropriate to do so. To engage in morally permissible activity without considering its effect on others and oneself, i.e., giving the appearance that one condones syncretistic worship of all gods or making one proud of knowing the truth so well that he flaunts his freedom before Christians and non-Christians with weaker understanding of these issues, is actually to rebel against God, not to submit to Him.

Thus, this behavior is detrimental to the moral well-being of both the Christian with supposedly a mature and stronger understanding of the gospel and the non-Christian who lacks such understanding (and the Christian with a weak understanding of the gospel). Actually both the Christian and the non-Christian lack mature understanding, because the Christian is not thinking through all the implications of his so-called mature knowledge of God and the Bible.

²⁶⁴ μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου – Paul wants the Corinthians to consider what is not only morally legitimate for themselves, e.g., eating meat regardless of where it came from, but also, in this specific context as Paul goes on to explain, what their actions communicate to others who are committed to worshiping false gods. He is all about the “moral improvement” (cf. v. 23 – πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ) of non-believers by their becoming believers *through the truth*, but this truth needs to be communicated well by Christians.

²⁶⁵ πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν – Ignorance is bliss as to the origin of the meat that is sold in the local Corinthian market for a mature Christian with a strong understanding of the gospel and the nature of reality. He does not have to think about whether or not he is “participating” in idol worship, even though he knows there is no such as a false god who is the ultimate force in his life.

²⁶⁶ τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς – cf. Psalm 24:1, יְהוָה הָאֵל וְהָאֵלִים לֹא יֵדָע, לֹא יֵדָע לֹא יֵדָע, LXX – τοῦ κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς. Ultimately, God is the creator of all reality, including any food that the Corinthians eat, regardless of what human beings have done with the food. Therefore, the food that mature Christians eat is God's food first and foremost. This is to say that it is He who provides it, not simply any forces of nature. God uses nature to provide us with what we need to exist in this realm. Therefore, to acknowledge nature (Mother Nature in our case) without acknowledging God who creates and is in control of nature is to engage in idolatry and to anger God.

²⁶⁷ εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε πορεύεσθαι, πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν – As a result of the Corinthians' understanding correctly the nature of reality, that all things come from God, as long as they do not bring up the subject of the origin of the meat that is being served, they need not worry about eating meat that has been sacrificed to false gods when their pagan friends invite them over for dinner, unless...

²⁶⁸ ἂν δέ τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ· τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν, μὴ ἐσθίετε δι' ἐκεῖνον τὸν μὴνύσαντα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν – However, if someone with “weak” understanding, i.e., an abject pagan, informs them that the food comes from sacrifices to false gods, then do not eat the food and *appear* to participate in the worship of false gods because of how the person with “weak” understanding is viewing reality and even the Christian's eating the meal prepared for him which includes food offered to the pagan gods (cf. 9:19-23 and 10:29).

²⁶⁹ συνείδησιν δὲ λέγω οὐχὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ τὴν τοῦ ἑτέρου – The point has been reached where the believer with “strong” understanding of the biblical message should take into account how people with “weak” (or no) understanding, even the worshiper of pagan gods, view reality when he is making his decision about what to do. This is ultimately what makes him a believer with strong understanding—because he is willing to act out of love for the other person and do what he can to promote the gospel in his mind and life.

Thus, Paul here is not concerned about the believer with a strong understanding, but about the unbeliever with a false understanding of God and reality.

²⁷⁰ ἵνα τί γὰρ ἡ ἐλευθερία μου κρίνεται ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως – It is plausible that ἵνα τί is not asking a question but leading into a statement, “so that what is happening is that my freedom is being judged, i.e., affected, by another person.” However, it also makes good sense that Paul is asking a rhetorical question which he expects the Corinthian Christians with strong and good understanding of the gospel to be able to answer for themselves. Thus, the question is intended to get them to *think* about their selfishness whereby they would object to having to make moral decisions based upon other people's understanding of reality.

If there is no such thing as a false god, then why even act as though people's “weak” understanding has any legitimacy? Isn't a Christian free to live as he wants within the creation which God has made that includes His provision of food, even through the process of sacrifices to pagan and false gods? It certainly seems so, *but not if one wants to communicate the gospel correctly to all people*, which is key for the apostle Paul as the primary spokesman to Gentiles.

²⁷¹ εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ – As in v. 29, Paul is mimicking the Corinthians, who, in their selfishness, would have difficulty grasping why they should care about another person's evaluation of their actions, when they are obeying God according to His grace that permits them to partake freely of all that God has created, as long as their actions are not explicitly immoral according to an obvious moral commandment such as “You shall not murder.”

The Corinthian Christian is basically asking, “So why I am denounced by you Paul, and by God by implication, for what I am doing, which is perfectly legitimate according to a proper understanding of reality? Other people simply need to get a better grasp on reality like me.” But this is not a good attitude to have in relation to the whole of the gospel, which is not about a Christian's always exercising his “freedom” so to speak, but about communicating through

love the truth of the message, which, if genuinely embraced by human beings, will result in their being rescued by the Messiah from God's wrath, eternal condemnation, and destruction.

Thus, these rhetorical questions are answered simply by, "Because love demands that we think about how our actions will affect another person's understanding of reality."

²⁷² εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε – The bottom line for all the Corinthian Christians, regardless of what category they are in (the stronger Christians or the weaker Christians) is their seeking to honor God for who He is, the God of love, justice, mercy, and truth who Himself wants people to come to a better understanding of truth *and be saved*, rather than authentic believers' simply exercising their freedom in pagan cultures which are based upon lies and false beliefs.

In this way, the Christians will lovingly and accurately point to the greatness of God in His entirety and properly promote the conversion of unbelievers to believers based upon actual *truth*. This will glorify God more so than simply living out one aspect of the truth—the freedom of Christians under grace to live completely differently from the religious aspects of their indigenous and native culture.

²⁷³ ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίους γίνεσθε καὶ Ἑλλήσιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ – Paul wants the Corinthians to act in such a way as not to appear to people of "weak" understanding of the truth as though they are doing something contrary to the truth, when, in reality, they are actually being consistent with a "strong" understanding of the truth. This is what accurately points to God's greatness, not by living in a manner apparently consistent with the "freedom" of a strong understanding of reality, but instead in a manner which is consistent with the goal of the truth (at least certainly for Paul, and by extrapolation for all Christians) of presenting it to others in order that they may be rescued from God's judgment (cf. 9:22,23 and 10:33). This is to say that Paul would want to prevent any unnecessary barrier from arising between Christians and non-Christians (and weaker Christians) that prevents people from the ultimate goal of being rescued from God's eternal condemnation and destruction.

²⁷⁴ καθὼς καὶ γὰρ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἐμαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν, ἵνα σωθῶσιν – As Paul said in 9:22,23, the ultimate purpose of Christians' lives is to communicate the truth of the gospel to others that they may embrace the truth in the same way and obtain God's eternal mercy. Thus, paying attention to other people's "weak" understanding of reality should result in Christians' providing them with enough explicit information of the gospel that they can consciously choose to long for God's eternal mercy more than anything else. The idea is to save people, not simply demonstrate that they are wrong in their "weak" understanding or unbelief. As a result, this may steer the "strong" person away from what he wants to do in accord with the freedom of the truth, but Paul is identifying this change in direction by the "strong" person as his loving the "weak" person and unbeliever.

The "benefit" (σύμφορον) that Paul could gain by eating food that has been offered to idols for example is his truly living out the wonderful freedom of the gospel whereby he is released from all the unnecessary ties and connections to the created reality that exist within religious systems and the thinking that these gain a better life for a person than if he did not force himself into these ties and connections. Thus, Paul is ultimately connecting himself to the transcendent author of the creation, God. But to take advantage of this freedom without considering the effect of his actions on unbelievers or weaker brothers in terms of their understanding the gospel would be wrong. The goal is to reduce the hindrances to other people's embracing the gospel as much as possible, regardless of how free someone is under the grace of God.

²⁷⁵ μμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς καὶ γὰρ Χριστοῦ – Paul adds as the basis for his exhortation above to the Corinthian Christians his following Jesus' example, who, as the Messiah, always considered the precise moral condition of people with "weak" understanding—whether they needed to have him confront their weak understanding directly by calling them out for their rebellion against God or confront their weak understanding indirectly by giving in to their weak understanding and thereby perhaps gaining an audience with them. In the first case, he confronted directly the Jewish leadership of the scribes and Pharisees, for example, in Matthew 23. In the second case, he confronted these same leaders by probably washing ceremoniously before the meal which was prepared in a kosher manner when he was invited by the Pharisee to dine with him in his home. As a result, Paul wants the Corinthians to follow his and Jesus' example. The key is that he wants people to be saved by making it as easy as possible for them to "hear" the NT message of God's Messiah if they are friendly towards Christians, e.g., by inviting them over for dinner. Therefore, he is willing to give up his own preferences of eating anything placed before him because it is just food provided by the transcendent Creator when his host might get the wrong impression about exactly what are his beliefs.

²⁷⁶ ἐπαινώ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε – Here we have a major transition from the issue of eating food that is sacrificed to idols and its ramifications in the Corinthians' lives to other issues that Paul needs to address. Yet, in spite of all the aforementioned problems in the Corinthian Christian community, Paul recognizes that they are still embracing the ideas of the Jewish Messiah that he as an apostle first presented to them. They also grasp the fact that the pagan gods do not actually exist à la 1 Corinthians 8. Their thinking is wrong in so many ways, but the core of their worldview is God's Jewish Messianic Kingdom of mercy with its freedom within the created reality and not pagan idolatry.

²⁷⁷ καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε – Paul reminds the Corinthians that their core worldview comes not ultimately from him, but from God through the scriptures as we know was the case from what Paul says in Galatians as he studied through the OT again in order to learn it correctly after being a student of Gamaliel and not quite getting the biblical message correct. Indeed, Paul had become an excellent Pharisee who obeyed the Mosaic

Covenant in order to demonstrate his faithfulness and worthiness to God that God might reciprocate and reward him with the promises of Abraham.

²⁷⁸ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός – Primary, defining member of a group.

Moving on to a new topic, Paul desires that the Corinthian Christian community understand the biblical dynamics of a marital relationship with respect to knowledge and understanding of God's truth as revealed in the Bible (cf. vs. 2 and 4) and with respect to how both the husband and wife engage with the Christian community in the light of their "freedom" to act any way they want short of crossing an obvious moral boundary. This is similar to the kind of issue as in chapter 8 (cf. especially 8:9) where the Corinthian Christians correctly understand that they may eat any food because God is ultimately the provider of it, but they are not thinking well about their "freedom" to do so in the light of other Christians who have not yet acquired their mature level of understanding of the gospel. This situation is also like that in 10:27-30 where Paul is concerned about how the outside culture and unbelievers will interpret these Christians' actions. Consequently, he is again dealing with the truth of the gospel in the light of consensus and convention in the Corinthian culture.

In Jewish synagogues, the men sat on one side, and the women (their wives) sat on the other side. The men participated in the service, while the women did not. Christianity introduced a new way of engaging in public worship of God by inviting and encouraging women (wives) to participate equally with the men (their husbands). However, there were certain cultural traditions and practices in place that appeared to come in conflict with how husbands and wives did participate in public worship. Here, the issue is that of having a covering on one's head. Men removed any head covering they had in order to demonstrate respect for God, while their wives wore a head covering to demonstrate respect for their husbands. But should wives remove their head coverings in order to show respect for God equally with and as their husbands are doing? Or should they leave them on for the culture's sake in order to show respect for their husbands? Paul will argue that the latter is the correct approach, but he will also admit there may be circumstances where this may not be the case (cf. 11:16).

Paul's biblical teaching here is that just as God has designated Himself in His transcendent position to be the One with whom the Messiah aligns His plans, purposes, and actions because He is the defining member of the pair of God and the Messiah, while He is also the source of the Messiah's existence within the creation, so also the wife should demonstrate outwardly in her culture that she recognizes that her husband is the defining member in her relationship with him, so that she aligns herself with her husband in being committed to the Messiah and all that he stands for—in spite of the fact that she may want to show respect for God in exactly the same manner as her husband, i.e., by not wearing something on her head when she is "praying or prophesying." In other words, Christ finds his role and sense of purpose in regard to his relationship with God from God, while a husband finds his role and sense of purpose in regard to his relationship to Christ from Christ, resulting in a wife's finding her role and sense of purpose within the marriage relationship from her husband. This interpretation follows from God's being the primary person in His relationship with Jesus and Jesus' being the primary person in his relationship with husbands and husbands' being the primary person in their relationship with their wives—and how demonstrating this to the culture is important.

In addition, Jesus' uses "head" (κεφαλὴ) when he quotes Psalm 118:22 in Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10, and Luke 20:12. God's faithfulness to the Jews through the Messiah is the cornerstone of the building as a metaphor for God's fulfilling His promises to the Jews. Jesus, indeed, is the personification within the creation of God's faithfulness to His fulfilling His promises, because Jesus himself faithfully aligned himself with God's eternal plans and purposes. Thus, God defines who Jesus is, Jesus defines who the wife is, and the wife finds her purpose in being a helper to her husband as they both obey God. This of course assumes that God, the Messiah, and husbands are all performing their roles as defining members properly, which certainly is the case with God and the Messiah but becomes iffy in the case of the husband. Nevertheless, the principles which Paul lays out here still apply.

²⁷⁹ πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ – Paul mentions only prayer and speaking the truth of God (that a husband has learned directly from an apostle, i.e., as as "prophet" (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28) in regard to this concept of the husband's being the "head" of the wife. He says that while speaking publicly (within the Corinthian Christian community at its gatherings) of the biblical things of God that are intended to instruct people so that they can align themselves with God and the Messiah, the husband must clearly indicate to his culture that the Messiah is the defining person in his relationship with him, so that he derives his role from the Messiah, thereby deriving his instructions from God.

Therefore, the main way culturally in Corinth (in the Greek culture of Greece at that time) that this was shown was by the husband's **NOT** covering his actual physical head. Otherwise, he would "dishonor" his "head," Jesus the Messiah. We can probably assume that men in Corinth wore something on their heads, a hat of sorts, and would remove them when they wanted to show that they were being respectful of a person or a deity whom they considered to be the defining person in the relationship. As a result, Paul is allowing the culture to drive the outward behavior for how a person shows respect to God/Jesus in order to place any unnecessary barriers between people in the culture and their embracing the gospel message.

And this is in light of the same issue as in chapters 8-10, that certainly the gospel *frees people from irrelevant cultural mores*, so that men and women can wear a headcovering or not when worshiping Yahweh, because it really does not matter to God. Indeed, if removing a head covering for a man allows him to show respect to God, then it makes sense

that the same would be true of his wife—as long as this does not send a message to their culture that she is disrespecting her husband.

²⁸⁰ πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς· ἐν γὰρ ἔστιν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ – Paul says that the opposite is true for wives who are speaking publicly of the biblical things of God that are intended to instruct people and align them with the Messiah through the information that she has learned directly from an apostle (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28). It is important for her to demonstrate clearly within her culture that her husband is the defining person in their relationship, that she finds her purpose in the role of her marriage with her husband and that to which God has called them together—to believe and obey God, and not from herself independently of her husband.

She does this by showing that her own husband is responsible within the created realm to define himself by his relationship with the Messiah so that she then defines herself by her relationship to her husband and thus to Jesus the Messiah. She thereby demonstrates proper respect for God, Jesus, and her husband by wearing something on her head in the Corinthian culture while her husband shows proper respect for God and the Messiah by not wearing a headcovering.

And this is probably the first time in history that both men and women are considered equal participants in the worship of God by both having the freedom to speak about him, either by direct statements to other Christians in the gathering (prophecy—learned from an apostle) or by statements to God that need to contain the same quality of truth (prayer). In the Jewish synagogue, women did not participate. So, if women now participate equally with men in publicly speaking to God or about God, would it not make sense that they physically and outwardly should show respect for their Messiah in the same way that husbands do, by not wearing a headcovering? Paul is saying, No, because of the cultural message this would send.

Thus, headcoverings were a cultural issue which needed to be taken into account even in the light of the “freedom” of the gospel.

Did the prostitutes shave their heads? Why? No clear evidence that it is this to which Paul is referring.

cf. Article in The Guardian (3/12/07) regarding Britney Spear’s shaving her head – “In ancient Greece shaved heads were a mark of the slave.” Therefore, it could be the woman’s shaved head indicated that she was a slave and unmarried (?).

²⁸¹ εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνὴ, καὶ κειράσθω – Sarcasm? Seems the most reasonable way to take this with the implication being that no Christian wife would really want to identify herself with whatever Paul is referencing here—a prostitute or an unmarried slave (?).

²⁸² εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω – This is the sentence that helps the most to make sense of the issue. If Paul is being sarcastic in the first part of v. 6, and it would seem that he is, then he is simply saying that it is most culturally beneficial, i.e., for communicating the truth of the gospel, that the wife respects her husband and finds her definition as a wife by her covering her head, even though they both have equal status before God and even if she were to desire to show respect to the Messiah in the same manner as her husband.

²⁸³ ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων ἢ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἔστιν – Speaking strictly culturally, Paul is saying that husbands (“a husband-man”) really ought to uncover their heads when participating in public worship of God in order to demonstrate respect to Him. Thus, for Christian husbands to show that their purpose as a husband and sinful human being is in the Messiah, i.e., in his association with the Jesus the Messiah, by wearing a headcovering in the same manner that their wives show theirs with respect to their husbands would not be wise in the Greek, Corinthian culture.

But Paul goes back to the creation account in Genesis 1 & 2 to remind the Corinthians that, while God intended both men and women to be made in the image of God, i.e., as real persons with minds and wills that are like God’s in order to bring Him glory by indicating His awesomeness, the husband is, in a sense, just exactly this in a defining position with respect to his wife because of Adam’s being created first and then Eve’s being created as a helper (βοηθός, ⁷¹²⁷) for Adam (as Paul will go on to state in the rest of this verse and the next). Therefore, the wife is intended to demonstrate how marvelous a creation the man/husband was by her willingness to fulfill her role as his helper.

Together, therefore, the husband and wife demonstrate the “glory” of God by showing that they understand that they live together as husband and wife and fulfill their roles in both obeying God. The husband finds his purpose in the Messiah and God, while the wife finds her purpose in her husband, the Messiah, and God.

It would seem that this is born out in cosmic history by virtue of the fact that God’s proxy and the ruler of the creation as the most important icon of God, indeed the person who is God in the story, is a man, Jesus of Nazareth, and not a woman. In addition, the fact that believers in Jesus are collectively called his bride also elevates Jesus to a defining position above them.

Hebrews 13:6 so that we confidently say, “THE LORD IS MY HELPER (βοηθός), I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?”

²⁸⁴ οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός – Adam was created first by God, and then God made Eve from Adam’s rib. This chronological order of events becomes the basis of Paul’s argument for stating that the husband reveals the elements of defining the husband/wife relationship that points to God (since He invented marriage through Adam and Eve), while the wife reveals the elements that define her by virtue of having a relationship with her husband and as his “helper.”

Therefore, it is clear that the wife points to God and His design just as much as her husband does, but God intended there to be a specific element of definition with respect to the Messiah and God, i.e., first the husband and then the wife within the marital relationship, because it is this relationship that glorifies God by virtue of its specific design within the creation. In other words, the similarity of the order of defining oneself by the wife with her husband is intended to highlight and emphasize the defining relationship of the Messiah's defining himself with respect to God, and then right after this, of the husband's defining himself with respect to the Messiah.

²⁸⁵ καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ ἡ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα – Now Paul moves from the chronological order of the creation of man before the woman to God's purpose for creating the woman after the man. In Genesis 2:18, God states first that it is not good that the man be alone, and, second, that He will make a "helper like him, who is correspondingly opposite to him."

In line with this, God made Adam, but not so that he would "help" per se another human being who was already in existence (even though he definitely has the responsibility to nurture and care for Eve as if he were doing so to himself (cf. Ephesians 5:21ff.)). Instead, Adam was made in order to be helped. Then, God made Eve in order for her to fulfill the specific role of being Adam's "helper." Thus, Eve was created "on account of" Adam.

²⁸⁶ διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους – Now Paul draws the conclusion that, in light of both the truth of God as presented in the Bible, i.e., the *angeloi* (the messengers and messages of God that came from the messengers, specifically Genesis 2 here), and the cultural situation in Corinth regarding women with head coverings and shaved heads, it is vital that wives who talk about the apostolic message as accurately communicating the Bible should show publicly in their group and to the culture that their right to speak alongside their husbands comes from God but also includes their desire to demonstrate to others in their culture their willingness to respect their husband as the one defines their role as a wife, while both the husband and the wife have a right to speak alongside the Messiah and his God as the chief instructor of the message, thus showing respect for them in their culture.

²⁸⁷ πλὴν οὐτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἄνδρος οὐτε ἄνθρωπος χωρὶς γυναῖκος ἐν κυρίῳ – Here Paul comments on an interdependency between husbands and wives on the basis of their origins—the first wife's origin from the first husband, and the first husband's origin with a view to his wife, Eve, who was definitely created after him and as his helper. And both these human beings and the truth about them is from God. In other words, it is GOD who defines the existence, purpose, and roles of both the husbands and wives—because He is the transcendent author of both their existence and marriage. In this way, there is a mutual symmetry in the marital relationship, that both the husband and wife receive their human purposes and marital roles from the transcendent Author of all reality, thus making them "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). God defines them—through the purpose and role of the Messiah. They do not define themselves.

²⁸⁸ ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τῆς γυναῖκος· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ – Paul states more explicitly what he said in v. 11, that both a husband and his wife exist because of both a husband (Adam) and a wife (Eve). Thus, they should demonstrate to their culture that together their apostolic worldview and their purpose for being husband and wife ultimately come from the Messiah and God, because each originates from God's creative work and exists at every moment of life on earth because of God's continued creative work. In this way, there is an equality of creation within the design of creation. It is not that a husband has a higher status but a different defining role which his wife respects, just as the husband respects his wife in the light of the defining role of the Messiah for him and the defining role of God for the Messiah.

²⁸⁹ ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε· πρέπον ἐστὶν γυναῖκα ἀκατακάλυπτον τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι – It may sound as though Paul is saying that all this about the importance of honoring the defining member of different persons should be obvious to the Corinthians and should lead to complying with his recommendations completely. But, because he is dealing with a cultural issue and not a moral issue, it makes more sense that he is granting to the Corinthians the right to make the right decision for themselves spontaneously and on the fly.

Therefore, he is allowing for the fact that circumstances may call for these Christians to decide differently from what he is presenting them and their wives regarding either wearing a head covering or not.

²⁹⁰ οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἄνθρωπος μὲν ἐὰν κομᾷ ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστὶν – It is possible that ἡ φύσις means nature in a sense similar to the way we use this word. If it does, then these statements by Paul are indicating that we consider short hair for men something that is quite natural, while long hair for women is equally natural. Thus, to deny this reality is in a sense denying the Creator and His design, which in turn causes us to disgrace ourselves if we do not live in line with this consideration from God.

But Paul also could be speaking again about the Greek culture, that it has "naturally," along the course of time because of certain idiosyncratic issues within it, developed the strong and impressive idea that short hair (and therefore no headcovering) for a man honors the gods, while short hair for women (and therefore no headcovering), dishonors the gods. Paul is saying that the Corinthian Christians must at least reckon with this well-entrenched way of looking at reality in the Greek culture—in the same way that he stated in chapters 8-10 that reckons with the well-entrenched but immature/erroneous way of looking at reality in the Jewish and Greek cultures as well as the Christian community. Paul wants to accommodate any peculiarities within the culture in the public settings of the Christian gatherings that will not lead to abject immorality, but will lead to avoiding miscommunicating the gospel. And he does so in order to make it as easy as possible for all others to listen to what everyone has to say about the Jewish Messiah Jesus and believe in Him for the sake of their own salvations (cf. 9:22; 10:33).

Therefore, the covering of short hair on husbands, i.e., pointing ultimately to no covering when wanting to show

respect to God and the Messiah, is correct in that culture for them. And the covering of long hair for wives, i.e., pointing ultimately to a definite covering for them to show respect to their husbands (and to the Messiah and to God), is the correct approach in that culture.

The very important fact is that we are supposed to read our culture and reduce any unnecessary barriers to their seeing the truth of the gospel and embracing it for the sake of their eternal salvations. This is a vital part of the definition of biblical love—even if it seems to curtail and reduce our freedom as Christians that is still true according to the gospel.

²⁹¹ γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν· ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται αὐτῇ – see above

²⁹² εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ – Paul urges his readers to consider his apostolic perspective and not arrogantly think that they have a better argument that focuses on the freedom of the gospel. He is encouraging them not to be mavericks just for the sake of being either different or “free.” Instead, he lets the Corinthians know that all the other (Greek?) Christian communities are engaging in the same practices that he has just described for husbands and wives and their head coverings. Therefore, they should consider the appropriateness of them while retaining the freedom to think for themselves what would be best in their situation—either wives’ wearing a covering while participating in public worship or not.

²⁹³ τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινῶ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε – Paul moves on to another issue that he is aware of and that demonstrates the Corinthians’ missing the point about the NT message, to the extent that they are definitely not helping each other remain committed to it and grow in it. Their gathering together as Christians is not such that it is encouraging the kind of unity and caring for one another to which the gospel calls all genuine believers.

It is not clear how Paul found out about this situation, but it may have been a part of the original letter of questions to which he has been responding. However, it does not have to involve an actual question but maybe just some statements that provided Paul with enough information to know what was happening.

Also, it is clear from v. 23 that Paul had already set up this particular practice for the Corinthians of eating a meal together in worship of God and Jesus as His Messiah. Now, however, they are mistreating each other in the midst of this practice.

²⁹⁴ πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω – In chapter 1 Paul addressed the subject of schisms and divisions (σχίσματα) that are based upon people’s preference of teachers. Is he referring to the same issue here, or is this the division of the gathering of Christians in Corinth based upon misinterpreting Jesus’ crucifixion leading to inappropriately behaving towards one another in the context of the celebratory meal that they are sharing together? In this context it seems better to understand Paul to be talking about the latter. So, the first problem is that the community is divided for the wrong reasons, as Paul will go on to describe. Nevertheless, he does go on to say that it is only natural that divisions occur for the right reasons.

²⁹⁵ δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα καὶ οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν – Thus, Paul is saying that divisions among “Christians” in a city are a necessary part of any Christian community. But here it means the *one* division between authentic believers and those who pretend to be believers.

Paul is implying that authentic believers will demonstrate clear evidence of the authenticity of their faith by their willingness to adhere to the apostolic message as he is presenting it in this letter and to live it out as a group.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 5.

Sometimes, people come into a Christian community and participate in it for a reason other than to be saved from God’s eternal condemnation through Jesus. Yet, over time, their lack of authentic belief and their commitment to this world becomes more and more obvious, so that eventually their opposition to Christianity becomes clear to authentic believers. The former are involved in Christianity for only religious purposes, so that they do not remain serious about avoiding all sin and evil that is described in the Bible. They fudge on certain issues in order to be acceptable to the world and its opposition to God and biblical morality.

The plural αἰρέσεις refers to not only factions, sects, or separate groups, but also to their manner of thinking and acting which is different from other groups. As far as Paul is concerned, there is only one αἵρεσις which is correct, the one which follows the apostolic message as he is explaining it in this letter. Thus, this word can have either a positive or negative connotation and seems synonymous with both σχίσμα and ἔρις, while the latter includes the notion of actually fighting with others over one’s manner of thinking for the purpose of winning an argument and destroying the opponents’ sect, division, and group.

²⁹⁶ συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν – Besides the fact of divisions for the wrong reason within their group, there is the manner by which they are causing these divisions. Paul has taught the Corinthian Christians to eat together in the manner in which Jesus ate the Passover meal with his apostles the night before he was crucified, but they are not doing so properly.

Because the whole rest of the NT indicates that Gentile Christianity is absolutely religion free so that there are no required rituals or ceremonies that Gentiles must practice in order to demonstrate that they are *bona fide* disciples of Jesus as the Messiah, Paul must have taught the Corinthians to emulate Jesus and the apostles at the so-called Last Supper because of the pagan practice of community meals of meat sacrificed to idols in their local temple that was well-entrenched in the psyche of even these Corinthian Christians. In other words, Paul simply gave them a Christian alternative to their usual pagan meals as a way to accommodate this religious habit of theirs. He was not indicating that either Jesus or he was mandating this meal for all Christians for all time. He was providing them with something

Christian that they were used to doing as something idolatrous.

Here, Paul accuses the Corinthian Christians of emulating more their pagan friends than Jesus and his apostles.

²⁹⁷ ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν – Paul states that the Corinthian Christians are not eating their shared meal as a community where people really care for one another, but as individuals (or families) who are watching out strictly for their own selfish physical desires, which was the exact opposite of Jesus' meal with his apostles that was intended to unify them in their belief in God's love and mercy.

These Corinthian Christians "go ahead" of actually caring for one another and instead eat their meals as if they are the only one's present—or at least the way they used to eat this kind of meal in the midst of their pagan idolatry.

²⁹⁸ καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ μεθύει – Here is Paul's explicit statement about the selfish behavior of the Corinthian Christians. If people are left hungry in a community meal of supposedly loving Christians, when this could easily be avoided by sharing the food, and if people are getting drunk on the wine, which indicates both that they are not sharing and that they are not committed to sober living, then there is something very wrong about their grasp of the biblical message of God's love and mercy.

Perhaps this practice of doing the "Lord's Supper" together involved each family's being responsible for bringing their own food, so that the wealthy families brought more than enough food while the poor families brought very little. And what is happening is that wealthy families are not inviting the poor families to share in their food, leaving the poor hungry and the wealthy drunk from drinking their wine which was more than enough for themselves. In this way, each family is eating "its own meal." There is no genuine, Christian love and sharing going on—no love of one's neighbor.

²⁹⁹ μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν; ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε, καὶ καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας; τί εἶπω ὑμῖν; ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς; ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινῶ – Paul asks the obvious question, that if people are not wise enough in their grasp of the biblical message to see the importance of preventing their physical desire for food from causing them to mistreat their fellow Christians by using their houses to eat their own meals that obviously do not involve sharing their food with others, especially with other Christians, then they are missing the point of the gospel and of this community meal—the Lord's supper that is like that which Jesus shared with his apostles. |

The Corinthians do not understand what it means for them to be "God's gathering" and are treating it as something trivial. It is as though the wealthy are seeing the occasion as just another opportunity to party (as they probably did in their pagan days). Indeed, they are going so far as to humiliate and treat with disrespect their fellow believers who do not have enough food for a full meal and maybe no wine at all either.

Of course, to Paul this is unacceptable behavior for those who claim to believe in the Jewish Messiah who shared his life by dying on the cross for these people's forgiveness of sins and acquiring the Kingdom of God.

³⁰⁰ ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣν παρέδιδото ἔλαβεν ἄρτον – This paragraph and Paul's having instituted the "Lord's Supper" for these Corinthian believers shows how central is Jesus' death in Paul's mind.

Here Paul explains that the purpose of this community meal is to celebrate Jesus' death on their behalf and that qualifies him to be their advocate before God to obtain His eternal mercy. Therefore, an important ramification of understanding Jesus' death would be that they love one another by sharing their food and wine with those who do not have enough because of their poverty.

Obviously, the Corinthian Christians misunderstand both the message of Jesus as the crucified Messiah and the gracious and loving content of Jesus' last meal with his apostles before his crucifixion. As a result, Paul recounts the important parts of the story of the Last Supper for them, something which he must have done when he first presented the gospel to them. He reminds them that even these details, just like his overall worldview, originated with God when he restudied the biblical message during the fourteen years when he was preparing himself to fulfill his role as the apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Galatians 1,2).

John 1:11 He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him (καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον).

³⁰¹ καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν τούτῳ μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τούτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν – To his apostles, Jesus said that the bread symbolized his body that he would offer to God in order to qualify to become fully the Son of God and high priest, so that **every time they ate the Passover meal in Jerusalem**, they were to remember him and his significance in their lives in addition to remembering God's rescuing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

In order to understand correctly how Paul is using all this information, it is vital to realize that Jesus was talking to only his apostles about only their celebrating the Passover once a year in Jerusalem. He was not establishing a daily, weekly, or monthly ritual for all Christians for all time. Therefore, Paul, too, is not providing a universal blueprint for all Christians. It only makes sense that he is accommodating the Corinthians because of their well-entrenched pagan mindset. In other words, they have been so used to getting together in pagan temples and eating meals in honor of their patron god or gods that they feel compelled to continue to get together and eat meals with one another now that they have become Christians. Paul has given them a rationale to do so by referring them to Jesus' meal with his apostles the night before he was crucified. By eating a meal in remembrance of the Last Supper and in commemoration of Jesus' death that qualifies him to be their advocate at the final judgment, they can eat their usual common meal and fulfill their cultural habit—as long as they eat it with genuine belief that manifests itself in their loving one another and sharing their food with each other in an appropriate way, whereby no one leaves their gathering either hungry or drunk.

³⁰² ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνήσαι λέγων τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνετε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν – Jesus’ death established and instituted the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 that God said that He was going to make with the Jews. The fulfillment of this covenant ultimately results in the Jews’ (and all Gentiles of similar genuine belief) being forgiven by God for the sake of their entering the eternal Kingdom of God when He changes their hearts in the present realm. Consequently, Jesus was telling his apostles that the annual Passover meal in Jerusalem with its cup of wine symbolized this important step in God’s project of bringing about eternal life for the Jews.

Obviously, Jesus’ death results in any human being’s acquiring God’s eternal mercy as long as God has changed his heart and granted him genuine belief, whether Jew or Gentile.

³⁰³ ὡσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνετε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ – Paul is telling the Corinthians that they, like the apostles when they eat the Passover once a year in Jerusalem with the new meaning for it that Jesus gave them, are making a statement about the meaning and significance of Jesus’ death as the Messiah and high priest (in contrast to making a statement about their pagan sacrifices of animals and their pagan gods) whenever they imitate Jesus and the apostles with respect to their last meal with one another before his crucifixion. And they are doing this until Jesus’ return, which Paul is certainly intimating is somewhere out there in the future. We all just need to be patient.

³⁰⁴ ὥστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου – If the Corinthians intend to eat their shared pagan-like meal for the purpose of remembering Jesus and his death instead of the pagan gods, then Paul is saying that the only proper way to do so is unselfishly, so that everyone participates equally in the food just as everyone will participate equally in Jesus’ mediating at the final judgment and in God’s granting mercy to those on behalf of whom Jesus mediates (cf. 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).

To act selfishly by hoarding food or getting drunk on too much wine in the midst of this shared meal is to deny the significance of Jesus’ death, which is the sole basis on which they are forgiven. As a result, the Corinthian Christians might as well be nailing Jesus to the cross themselves and spitting on his grave. They are just as guilty of his death as the men who crucified him and the crowd who demanded his execution.

³⁰⁵ δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω – Paul wants the Corinthians to take a cold hard look at themselves and assess the authenticity of their belief in the NT message by genuinely desiring God’s mercy which would result in their choosing to be loving toward their fellow believers whenever they eat this meal together—and at all other times, too. If they cannot control their hunger or thirst with the result that people are left out of sharing in the meal and they themselves are getting drunk on too much wine, then they should gain control over these desires by eating and drinking at their own homes before they gather together. Thus, the word δοκιμαζέτω does not refer to proving the genuineness of one’s faith, but of assessing it’s quality and then acting either to correct its quality or to demonstrate it.

³⁰⁶ ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα – Paul declares that a person who does not properly interpret Jesus’ death on the cross so as to understand the depth of his sinfulness whereby all he deserves is condemnation and destruction, he will naturally act in an unloving manner toward his fellow believers, because he does not value authentic goodness and morality. The result will be that he will incur God’s condemnation at the final judgment. Of course, Paul is speaking in ultimate and final terms here in order to get across his point of how important to God is a person’s love towards other followers of the Jewish Messiah.

Two options for “body” – 1) the Corinthian Christian’s spiritual condition that is important to evaluate for each Christian so as to choose to do what is good and loving towards God and his fellow Christians, or 2) Jesus’ body and experienced death in order for him to qualify to intercede on behalf of sinners who can easily mistreat others by unlovingly hoard food and get drunk.

³⁰⁷ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοι καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί – An important question here is whether Paul is speaking of physical weakness, sickness, and sleep (even death) or of these in a spiritual sense, i.e., weak faith, if not really no faith, and dullness of living for God, if not actually not living for God at all. It is plausible that the Corinthian Christian community is experiencing people becoming physically ill and even dying due to their rank immorality and lack of respect for Jesus’ death during their group celebratory feast, as happened for example to Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 and as how God would be disciplining them and trying to get their attention (cf. Hebrews 12). Perhaps this is how God chose to reveal His character and the seriousness of the gospel message in these apostolic communities, especially in Corinth, for it seems to be somewhat unique since Paul had to write two long letters to them (plus two more that we do not have).

But if people are dying right and left within the Corinthian Christian community, wouldn’t this be such a big deal that Paul would address it at the beginning of the letter? Instead, he waits until chapter 11. So it makes more sense to see him continuing to challenge his readers in regard to the authenticity of their belief (cf. 2:14ff., 3:3ff., 6:7ff., 9:24ff.). He is referring simply to the poor quality of these people’s belief *as he has been throughout this letter because of their arrogance and susceptibility to worldly influences*. Therefore, those who engage in the “Lord’s Supper” in the Corinthian Christian community in a selfish and arrogant manner are demonstrating a weakness and sickness in their faith, as well as the strong possibility that some of them are even asleep in their faith, meaning that they have no faith whatsoever. They are abject unbelievers, which is also a possibility as Paul commented in 11:19 that the genuine in faith and those lacking in faith should become clear as the Christian community continues to gather together and are

supposed to share the same truth and morally obedient life.

The improper behavior of the Corinthian Christians in the midst of their shared pagan-like meal that emulates Jesus' meal with his apostles leads Paul to conclude that many of them are truly acting like unbelievers with nothing of the power of God operating with them and, therefore, people who are headed towards eternal death and condemnation. The word *ικανός* is a curious term because of its multifaceted meanings. Luke uses it to refer to "many" things in Acts, while the gospels and Paul use it to refer to someone who is fit or worthy of something. As a result, Luke could definitely be including the notion of "fitness" in his uses, where he means an appropriate number in the circumstances, i.e., taking into account all the various aspects of the circumstances.

Here in 1 Corinthians 11 all English translations give it the quantitative meaning, while it makes more sense that Paul is saying that people who ignore morality even while claiming to believe in Jesus as the Messiah actually make themselves worthy of death, i.e., eternal death, by demonstrating that they lack genuine belief.

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are adequate (*ικανοί*) in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy (ἡ *ικανότης* ἡμῶν) is from God,

2 Timothy 2:2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, "entrust these to faithful men who will be able (οἵτινες *ικανοί* ἔσονται) to teach others also.

³⁰⁸ εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα – Paul switches to the first-person plural to include himself in this statement for mainly the Corinthian Christians' sake, that if believers in the Messiah take spiritual inventory of themselves properly, so that they truly pursue obeying the biblical message by loving their fellow believers, then they have nothing to fear about God's judgment. His condemnation will not involve them.

³⁰⁹ κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου παιδεύομεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν – In addition, Paul reveals the mindset of believers, that even though God will scrutinize them and their belief just as He will do so for unbelievers, He also provides them with instruction on how to live life well, implying that they receive it in order to escape the condemnation and destruction which will come upon the rest of humanity who are not believers.

In addition, they are demonstrating that they are being properly instructed by God and responding to it properly, which is also a ramification of genuine belief.

³¹⁰ ὥστε ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν, ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε – Paul sums up his point, by telling the Corinthians that it is a simple matter of their waiting for all to arrive and then serve each other appropriately by sharing their food with one another—instead of immediately eating and getting drunk as soon as they arrive at the meeting location. This is the loving thing to do in that it allows all those of authentic belief to eat together with everyone participating equally in the amount of food that is available, so that no one is left out and no gets drunk.

Such treatment will indicate that the Corinthian Christians grasp the meaning and significance of the NT message, i.e., that all believers are equally granted mercy by God through Jesus' loving death, which he shares with all believers and that is equally effective towards all of them. Each of them is of equal ontological value to God and should be of equal value to one another, even if there are some who are wealthy and others who are poor (cf. 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).

³¹¹ εἴ τις πεινᾷ, ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω, ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχησθε – Paul exhorts them to do what is wise, loving, and practical. Rather than being driven and controlled by their physical passions and hunger, he would have them reduce their physical desire for food in their gatherings by first eating in their own homes before they come together to participate in a religious meal that is intended only to demonstrate the authenticity of their belief in a shared salvation through their Messiah, Jesus, not to demonstrate that they really know how to eat and drink.

³¹² τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθῃ διατάξομαι – We can only wonder what other issues Paul was going to address that were along the same lines as those he has discussed so far, particularly in chapters 8-11.

³¹³ περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν – Paul now addresses another topic, which he somehow knows needs attention regarding God's working in people's very beings that results in their behaving in a specific and unique way vis-à-vis Jesus as the Messiah (saying, "Jesus is Lord" and truly meaning it for the sake of their entering the eternal Kingdom of God) and in a specific way vis-à-vis one another (beneficially through their individual roles in the entire Christian community that is based in God's love for them, their love for God, and their love for one another). He does not want them to lack understanding of τῶν πνευματικῶν, the dynamics of God's transcendence with respect to mainly people of authentic belief in the created reality, which apparently they are lacking because of their pride, arrogance, and trying to one up each other by who their teacher is (cf. chapter 1). In other words, this is not primarily about spiritual gifts as it is translated in the KJV, NAS95, and NIV. It is about the invisible dynamics between God (the Spirit) and sinful human beings as they live out Christianity individually and collectively that includes the various functions and effects which God grants to individual believers in contrast to the life they were used to living as pagan polytheists.

Therefore, this discussion is a continuation of Paul's explanations in the previous chapters about not only what Christians should do in specific situations, but also how God will cause them to remain on course for eternal mercy in the midst of their responsibility to pursue making good and loving choices towards God and one another. Paul is always conveying his ideas in the light of divine determinism and peoples' responsibility to obey God and make their choices with their accountability before God in mind.

As will become clearer, this explanation by Paul is also in the light of the Corinthian Christians' not affirming one another sufficiently in their individual contributions to the community, probably (and naturally because of our tendency as sinful human beings to be drawn towards drama) granting more importance to the more miraculous looking roles

such as healing, miracles, and speaking in foreign languages.

Paul wants them to pursue good knowledge and understanding of God (even if they never reach complete knowledge this side of eternity) and love for God and one another in the midst of their genuine belief and hope for the eternal Kingdom of God when Jesus returns.

³¹⁴ Οἴδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ῥάφωνα ὡς ἂν ἡγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι – In this whole section, Paul is contrasting pagan worship with the Christian life. The Greek polytheistics believed that their practice of worshipping the pagan gods involved losing control of themselves into an ecstatic state where they became possessed by a god, a spirit—with the possible help of drinking wine and getting drunk. The result would be any kind of unpredictable behavior that could naturally be labelled as pretty bizarre and nonsense. Thus, the “however you were being led along” refers to the cause of their ecstatic and erratic behavior which is anybody’s guess—their own personality, their need to be accepted by their pagan peers, etc.

³¹⁵ διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ὁ λαλῶν λέγει ὅτι Ἄναθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν ὅτι Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ – In pagan worship, people counted on an ecstatic and out of control state from some cause or source that was something or someone other than themselves and that could lead a person in one nonsensical and bizarre direction or another, i.e., even opposite directions that are contradictory. Perhaps there were new believers in Christ who were expecting (or hoping) the same kind of experience in Christianity. However, Paul informs the Corinthians that the Spirit of God always leads a person to remain in control and mainly do one thing and one thing only—acknowledge and confess that Jesus is Lord.

Christian worship and the Christian life are both centered on this fact and this confession by a sinner. In other words, the Holy Spirit, God, never leads people to do things that are contrary to the truth and are therefore contradictory. Plus, Christian worship is rational and makes sense while focusing on the main idea that Jesus is Lord and encouraging people to understand all that this means. And, indeed, Paul is affirming that it is God through His Holy Spirit who causes all this to happen. A sinner cannot do these things in and of himself.

³¹⁶ διαίρεσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσὶν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα – The Spirit of God bestows different ways and roles that Christians engage with one another for the benefit of each person’s being more established in his belief and understanding, but He is still the one and same Spirit—and He is the known source of these roles and functions. People are not influenced by different gods or sources of their religious behavior as in polytheism. They are reoriented away from them and towards the transcendent monotheistic God and His Messiah. It is this fact of only one source of community, the transcendent Creator who is actively and purposefully working in each individual Christian, that constitutes the sole logical basis for unity of actions (love) and of purpose (growth in understanding the gospel to persevere in belief to gain eternal mercy and life) within a Christian community.

³¹⁷ καὶ διαίρεσεις διακονιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος – Some Christians serve God and their community in one way, while other Christians serve them in another way. There is not template or set way to serve God. Nor is their serving one another chaotic like the pagan, religious gatherings. They are orderly and helpful for educating Christians and encouraging them in their faith.

Therefore, either looking down our noses at people who do not do their Christianity exactly the same way we do or needing high drama and even chaos to serve God well is to misunderstand Him and the gospel.

³¹⁸ καὶ διαίρεσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσιν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν – Some Christians have well-known activities within the Christian community such as the apostle Paul, and some have much smaller roles. The size of the role or function is not what matters. It is the fact that God is bringing about these activities according to His sovereign will that is. Therefore, comparing ourselves and our activities in serving one another as Christians misunderstands that God is the cause of both our service and our activities.

Ultimately, it is the transcendent Creator God who is causing all things to be exactly the way that they are in all Christians for the purpose of their rejecting the worship of pagan gods and instead their serving their new master Jesus. Thus, the bottom line in any explanation of why reality is the way it is is divine determinism on the part of the one God whose ultimate purpose for Christians on the earth is to keep them together in their belief in the Messiah so that they all obtain eternal mercy and life.

And He does this through orderly education of the truth that leads to loving God and people in genuine ways.

³¹⁹ ἐκάστῳ δὲ δίδεται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον – The purpose of God in causing a variety of roles and activities for authentic believers within the community of believers is to benefit them in their growing in their understanding of the gospel, remaining faithful to it, and loving God and one another in a proper way, so that each Christian can be of benefit to all the others. The situation seems to be that the Corinthian Christians are thinking that some people are of more benefit and great advantage than the people in the world (cf. vs. 12-26), which they are if the activity that someone has is to enhance another person’s understanding of the truth (cf. 12:31 and chapter 14).

however, the Corinthians’ desire to seek and create drama in order to show off their “gifts” in their serving each other, which is leading to factions within their community and therefore a lack of unity, is simply wrong.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 and their dividing themselves up according to their favorite teachers, which is another way they desire to be showy and dramatic.

Regarding τὸ συμφέρον, consider 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23 where the meaning is for something to be beneficial for others in their understanding the apostolic message, which leads to living it well in a manner corresponding to its truth. The same form of the verb is used in Hebrews 12:10 with ἐπὶ, meaning “on the basis of what is beneficial” for

someone's belief and perseverance leading to eternal life.

In the light of the emphasis in this letter which Paul has placed on understanding the apostolic message and its implications properly, as well as the reference to the roles which the Spirit gives to Christians within their believing communities which Paul mentions in Romans (prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, caring, showing mercy—12:4-8), Ephesians (apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers—4:11), and Peter indicates in 1 Peter (speaking, serving—4:10,11), plus taking 1 Corinthians 13 and 14 into account, it does not make sense to interpret this list in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 as normative, complete, standard, and required in each and every Christian gathering (even "church").

Indeed, Paul's discussion in chapters 12-14 makes more sense as suggesting that Paul is allowing for the fact that God may provide such roles and functions any time He wants in different Christian communities. In the final analysis, God is certainly much more interested in Christians' retaining and growing in their understanding of the apostolic message so as to aid them in living life in a manner corresponding to this truth. This, too, will help in their persevering in their belief in order to qualify finally for His eternal mercy through the Messiah. Plus the underlying quality of any action a Christian performs towards another Christian must be love (cf. chapter 13; 1 Peter 4:8). This is what the Spirit of God purposes and causes for authentic Christians. The obvious inference is that if love and intellectual edification is not taking place, then the Spirit is not involved, no matter how impressive and dramatic is the show that the "Christians" are putting on for themselves.

2 Corinthians 8:10 I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage (**συμφέρει**), who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it.

³²⁰ ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα – In verses 8-10, Paul provides a list of certain manifestations of the Spirit of God in Christians' lives for each other's benefit, and he actually labels them, something which could not be done in pagan worship that involved out of control religious and immoral practices.

Therefore, this is another marked difference between paganism and Christianity that Paul wants the Corinthians to take note of. And some of these manifestations of the Spirit look rather natural while others are clearly supernatural. Paul is saying that it does not matter how supernatural a person's actions appear when the Spirit is working. All that matters is that it is God who is choosing when, where, and how these occur for His transcendent purposes.

The "message of wisdom" is the intellectual skill to grasp the apostolic message of the gospel and its practical implications, as Paul has been displaying in this letter. The "message of knowledge (understanding?)" is not much different but may emphasize the raw information of the apostolic message concerning Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Both of these come about rather naturally by diligent study and research. Yet, God grants to certain students of the Bible (and of the apostles in Paul's day) the opportunity and ability to share this information with others so that can benefit from it in their faith and loving God and one another.

³²¹ ἑτέρω πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι – πίστις – Belief also appears rather natural as the choice that a human being makes with respect to the message of the gospel. Nevertheless, it is a clear manifestation of the Holy Spirit and is part of what He does that is beneficial for individuals within the Christian community. Therefore, the production of belief in a person is ultimately the work of God through His Spirit.

But maybe the word πίστις here means more something like reliability or commitment, so that Paul is talking about Christians who clearly act in a more committed manner to the gospel as an encouragement to others to persevere in their faith.

³²² ἄλλω δὲ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι – Now Paul lists two manifestations of the Spirit that are clearly supernatural—healings and miracles. Nevertheless, these are very beneficial to individuals within the Christian community when God wants them to appear to encourage them to believe the gospel and persevere in loving God and one another.

³²³ ἄλλω δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων – Working and activating powerful actions, i.e., miracles, which certainly both Jesus and the apostles performed and brought about by the Spirit of God is something else that God can surely bring about within any Christian community.

Again, it is God who chooses who performs miracles He wants them performed.

³²⁴ ἄλλω δὲ προφητεία – This is another rather natural looking manifestation where someone repeats the apostolic message to others in order to remind them and enhance their understanding of the biblical truth. Ultimately this is the most important manifestation of the Spirit (cf. 1 Corinthians 14) for the "benefit" of all Christians in their continuing to live the gospel and arrive at the end of their lives qualified for eternal mercy through the Messiah.

³²⁵ ἄλλω δὲ διακρίσεις πνευμάτων – This, too, is somewhat natural looking, the distinguishing between truth and error, that which is in line with the biblical message and that which is not. Certainly Paul was constantly doing this, and this letter is all about everybody learning from him in regard to the concepts which he is discussing. Cf. 1 John 4:1ff.

³²⁶ ἑτέρω γένη γλωσσῶν – Here Paul mentions the same manifestation of the Spirit that God brought about in Acts 2 at Pentecost, human beings' speaking about God in a language they have never learned. Clearly, this is miraculous. In Acts 2, Christians were "talking acts of God" (cf. Acts 2:11) in order to demonstrate that God is at work changing hearts for the sake of people's eternal salvation.

³²⁷ ἄλλω δὲ ἐρμηνεία γλωσσῶν – Is Paul talking about the translation of languages unknown to the speaker and the translator and therefore miraculously translated by him? Or is he talking about translation being done by people who

have learned the language naturally? The former is not explicitly described anywhere. So it may be the former where God miraculously produces the speaking of an unknown foreign language where He also knows someone is present who actually understands the language and can translate it.

³²⁸ πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται – The bottom line for Paul is that God alone determines the function and effect that each individual Christian will perform and have respectively within the collective group of authentic believers. This is in contrast to pagan polytheists' thinking that their actions and effects are dependent on their drinking wine and slipping into an ecstatic state where a god can take control of them. Thus, it is the single and transcendent God's plans and purpose which are the basis for how individual Christians live their lives and serve one another for each other's benefit.

³²⁹ καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἓν ἐστὶν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἓν ἐστὶν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός – Here, in vs. 12-26, Paul launches into a lengthy explanation of the human body and its various members or parts in order to use it and them as an analogy for the community of believers in Jesus the Messiah comprised of all Christians currently in the Roman Empire who have come to faith in him by means of the proclamation of the gospel by the apostles and those who have heard them. In this way, Paul says in this first verse that the collection of believers is “the Messiah.” They make up the “body” that can be said to be Jesus on earth among the unbelievers. And they are those who consider Jesus to be their leader, so that everything which they do is or should be a reflection of who he is.

Paul will use this analogy to say that while all Christians are equally necessary to the entire community of believers, nevertheless the communication of ideas via words, speaking, and understanding is in the final analysis more profitable for the depth of people's grasp of the biblical truth and the longevity of their faith. After certain Christians “speak” the truth, the other Christians who listen “live” the truth, thus making both necessary to the entire group who are following Jesus as their leader and Messiah to the end of their lives.

In addition, Christians remain unified in their understanding and destiny by means of all the roles which God causes them to play individually in the community. And it should be understood that each role is important and to be honored as a means to lead all the Christians towards the perseverance of their belief.

³³⁰ καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν – It is the common experience of being set apart and granted specific roles within the Christian community by the one God and His Spirit which unifies all believers and ties them together like glue, so that they are “the Messiah” on earth and living amongst unbelievers. And this is in spite of any human differences attributed to ethnicity, economic status, etc. All believing human beings are equally valued and of equal eternal status before God. They will ALL inherit the eternal Kingdom of God together. Therefore, the fact is that the work of God through His Spirit within them provides them with exactly one element of sameness—God is saving them from His eternal condemnation as symbolized by their experiencing water baptism in that culture.

Probably harkening back to the “meal of the Lord” in chapter 11, where it is not the physical act of eating which is important, Paul likens God's Spirit's miraculous work in a sinful human being as this person's “drinking” the Spirit. The Christian has taken the Spirit of God inside himself as the existential defining factor which connects him to all other believers in Jesus as the Messiah, who is also the defining factor of connection in conjunction with the work of the Spirit.

³³¹ ἔὰν εἴπῃ ὁ πούς· ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ χεὶρ, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος

³³² καὶ ἔὰν εἴπῃ τὸ οὖς· ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὀφθαλμός, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος

³³³ εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ὀφθαλμός, ποῦ ἡ ἀκοή; εἰ ὅλον ἀκοή, ποῦ ἡ ὁσφρησις

³³⁴ νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἑκάστῳ αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν – God is ultimately the wise manufacturer of the human body with all its different members and parts distributed in it as they are, so that each part plays its important and necessary role—even if it is in response to another part. Again, God as the sole creator and designer of the human body is the primary cause of the existence, placement, and function of each part of a human body. It is the one God and His plans and purposes which are the basis for the proper operation of the human body. Therefore, it makes no sense that one member or part of the body would lament that it is not a different kind of member, e.g., that the foot would want to be a hand, that an ear would want to be an eye. Every element and function of the members and parts of the body is necessary.

³³⁵ εἰ δὲ ἦν ὅτ' ἀ πάντα ἐν μέλος, ποῦ τὸ σῶμα – To make the point of the co-necessity of each member and part of a human body (and therefore of the “body” and community of believers of the Messiah) even more emphatically, Paul asks the obvious rhetorical question as to if a human body can actually be a body if every “member” constituted one “member,” e.g., if every “member” together meant that the whole body was a hand? The answer is clearly, No. By definition, a “body” is a collection of parts where each one performs a different function or role, thus making each “member” or part a necessary element within the boundaries of its own function for the proper operation of the whole body.

Therefore, the “Messiah” does not function well if each individual Christian is not functioning well within the individual boundary for each Christian as established by God Himself in relation to all other Christians.

³³⁶ νῦν δὲ πολλὰ ὁμὲν μέλη, ἐν δὲ σῶμα

³³⁷ οὐ δύναται ὁδὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρὶ· χρειάν σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἢ πάλιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῖς ποσίν· χρειάν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω

³³⁸ ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν ἀναγκαῖά ἐστιν – What is the use of an eye's seeing an object if the person cannot reach out and touch or grab with his hand it in order to use it? What is the use of the head as the center of the plans and purposes of a person sitting on top of his body if the person cannot walk around and experience life, i.e., if he cannot fulfill his plans and purposes? While the hand, at certain moments, may not seem as important to human existence as the eye, and while the feet, at certain moments, may not seem as important to human existence as the head, complete human existence is impossible without these seemingly less significant parts of the body.

³³⁹ καὶ ἂν δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα εἶναι τοῦ σώματος τούτοις τιμὴν περισσοτέραν περιτίθεμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀσχήμονα ἡμῶν εὐσχημοσύνην περισσοτέραν ἔχει – When we realize how useful seemingly less significant parts are to the overall operation of the human body, then we naturally grant them increased significance and honor among all the members of our body.

³⁴⁰ τὰ δὲ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρειάν ἔχει τ. – No one thinks for a moment that the eye and the head need explanation as to why they are significant. This is a no brainer for them. Therefore, it stands to reason that it does not need to be said explicitly that they are important to the human body, while it is good to state explicitly that seemingly less significant parts, the foot and hand, at certain moments, are just as important.

We hardly praise the more important parts of our human bodies (because we simply take them for granted), while we should make it a point to honor and praise the seemingly less important parts—in order to honor and value all them equally—as an analogy to God's honoring and valuing each Christian equally in regard to their each acquiring life in the eternal Kingdom of God.

³⁴¹ Ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα τῷ ὑστερουμένῳ περισσοτέραν δούς τιμὴν – Once we really think about and analyze the human body and its parts, we realize just how important seemingly insignificant parts are, and we extol their virtues for the sake of the rest of the body.

This is the way God intended it, because He has made the human body with no more members and parts that it has and no less, either. In this way, God is implying that each part of the body has great value, even if we tend to ignore the value of certain parts as they operate quietly and effectively without making a big show of what they are doing.

³⁴² ἵνα μὴ ᾖ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σώματι ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσιν τὰ μέλη – The result of careful analysis of the parts of the human body and their interdependence is a complete absence of disagreement, discord, and conflict that could arise from thinking that one part is more important and ought to be more honored than another. If the parts of our bodies started arguing with one another as to which one should be valued and honored, what a mess this would make of our lives. We would be dishonoring God and not getting anything really beneficial to ourselves done. Instead, there is a mutual respect and caring for each other on an equal level. By analogy, there should be no pomp and circumstance on behalf of church officials, pastors, ministers, elders, even apostles, or any other members of the collection of Christians if we want to honor what Paul is saying about the Christian community.

³⁴³ καὶ εἴτε πάσχει ἐν μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη· εἴτε δοξάζεται ἐν μέλος, συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη – The parts of the human body normally act in perfect coordination with one another so that they all respond in the same way to various stimuli in their experience. If one part experiences pain, the whole body is in pain with it. If one part experiences joy, the whole body feels with it. In this way, every part of the human body renders equal respect and appreciation to every other part of the body in the midst of its individual function. The experience of one part of the body becomes emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually the experience of every other part of the human body (and, analogy, Paul will indicate that this is the case with individuals within the Christian community).

³⁴⁴ ὁμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ, καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους – After the previous explanation of the unity of the human body with its individual parts and just a brief hint in v. 12 that it is analogous to the community of believers in Jesus the Messiah, Paul explicitly identifies each believer within the Corinthian Christian community (“you”) similarly within the “body” of the Messiah. And the conclusion which the Corinthians Christians are meant to draw is that they are all equally important to the process of their representing the Messiah to each other and the world as they function according to how God has graciously bestowed on them not only their belief but also their function and role within the Christian community.

Literally, they are “members among members,” meaning that each one of them is an important part of the gathering and group who reflect Jesus in the world.

³⁴⁵ καὶ οὗς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεῦτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν – Next, Paul explicitly lists different functions that God has assigned to each Christian. In other words, it is He who has placed different people with different roles within the overall Christian community, just as He has placed different parts of the body with different roles within the human body.

God chose who was going to be an apostle, a prophet, a teacher, et al. The apostles (as the “first” gift and function) are the only authoritative spokesmen for Jesus and, therefore, the primary source of truth for all Christians, regardless of where they live. For us, this means that only their documents in the Bible are proper sources of learning about Jesus as the Messiah.

Then, “second,” prophets are those who speak for God and Jesus. But it makes sense that they derive their understanding, not from direct communication from God as the OT prophets did, but from direct communication from the apostles. In other words, they teach ONLY the apostolic message that someone like Paul teaches. They do not come

up with supposed stuff that God has directly told them. This is because the information from apostles is what really matters to God, Jesus, and to Paul as an apostle.

For example, **1 Corinthians 11:4** Every husband, while he is praying or speaking as a prophet, if he has something on his head (κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων) dishonors his “head.”

And teachers, either sanctioned by the apostles or having learned the gospel from others than the apostles, are important secondary sources of truth—as long as the apostles are alive, so that it is possible to ask a living apostles if what the teachers are teaching is completely in line with the apostolic message.

This is basically a relisting of the functions which Paul mentions in 12:7-11, but by saying that God has “first” placed the apostles in the community of believers, Paul is expanding the group to include all Christians and not just those in Corinth. Likewise, Paul is stating that communicating the information and ideas of the gospel explicitly through oral and written means is actually what is most important for the proper function of all the Christians in the group.

Therefore, in this case the “prophets” are those spokesmen who are in closest relationship to the apostles, while teachers are next in their relationship to the apostles through the prophets.

But this makes sense only for the 1st century Roman Empire while the apostles are still alive. After they die, the “prophets” and “teachers” collapse into one group who should be considered discussion leaders of Christians studying the biblical texts together without there being anyone who is actually an authority on the Bible. This ensures that the Bible remains the sole authority in everyone’s life.

As stated above, Paul also is allowing for the fact that God may cause miracles to occur within the Corinthian community just as He has been doing through the apostles mainly (cf. 2:4). Nevertheless, the primary way by which the “body” of the Messiah retains its unity is through repetition of the apostolic message, so that people individually can think it through and its implications so as to live in a wise and loving way with respect to God and to one another.

³⁴⁶ μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι· μὴ πάντες προφῆται· μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι· μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις – The implication here is that, just as individual parts of the human body do not take on a role or function different from their God-given design, neither do individual Christians take on functions different from their God-given designation.

³⁴⁷ μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων· μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν· μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν – Thus, not every Christian is assigned the task of healing people who are ill, nor the task of miraculously speaking about God in an unknown foreign language, nor the task of translating these languages when someone uses them within the Christian community.

Here is a clear statement to the effect that it does not make sense that all the Corinthian Christians should expect to “speak in tongues,” i.e., to speak in foreign languages that they do not know—at least, after their initially hearing the gospel when Paul first presented it to them (as was the case for all the disciples on Pentecost in Acts 2 and for the new, Gentile Christians after Peter taught them the gospel in Acts 10).

But rather than fully consider this and its ramifications, people focus on 14:5, “I do desire that all of you speak with languages” and misinterpret Paul (and God in Acts 2 and Acts 10).

³⁴⁸ ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα – Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to seek out people who have been assigned by God to function in the most important roles for Christians. This sounds contradictory to his previous point, but he was talking about status and value with respect to acquiring eternal life. Here, he is talking about the actual function and role, and specifically those who can help people to think rightly about truth—apostles, prophets, and teachers (who are in touch with one another at that time as living apostles, prophets, and teachers), in order to enable Christians to think well about how to live in a manner which corresponds to the biblical message.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 14 along with the comments in the other letters such as Romans, Ephesians, and 1 Peter and what is implied by them.

³⁴⁹ καὶ ἔτι καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι – Here, Paul is saying that there is a more important issue than truth. It is love (as long as it is biblical love), regardless of how much or how accurately a Christian knows the truth and can articulate the truth.

³⁵⁰ Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον – Paul is using hyperbole to make his point about the importance of love. If he (as an example of a committed Christian) miraculously speaks about God in any language which human beings speak on earth or in any “language” which the messengers of God, even theophanies, might use, and he is not doing so out of a motivation to be truly loving in a biblical manner, whereby other people benefit or profit from what he is doing for the sake of growing in their understanding of God for the purpose of their persevering in their belief and gain God’s eternal mercy and life, then he might as well be an irritating and shrill sound as when a brass gong or a metal cymbal or basin is struck. In other words, when it comes to his own eternal salvation and Jesus’ being his advocate and savior, his doing outwardly what a gift from God does has no effect on his obtaining salvation. Paul is implying that he lacks authentic changed inwardness in this situation.

I think that theophanies as the interpretation for τῶν ἀγγέλων makes more sense than conventional angels, because it is more profound in line with Paul’s speaking in hyperbole here.

³⁵¹ καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὁρῇ μεθιστάναί, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι – Likewise, Paul defines prophecy, but with hyperbole as he did in the previous verse to emphasize his point about love. It is having understood the message of the gospel from an apostle so that a person can repeat it completely accurately, and then also grasping well what God revealed in the OT in

words and then revealing the same things to others, which is all that God wants to reveal to human beings, including that which had not been revealed in the OT but now has in the person of Jesus himself as the Messiah, with all that he will do as king, conqueror, and priest, so that people may know all that is truly important about God and the reality He has created (“all mysteries and all knowledge”).

However, Paul will go on to use the word prophet in chapter 14 to include the possibility that someone may be wrong in what he is saying (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:29,30). Here, though, I think that he is referring to the classic, OT use of the word prophet as he speaks in hyperbole. Later, in chapter 14, he will imply that the situation is different in Corinth because of something rather strange going on that he may not completely understand himself.

But Paul is also saying that even if he as an apostle were to present people with all the knowledge possible about God, yet without his truly loving God and people from a changed inwardness, then he is basically a nobody and will not gain eternal life for himself.

Similarly with hyperbole, belief is understanding that God is the Creator of all reality who can adjust the creation at any time and in any way to be different from what it is—again, according to the apostolic message, so that the person is used to adjusting creation with the maximum effect, i.e., moving mountains around the earth. But Paul would expect this Christian to be an instrument of God in this manner only with the foundational motivation of loving God and loving others, resulting in the person obtaining His eternal mercy.

³⁵² *κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα ἱκανήσωμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω. οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι* – Another example of hyperbole without love. If Paul were to give up all that he has and even present his body as a final offering and sacrifice to God, so that he could brag about giving up the ultimate as a human being, his life, and thereby obtain eternal life, but he does so without being a person who is fully committed to loving God and others, then he does not accomplish his goal of eternal life. It is the opposite. He obtains God’s wrath and eternal destruction. He accomplishes “nothing.”

³⁵³ *Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ. ὅ[ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται* – The inference of Paul’s listing these qualities of human love towards God and in certain cases other human beings is that some individuals, if not most of them, in the Corinthian Christian community were lacking them.

“Love is patient” means that Christians wait for God to accomplish His plans and purposes in His own time and extends this same patience to wait for Him to other Christians.

“Love is kind” means that Christians extend the kindness of God which a person has been shown to other human beings who do not deserve this kindness any more than he does.

“It is not envious” means that the loving Christian does not begrudge what God is doing in another person’s life according to His plans, love, and work of His Spirit, so that he does not need the same thing to happen to him in order for him to feel good about himself and loved by God.

“Love does not heap praise upon itself” means that the loving Christian has no interest in finding his self-worth in how great his accomplishments are in either the eyes of God or the eyes of his fellow Christians (or other human beings). He is content with being loved by God and what God is accomplishing through him according to His sovereign plans and purposes, even operating within the boundaries of the role which God has given him to be of benefit to other Christians in order that they might persevere in their belief and obtain God’s eternal mercy and life.

“It does not have an exaggerated self-conception” means that the loving Christian is soberly honest about exactly who he is in God’s eyes, a morally depraved sinner who deserves God’s eternal condemnation and destruction, thus rendering him quite humble before other Christians. He knows that he is a clay pot whom God is shaping constantly, so that he is no more and no less than what God wants him to be. Therefore, he simply needs to accept exactly who he is.

³⁵⁴ *οὐκ ἄσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ ἑαυτοῦ, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν* – Continuing along, Paul says that “it does not behave dishonorably,” meaning that the loving Christian does not behave in such a way that it is shockingly unacceptable in the light of the gospel and God’s love for him. Jesus would not be embarrassed if he watched this “Christian” act the way he is. He is always an honorable, i.e., reflecting the gospel and biblical message accurately, person.

“It does not seek its own things” means that the loving Christian does not pursue his own self-interests at the expense of caring for others in order to make sure he “gets ahead” in the Christian community and/or the general culture and world, i.e., that he becomes better known, more respected, more influential, etc. just so that he can feel better about himself. Instead, he is willing to have God love him and provide his place and role within the Christian community and the world regardless of how prominent or obscure it is.

“It is not irritated in a destructive way” means that the loving Christian does not allow his irritation with other people within the Christian community and with himself to destroy his relationship with other Christians and even unbelievers, such that he basically writes people off and refuses to deal with them at all. Certainly, he avoids the sins of others when it is possible, but he recognizes that God may cause them to repent (if they are authentic Christians) or change their hearts (if they are unbelievers) at any moment and cause them to act more morally or become authentic Christians according to His grace. Then, it would necessary for him to engage with them more intimately that he currently is.

“It does not dwell on evil” means that the loving Christian does not entertain evil as an option for how he will act in the presence of his fellow Christians (and other people), even when evil pops into his own mind and he is tempted to submit to it. He is fundamentally committed to goodness and morality as that which defines his actions over the course of his life.

³⁵⁵ οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ –

“It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth” means that there is a stark contrast between rejoicing (χαίρει) when another person performs evil and rejoicing with my fellow Christians (συγχαίρει) when people pursue biblical goodness and morality for the sake of promoting and perpetuating the truth about God and His plans and purposes as laid out in the Bible.

³⁵⁶ πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει – This whole verse refers to the Christian’s waiting for Jesus’ return and the Kingdom of God with great patience, humble and strong expectation, and endurance through all of life’s circumstances that are both enjoyable and grievous for the sake of obtaining existence in the eternal Kingdom of God.

The biblically loving Christian does not let circumstances get to him so that his faith is crushed and he abandons not only God’s love but also loving his fellow Christians. Instead, he perseveres in his belief in the truth of the gospel and his confident expectation that God will eventually bring about eternal life for him. Thus, he endures (by God’s grace and love, cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13) all his circumstances which include handling his fellow Christians with respect and patience.

³⁵⁷ ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει – Just as God’s love for His people does not end with the completion of His plans to bring about the eternal Kingdom of God starting with Jesus’ return and his setting up this kingdom on the land of Israel (cf. v. 10), so also people’s love for God and their fellow citizens of this kingdom will not end either.

³⁵⁸ εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλώσσαι, παύσονται· εἴτε γνώσεις, καταργηθήσεται – In contrast to God’s love for His people and His people’s love for Him and their fellow Christians’ never coming to a conclusion and disappearing, the specific roles, which God has assigned to Christians within their local Christian communities, will no longer be necessary to “profit” or “benefit” them towards persevering in their belief and acquiring eternal life, so that these will end.

Thus, Paul is not speaking of understanding or speaking about truth *per se*. He is referring to these specific roles as gifts within the earthly Christian community this side of eternity creation of Revelation 21.

³⁵⁹ ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκωμεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν – If Paul is including himself in the “we,” and it seems that he is, then he is saying that even he as an apostle does not have a grasp on the biblical message that is as complete as is humanly possible. In other words, this side of Jesus’ return and eternity, we Christians have to be content with partial knowledge and understanding of the biblical message as we eagerly and expectantly wait patiently for God to bring about the Kingdom of God at Jesus’ return.

³⁶⁰ ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται – The experiences of a partial understanding of the biblical reality by even Paul as an apostle that includes God and the eternal Kingdom of God will come to an end when God brings the present age to an end and the millennial kingdom begins with Jesus’ return, when also believers are transformed into immortal and morally perfect beings (1 Thessalonians 4:13ff.). In the present realm before the Kingdom of God comes into existence, we all operate on less than full knowledge and understanding of reality. Nevertheless, we know enough to make a rational decision to be committed to the truth and to obey the truth. But Paul is also saying that when we are transformed into immortal and morally perfect beings, we will have the opportunity to obtain a parity of understanding in the whole group which inhabits the eternal Kingdom of God, both in the millennium and in the new, eternal creation.

³⁶¹ ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου – Now Paul spells out in more detail the idea that even he lacks a complete understanding of reality in comparison to what will be possible later in the Kingdom of God. He likens existence as a Christian in the present with the various functions that God has assigned within the Christian community to that of a child, and this is in comparison to the Christian who becomes transformed into a morally perfect human being in the eternal Kingdom of God, who is like an adult. A child speaks, thinks, and reasons like a child, i.e., immaturally with less knowledge and understanding than an adult.

In other words, the roles which God has created within the Christian community where some people actually have greater understanding than others will no longer be the case. The inference that Paul wants people to draw from what he is saying here is that no one should think more highly of himself than he ought, because none of us has reached moral perfection and complete knowledge of the gospel and God yet—which is the problem in Corinth going back to chapter 1.

³⁶² βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι’ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγινώσκωμαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην – Another analogy which expresses the same point as the child/man analogy is that of looking in a mirror at oneself (I assume) vs. looking at oneself “face to face” (however this might be possible). Especially in Paul’s day, mirrors were quite imperfect and provided a less than complete and accurate reflection of the person using it, while if he could actually look at himself face to face, then his “knowledge” of what he would be looking at would be both complete and accurate.

As Christians with the truth, we still see in our minds the eternal Kingdom of God in a very limited manner, as though we are looking at just an image in a rather poor 1st century mirror and not the actual thing. Even Paul as an apostle, who understands the biblical message as accurately and completely as a sinful man can from his study of the OT and conversations with the apostles, knows only a little about the eternal Kingdom of God in comparison to what he will know and experience once he arrives there after death and the judgment, in comparison to how God knows him right

now because of God's omniscience.

Therefore, just as God knows Paul completely, so also he will have the opportunity to gain even more knowledge than he has right now and reach a level of understanding which he will be able to call "complete" (I guess). In addition, the inference is that all other Christians will do the same when they reach immortality and moral perfection along with Paul.

Therefore, again, no one should think more highly of himself than he ought—which is the problem going back to chapter 1.

³⁶³ νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα μέζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη – In comparison to complete knowledge in the future Kingdom of God and the importance of being humble now, what each Christian does have is belief, hope, and love (in the midst of limited knowledge and perhaps relative obscurity in the Christian community and in the larger society in general). And these are sufficient now, because we are always supposed to be looking to the future and Kingdom of God when Jesus returns for what will be completely fulfilling for each of us Christians.

As a result, three things are important NOW to an individual Christian—his belief in the biblical truth, his eager expectation of mercy at the judgment and entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God, and his genuine, biblical love for God and people.

At it is reasonable that love is the greatest of these three, because it subsumes the other two as in the two great commandments, "You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, your inwardness, and your mind" (Deuteronomy 6:5) and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). Nothing is greater than biblical love—God's love for us, our love for God, and our love for others, first for our fellow Christians and second for our fellow sinful human beings who lack genuine faith and belief in the biblical truth.

³⁶⁴ δίδωκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε – Because authentic, biblical love is greater than either accurate or complete knowledge, and because it more accurately reveals a changed heart, Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to pursue being loving above all else, while also seeking out what God is doing in people's lives for how they function within the Christian community and, especially, how these functions provide people with truth for their minds, i.e., the functions which provide good, clear teaching of the apostolic message—from apostles, prophets (who have learned the gospel from apostles), and teachers (who are doing the best they can to keep people on track with the apostolic message, even if they have not learned it as well as prophets).

Thus, we see that Paul in no way denigrates or criticizes biblical learning and knowledge. Indeed he upholds it as absolutely necessary—for a proper understanding of what exactly is love. This is why he listed loves' characteristics in chapter 13 when he is encouraging people to love God and one another above all other things they could do as functions and roles within the Christian community.

Here "utter prophetic sayings" (προφητεύετε) refers to educating people in the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah from contact with living apostles who have the most accurate understanding of this message, i.e., the very ideas which Paul, for example, would have conveyed to the Corinthians during his 18 month visit in that city (cf. Acts 18:11).

1 Corinthians 2:1 Brothers, I do not want you to lack understanding concerning spiritual things (περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν).

³⁶⁵ ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλῶσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει, πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια – When God causes a Christian to talk in a language that is unknown to him, if there is no translation, then the person is miraculously speaking revealed things about reality to God alone. As a result, this person is the only one who understands what is being said, even though he is speaking a language previously completely unknown to him. In other words, "tongues" is truly a miraculous performance of speaking a foreign language unknown to the speaker, while the speaker actually understands what he is saying. This is part of the miraculous nature of "speaking in tongues." The person is thinking in his own language, e.g., Greek, but he is speaking with a foreign language, e.g., the dialect of Egypt, that he does not know.

Then, because no one else in the Corinthian audience understands this language either, the speaker is talking only to God in the sense that only God understands what he is saying (along with himself). He is talking "mysteries by the Spirit," things unknown to others, because they do not understand his foreign language, and miraculously caused by the Holy Spirit. Thus, it makes more sense to translate πνεύματι as "by means of the Spirit [of God]" and not "in his spirit" as in the NAS95 (but notice their suggestion in the margin, "by the Spirit").

Consequently, it appears (at least this is what Paul had heard) that God was manifesting Himself in the Corinthian Christian community by causing believers to speak in foreign languages without there necessarily being an interpreter (?). Or maybe this is what the Corinthians were claiming, and Paul is careful not to contradict what God may have been doing—to test them as to whether or not they really understand the purpose of "spiritual gifts." So the Christians were to appreciate God's encouragement to them in this limited intellectual manifestation of His power but not take it so far as to assume that any context, including that when non-believers are present, would be appropriate for this kind of demonstration of God's presence. Nor were they to think that this kind of miraculous manifestation of God should be sought above simply learning the apostolic message through "uttering prophetic sayings" (προφητεύετε), and teaching by extrapolation.

³⁶⁶ ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομῆν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν – Because a "prophet" as a spokesman for the apostolic message uses the language of his listeners, he can truly educate and build people up in truthful ideas which provide comfort and encouragement in the midst of the difficulties of life, which Paul is implying

is more valuable than the miracle of speaking in an unknown language—especially when the latter by itself is understood by only God (and the individual through whom He is performing this miracle), while the former is understood by the whole gathering of Christians. Only speaking in a known language provides true intellectual growth in understanding of the biblical message, and this is what Paul is after for the sake of the belief, hope, and love of the Christians.

³⁶⁷ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ· ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ – Because the person speaking in an unknown language nevertheless understands intellectually what he is saying, he is the only one who is learning from what he is saying. In contrast, the person speaking in everyone’s known language will educate the whole assembly of believers in what he is saying. The implied question is, is it more worthwhile for one person to grow in his understanding of the gospel or for many people? The obvious answer is, many people.

Thus we learn that the role of someone’s being a translator is an important function because the person speaking in a foreign language is sharing the floor with the person who is translating for him (cf. 14:12ff.).

³⁶⁸ θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μείζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύῃ. ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομῇν λάβῃ – Paul certainly would not think of being critical of God’s miraculously causing people to speak about Him in a language unknown to both the speaker and his audience. After all, it is a miracle which is manifesting the presence of God. Therefore, he is all for everyone performing this miracle, if God were to cause it to happen.

Instead, Paul explicitly states that speaking in the audience’s own language is “greater” than the miracle of an unknown foreign language because it allows for genuine education to take place. This is the main goal of being together as a Christian community, to continuing learning and becoming established intellectually in the gospel—for the purpose of loving God and one another in the midst of authentic belief and hope. While Paul said that love is greater than belief and hope, nevertheless, a person’s understanding of exactly what love is what permits him to be loving. Because speaking of the things of God to an audience in their language is what brings “edification” (οἰκοδομῇν), Paul says that it makes sense that explaining to an audience in their language what someone (or another person) is saying in an unknown language will also provide intellectual progress for the rest of the Christian assembly—if God were to allow this. Paul is not explicitly indicating that this is exactly what God is going to do, but if it were to happen, it certainly would be better than simply the miracle of a person’s speaking about God to God and to himself in an unknown foreign language.

As Paul already made clear in 14:2, this shows that “tongues” involves understandable concepts regarding God and that the language being spoken is truly a human language which exists somewhere in the world. So Paul is also saying in chapters 12-14 that it is the person whom God miraculously causes to translate what the person who is speaking in a foreign language is miraculously saying that is the means by which others in the Corinthian Christian community come to understand what the latter is saying.

³⁶⁹ νῦν δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς γλώσσαις λαλῶν, τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελήσω ἐὰν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει ἢ ἐν γνώσει ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ ἢ ἐν διδασχῇ – Only the latter four involving speaking in the Greek language that the Corinthians can understand will be beneficial for the Corinthian Christian community in truly improving their understanding of the gospel and comforting and encouraging them.

In other words, only if Paul speaks in Greek will they be able to grasp ideas of the biblical message. And this is the point. He wants them to learn more and become more grounded in what they already know—by virtue of someone’s reminding them and educating them using the Greek language, their mother language common to the Corinthians. It seems most coherent in the context to interpret “revelation” as revealing the ramifications of the gospel in more and more areas of human existence so that Christians can live the truth as expansively as possible in their lives.

Knowledge is literally knowing the ideas associated with the truth of the gospel.

Uttering prophetic sayings for Paul is communicating the apostolic message as it pertains to Jesus and the OT.

Teaching is verbally doing the same thing as uttering prophetic sayings for the sake of taking good ideas in one person’s mind and transferring them to other people’s minds.

³⁷⁰ ὅμως τὰ ἄψυχα φωνὴν δίδοντα, εἴτε αὐλὸς εἴτε κιθάρᾳ, ἐὰν διαστολὴν ‘τοῖς φθόγγοις’ μὴ δῶ, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ αὐλούμενον ἢ τὸ κιθαριζόμενον – A very simply analogy. People who play musical instruments do not cause them to make sounds randomly. Instead, there is great intention in the notes and sounds that they cause the instruments to make so that they and their listeners can identify with the sounds and appreciate the “language” which they are speaking with these instruments. Perhaps they are playing a song that everyone knows, so that they all appreciate what the sounds are.

³⁷¹ καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ἄδηλον σάλπιγξ φωνὴν δῶ, τίς παρασκευάζεται εἰς πόλεμον – Paul continues with the analogy of musical instruments when everyone knows that a trumpet is used to alert soldiers that they need to prepare and engage in battle. It is specific sounds that convey this for the proper behavior of the soldiers.

But if the “language” sounds of the trumpet are unfamiliar to the soldiers, then obviously they will now know what to do. And the point is that they understand the sounds of the trumpet and do what they are supposed to do.

³⁷² οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς γλώσσης ἐὰν μὴ εὐσημον λόγον δώτε, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ λαλούμενον; ἔσεσθε γὰρ εἰς ἀέρα λαλοῦντες – What obviously follows from the analogy of the musical instruments is that spoken human language is intended to transfer intelligent and helpful ideas from one mind to another, so that the two parties understand the ideas and they appreciate the value of the ideas, even for the sake of believing them and doing

something in the light of them.

This should be obvious. Only well-signed, intelligible, understandable, and comprehensible language (literally – εὐσημον λόγον) communicates the ideas of truth in one person’s mind to another person’s mind so that the second person acquires the knowledge of the first person, which is what Paul is saying is the most important goal in a Christian community, especially when the ideas originate with an apostle and are conveyed through a prophet who learns them from him, and then a teacher who learns them along the way too.

³⁷³ τὸσαῦτα εἰ τύχοι γένη φωνῶν εἰσιν ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ οὐδὲν ἄφωνον – Again, Paul implies that “tongues” involve understandable concepts about reality being spoken with existing human languages on earth that are intended to convey the meaning of words, syntax, etc. that are conventional among a certain group of people, as opposed to someone’s simply being silent, the literal meaning of ἄφωνον. Silence conveys no intelligible meaning. Only the sound of words placed together in a conventional and common way for a group of people does. English speaking people put English words together to communicate ideas. French speaking people do the same with this language. Etc. The purpose of language is to transfer ideas and concepts from one mind to another.

³⁷⁴ ἔάν οὖν μὴ εἰδῶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς φωνῆς, ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος – Notice how δύναμιν here refers to meaning, i.e., the meaning of a sound with its ability and power to communicate an idea from one human being’s mind to another.

If Paul does not know the “power/ability of the sound” of a particular language with its purpose of conveying ideas from one person’s head to another person’s mind, then there is no intimate connection of knowledge which can exist between him and the person speaking that language. And knowledge is key when it comes to making decisions in one’s life which either correspond to the truth of the biblical message or to lies. Embracing with authentic belief the former leads to eternal life. The latter leads to eternal destruction. This is how important these ideas are.

³⁷⁵ οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ἐπεὶ ζηλωταὶ ἐστε πνευμάτων, πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ζητεῖτε ἵνα περισσεύητε – Paul has said in 14:5 that edification (οἰκοδομὴν) of and building up a gathering of Christians takes place when true ideas are conveyed from one person to another using the known and common language of the two people. Therefore, because the Corinthian Christians are true zealots and committed to act toward one another in line with what God is doing and the spiritual dynamics which exist in their relationships with God as he is explaining in chapters 12-14, i.e., through the work of the Spirit of God, then they will obviously want to maximize their efforts (περισσεύητε). And as he has already been saying, this will happen by their using understandable human communication in their own native tongue, Greek, not with miraculous speaking of unknown and foreign languages—if no one is there to translate and make the concepts about God known to the people.

³⁷⁶ Διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ – Paul has mentioned this possibility as something certainly which God can do. If God is willing, then the speaker of a foreign language should ask Him to permit him to translate what he is saying, in order that everyone else may grow in their knowledge or commitment to their knowledge of God. He will take what he understands because it seems like Greek to him in his mind, while his mouth is using a completely different language that no one in the room knows, and pray that he can take what is mouth is and turn it into Greek.

³⁷⁷ ἔάν γάρ προσεύχωμαι γλώσση, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν – Here the prayer is not a “prayer language” as Pentecostals take it, but the prayer of the person speaking an unknown foreign language as a request to God to permit him to translate what he is saying by stopping his speaking in a foreign language and returning to speaking in the language of his audience. If this does not happen, then even if he personally understands what he is saying while miraculously speaking in a language that he does not know, his mind is not bearing fruit in other people’s minds by communicating to them truthful ideas that they can understand. Only his spirit is praying to God and speaking in an unknown foreign language which permits him to understand what he is saying, but he is the only one.

³⁷⁸ τί οὖν ἐστίν; προσεύξομαι τῷ πνεύματι, προσεύξομαι δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῖ· ψαλῶ τῷ πνεύματι, ψαλῶ δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῖ – Paul wants what God is miraculously doing within him and his mind to operate together in such a way that others can benefit intellectually from it and learn truth, but this requires that he communicate the ideas in his head to others using the language which they speak.

So whether he is speaking, praying out loud, or even singing, then communicating what is coming out of his mouth in an understandable language is key to building people up in their faith.

³⁷⁹ ἐπεὶ ἔάν εὐλογῇς ἐν πνεύματι, ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ιδιώτου πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀμὴν ἐπὶ τῇ σῇ εὐχαριστίᾳ; ἐπεὶ δὲ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν – If the only person who understands what is being said is the person who is saying it, i.e., “if you give thanks and praises with your spirit,” because his mouth is actually speaking a foreign language, then it will be of no benefit intellectually to anyone who does not know that language. He is “unlearned” from the standpoint of the language being spoken and the ideas being conveyed. Therefore, his relationship with God from the standpoint of his knowledge of God is not advanced, which, again, is the most important goal, in order that a person may think through well the gospel and its implications—which has been the subject of 1 Corinthians from the beginning of the letter. Do not pursue practices that come from a position of arrogance and a desire for status and drama, because these will always lead people astray from the truth instead of towards the truth.

³⁸⁰ σὺ μὲν γάρ καλῶς εὐχαριστεῖς ἀλλ’ ὁ ἕτερος οὐκ οἰκοδομεῖται – The person speaking in an unknown foreign language is “thanking God well,” but the listener who does not know the language is not built up in his knowledge of God.

In a Christian gathering, for Paul it is all about progressing intellectually *as a group*, because, as human beings, we act on the basis of what we know and believe to be true. And the entire gathering's improving in their knowledge and decision making is what Paul wants most of all, so that individuals within the group are better prepared to think through how to live their lives.

³⁸¹ Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι, πάντων ὑμῶν μάλλον ὁ γλῶσσας ἑλάλῃ – Paul acknowledges that God has caused him to speak in foreign and unknown languages more than anyone in the Corinthian Christian community. And he is grateful for this, because he knows that it is something that God is doing intentionally according to His purposes for the Christian communities of that day—to highlight Paul's role as an apostle, I suppose.

³⁸² ἀλλὰ ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ θέλω πέντε λόγους τῷ νοῦ μου λαλῆσαι, ἵνα καὶ ἄλλους κατηχήσω, ἢ μυρίους λόγους ἐν γλώσσῃ – Paul's opinion of the importance of clear, human knowledge is demonstrated in a statement like this. It is not as though a person who speaks in a foreign language is not using his mind at all, but Paul uses the expression “with the spirit” to refer to miraculous use of a foreign language while the mind actually understands what one is saying, and he uses the expression “with the mind” to refer to typical use of one's mother tongue while the mind also understands what one is saying. Countless words in a foreign language which the Corinthian Christians do not understand are worth nothing in comparison to five words in Greek regarding the apostolic message.

Again, bona fide knowledge and understanding of God is the ultimate goal for Christians who are fundamentally intent on living life well and acquiring eternal life through God's grace and mercy.

³⁸³ ἀδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσὶν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιᾶτε, ταῖς δὲ φρεσὶν τέλειοι γίνεσθε – This is a different use of the child/adult analogy from 1 Corinthians 13:11. There it was this realm vs. the future realm of the eternal Kingdom of God, whereas here it is understanding the edifying significance of speaking in an unknown foreign language vs. in a known language. The Corinthians are not grasping the importance of good, intellectual understanding in contrast to the mere drama that speaking in a foreign language produces. The latter is a “message” without long-term, genuine beneficial effects, because it is not understood intellectually by the listeners. All that happens with speaking a foreign language that nobody knows is someone's putting on a show for entertainment purposes.

³⁸⁴ ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις καὶ ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἐτέρων λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ καὶ οὐδ' οὕτως εἰσακούσονται μου, λέγει κύριος – In Isaiah 28, God is rebuking the Israelites for not listening to His message of righteousness and security, i.e., the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. Consequently, He is going to speak to them through the Assyrian soldiers as they communicate to them and one another with a foreign language. But this speaking will be a demonstration of God's judgment and condemnation, not mercy and salvation. In other words, it is more important to grasp the clear communication of God than to experience even the miracle of speaking in a foreign language.

Perhaps the Corinthian Christians are using this passage as a basis for the importance of their speaking in unknown languages while the listeners do not understand what is being said. Their thought is, if it was good enough in an OT context, it is good enough in a NT context. However, they are wrong in their assessment of Isaiah 28. It is not about God's being favorable and bringing blessing to His people. It is about judgment and very negative consequences, i.e., dying and being taken into captivity and exile. And this happens to both the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah.

³⁸⁵ ὥστε αἱ γλώσσαι εἰς σημείον εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ἡ δὲ προφητεία οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν – Perhaps the Corinthian Christians in their hyper-enthusiasm for speaking with unknown foreign languages cited Isaiah 28:11 as a basis for their obsession with “speaking in tongues,” that it is good to do so in order to confront Corinthian, Greek-speaking unbelievers, even if they do not understand what is being said.

Paul acknowledges that God caused the speaking of foreign languages by the Assyrians to occur in the midst of those who neither understood the languages nor were believing Him, the Israelites, for the purpose of communicating His presence and impending judgment to these unbelieving Jews in the northern Kingdom of Israel (and, by extrapolation, later to the unbelieving Jews in the southern Kingdom of Judah).

Here in v. 22 Paul summarizes his conclusion, that (as can be seen even in Acts 2) speaking in foreign languages, even if it is a miraculous occurrence, indicates to unbelievers that God is at work, while speaking in a group's own native language is intended to educate believers.

However, he has been talking about the miracle of speaking in an unknown language as being slightly different from Acts 2 where what was being said was truly understood and therefore appropriately evangelistic. Here in Corinth, there are no foreigners who will understand what the Christians are saying in an unknown foreign language. Therefore, it is really only by means of speaking Greek in the Corinthian Christian gathering, or translating from the unknown foreign language into Greek, that the people in Corinth will benefit from what is being said, whether miraculously through the “gift of languages” or simply by the “gift of uttering prophetic sayings” of the apostolic message so as to repeat what everyone learned from the apostle Paul when he was in Corinth for a year and a half.

Certainly, a sign where words cannot be understood is not a bad thing—if people really grasp the fact that it is a sign, but growth in comprehension and understanding by the communication of known symbols (words with correct syntax and grammar) is better to the point that the benefit of a sign which is incomprehensible is very much relativized in comparison to symbols (words with correct syntax and grammar) which are comprehensible.

³⁸⁶ εἰάν οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσας, εἰσέλθωσιν δὲ ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι, οὐκ ἔροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε – Again, the context is the Greek-speaking community of Corinth, and Paul gets back to the issue at hand, that the use of unknown foreign languages in the Corinthian Christian community is NOT like either the

Isaiah 28 situation or the Acts 2 situation. In Isaiah 28, the Hebrew-speaking Jews were not intended to understand the Assyrians to the effect that God was bringing judgment on them. In Acts 2, the foreign unbelievers, who understood what was being said in their dialects, were intended to learn that God was at work. Here, in the Corinthian gathering, the only way that the miraculous speaking of unknown foreign languages can be of benefit is if local unbelievers or believers, who do not understand what is being said, can appreciate the miracle by virtue of there being also a miraculous translation by a believer.

In contrast, a local unbeliever would think that people are crazy if all he hears is unknown foreign languages' being spoken in the gathering of Christians, which is NOT a good thing, especially if he hears foreign languages being spoken by all the Corinthian Christians at once.

In this way Paul is pointing out the difference between the situation in Isaiah 28 (and by extrapolation for us as we consider Acts 2) and the Corinthian Christian gathering, so that the Corinthians cannot use it as a legitimate basis for the speaking in unknown languages *without an interpreter and translator*.

Yet, the main point is still the same. Teaching people about God in their own language is by far the better means, as Paul now goes on to reiterate.

³⁸⁷ ἐὰν δὲ πάντες προφητεύωσιν, εἰσέλθῃ δέ τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης, ἐλέγχεται ὑπὸ πάντων, ἀνακρίνεται ὑπὸ πάντων – In contrast to the Old Testament situation, any non-believing Corinthians will be most helped by all the Corinthians' talking about the biblical message in their mother tongue, Greek, because the purpose of God in this situation is not to judge and condemn them by virtue of bringing their enemies into their land and presence, but to offer them mercy and salvation through the explicit and clear teaching from their fellow citizens who are clearly communicating the truth of the gospel.

It is this that Paul really wants his readers to grasp well—for the edification of and building up people in their knowledge and understanding of God vs. being obsessed with the drama of foreign languages and “tongues” that is merely for entertainment purposes and putting on a show.

³⁸⁸ τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερά γίνεται, καὶ οὕτως πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον προσκυνήσει τῷ θεῷ ἀπαγγέλλων ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν – cf. Isaiah 45:14, לִנְיָ יִשְׁתָּחֲוּ (LXX – ὅτι ἐν σοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐστίν) & Zech. 8:23, כִּי עִמָּנוּ יְהוָה (LXX – ὅτι ὁ θεὸς μεθ' ὑμῶν ἐστίν); cf. Ps. 46:7,11; Isaiah 8:10. A fairly common way of referring to God's work within a community was to speak of His being “with” them. Paul draws on this terminology to indicate the realization that will occur to unbelievers when they hear the New Testament truth and are caused by God to respond to it positively in the midst of the Corinthian Christians. And all this happens by means of clear speaking in the Greek language of the Corinthians, not by means of unclear speaking in unknown foreign languages—however dramatic this appears and attractive it is to these immature Corinthian Christians.

³⁸⁹ τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἑρμηνείαν ἔχει πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω – The first three words are a bit strange for us English-speaking people. They are literally “what therefore is?” I think Paul means, “What therefore is the right way to do a Christian gathering when everyone comes together to build each other up in their knowledge of God and their belief in God?” Along the lines of what Paul has already said in chapter 12, not all Christians will perform the exact same function in a Christian community and its gathering. They will not even all “utter prophetic sayings,” because they may not have all be taught directly by an apostle in order to declare clearly biblical concepts of the gospel. Instead, God causes a variety of functions to occur, including “a revelation,” by which Paul most likely means a kind of making the apostolic message clearer in regard to the issues of life, that a person understands its ramifications beyond what people are currently thinking about (cf. vs. 6 & 26). This, then, is a broadening of the message for the sake of its bringing truth to more areas of human existence and is in line with Paul's emphasis on uttering prophetic sayings as a mean to educate Christians well for living the truth in a manner as best as possible.

Plus, Paul is willing to admit that, in that 1st century context, one of them just might be the speaking in an unknown, foreign language—even in Corinth. However, it only makes sense for this to occur if there is a translator who can make what is being said intelligible to everyone in the Greek-speaking group.

This would all constitute the orderly process of Christians' meeting together with the goal of people being built up and edified, i.e., growing in their intellectual grasp of the gospel for the sake of their living it well and persevering in their belief as the qualification necessary for entering the eternal Kingdom of God.

³⁹⁰ εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ, κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος, καὶ εἰς διερμηνεύτω – Again, Paul is putting the clamps on speaking in unknown foreign languages. Their must be someone who can translate if it is truly something from God.

Thus, the orderliness of a Christian gathering for intellectual growth purposes.

³⁹¹ ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, εαυτὸν δὲ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ – Apparently, someone can tell when he is going to speak in a foreign language and not in his own mother tongue. Therefore, he can and should stop himself from speaking out loud, so that he simply contemplates his thoughts in silence, thus being the only one besides God who understands what he is thinking.

Paul is certainly saying that this is better than speaking and risking an unbeliever saying that the speaker is crazy. Plus, it stops the drama if it what is happening in the Corinthian gathering with supposed unknown foreign languages is fake.

³⁹² προφηται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείωσαν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέωσαν – The Old Testament principle of two or three witnesses seems to be the benchmark for Paul in regard to the number of people who should provide clear communication of ideas to the whole gathering.

While the other English translations translate διακρινέωσαν in the direction of others' judging and passing judgment on what the "prophets" are saying, I wonder if it is more that he wants them to discern the truth in contrast to the lies of their culture and the world. In other words, he wants the other Christians to embrace the truth that is being spoken by those uttering prophetic sayings from the apostolic message that involves their being able to say, this is the truth while that stuff in our culture is lies. This makes more sense in the light of the these "prophets" having been taught the apostolic message that they all have heard from Paul or even other apostles, if any happen to come around?

While people want to take all sorts of things seriously in chapters 12-14, including getting everyone to speak in "tongues," they manage to skip Paul's advice of their being two or three teachers who speak during any one gathering of Christians in a "church." Instead, the senior pastor does all the teaching, and in some settings people speak in "tongues" with reckless abandon all together without any translators. This is the crowd's doing its thing with the leader of the crown controlling them when he teaches to prevent any dissent.

³⁹³ ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένω, ὁ πρωτὸς σιγάτω – Here is the concept of "revelation" again after vs. 6 and 26.

If someone is enlightened to the broader significance of the apostolic message than is being currently presented, then let him speak and help build up the Christians even more in their contemporary and cultural context. This would be the orderly way to do a Christian gathering, too.

³⁹⁴ δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἕνα πάντες προφητεύειν, ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται – Again, the point of gathering together is to give each "prophet" the opportunity to communicate apostolic ideas to the rest of the group, so that everyone may continue to learn and be persuaded of the biblical truth.

In addition, Paul is giving each Christian in the Corinthian gathering credit for knowing the gospel well enough that they all can contribute to the discussion for everyone's increasing in their knowledge and commitment to the truth of God.

Because of 14:23 and this verse, it sounds as though the Corinthians were so impressed with the miraculous speaking of foreign languages that they all wanted to do it at the same time. The more the merrier. But just as there should not be multiple foreign language speakers speaking all at once, neither does it make sense that several teachers all be speaking at the same time. This is certainly plainly obvious to everyone who speaks the same language.

³⁹⁵ καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται – Even though God is miraculously working in individuals to cause them to function and perform their roles individually within the gathering of Christians in order to build up each one in his knowledge and understanding, reality works in such a way that each person is still in control of when he functions accordingly. In other words, freewill choices along with commandments and exhortations still make sense in spite of divine determinism. Even if a teacher feels compelled to talk at the same time another teacher is speaking, he should not. Thus, orderly communication and learning of important apostolic ideas can and should take place.

Perhaps Paul is also wanting the Corinthians to get the point that the spirits of those who miraculously speak with unknown, foreign languages are also subject to themselves, while they are saying that they just can't help themselves when they speak, thus creating a chaotic cacophony of foreign languages in their midst. While all that noise may impress them as wonderful spiritual drama, it is not an orderly presentation of God! And Paul is encouraging them to remain orderly for the sake of growing in their understanding of God and their living out the truth in their individual lives.

³⁹⁶ οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ εἰρήνης – As much as everyone's speaking in foreign languages together appears to be a spectacular display of God's power and presence, Paul has argued that orderly presentation of understandable, biblical truth is what God really cares about. This is what constitutes and produces good, biblical order, shalom, and wholeness for the sake of everyone's living out the gospel in a wise and loving manner.

³⁹⁷ ὥς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων – Paul has had to deal with the following issue in other Christian gatherings during his travels, and so he presents the same encouragement to the Corinthian Christians, because he has probably heard that this is part of the problem during their Christian gatherings.

This, too, must come under the issue of orderliness and the whole community of Christians' building up each other when they gather together.

³⁹⁸ αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει – In the light of 1 Corinthians 11:5 where Paul writes about women acting as spokesmen for God ("prophets" who utter prophetic sayings), it does not make sense that he is talking about all women and their not being allowed to share the ideas of the apostolic message with the rest of the community of believers, including the men. Therefore, Paul must be talking specifically about a problem that wives (better way to translate αἱ γυναῖκες here) were creating by conversing with their husbands during times when the whole gathering of Christians was supposed to be listening to another person who was proclaiming the apostolic message to the whole group. Paul is saying that the side conversation of the husbands and wives is too distracting for the whole group and should be reserved for the privacy of their own homes. In other words, this is not a prohibition of woman who are capable of contributing to the conversation regarding the gospel in a group of Christians. It is an exhortation to remain orderly in line with v. 33.

It may very well be that the new freedom and status enjoyed by Christian wives, i.e., a freedom to teach and an eternal

status equal to their husbands before God, went to their heads a little bit so that they took undo advantage of these and used them inappropriately, i.e., in a way that actually became disruptive instead of helpful. Instead, Paul wants the wives to act in a manner consistent with the OT Torah that teaches about the creation of Adam and Eve, husband and wife, and continues to instruct the Jews and human beings about the relationship between husbands and wives.

³⁹⁹ εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν· αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ – Cf. v. 32, so that it makes the “if” here assumes a “since,” i.e., that Paul assumes the wives do want to learn more about the gospel. They just should not be doing it from their husbands in the midst of the gathering of all the Christians together, because it is simply disruptive there.

Indeed, the wives do desire to learn, which is a good thing, but their side conversations with their husbands should not take place because they are disrupting the flow of conversation and learning in the whole gathering. This is what is “morally unacceptable” (αἰσχρὸν), which would be true of anyone, male or female, who breaks up the orderliness of a Christian gathering who are seeking to understand the apostolic message better in order to live their lives well before God.

In other words, everyone’s speaking in supposed unknown foreign languages is morally unacceptable (αἰσχρὸν) also. Both these kinds of behavior are morally unacceptable when the goal is growth in understanding by all those who gather together as a Christian community to learn from one another.

⁴⁰⁰ ἢ ἂν ὑμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξηλθεν, ἢ εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους κατήντησεν – The Corinthian Christians must be thinking that they are very special which, in turn, is making them think that they have some sort of exclusive grasp on the biblical message, which in turn is leading to act in inappropriate ways. Their arrogance and pride are getting the best of them. Of course, this is in line with the whole letter and Paul’s starting in chapter 1 with the problem of their thinking their teachers provide them superior status within the Christian community.

⁴⁰¹ εἰ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός, ἐπιγινώσκέτω ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή – Paul reminds the Corinthians that he is the apostle, not them, and that just because God has assigned someone within their community the role of helping everyone else grow in their understanding of the gospel does not make this person better or have a higher status before God than other Christians. They all have equal status before God, and Paul definitely has the God-given responsibility to instruct people in the best manner possible in his day, because this is what He intended for apostles in their role.

⁴⁰² εἰ δέ τις ἀγνοεῖ, ἀγνοεῖται – If a person does not embrace Paul (and other apostles) as the only authoritative spokesmen of the biblical message, then God will not embrace him with mercy and eternal salvation. This is pretty harsh but the brutal truth which all Christians need to understand and grasp, right on down to our own time—in the light of all the Christian leaders and teachers who either explicitly or implicitly communicate their supposed great “authority” to their listeners and followers.

⁴⁰³ ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεῦν καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις – Again, Paul emphasizes that the main function within a Christian gathering is speaking and learning the biblical message, while watching God perhaps work miracles through people’s speaking in foreign languages. This latter function could certainly be something that happens also.

Perhaps Paul is now concerned about the pendulum swinging the other way so that the Corinthians become so focused on talking to one another with their mother tongue of Greek in their gatherings that they completely eliminate God’s producing the miracle of some person’s speaking in a foreign language—or other miracles, too.

⁴⁰⁴ πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω – An organized presentation of whatever God is doing in a Christian gathering makes for the best environment for Christians to benefit one another in the growth of their understanding and the perseverance of their faith in order to qualify for the eternal Kingdom of God when Jesus returns.

⁴⁰⁵ γυνώριζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε – It makes sense that after Paul has emphasized in chapters 12-14 the intellectual growth in the apostolic message within the Corinthian Christian community by means of apostles, prophets, and teachers, that he would review it with his readers. This also provides him with another opportunity to remind these Christians of the concept of the “crucified Messiah” (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18ff.) for the sake of their thinking through the various implications of the gospel which he has touched upon in this letter.

thus, Paul is making known the good news, that he good-newsed to them. And he reminds them that they actually received this news and they have stood in it in their lives since then. Of course, he wants them to persevere in their faith in it.

⁴⁰⁶ δι’ οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν εἰ κατέχετε, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκὴ ἐπιστεύσατε – Having just emphasized the primary importance of an intellectual grasp of the apostolic message, Paul presents it once again to the Corinthian Christians. I guess a person can never hear it often enough. Paul does offer the possibility that they are not authentic believers. He has to, because not even he knows accurately anyone else’s heart. This is also another way he can encourage these Christians to persevere in their belief as that which result in their eternal salvation.

Thus, he tells them that they are being saved [from God’s eternal condemnation] by embracing the good news of Jesus as the Messiah. This is the message which they should hold on to firmly, through the thick and thin of life, unless, of course, they “believed” this message in vain, meaning that they did not actually believe it biblically. They do not have

changed hearts, so that they will eventually reject the gospel to the degree that they demonstrate that they are not authentic believers.

⁴⁰⁷ παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν αμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς – Jesus’ death as the Messiah was “for our sins,” meaning that he qualified to become our high priest before God in order for us to acquire His eternal forgiveness (cf. Hebrews 7-10; 1 John 2:1,2). Paul had received this information in the process of relearning the Old Testament during the fourteen years that he prepared for his responsibility as the apostle to the Gentiles after his conversion on the road to Damascus (cf. Galatians 1:15-2:1; Acts 9).

The OT scriptures indicate in so many words that the Messiah had to suffer from his enemies to the point of death, and this, then, became the basis for people’s forgiveness from God for their sins—as Paul lays out very clearly in Hebrews regarding Psalm 110 and the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31.

This is the information “of first importance” in all the world to all sinners everywhere in order for them to escape God’s eternal condemnation and destruction.

⁴⁰⁸ καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς – There is plenty of evidence in the Old Testament to the effect that the Messiah would suffer death and then be raised from the dead in order to fulfill his responsibility as Messiah and high priest (cf. Psalms 16 & 22 and Isaiah 53).

But this is as far as Paul goes in explaining what happened to Jesus. He does not mention his ascension or his return, because of the problem he will mention in v. 12 of some Corinthians’ rejecting the idea of the resurrection of the dead.

⁴⁰⁹ καὶ ὅτι ὡφθῇ Κηφᾶ εἴτα τοῖς δώδεκα – Here Paul refers to Jesus’ immediate appearance after his crucifixion and resurrection to Peter/Cephas and the “twelve” apostles (even though there were only 11 at the time (Matthew 28:16ff., Mark 16; Luke 24, John 20,21)). Jesus’ death, resurrection, and new life as the Messiah are obviously key to his role and our belief.

⁴¹⁰ ἔπειτα ὡφθῇ ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ, ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἕως ἄρτι, τινὲς δὲ ὧς ἐκοιμήθησαν – By the time Paul writes this letter to the Corinthians (spring of A.D. 55), some of the eyewitnesses of Jesus’ death and resurrection have died during the last twenty or so years since then. Jesus’ appearance to such a large crowd probably took place in Galilee (cf. Matthew 28).

The verb κοιμάω is used 4x in 1 Corinthians 15 to refer to physical death.

Matthew 27:52 The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen **asleep** were raised (καὶ πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν).

John 11:11 This He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep (Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν ἔκεοιμήται ἀλλὰ πορεύομαι ἵνα ἐξυπνίσω αὐτόν).” **11:12** The disciples then said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover (εἶπαν οὖν ‘οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτῷ’ κύριε, εἰ ἔκεοιμήται ‘σωθήσεται’). **11:13** Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep (εἰρήκει δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς περὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ἔδοξαν ὅτι περὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ὕπνου λέγει).

Acts 7:60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Having said this, he fell asleep (καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐκοιμήθη).

Acts 13:36 “For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay (ἐκοιμήθη καὶ προσετέθη πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶδεν διαφθοράν).”

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep (περὶ τῶν ἔκοιμωμένων), so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. **4:14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus (οὕτως ὡς καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἔξει σὺν αὐτῷ). **4:15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep (οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας).

2 Peter 3:4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep (ἀφ’ ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἔκοιμήθησαν), all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.

⁴¹¹ ἔπειτα ὡφθῇ Ἰακώβω εἴτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν – Jacob is probably Jesus’ brother, James, and “all the apostles” are probably all the apostolic co-workers who were instrumental in helping the actual apostles in their carrying out their responsibility of proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah to the Jewish people (cf. Acts 14:14 where Barnabas is included as an apostle, and Acts 15 where it could be argued that the “elders” of the Christian Jews are apostolic co-workers).

⁴¹² ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὡφθῇ κάμοι – Paul feels deeply his lack of worthiness of being saved and being an apostle, especially because of his having persecuted Christians (cf. v. 9 and Acts 9). As a result, he calls himself a miscarriage of birth into becoming an apostle. Yes, God brought it about through His grace and mercy towards Paul. But Paul still does not feel like a bona fide apostle like the others who never spent their time persecuting, imprisoning, and even putting to death followers of Jesus as the Messiah the way he did.

⁴¹³ Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμι ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ – Paul, as a disciple of Gamaliel (cf. Acts 22:3) and a staunch Pharisee, had committed himself to destroying the Christian movement before his conversion on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. None of the other apostles had had this kind of attitude and actions towards Christians before they became Christians. Only Paul sought to destroy Christianity before he changed and began to promote it with the greatest of enthusiasm and thankfulness. It was as

through all his original hostility towards Christianity motivated him just that much more to become its greatest champion—more than any other apostle.

⁴¹⁴ χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι, καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα. οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σὺν ἐμοί – Paul acknowledges that his condition and status as an apostle is because of the kindness of the transcendent Creator toward him. He also claims to have worked (probably travelled, experienced persecution, and been in prison) more than the other apostles. However, again, the ultimate cause of his apostolic labors is God and His grace, not Paul's created humanity. Thus, here we have an explicit statement to the effect that God is not only the Creator of Paul and his choices, but that Paul's efforts in the direction of fulfilling his Christian, apostolic responsibilities are also caused by God's gracious kindness towards him to rescue him from His eternal condemnation and to use him as an instrument of grace in the Gentiles' lives. In this way, all of reality in which we move as human beings is an operation of the dynamic which exists between God and it, so that God is the ultimate author of any reality apart from Himself, and one can include the word "grace" in an explanation of how the reality comes into existence, operates, and produces God's desired effects when the subject is a Christian.

Is Paul saying that it is possible for the activity of God's grace to occur in vain and be worthless with respect to God's intended goals and purposes? Theoretically, yes, if Paul were to reject the operation of God's grace within him and refuse to engage in fulfilling his responsibility as an apostle. But actually, no, because God is the transcendent Creator who authors the story of the entire creation at every moment of its existence. It seems that Paul simply wants to emphasize that he has worked hard to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, which hard work the grace of God does not exempt a human being from engaging in. Indeed, His grace may certainly cause a person to work harder than he normally would if it were not for his conscious awareness of the importance of his fulfilling his responsibility as a Christian within the giftedness which God has granted him—in this case, Paul's gift to be the unique apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Ephesians 3).

⁴¹⁵ εἴτε οὖν ἐγὼ εἴτε ἐκεῖνοι, οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε – Paul's main point, though, is that the apostles and their co-workers have exercised their proper and unique function of proclaiming the NT message, and those who have heard it in the Corinthian community have believed it for the sake of their eternal salvation.

And all this takes place within the operation of the grace of God in their lives.

⁴¹⁶ εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν – Here is an example of the Corinthians' thinking that they are special in their understanding of the NT message and how their "moral" and theological judgment has been clouded by the various errors which they have been pursuing, including dividing themselves up according to their favorite teachers (cf. 1 Corinthians 1-4).

Some of them, for whatever reason (either because of pagan influence which denied the reality of eternal life or because of erroneous Judaism which was very possibly doing the same), are claiming either

1) that Jesus did not rise from the dead and that there is no general resurrection from the dead, i.e., no eternal life, in the midst of people's proclaiming that Jesus has been resurrected from the dead, or

2) that there is no general resurrection of the dead while Jesus is being proclaimed (and even the Corinthians' believing) as having been raised from the dead. So Jesus has been raised from the dead, but no one else will be?

The second option is making more sense to me. This is how messed up the Corinthians are in their faith and understanding of the gospel. But how strange that they would want to deny their own resurrection from the dead while believing that Jesus was resurrected from the dead, especially because eternal life along with God's forgiveness is the best benefit of Christianity (cf. 15:14-19). And it must have been central to the information of the gospel which Paul had presented to them—for eighteen months! Where did they get the idea that there is no resurrection of themselves? Cf. [Acts 17:32](#) Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this."

Cf. [1 Thessalonians 4:13](#) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

Therefore, it is very possible that eternal death was so ingrained in the minds of the Greek Corinthians in the Greek culture that they struggled to hold on to the idea and truth of their own resurrection from the dead.

We notice also that Paul stops his explanation here of the gospel with the resurrection of Jesus and does not go on to his ascension. This is because of the specific Corinthian problem of denying the general resurrection of Christians to eternal life that he will now address. Then, in v. 24, he will pick up this thread again and go on to Jesus' role as a result of and after his resurrection—the establishment of the eternal Kingdom of God.

⁴¹⁷ εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται – Paul's logic is that if there is no general resurrection of the dead (as if this is something impossible for God to bring about?), then the resurrection of the Messiah has not even taken place as something needed. If God cannot (?) raise the Corinthians from the dead, then He could not raise Jesus from the dead either.

In other words, it seems to be a matter of power and ability (I think), and somebody is proclaiming a false idea about Jesus' resurrection if the Corinthian Christians are not going to be resurrected.

⁴¹⁸ εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα ὁ[καί] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν – Christianity and belief in Jesus as the Messiah is grounded in the event of Jesus' death and resurrection, the latter proving that Jesus qualified to be our high priest and king. For there to be no resurrection of Jesus is for the message of Christianity to be meaningless and useless. We might as well make up just another pagan religion and self-help program for this life that

ultimately helps no one in regard to the the real issue of life as sinful human beings, which is to avoid eternal death and gain eternal life through God's mercy through Jesus as the basis for His mercy.

⁴¹⁹ εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν ὥστε οὐκ ἐγείρονται – Paul has always emphasized in his proclamation of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah that God raised him from the dead. But if there is no resurrection of the dead to the effect that Jesus has not been raised, then Paul is lying about God. And who would really want to be accused and found guilty of such an blasphemous act against God?

⁴²⁰ εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται – The same logic applies here, too.

⁴²¹ εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν – Sin is the problem, and its forgiveness is the solution, because sin results in eternal death. Sin is the sting or goad of death as Paul says in 15:56, and it results in condemnation and destruction from God. Therefore, if there is no resurrection from death, so that Jesus never rose from the dead and qualified to be our high priest, then there is no salvation from God's condemnation.

Thus, any belief in God, Jesus, and resurrection from the consequence of sin which is death is useless with respect to eternal salvation and life. It is as simple as this. Someone is still in their sins and headed towards eternal death without there being any solution to this problem. In other words, this life is just a temporary experience with some pleasure and some pain that eventually ends forever.

⁴²² ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο – The word “forever” is not explicit in the text, but this must be what Paul means, that authentic believers, who are in the Messiah as members of the group who belong to him, went through their last and irrevocable transition of human existence when they fell asleep, i.e., when they lost all consciousness when they died, because there is no hope of their rising from the dead and gaining God's forgiveness and eternal life through the Messiah's intervention. He is still dead and unavailable to intercede on behalf of sinners, and they will remain dead also.

⁴²³ εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλικιώτεες ἐσμέν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν – Paul states bluntly how ridiculous it would be for the apostles to proclaim a message that does not deal with sin and eternal death such that these can be overcome in eternity. Yes, it is entirely possible (and certain before the 2nd coming of the Messiah) that all human beings experience physical death. But is there any escape from annihilation into eternal life? Yes, but only through God's mercy and forgiveness. But the only way to acquire these is through the intercession of a living Messiah who must have been raised from the dead because he was clearly crucified on a cross and died!! Thus, escape from death and acquiring eternal forgiveness from God that leads to eternal life ought to be the main concern of each and every human being. It certainly is the main concern of God for us. This is why self-help programs for this life alone and other religions that present false explanations of God and how to gain eternal life are likewise useless. They are basically saying what these Corinthians are, that Jesus never rose from the dead to intercede on our behalf in order for us to obtain mercy and life from God in eternity.

⁴²⁴ νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων – Paul affirms the resurrection of Jesus and that he is the first of all those who have died in belief, so that they all who have had genuine belief down through history but who have died prior to the 2nd coming of the Messiah will eventually experience resurrection from the dead also when Jesus returns (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11). Does this mean both Old Testament and New Testament believers? Certainly, as even Abraham, Moses, and David will experience life again when Jesus returns and sets up the messianic kingdom on the land of Israel.

And does this mean that Jesus is still in existence (and therefore “alive”) after God raised him from the dead? Yes, it would seem so. Even though no other dead believer has yet been raised from the dead, except temporarily when God made Moses and Elijah appear to Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration (cf. Matthew 17), Jesus has and remains alive just as he appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9). But where is he during the other times? We simply are not told. Certainly, somewhere else in this cosmos or in another dimension or parallel universe. But he is definitely alive now within Gods' creation.

⁴²⁵ ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν – Adam's disobedience and actions resulted in death and condemnation for all human beings who have followed in his footsteps and disobeyed God, i.e., everybody but Jesus. Similarly, Jesus' obedience and actions result in eternal life and salvation for all human beings, who authentically believe God for His message of man's sin and His mercy through the Messiah.

The pattern that God has used is to created one man and bring about both death and life through each one. This obviously is vital to recognize for all the other men and women who follow the one man towards death so that they may follow the other man towards life!

Cf. Romans 5:12-21.

⁴²⁶ ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται – Death and condemnation have come about because God created all human beings after Adam to be like him as sinners who willfully choose to define morality independently of God, while eternal life and salvation have come about because of God has caused some sinners to take advantage of Jesus' moral perfection and obedience as the Messiah so that he becomes their advocate and intercessor before God.

Those who live their lives only as Adam did by being a sinful person and rebelling against God's commandments in Genesis 2,3 will experience physical death and even eternal condemnation and destruction/death. However, those who

live their lives as Jesus did by being people of appropriate inwardness (moral perfection for Jesus and circumcised heart for everyone else) and obeying God accordingly with genuine inwardness and belief will experience resurrection from the dead like Jesus into eternal life (immortality), moral perfection, and God's mercy (even though Jesus himself did not need God's mercy).

Those who live in association with Adam die forever, unless they live in association with Jesus to live forever. Paul is focused on those who have died already as authentic believers, while certainly not leaving out the fact that believers who are alive at Jesus' second coming will also experience an instantaneous transformation into being immortal and morally perfect people. Therefore, in this context, this word "will be made alive" (ζωοποιηθήσονται) refers to only resurrection from the dead.

⁴²⁷ ἕκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ – This is the only verse in which τάγμα is used. Does it mean "turn, order" or "group?" Because of how Paul goes on to list first the Messiah's resurrection and then "that of those who belong to the Messiah at his coming," seeing τάγμα as meaning "turn" makes the most sense.

Jesus has been resurrected from the dead, given his immortal body, and he exists somewhere where we are not told. Then, "at his grand appearance/coming," all those who have had genuine belief like Abraham (cf. Genesis 12:3) and therefore "belong to the Messiah," because their belief qualifies them, whether OT believers or NT believers, to enjoy his advocacy at the judgment, which takes place at his 2nd coming, can essentially say, "Now it's our turn," and will be resurrected from the dead by God and granted both immortality and moral perfection (cf. Revelation 20).

The order is—1) Jesus is resurrected three days after his death, and then 2) all sinful believers will be resurrected when he returns. In other words, all believers, both OT and NT, who have died are still dead until Jesus' return.

⁴²⁸ εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῷ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύνανται – As described in Revelation 20 & 21, Jesus will reign as king over the earthly, millennial kingdom until it is time for God to do away with the present realm entirely and create another and eternal realm where there will be only those who have been authentic believers who will be morally perfect and immortal in this eternal realm. Thus, God will destroy all remaining human governments and religious rulers which have existed around the world during Jesus' millennial kingdom.

In the midst of the end of the present realm, Jesus will in a sense hand over his kingdom to God so that He can accomplish His final plans and purposes of destroying all opposing governments. This also implies that all other governments down through history have been God's enemies to some extent, because their personnel have been sinners. Only Jesus' government during the millennial kingdom will be God's total and complete friend in the present realm.

⁴²⁹ δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ θῇ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθρούς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ – cf. Psalm 110:1, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου (יְהוָה יִשְׁמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ). The whole ANE idea of Jesus' being the Son of God is that he rules over all of the Father's property, which, in a sense, actually includes death that exists in the present realm. However, God's plan, unlike what was even possible for any other ANE chief god, such as the Egyptian sun god Ra, is to destroy the property of the present realm and create a completely new property of the eternal realm. Therefore, Jesus' role as ruling over God's property will have as its final and eternal realm one where death no longer exists. In fact, as depicted in the visions of Revelation 20 & 21, it will be the abolition and annihilation of death that will mark the complete transition to the eternal realm of the Kingdom of God, because death will still exist among human beings while Jesus rules over his millennial kingdom, but it will not exist on the new earth once it is created. For all God's enemies to be placed under Jesus' feet is for all of them finally to submit to Jesus as ruler and king of the realm in which they exist, which also is for them to be destroyed by God so that they no longer have the opportunity or ability to influence Jesus' rule over the Father's property. Thus, God reigns until He has put all Jesus' enemies under his feet by destroying them. But then also Jesus hands over his kingdom to the Father, because the Father has completed His plans and purposes of bringing about the eternal realm where death and sin will no longer have any part in it.

⁴³⁰ ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος – This enemy, death, is abolished at the final judgment, Jesus' return at the beginning of the millennial kingdom and at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20, when God both grants mercy and eternal life to believers and destroys unbelievers respectively. Thus, this is a two-part process with the first resurrection of believers as described in Revelation 20:1-4 and with the second resurrection of non-believers as described in Revelation 20:7-15. This latter resurrection will result in God's bringing about the eternal realm without sin and death, two things that will still exist in the millennial kingdom of Israel with Jesus' ruling over all human beings on the present earth.

⁴³¹ πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ – cf. Psalm 8:6, כָּל יִצְחָק תַּחַת רַגְלֵי (LXX – πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ). Psalm 8 was written by David after God had made the Davidic Covenant with him to the effect that he and his descendants had the right to rule over the entire creation with the same level of authority as God himself. Here Paul quotes verse 6 to demonstrate that every element of the present creation is something which the Son of Man, the Messiah and kingly descendant of David, is given the right to rule. And since death is an element in the present creation, then the Messiah rules over it, too—but only until God wipes out death in this realm when He destroys it and creates a new realm which will be eternal, meaning that no aspect of it will even "die" and suffer decay and

corruption, even physical corruption. This implies of course too that wonderfully there will be no sin on the eternal earth.

⁴³² ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα – Paul says that it is obvious that the only “thing” that does not become subject to Jesus the Messiah in the eternal Kingdom of God is the One who subjects everything to Jesus, the Creator Himself, who is God the Father and the Author of all reality and this story which He is telling for His own eternal purposes.

⁴³³ ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῇ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἡ ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν πάσιν – While death still occurs during the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20, in a sense it is not in subjection under Jesus’ feet, because it is not completely conquered since it still exists and is the worst enemy of life and those who live life. But when death as that which occurs in sinners’ lives comes to an end with the Great White Throne Judgment, and therefore death or dying is abolished, then death itself will finally have come under subjection to Jesus and will be symbolically under his feet. This will also be when Jesus will finally be completely in subjection to God in the sense that nothing exists outside that which he is all about, which is life, and eternal life at that.

Interesting expression, “God will be all things in all things.” It must mean that God will have completed His whole purpose and project of bringing about the eternal Kingdom of God through the Messiah and the destruction of death, so that only eternal life exists for Jesus’ subjects who have been authentic believers during some period of time of their existence on earth when they were subject to death and most of them died (instead of being lifted from the earth alive when at Jesus’ return).

⁴³⁴ ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν; εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, τί καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν – Makes more sense to translate the ὑπὲρ as “because of.” Baptism was a common religious practice in the Roman Empire in that day, and people thus expressed their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, who rescued them from the death that the previous unbelieving dead had already died that would result in eternal death, in order to gain eternal life. And Paul’s point is, why make such an expression of belief in Jesus through water baptism if resurrection and eternal life are not a reality?

Therefore, what Paul means is that people were baptized because they wanted to identify not only with the Messiah, who died on their behalf and who demonstrated that they deserved eternal death for their sinfulness, but also to identify with those who had already died and yet would be raised from the dead to gain eternal life because of their authentic belief—in contrast to those who lacked belief and would experience condemnation and eternal death at the Great White Throne Judgment.

In this way, Paul is reflecting back on what has happened among the Corinthian Christian community where there are some who are denying the very fact of a general resurrection of the dead (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:12ff.).

⁴³⁵ τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν – In addition, to baptism’s being worthless as that which symbolizes death and resurrection, Paul asks what is the use of the apostles’ and apostolic workers’ with him suffering for the NT message if their message of resurrection is for nothing. What is the point of their putting their lives on the line each day by proclaiming such a controversial message that could get them killed by the world that remains overall hostile towards God?

⁴³⁶ καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀποθνῄσκω, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, ἀδελφοί, ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν – Speaking of dying (and explicitly proclaiming resurrection from the dead), any kind of appropriate “dying” that a believer does, especially an apostle in this case, who constantly dies to the stuff of the present realm by proclaiming a message that points people mostly to the next, eternal realm and then gets persecuted for it, is a good kind of dying in line with the truth of the biblical message and God’s purposes of taking that which dies in this realm, i.e., human beings of authentic belief, and raising it (and them) from the dead for the purpose of eternal existence in the Kingdom of God. To brag or boast about something is to declare that it is what makes a person significant, important, valuable, and purposeful. The Messiah Jesus, with both his death and his resurrection, is what Paul considers to make him these three things. Then, Paul also considers what God has done through him in the lives of the Corinthian Christians with respect to Jesus’ death and resurrection, i.e., making them believers in him, to be also that which makes him significant, important, and purposeful.

But again, these make sense only if there is a resurrection from the dead.

⁴³⁷ εἰ κατὰ ἀνθρώπον ἐθηριόμαχῃσα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίνωμεν, αὐριον γὰρ ἀποθνῄσκομεν – Cf. Isaiah 22:13, φάγωμεν καὶ πίνωμεν, αὐριον γὰρ ἀποθνῄσκομεν, where Isaiah is rebuking the Jews for their disobedience of God. Here, “human motives (κατὰ ἀνθρώπον)” refer to only the present realm, i.e., this is all that exists and there are no plans on God’s part to create a new realm in which there will be eternal life. Paul is saying that, if eternal life through the Messiah is a false idea, then we may as well act like the Israelites in their disobedience of God. The world operates on the principle that getting the most happiness and pleasure out of the present life should be our goal (cf. 2 Timothy 3:4 – φιλήδονοι = lovers of pleasure vs. φιλόθεοι = lovers of God). Paul’s fundamental principle is different. Based upon the fact and role of Jesus as Messiah, his goal is to fulfill his responsibility as the apostle to the Gentiles and help them attain to the resurrection of the dead through belief in the risen Messiah.

Paul also comments that he has been fighting wild beasts in Ephesus, i.e., people who are out of control in their opposition to the gospel and therefore acting like wild animals who are operating on the principle of their sensual instincts and not of their rationality (cf. 16:9).

⁴³⁸ μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἡθὴ χρηστὰ ὁμιλίας κακαί – Paul borrows what must have been a wise saying of his day, maybe even there in Corinth, and reminds his readers that they need to be careful of whom they allow to influence them. People who deny the truth, such as the false teachers, would want them to follow them in their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and of the important idea of the resurrection of the believing dead.

Paul is urging them not to go this direction in their belief system.

⁴³⁹ ἐκνήψατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε – Paul likens the Corinthians to people who have drunk too much wine, causing them to lose their good senses about what is true vs. what is a lie. And he wants them to return to being in their right minds so that they reject this whole idea of there not being a resurrection of the dead. In fact, if they keep going in the direction of rejecting God’s truth, then they are committing sin against Him, which obviously Paul does not want them to do.

⁴⁴⁰ ἀγνοοῦσιν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν, πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λαλῶ – Again, the emphasis is on a correct intellectual grasp of who God is and what He is up to. Some of the Corinthians sound like idiots because of their stated knowledge of God, which excludes the very important concept of the resurrection from the dead and which leads them to ask the following question as though the whole concept does not make any sense to them.

⁴⁴¹ ἀλλὰ ἐρεῖ τις· πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποῖω δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται – Paul is implying that the person posing this question is not genuinely seeking truth, but questioning the whole idea of the possibility of resurrection from death, thus questioning God’s clear statements about the Messiah and his own resurrection from the dead. He is acting as though it makes no sense that God either is able or wants to raise people from the dead. Probably, the former is more correct, that for some reason they think that God is unable to resurrect the dead. But could not Zeus or another pagan god do this? So what is the problem here?

⁴⁴² ἄφρων, σὺ δὲ σπείρεις, οὐ ζωοποιεῖται ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ – Paul calls this person a fool, which is probably like our “Silly!”

Paul will now use a simple agricultural analogy that everyone takes for granted and does not question the reality of it. He likens death and resurrection to what happens to a seed, saying that there is a certain, obvious logic to the kind of substance that “dies” in comparison to the kind of substance that “gets resurrected” after death. For example, the seed of a plant, e.g., wheat, must “die” when it is buried in the ground. Indeed, it does not sprout into wheat or whatever unless it does “die” and is buried. The inference is that we do not acquire our eternal bodies until and unless we die, except for those who are still alive at Jesus’ return. But Paul is focusing on the issue of resurrection from the dead, not on the rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4.

This ends up being a long argument by Paul because of the seriousness and bizarre nature of the question, “Is there a resurrection of the dead?” The argument’s length speaks to the importance of this concept and the depth of the rejection of it by certain Corinthians.

Paul wants to make absolutely certain that no one can raise an objection to the truth of resurrection from the dead—because Jesus’ resurrection is at the core of what it means to be a Christian.

⁴⁴³ καὶ ὁ σπείρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ τίνος τῶν λοιπῶν – Plants start off as seeds, that must be sown in the ground, and then they become a plant. They do not start off as full-grown plants. And Paul is saying that this is something that “you” do, that the Corinthians do that is very logical and possible.

The analogy is that we Christians do not start off with immortal, morally perfect bodies. We begin our existences with mortal, sinful bodies which must die. Then, God plants us in the ground so to speak through death, and then He transforms us when He raises us from the dead. As a result, we will have our final immortal and moral perfect bodies that are radically different in their nature from our earthly, mortal bodies.

⁴⁴⁴ ὁ δὲ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα καθὼς ἠθέλησεν, καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα – God chooses exactly what full-grown plant comes from each kind of seed. And the point is that this is the process that a substance must go through in order to reach the point where it is a full-grown plant. It does not have its “body,” the full-grown plant, right away. It takes the process of being planted, dying, and then growing before it does—according to God’s desire that is irrefutably unstoppable, because He is God!

⁴⁴⁵ Οὐ πάντα σὰρξ ἡ αὐτὴ σὰρξ ἀλλὰ ἄλλη μὲν ἀνθρώπων, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ κτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ πτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ ἰχθύων – Here, the point seems to be that just as there are different kinds of organic bodies on the earth according to whether something is a person/human being, an animal, a bird, or a fish, so also there are different kinds of bodies which a human being has in this realm in comparison to his immortal body in the eternal realm. If God can create and thereby bring into existence different kinds of organic entities in the present realm, then it stands to reason that He can raise people from the dead, after they had one kind of organic body, and give them different bodies (of different organic material, i.e., material that is life supporting) suitable for the eternal realm.

Will our eternal bodies have a circulatory system and hearts that pump blood through them? We are not told.

⁴⁴⁶ καὶ σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια· ἀλλὰ ἑτέρα μὲν ἡ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα, ἑτέρα δὲ ἡ τῶν ἐπιγείων – “Bodies” here refer to the substantive enclosure which human beings experience in the two possible realms where they dwell—either the eternal realm of the eternal universe of Revelation 21ff. or the temporary realm of this universe until God destroys it as described in Revelation 21 also. This is the present realm on this particular earth and there will be the future realm on the eternal earth. The former Paul calls an “earthly body,” while the latter he calls a “heavenly body.”

His point is that they are both great and important, but they also have a different level of greatness and importance. And they are different, implying that being able to look forward to an eternal body for a Christian is a wonderful sense of anticipation.

⁴⁴⁷ ἄλλη δόξα ἡλίου, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα σελήνης, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα ἀστέρων· ἀστὴρ γὰρ ἀστὲρος διαφέρει ἐν δόξῃ – Paul now uses the actual brightness of the light coming from the sun, the moon, and stars to illustrate his point. Just as the sun is brighter in comparison to the moon and the stars, so also the eternal body of human beings is greater in importance ultimately than the body which human beings experience on this earth in the present realm. And just as the moon's light and the stars' light are both "important" ("bright") lights, they are not as important and bright as the sun, meaning that the earth's body, which a human being experiences, is important, but it is not as important as his eternal and resurrected body—that comes from being an authentic Christian who embraces the truth of the gospel, including the truth of resurrection from the dead for Jesus and his followers.

If God can create things in our sky and above the earth that give off different levels of light, then it stands to reason that God can create eternal, human bodies later with a different and greater awesomeness (morally and ontologically) than the temporary bodies we inhabit now.

God can create moral bodies that are perfect and ontological bodies that He is going to preserve for all eternity.

⁴⁴⁸ οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ – cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13,14 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

The raising from the dead of authentic believers will result in their being given immortal bodies that will never decay and die and then decay some more, which will be their condition even when they return with Jesus to instruct mainly Jewish believers in the messianic Kingdom of Israel for the "1,000 years" of the millennium kingdom (cf. Revelation 20).

"Decaying" = will die and will not last forever and will continue decaying when dead. "Not decaying" = eternal and lasting forever. The first refers to that which is mortal. The second refers to that which is immortal.

⁴⁴⁹ σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ· σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει – Human beings come into existence in the present realm with organic bodies which are morally deficient and subject to death and dying, but they will be raised (if they are authentic believers) with some kind of organic (I assume) bodies which will be morally perfect and subject to only life, i.e., eternal life, and not to death and to decay.

Now, our bodies are morally weak but will become morally strong with the power never to sin again but only to choose righteousness and goodness. God will ensure we always make morally perfect choices because we will be morally perfect.

⁴⁵⁰ σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν –

"Natural" here means having come into existence through the normal biological process of procreation and results in the body being morally deficient and subject to death and dying. A natural body has all the limited characteristics of the present realm. This body is mortal and decays and dies and decays some more.

"Spiritual" here means having come into existence through God's creating it out of nothing (*ex nihilo* in the Latin) and results in the body being morally perfect and subject to only eternal life. It is a moral and immortal body that is also eternal.

In other words, Paul is not using the word "spiritual" to refer to something which is ghost-like, so that it cannot be touched and has no real substance. It refers to that which has come into existence differently and is materially different when God transforms our earthly bodies subject to sin and death into immortal and morally perfect ones subject to righteousness and life.

⁴⁵¹ οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν – cf. Genesis 2:7, הָאָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (LXX – καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν). After God took dust from the ground and breathed into it, the dust became a living being with a heart pumping and blood flowing, but Paul is also saying that Adam was a sinful human being whose body was subject to not only moral corruption but also physical corruption which would eventually result in physical death. It was only a matter of time before Adam revealed outwardly his true immoral state, rebelling against God, and thereby demonstrating that he was headed towards death.

This is exactly what occurred in Genesis 3. It was not a Fall *per se*. It was an outward revealing of his already existing inward state of sinfulness.

⁴⁵² ὁ ἕσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν – Adam was the first of a dying kind of blood-flowing organic material that were human beings. Jesus, as the last Adam, in his condition of resurrection from death and, therefore, with an eternal body, is the first of an eternal kind of human being. As a result, he, by his advocacy at the final judgment, provides eternity for the dying kind of human being. Thus, Jesus initially was a morally perfect, mortal human being whom God transformed into a morally perfect, immortal human being after his resurrection. He thus becomes a "life-producing spirit," i.e., life-producing person, because those who are authentically associated with him through their belief will follow him into eternal life at his second coming. This was God's plan for him, i.e., his "spirit," and will be His plan and "spirit" for all authentic believers in Yahweh and in Jesus as the Messiah.

Therefore, "spirit" here is not referring to an immaterial being, but to the kind of being Jesus is. He is a life-giving kind of eternal being, because, through belief in him, sinners obtain God's eternal forgiveness and life.

⁴⁵³ ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν – There is a divine chronological order of things, just as there is as divine order to seeds being sown in the ground before they become full-grown plants (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:36-38).

First, a human being must experience a temporary existence that ends with death and decaying, because he, like Adam, is of this present realm with its characteristic of decay, death, and further decay. Then, a human being can experience an eternal existence where there is no decay—if he exhibits authentic belief (as implied here). The person starts out as mortal and then transitions to immortality as an eternal human being.

Again, spiritual does not mean ghost-like, but permanent and morally perfect. Similarly, natural means temporary.

⁴⁵⁴ ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ – God made Adam for the purpose of starting a human race in the present realm. God made Jesus for the purpose of starting another human race, i.e., by acquiring human beings for the eternal Kingdom of God. This statement does not have to mean that Jesus originated in heaven as the second person of the trinity, and then traveled from there to earth. We just make it mean this because of our presuppositions. Instead, it is just as reasonable if not more reasonable to interpret Paul as saying that Jesus' purpose is eternal while being morally perfect, especially after his resurrection to an immortal state, while Adam's purpose was temporary and mortal while being sinful, especially with his coming from the dirt and ground of the present earth so as to be subject to physical death. He went from dust back to dust. Jesus went from being created *ex nihilo* to being created *ex nihilo* again.

In other words, Jesus' "out of heaven-ness" and "heavenly-ness" refers to his resurrection from the dead, not to his original injection into the created reality by God the Father when he was conceived and born of Mary.

Nevertheless, God made Adam from the dust of the earth, while He made Jesus out of nothing and miraculously as a zygote in Mary's womb. Thus, even this distinction in actual physical origins constitutes a distinction in role within human history. Adam's role was to present the inevitable process of sinning and dying physically for all human beings who follow after him because of his mortality, while Jesus' role was to present the inevitable process of being miraculously resurrected from the dead and granted eternal life and immortality (and moral perfection for sinners) by God. All along, God intended the two men to point to two different destinies.

⁴⁵⁵ οἶος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι – As in the previous verse, Paul's point is that the purpose of our physical bodies in line with Adam's origin from the ground of this earth is for the present realm—to decay, to die, and to decay some more. The purpose of our spirituality and authentic belief like that of Jesus is for the eternal realm—to live with moral perfection and immortality, like Jesus after his resurrection.

Thus, "heavenly" does not have a locational meaning, i.e., up in heaven, as if it were the place from which Jesus came and where people go when they die. It has a qualitative meaning, i.e., that which is permanent and eternal.

⁴⁵⁶ καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ – We certainly share the physical and ending-in-death characteristics of sinful Adam, while we also will share (future tense!) the spiritual and ending-in-eternal life characteristics of morally perfect and resurrected to immortality Jesus, which we will acquire after our own resurrection from the dead (or lifting from the earth if we are still alive when Jesus returns).

⁴⁵⁷ τοῦτο δὲ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ – The phrase "not able" means "not purposed." God could certainly write into His story the transition of flesh and blood sinners into the eternal Kingdom of God without there going through any kind of physical transition or transformation. However, He has not purposed such. Instead, the purpose of physical bodies is for them to die (because they are in the condition of decaying that leads to death and further decaying) and end their existence in the present realm.

Paul is also saying that the Kingdom of God does not yet exist. It will do so only when Jesus returns and first establishes the messianic kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel while also ruling over the whole earth. And after this, it will continue to exist after God destroys the present realm and creates a new heaven and new earth according to Revelation 21.

⁴⁵⁸ ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω ὅτι πάντες ὅτι οὐ κοιμηθήσόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγῆσόμεθα – A mystery is not something that is unreasonable and cannot be understood by the human mind. It is something that has not yet been revealed and made clear by either the biblical message or human history, but now it is, because Jesus was permanently raised from the dead, and Paul is explaining the biblical concept of the change from decaying to not decaying that authentic believers will go through by God's power and grace. Therefore, Jesus own first appearance reveals that which was not clear in the OT by virtue of all that Jesus did and went through himself, including his death and resurrection to permanent eternal life—unlike probably the son of the woman whom God used Elijah as His instrument of resurrection.

Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. Paul is not necessarily expecting that every authentic believer in Jesus will have died by the time he returns. Those who are actually alive at that future moment will not undergo a resurrection. Instead, they will rise up in the air to meet Jesus and be changed and transformed immediately by being given their permanent, eternal, and therefore morally perfect bodies. This is the immediate and instantaneous change to which Paul is referring in this verse.

⁴⁵⁹ ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥίπῃ ὁφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι σαλπίζει γὰρ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἀφθαρτοὶ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγῆσόμεθα – This sure sounds as though death before Jesus' return does not immediately bring eternal

life. Instead, at his return, the believers who have died will be resurrected from the dead into a bodily state of immortality, while those who are still alive (and Paul considers the possibility that anyone may be one of these) will have their bodies immediately changed by God into the same eternal state (cf. vs. 22,23 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, and Revelation 20:4).

Plus, I think that he is emphasizing that this WILL happen, because there is something about the thinking of the Corinthian Christians that is leading them to believe that it actually CANNOT happen. Paul completely disagrees.

⁴⁶⁰ δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν – The necessity of this transition from a “physical” and mortal body to a “spiritual” and immortal body is found in God’s transcendent plans and purposes. God’s goal all along has been to cause mortal and sinful human beings to acquire a state of immortality and moral perfection, which Jesus himself has now obtained (albeit only the first part was necessary for him) after his own resurrection from the dead.

Again, Paul is emphasizing the guaranteed actuality of this transition taking place for authentic believers and Christians, so that the Corinthians can stop believing that it will not happen. Yes, it will, because God is a God of transcendent purpose and intention, and no one can thwart His plans.

⁴⁶¹ ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν, τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος – cf. Isaiah 25:8, כָּל־הַמָּוֶת בְּלָעַתָּה לַיְיָ (LXX – κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας = death with its strength has drowned). In Isaiah 24 & 25, the prophet is describing the destruction of the land of Israel and Jerusalem immediately before the return of the Messiah, so that then God will bless the Jews and Israel with authentic belief and security from their enemies with the Messiah’s reigning over them as their king. In the midst of all these divine activities, death itself will eventually come to an end, with Jesus’ return marking the final phase of its existence. Paul exploits these ideas to refer to the transformation of mortal beings into immortal beings at Jesus’ return when either the living believers are only transformed from decaying living beings to non-decaying living beings or the believers who have died are resurrected and transformed from beings who have decayed into non-decaying living beings.

⁴⁶² ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος; ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον – cf. Hosea 13:14, אֱלֹהֵי דְבַר־יָדָי מִנֵּת אֶת־הַקְּטָבִיךָ שָׁאוּל (LXX – ποῦ ἡ δίκη σου, θάνατε; ποῦ τὸ κέντρον σου, ἄδη). In Hosea 13, God is declaring His displeasure with the northern Kingdom of Israel which will result in their destruction. In v. 14, God is asking if it makes sense that He rescue the people from the destruction which He is bringing on them? But He also asks where is death and Sheol’s power and effect to affect His people? The implied answer is that they (and everything else in the created reality) come from God.

Paul is exploiting this answer to say that God not only controls even death and destruction, but that when the time is appropriate in the midst of His establishing the Kingdom of God through the Messiah, He will exercise such control by destroying death, its effect, and its source, i.e., sin, which Paul goes on to mention in the next verse.

So I am taking τὸ κέντρον as the cause of death, which is sin. Where is sin which causes death—after Jesus’ return and the resurrection of the believing dead takes place? It is gone forever in their lives and existences. This is why I translate τὸ κέντρον as goad, that which prods someone on to eternal death because sin deserves God’s judgment, condemnation, and destruction.

⁴⁶³ τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἡ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος – Human sin keeps goading and stimulating death, and ultimately eternal death and destruction, into making themselves known in human existence, while the biblical message of the Mosaic Covenant grants sin this power by stating clearly what is the proper definition of morality and what are God’s purposes to use sin and death to bring about eventually the eternal Kingdom of God. In addition, as in Romans 7, sin takes its opportunity to reveal itself through our inability to obey God’s Mosaic Covenant properly, so that in a sense the Covenant provides sin with its power to keep being sin and not be able to change into righteousness. The explicit commandments of the covenant point out exactly what sin is.

Thus, the Covenant of Moses has the power to make clear, which it does, that sin results in death, especially eternal death in the midst of a lack of forgiveness from God, if the sinner does not have and manifest the necessary condition of a changed heart and humble belief, penitence, and moral obedience in order to obtain eternal forgiveness.

⁴⁶⁴ τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Just as death is victorious over us in the present realm and cannot be avoided (and eternal death is victorious over us in the next realm and cannot be avoided if we remain without changed hearts and authentic belief), life eternal is victorious over us in the next realm and cannot be avoided for genuine believers due to Jesus’ death and resurrection which have qualified him to be our advocate at the judgment.

⁴⁶⁵ ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ – God’s plans and purposes will ensure that the Corinthian Christians’ efforts to believe the biblical message, including the reality of the resurrection from the dead, will allow them to overcome death and obtain God’s eternal mercy and life. Paul wants his readers to be thus encouraged to continue in their hard work of believing the truth of the NT message and serving God.

In this way, their lives will not be for nothing as basically the lives of the rest of the world will be. It is futile and worthless to fight against God and try to make reality something which it is not, e.g., by believing and worshiping pagan gods as the best approach to life in ancient times, or by believing that ignoring God and His moral

commandments is the best approach to life in modern times, or by taking the Bible and making up a “Christian” religion from it that is only a perversion of the truth.

⁴⁶⁶ περὶ δὲ τῆς λογιᾶς τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ὡςπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε – Probably the same collection Paul writes about in 2 Corinthians 8 & 9. Paul wants the Corinthians to be as generous to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and its surrounding area as the Galatians Christians already are.

⁴⁶⁷ κατὰ μίαν ἑξαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ’ ἐαυτῷ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὃ τι ἐὰν ἑυδοῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογέται γίνωνται – The Corinthians should take whatever extra money they do not need each week and put it aside in order to send it to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. By the way, this is not a tithing. It is their generous gift to their Christian brothers and sisters who are in need.

⁴⁶⁸ ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι, οὓς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, δι’ ἐπιστολῶν τούτους πέμψω ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ – Letters seem to provide verification of the personnel involved and the purpose intended for people’s actions.

⁴⁶⁹ ἐὰν δὲ ἴσῃ τοῦ κάμει πορεύεσθαι, σὺν ἐμοὶ πορεύσονται – It may be that Paul decides that it is a good idea for him to visit Jerusalem also at the same time as the Corinthians send their financial gift. And if it seems so, then he will accompany the others, or they will accompany him.

⁴⁷⁰ Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω· Μακεδονίαν γὰρ διέρχομαι – Paul plans to pass through Macedonia on his way to Corinth. And he states emphatically that he will pass through Macedonia. This is definitely his planned route.

⁴⁷¹ πρὸς ὑμᾶς δὲ τυχὸν παραμενῶ ἢ καὶ παραχειμάσω, ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε οὗ ἐὰν πορεύωμαι – It seems there was something valuable about not only providing hospitality for someone, but also being able to say that one has sent the person on his way.

⁴⁷² οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν. ἐλπίζω ἵνα γὰρ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμείναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ – By passing through Macedonia, he will not be anxious to leave Corinth and see it. Instead, he will have touched bases with the Christians in Macedonia so that he then can think only about spending time with the Corinthians. He can focus on them without being distracted by thoughts of moving on and visiting Macedonia.

⁴⁷³ ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς – Yet, Paul’s plan is to stay in Ephesus until the feast of Pentecost. It is interesting that he thinks in terms of the Jewish calendar even as he speaks to mostly Gentile Christians in Corinth.

⁴⁷⁴ θύρα γάρ μοι ἀνέφωγεν μεγάλη καὶ ἐνεργής, καὶ ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί – Along with openness to the NT message comes also hostility toward it. Indeed, typically there is more opposition to the biblical truth than acceptance of it, because the number of believers and Christians throughout history have been fewer than unbelievers. But this is also an interesting for Paul to describe what is motivating him to remain in Ephesus. He has a lot of opportunity to present the gospel to people, and it seems that it is being well received also. However, along with his presenting the message of truth to many people (“a large and active door”), he is also encountering much opposition to God and the Bible. It is as though he is saying that he must be on the right track, because with acceptance of the truth by some comes its rejection by many others. But I also assume that he is talking about the true truth, not some distortion of it that has existed in various places and various times, including in OT Israel and in places where Bible has been introduced for the first time. But was it the genuine message of God’s grace and authentic belief? Not always. This is why we cannot say that people have become authentic Christians, because they may have embraced religious Christendom and not the actual truth.

⁴⁷⁵ Ἐὰν δὲ ἔλθῃ Τιμόθεος, βλέπετε, ἵνα ἀφόβως γένηται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ ἔργον κυρίου ἐργάζεται ως ἡ ἐγώ – Why does Paul have to instruct and command the Corinthians not to make Timothy afraid when he is with them? Perhaps, it is his youthfulness as Paul comments on this in 1 Timothy 4:12. As a result, Paul tells the Corinthians that Timothy and his work are no different from Paul and his work. They should treat Timothy as they treat him—basically as an apostle even though he is only an apostolic co-worker.

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

⁴⁷⁶ μὴ τις οὖν αὐτὸν ἐξουθενήσῃ. προπέμψατε δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν εἰρήνῃ, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς με· ἐκδέχομαι γὰρ αὐτὸν μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν – Paul wants them to treat Timothy as they would treat him. Clearly, Paul is waiting for Timothy in Ephesus there, and he is looking forward to seeing him “with the brothers” when he arrives.

This also indicates that it may be a while before Paul can make it to Corinth. Yet, as he has said, he definitely plans to travel through Macedonia and then be on his way to Corinth to see them.

⁴⁷⁷ περὶ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, πολλὰ παρεκάλεσα αὐτόν, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν· καὶ πάντως οὐκ ἦν θέλημα ἵνα νῦν ἔλθῃ· ἐλεύσεται δὲ ὅταν εὐκαιρήσῃ – cf. Acts 18:24ff. This is probably the second time Apollos will visit them.

⁴⁷⁸ γρηγορεῖτε, στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε – Paul begins his conclusion and final encouragement to the Corinthians by encouraging them to be alert in their faith so that they are aware of what is happening around them morally and spiritually. And certainly they should stand firm in their belief in the apostolic message. They should also be brace and courageous because they are people of truth to whom God has promised eternal life in the Kingdom of God. This should give them strength to persevere in their faith in the midst of all life’s circumstances, regardless of how difficult life becomes and tests their faith in waiting for God to completely His project in their lives and in the world.

⁴⁷⁹ πάντα ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ γινέσθω – Paul wants them and all that they are about to remain in a state of being loved by God and loving God and His people, their fellow Christians.

⁴⁸⁰ παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί· οἶδατε τὴν οἰκίαν Στεφανᾶ, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀχαΐας καὶ εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς – Stephen’s household seems to have learned the apostolic message from Paul first when he arrived in Corinth, and they have run with the truth by serving the rest of the Christian community in the best ways possible. They are wholeheartedly committed to their fellow Christians and to Paul.

⁴⁸¹ ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτάσσησθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις καὶ παντὶ τῷ συνεργούντι καὶ κοπιῶντι – Paul has confidence that Stephen and some others grasp the apostolic message well so that others should listen to what they have to say and be respectful of the genuineness of their faith, especially as they serve the Christian community in the best way. It stands to reason that this cannot be said about anyone today, because no apostle is alive to evaluate our understanding and serving the truth of the Bible and say this of us.

Also, see the below for why Paul has even more current confidence in Stephen and the others.

⁴⁸² χαίρω δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ καὶ Φορτουνάτου καὶ Ἀχαϊκοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν – These men must have visited Paul or are visiting him now and helping him by being fellow believers and committed followers of Jesus there with him in Ephesus. In the absence of the rest of the Corinthian community, these men are a great substitute and encouragement to Paul.

⁴⁸³ ἀνέπαιναν γὰρ τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν. ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιούτους – The commitment of these men to the biblical truth is incredibly encouraging to Paul and must be the same for the Corinthians. Consequently, Paul wants the Corinthians to acknowledge these men in the light of their genuine belief and obedience to God.

This manner of speaking of these men may also indicate that they are the couriers of this particular letter, having first appeared to Paul in Ephesus and then being sent back to Corinth by Paul with this letter.

⁴⁸⁴ ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας. ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ’ οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ – Paul is sending greetings from all the gatherings of Christians in Asia Minor with whom he is in direct contact, probably those in Ephesus. Therefore, here, he is identifying the gatherings in people’s homes as “churches” and assemblies of Christians, in addition to having referred to the “church” and gathering of the Christians in individual cities.

It appears too that Aquila and Prisca have followed Paul to Ephesus and set up shop there, even having a home in which a gathering of Christians meet to encourage one another, probably each Jewish Sabbath (cf. 16:2).

⁴⁸⁵ ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες. Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ – Here, I assume, Paul refers to all the Christians of all the gatherings in Ephesus. They all greet the Christians in Corinth, and he then encourages the Corinthian Christians to greet one another, “with a holy kiss,” i.e., warmly and genuinely.

⁴⁸⁶ ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου – Paul writes these last lines himself.

⁴⁸⁷ εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἤτω ἀνάθεμα. μαράνα θά – Here is the bottom line. Love Jesus, and receive eternal mercy and life. Hate or reject or ignore Jesus, and receive eternal condemnation.

In Aramaic, Paul says, “Our Lord, come!” Paul definitely looks forward to God’s bringing the present realm to an end and ushering in the first stage of the eternal Kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom of Israel and this world before God destroys the present realm and creates a new and eternal universe.

⁴⁸⁸ ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ’ ὑμῶν – God’s grace is always the key. It is only by His exercising His grace that people are changed and rescued from His eternal condemnation and destruction.

⁴⁸⁹ ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – And Paul extends through this letter his love for all the Corinthian Christians as they together are associated with the Messiah Jesus, even though they are separated by the Aegean Sea and the many miles between Corinth and Ephesus.