

1 Corinthians

1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of the Messiah Jesus through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother¹ **1:2** to the gathering that belongs to God that is in Corinth,² to those who have been set apart to be in the Messiah Jesus,³ called to be set apart ones,⁴ along with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah in every place—their Lord 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 wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus the Messiah,¹⁰ **1:8** who will also establish you as uncondemned at your goal (ἔως τέλους) in the day of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.¹¹ **1:9** God is faithful, by whom you were called to have an existence in common with His Son, Jesus the Messiah, our Lord.¹²

1:10 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** It was explained to me by those from Chloe concerning you, my brothers, that rivalries exist among you.¹⁶ **1:12** 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 Krispos and Gaios,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 those who are being saved.²³ **1:19** It was 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 preposterous?²⁶ **1:21** In other words, because the present realm did not understand God by means of their wisdom in the midst of the wisdom of God,²⁷ God was pleased via the foolishness of the official announcement to save those who believe.²⁸ **1:22** For example, 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 preposterous to Greeks.³⁰ **1:24** But to the called,³¹ both Jews and Greeks,³² this message is about THE MESSIAH, the power of God and the wisdom of God,³³ **1:25** because God's foolishness is wiser than man's, and God's weakness is stronger than man's.³⁴

1:26 In addition, notice your calling, brothers, that 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 shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak people of the world, so that He may shame the strong, **1:28** and God has chosen the base 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 one 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 different, and redemption,³⁹ **1:31** so that it may be simply 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 did not come with superiority of reasoning or wisdom as 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** As for me, I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling,⁴³ **2:4** and my logic and proclamation were not in 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 Nevertheless, we do speak a wisdom among those with *the goal* (ἐν τοῖς τελείοις), a wisdom not of this age, nor from the rulers of this age, who are passing away.⁴⁶ **2:7** But we speak the wisdom of God that has been hidden in a mystery, wisdom that God predestined before the ages for our glory,⁴⁷ **2:8** that 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** Who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man in him? Thus, also, no one has grasped 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 of God,⁵³ so that we may grasp the things graced to us,⁵⁴ **2:13** things that we also talk about, not with reasonings taught from human wisdom but with 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 preposterous to him. And he is unable to grasp them because they are embraced spiritually.⁵⁶ **2:15** However, the spiritual man properly judges all things, while he is properly judged by no one.⁵⁷

2:16 Now, who has known the mind of the Lord? Who will instruct Him <cf. Isaiah 40:13>?⁵⁸

Yet, 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 unspiritual 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 limited in your ability.⁶¹ **3:3** You are

yet unspiritual, because, in so far as there is envy and rivalry among you, are you not unspiritual and living according to man?⁶² **3:4** When someone says, "I am with Paul," and another, "I am with Apollos," are you not acting like mere men?⁶³

3:5 What then is Apollos, and what is Paul? Servants through whom you have believed, even to each person as the Lord gave.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 that foundation.⁷² However, let each one beware of how he builds,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** If someone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw,⁷⁵ **3:13** each person's work will become known. The day will make it clear, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will prove out the quality of each person's work.⁷⁶ **3:14** If someone's work that he built 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 holy, which 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** The wisdom of this world is preposterous before God, because it was written,

He 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, Apollos, or Kephias, whether the present world, life, or death, whether present or future things. 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 connection, it is required of managers that each one be found trustworthy.⁸⁸ **4:3** However, it is of little or no importance to me that I be called to account 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 things hidden in the 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 concede one of you any superiority? 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 had become kings, so that we may also be kings with you.⁹⁷

4:9 I think God has made 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 fools for the Messiah's sake, but you are wise by means of the Messiah. We are weak, but you are strong. You are glorious, 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 toiling 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 off-scourings 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 admonish you as my beloved children.¹⁰³ **4:15** For if you have a myriad of teachers because of the Messiah, nevertheless you do not have many fathers, because, as a result of 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 child and faithful in the Lord, who reminded you of my ways that are because of the Messiah, just as I teach everywhere in every group.¹⁰⁶

4:18 Some have become conceited, as though I were not coming to you.¹⁰⁷ **4:19** But I will come quickly to you, if the Lord wills, 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 do you want? That I come to you with a stick or with love and a gentle spirit.¹¹⁰ **5:1** It is being heard everywhere that sexual immorality (πορνεία)¹¹¹ exists among you, and such sexual immorality (πορνεία) that does not even exist 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 has thus done this.¹¹⁴ **5:4** When you are gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and with my spirit, along with the effect 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 (πονηρίας), but with the unleavened bread of a single-minded commitment and truth (εὐλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας).¹²⁰

5:9 I wrote to you in my letter not to get tangled up with immoral people (πόρνοις)¹²¹—
5:10 certainly not with the immoral people of this present realm's system (τοῖς πόρνοις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου)—neither with the selfish, nor with thieves, nor with idolaters. 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 a sexual immoral person (πόρνος), a greedy person, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a thief—and not to eat with such a one.¹²⁴

5:12 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 immoral 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 set apart.¹²⁸ **6:2** Or do you not recognize that set apart ones discern the errors of the world?¹²⁹ So, if the world is in the process of being judged by means of your insight, are you incompetent to settle trivial cases?¹³⁰ **6:3** Do you not recognize that we evaluate messengers? Then why not 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 standing within the group?¹³² **6:5** I am speaking to your shame.¹³³ Is there not one wise person among you who will be able to decide between his brother and his opponent?¹³⁴ **6:6** But brother goes to court against brother and this before unbelievers.¹³⁵

6:7 My conclusion is that it is already an utter loss for you, because you have brought lawsuits against one another.¹³⁶ Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?¹³⁷ **6:8** But you are treating people unjustly and engaging in fraud, and this as brothers.¹³⁸

6:9 Or do you not know that those who treat people immorally will not come into possession of the Kingdom of God?¹³⁹ Do not deceive yourselves. Neither the sexually immoral (πόρνοι), idolaters, adulterers, catamites, pederasts,¹⁴⁰ **6:10** thieves, those who are greedy, drunkards, slanderers, nor swindlers will obtain 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.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless the body is not for sexual immorality (τῆ 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 by means of His power.¹⁴⁶

6:15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of the Messiah? Shall I remove the members of the Messiah and make them members of a prostitute (πόρνης)? May it never be.¹⁴⁷ **6:16** 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 from sexual immorality (τὴν πορνείαν). Every immoral action (πᾶν ἀμάρτημα) that a man commits involves moving away from his body. Nevertheless, he who commits sexual immorality (ὁ δὲ πορνεύων) acts immorally (ἀμαρτάνει) 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 Concerning the things which you wrote, is it good for a man not to “touch” his wife?¹⁵⁴

7:2 Well, in the light of the existence 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** 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, a wife should not divorce her husband.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 divorce 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 divorce 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 because 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 groups.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 guarding the commandments of God is something.¹⁷³

7:20 Let everyone remain in the condition 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 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, everyone is to remain with God in the condition 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 a divorce; you have been divorced, do not seek a wife. **7:28** But if, indeed, you are married, you have not committed immorality (οὐχ ἡμαρτεῖς), and if a young woman of marriageable age gets married, she has not committed immorality (οὐχ ἡμαρτεν). But those who are such will have tribulation with respect to life here on earth, and I would like to spare you.¹⁸¹

7:29 And I say this, brethren, the season is short.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 unmarried care about the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord. **7:33** But he 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 care 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** And I say this to your own benefit, not to impose restrictions on you but for good order and that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.¹⁸⁷

7:36 But if anyone thinks he is behaving dishonorably toward his fiancée, while his passions are strong and thus it must be, let him do what he wants. He is not committing immorality (οὐχ ἀμαρτάνει). Let them get married.¹⁸⁸ **7:37** And he who stands firm in his own heart, while not feeling compelled but having control over his own will and has decided this in his own heart—to keep his own fiancée, he will do well.¹⁸⁹ **7:38** Therefore, indeed, he who marries his own fiancée does well, and he who does not marry her will do better.¹⁹⁰

7:39 A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, 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 stuff that has 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** If someone loves God, he is known by Him.¹⁹⁶

8:4 Therefore, concerning 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 dirty, because it is weak.²⁰²

8:8 Nevertheless, 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** However, 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, because 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 committing immorality against the brothers and assaulting their weak understanding, you commit immorality against the Messiah.²⁰⁷ **8:13** Indeed, if food scandalizes my brother, I will in no way eat meat into the age, so that I do not scandalize 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 Kephaz?²¹³ **9:6** Or do I only and Barnabas not have the right not to work?²¹⁴ **9:7** Whoever 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 is written,

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

Is it for 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 that those who proclaim the good news to make their living from the good news.²²³ **9:15** However, I have not taken advantage of any of these things, and I did not write these things so that it may be thus with me.²²⁴ For it is good for me rather to die than someone render my boast empty.²²⁵

9:16 If I proclaim the good message, there is no bragging for me, 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 *gratis*, 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 a great number of them.²²⁹ **9:20** For example, 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 of 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 participate 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 it.²³⁴ **9:25** Each one who engages in the contest exercises self-control in all respects. Therefore, on the one hand, there are those who engage in it so that they may receive the perishable wreath. However, on the other hand, we engage in it for the 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. All passed through the sea.²³⁸ **10:2** All were baptized into Moses by means of the cloud and in the sea.²³⁹ **10:3** 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 many of them, because they were killed in the desert.²⁴²

10:6 And these things became examples for us, so that we should not desire evil things.²⁴³ **10:7** Therefore, do not be idolaters as some of them were,²⁴⁴ just 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 the "Messiah" as some of them tested him, and they were destroyed by the snakes.²⁴⁷ **10:10** And do not grumble as some of them grumbled, so that they died at the hands of 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** A temptation has not happened to you except what is common to humanity,²⁵¹ and God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but, along with the temptation, He will indeed produce the outcome, so that you may be able to endure it.²⁵²

10:14 Therefore, ones whom I love, flee from idolatry.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 on account of one's 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 things to the glory of God.²⁷² **10:32** Give no offense to the Jews, the Gentiles, and the gathering of God,²⁷³ **10:33** just as, indeed, I please everyone with everything I do, by not seeking my own benefit but that of many others in order that they may be saved.²⁷⁴ **11:1** Become 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** Now 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 on behalf of God, 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 τῆ κεφαλῆ), dishonors her "head," because she is one and the same as

a woman whose head has been shaved (τῆ ἐξυρημένη).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 man is not obligated to cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God. On the other hand, the woman is the glory of man,²⁸³ **11:8** because man is not from woman, but the woman is from man.²⁸⁴ **11:9** In addition, the man was not created on account of the woman, but the woman was created on account of the man.²⁸⁵ **11:10** Therefore, the woman really should have something that demonstrates her authority on her head on account of the *angels*.²⁸⁶

11:11 Nevertheless, neither is a wife independent of her husband, nor is a husband independent of his wife—because of 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 for yourselves. Is it right 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 man is a disgrace to himself if he wears long hair,²⁹⁰ **11:15** and, on the other hand, a 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, as long as I am giving you directions on what to do, there is this for which I cannot praise you—that you hold your meetings in such a way that you are not better off but worse off.²⁹³ **11:18** In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a group, there exist divisions amongst you. Now, I partly believe this,²⁹⁴ **11:19** because there must indeed be factions among you, in order that those who are proven to be genuine may become plainly evident among you.²⁹⁵

11:20 Secondly, when you gather together at the same place, you are not really eating the meal of the Lord,²⁹⁶ **11:21** because, when you eat, each one goes ahead and has his own meal.²⁹⁷ The result is that one is hungry, and the other is drunk.²⁹⁸ **11:22** Is it that you do not have homes in which to eat and drink? Or do you consider of little value God's gathering? And is the point to humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Shall I praise you? I am not going to commend you for this.²⁹⁹

11:23 I received from the Lord that which I passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took the bread,³⁰⁰ **11:24** and after giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in order to remember me."³⁰¹ **11:25** Likewise, he took the cup after they ate, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant because of my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in order to remember me."³⁰² **11:26** Therefore, as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you announce 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 is guilty of immorality against the body and the blood of the Lord.³⁰⁴ **11:28** Therefore, let a man assess himself, and, thus, 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 powerless, and you fit the description of those who are sleeping.³⁰⁷

11:31 However, if we assess ourselves correctly, we are not condemned.³⁰⁸ **11:32** Instead, because 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 gather to eat, wait on one another.³¹⁰ **11:34** If someone is hungry, let him eat in his own house, so that you do not come together in a condemnatory fashion.³¹¹

And as for the remaining things, I will take care of them when I come.³¹²

12:1 Brothers, I do not want you to lack understanding concerning spiritual things.³¹³ **12:2** You know that, as pagan Gentiles, however you were being led along, you were led along toward speechless idols.³¹⁴ **12:3** Therefore, I make known to you that no one, when speaking, says by means of the Spirit of God, "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 service, but the same Lord.³¹⁷ **12:6** And there are varieties of effects, but the same God, who works all things in everyone.³¹⁸

12:7 Certainly, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for that which is beneficial.³¹⁹ **12:8** 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 understanding according to the same Spirit.³²⁰ **12:9** To a different person is given belief by the same Spirit,³²¹ to another the bestowing of healings by the one Spirit,³²² **12:10** to another the workings 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 wills.³²⁸

12:12 Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, make up one body, thus also is the Messiah.³²⁹ **12:13** As a result, 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** Indeed, the body is certainly 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 any less a part of the body. **12:16** If the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any less a part of the body. **12:17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? **12:18** But God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body just as He desired.³³¹

12:19 Therefore, if all the members were one part, where would be the body?³³² **12:20** Instead, on the one hand, there are many members, while, on the other hand, there is one body. **12:21** Consequently, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you." Nor can the head say to the feet, "I do not need you." **12:22** Rather, much more, the members that seem to be less important are indispensable.³³³ **12:23** To those members of the body that we think are less significant we grant more honor, and our more unrepresentable parts are treated with greater presentability,³³⁴ **12:24** whereas our more presentable members do not need this.³³⁵

As a result, God has composed the body so as to give to the member that is inferior greater honor,³³⁶ **12:25** so that there may not be cause for dissension within the body.

Instead, the members may have the same care for one another.³³⁷ **12:26** Therefore, if one member suffers, all the members suffer together. If one member is honored, all the members rejoice together.³³⁸

12:27 You are the body of the Messiah and individually members of it.³³⁹ **12:28** Thus, God has placed in the group first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healings, helpful deeds, guides, kinds of languages...³⁴⁰ **12:29** Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all are assigned to do powerful deeds, are they?³⁴¹ **12:30** Not all have gifts of healings, do they? Not all speak languages, do they? Not all translate these languages, do they?³⁴² **12:31** Nevertheless, be committed to the greater gifts.³⁴³

And I will show you a still more important issue.³⁴⁴ **13:1** If I speak with the languages of men and angels, but I do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clashing cymbal.³⁴⁵ **13:2** If I have 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.³⁴⁶ **13:3** 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.³⁴⁷

13:4 Love is patient. Love is kind. It is not jealous. Love does not heap praise upon itself. It does not have an exaggerated self-conception.³⁴⁸ **13:5** It does not behave disgracefully. It does not seek its own things. It is not irritated in a destructive way. It does not ponder evil.³⁴⁹ **13:6** It does not rejoice over injustice, but rejoices in the truth.³⁵⁰ **13:7** It does not let anything get to it. It believes all things. It eagerly expects all things. It endures all things.³⁵¹ **13:8** Love never comes to an end. In contrast, whether we are talking about prophetic utterances, they will cease, or languages, they will stop, or understanding, it will cease,³⁵² **13:9** because we understand in part, and we utter prophetic sayings in part.³⁵³ **13:10** Yet, when the completion of the goal (τὸ τέλειον) occurs, the less than complete will cease.³⁵⁴

13:11 When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child. But when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child.³⁵⁵ **13:12** Now we see indirectly in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Currently, I know in part, but, then, I shall know just as I am indeed known.³⁵⁶

13:13 Indeed, now abide belief, hope, love—these three things, and the greatest of these is love.³⁵⁷ **14:1** Pursue love, and be committed to spiritual things, especially that you may utter prophetic sayings.³⁵⁸ **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.³⁵⁹ **14:3** In contrast, he who utters prophetic sayings speaks edification, encouragement, and comfort to men.³⁶⁰ **14:4** He who speaks with a language edifies himself, but he who utters prophetic sayings edifies the gathering.³⁶¹

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 explains what he is saying, so that the gathering may receive edification.³⁶² **14:6** Brothers, if I come to you speaking languages, what value will it be to you if I do not speak to you either with revelation, with knowledge, with a prophetic saying, or with teaching?³⁶³

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 clear? **14:8** If, for example, a trumpet makes a strange sound, who will prepare himself for battle?³⁶⁴ **14:9** Therefore, 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.³⁶⁵ **14:10** There are ever so many different sounds of languages in the world, and none is without meaning.³⁶⁶ **14:11** Consequently, if I do not grasp the meaning of the sound of a language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker will be a foreigner to me.³⁶⁷

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.³⁶⁸ **14:13** Therefore, let him who speaks in a language pray that he may translate what he is saying,³⁶⁹ **14:14** because, if I pray in a language, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.³⁷⁰ **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.³⁷¹ **14:16** 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?³⁷² **14:17** On the one hand, you are thanking God well, but, on the other hand, the other person is not being edified.³⁷³

14:18 I thank God that I speak in languages more than all of you.³⁷⁴ **14:19** However, in the gathering, I prefer to speak five words with my mind, so that I may indeed instruct others, than thousands of words in a language.³⁷⁵

14:20 Brothers, do not be children as far as your minds are concerned. Instead, be children with respect to evil, while being adults with respect to your minds.³⁷⁶

14:21 Yes, in the Old Testament, it was written,

“I shall speak to this people by people who use strange languages and by the lips of foreigners, and yet they will not listen to you,” says the Lord <Isaiah 28:11>.³⁷⁷

14:22 Consequently, the purpose of languages is to be a sign—not to believers but to unbelievers, while the purpose of prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers.³⁷⁸

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 in, will they not say that you are crazy?³⁷⁹ **14:24** Instead, if all of you speak with prophetic utterances, and a certain unbeliever or unlearned person comes in, he will be reprovved by all of you. He will be called to account by all of you.³⁸⁰ **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.”³⁸¹

14:26 Therefore, brothers, what should be done? When you gather together, one individual has a psalm, another individual has something to teach, another individual has a revelation, another individual has a foreign language, and another individual has a translation. Let all things happen for the purpose of edification.³⁸²

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.³⁸³ **14:28** However, if there is no

translator, let the one who speaks in a different language remain silent in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God.³⁸⁴ **14:29** In addition, let two or three prophets speak while everyone else evaluates what they are saying.³⁸⁵ **14:30** Thus, if an error is revealed to another who is seated, let the first be silent.³⁸⁶

14:31 You are all capable of uttering prophetic sayings one at a time, so that all may learn and all may become persuaded.³⁸⁷ **14:32** Indeed, the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets.³⁸⁸ **14:33** Besides, God is not a God of disorder but of shalom.³⁸⁹

As in all the gatherings of those who have been set apart,³⁹⁰ **14:34** let the wives be silent in the assemblies, because it is not permitted for them to speak. Instead, let them be in subjection, just as the instruction says.³⁹¹ **14:35** But since they desire to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home, because it is disgraceful for a wife to be talking in the midst of the assembly.³⁹²

14:36 Has the message of God come forth from you, or has it come to you alone?³⁹³ **14:37** If someone thinks himself to be a prophet or to be spiritual, let him understand that the things I am writing to you are a commandment of the Lord.³⁹⁴ **14:38** Yet, if someone does not acknowledge this, he is not acknowledged.³⁹⁵ **14:39** Therefore, my brothers, pursue uttering prophetic sayings, and do not forbid people to speak in foreign languages.³⁹⁶ **14:40** Indeed, let all things happen in the right way and in order.³⁹⁷

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 you also stand,³⁹⁸ **15:2** through which you also are being saved, if you hold firmly to that message which I proclaimed to you, unless you believed in vain.³⁹⁹ **15:3** I delivered to you of first importance what I in turn had received, that the Messiah died for our sins (ὕπερ τῶν αμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν) according to the scriptures,⁴⁰⁰ **15:4** that he was buried, and that he was raised from the dead on the third day according to the scriptures,⁴⁰¹ **15:5** and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve.⁴⁰² **15:6** Then he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at one time, of whom many are still alive, but some have died.⁴⁰³ **15:7** Then he appeared to Jacob, then to all the apostles,⁴⁰⁴ **15:8** and last of all, as though to an abortion, he appeared even to me.⁴⁰⁵ **15:9** For I am the last of the apostles, who is not worthy to call himself an apostle, because I persecuted the gathering of God.⁴⁰⁶ **15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace towards me has not been worthless. Instead, I have toiled more than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God with me.⁴⁰⁷ **15:11** Therefore, whether I or those others, thus we proclaim, and thus you believed.⁴⁰⁸

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?⁴⁰⁹ **15:13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even the Messiah was raised from the dead.⁴¹⁰ **15:14** And if the Messiah was not raised from the dead, then our proclaiming it is vacuous, and your belief is vacuous.⁴¹¹ **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.⁴¹² **15:16** If the dead are not raised, not even the Messiah has been raised.⁴¹³ **15:17** And if the Messiah has not been raised, your belief is useless. You are still in your sins (ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν).⁴¹⁴ **15:18** Therefore, indeed, those who have fallen asleep in the Messiah are lost forever.⁴¹⁵ **15:19** If we have hoped in the Messiah in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.⁴¹⁶

15:20 However, the Messiah was raised from the dead—the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.⁴¹⁷ **15:21** After death resulted from one man’s actions, indeed, resurrection from the dead resulted from one man’s actions.⁴¹⁸ **15:22** For just as all men die in the footsteps of Adam, thus also all men will be made alive in the footsteps of the Messiah,⁴¹⁹ **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.⁴²⁰

15:24 Then comes the end when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when He abolishes every rule, and every authority and power.⁴²¹ **15:25** For He must reign until He places all of his enemies under his feet.⁴²²

15:26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death,⁴²³

15:27 for he has put all things in subjection under his feet <Psalm 8:6>.⁴²⁴

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.⁴²⁵ **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 in all.⁴²⁶

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?⁴²⁷ **15:30** Why then are we in danger every hour?⁴²⁸ **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.⁴²⁹ **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.”⁴³⁰ **15:33** Don’t be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”⁴³¹ **15:34** Sober up for uprightness’ sake, and do not commit immorality.⁴³²

Some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame,⁴³³ **15:35** because someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they appear?”⁴³⁴ **15:36** Fool, that which you sow does not bring about life unless it dies.⁴³⁵ **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.⁴³⁶ **15:38** And God gives to it a “body” just as He desired, i.e., to each of the seeds its own “body.”⁴³⁷

15:39 Not all organic material with blood flow is the same organic material, but there is one organic material of men, another of animals, another of birds, and another of fish.⁴³⁸ **15:40** There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. Nevertheless, on the one hand, the greatness of the heavenly bodies is one level of greatness, and, on the other hand, the greatness of the earthly bodies is another level of greatness.⁴³⁹ **15:41** The brightness of the sun is one level of brightness, the brightness of the moon is another level of brightness, and the brightness of stars is even a third level of brightness, even while one star differs from another star in brightness.⁴⁴⁰

15:42 Thus, also, is the resurrection of the dead. Their bodies are sown in a state of decaying. Their bodies are raised in a state of not decaying.⁴⁴¹ **15:43** Their bodies are sown in a state of lack of acclaim. Their bodies are raised in a state of acclaim. Their bodies are sown in a state of weakness. Their bodies are raised in a state of power.⁴⁴² **15:44** A physical body is sown. A spiritual body is raised. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.⁴⁴³

15:45 Thus, it is also written,

The first man, Adam, became a living being <Genesis 2:7>. ⁴⁴⁴

The last Adam became a life-producing spirit. ⁴⁴⁵

15:46 Nevertheless, the spiritual is not first, but the physical. Then comes the spiritual. ⁴⁴⁶

15:47 The first man was out of the earth for the earth. The second man was out of heaven for heaven. ⁴⁴⁷ **15:48** As was he who was earthy, so also are those who are earthy. And as is he who is heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁴⁸ **15:49** And just as we have born the image of him who was earthy, we also will bear the image of him who is heavenly. ⁴⁴⁹

15:50 This I say, brothers, that flesh and blood are not able to inherit the Kingdom of God, and that which can be destroyed does not inherit immortality. ⁴⁵⁰ **15:51** Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all be put to sleep, but we shall all be changed ⁴⁵¹ **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 immortal, and we shall be changed. ⁴⁵² **15:53** This is because it is necessary for this destructibility to put on indestructibility and this mortality to put on immortality. ⁴⁵³

15:54 When this destructibility has put on indestructibility and this mortality has put on immortality, then will come about the statement that has been written,

Death was swallowed up in victory <Isaiah 25:8>. ⁴⁵⁴

15:55 Death, where is your victory? Death where is your goad <Hosea 13:14>? ⁴⁵⁵

15:56 The goad of death is moral depravity (ἡ ἀμαρτία), and the power of moral depravity is the Torah (ὁ νόμος). ⁴⁵⁶ **15:57** But thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus the Messiah. ⁴⁵⁷

15:58 Therefore, my brothers whom I love, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. ⁴⁵⁸ **16:1** And concerning the contributions to the saints, you should do just what I commanded the gatherings in Galatia. ⁴⁵⁹ **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. ⁴⁶⁰ **16:3** And when I appear, I will send whomever you approve with letters to carry your gracious gift to Jerusalem. ⁴⁶¹ **16:4** And if it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. ⁴⁶²

16:5 And I will come to you whenever I pass through Macedonia, because I am passing through Macedonia. ⁴⁶³ **16:6** And if it turns out this way, I will remain with you or even spend the winter with you, so that you may send me on wherever I go. ⁴⁶⁴ **16:7** I do not want to see you now just in passing, because I expect to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits. ⁴⁶⁵ **16:8** But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁴⁶⁶ **16:9** because a large and active door has opened for me, and there are many who are opposing me. ⁴⁶⁷

16:10 If Timothy comes, be careful, so that he has no reason to be fearful among you, because he is doing the work of the Lord as I also am. ⁴⁶⁸ **16:11** Therefore, let no one

disdain him, but send him on his way with shalom, so that he may come to me, because I am waiting with the brothers for him.⁴⁶⁹

16:12 Concerning our brother Apollos, I have greatly encouraged him, so that he may go to you along with the brethren. However, he was not willing to come now. Instead, he will come as soon as he finds the opportunity.⁴⁷⁰

16:13 Remain alert. Stand firm in your belief. Be brave. Be strong.⁴⁷¹ **16:14** Let all of you be in a state of love.⁴⁷²

16:15 I exhort you, brothers, this way. You know Stephen's household, that they were the firstfruits in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to serving those who have been set apart.⁴⁷³ **16:16** You should subject yourselves to such as these and to everyone who works and labors with them.⁴⁷⁴ **16:17** I rejoice in the appearing of Stephen, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, that they may supply your every need,⁴⁷⁵ **16:18** because they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore give recognition to such as these.⁴⁷⁶

16:19 The gatherings of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you warmly along with the gathering in their home.⁴⁷⁷ **16:20** All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

16:21 This greeting is with my own hand, Paul's.⁴⁷⁸ **16:22** If someone does not love the Lord, let him be damned. Our Lord, Come.⁴⁷⁹ **16:23** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.⁴⁸⁰ **16:24** My love be with all of you in the Messiah Jesus.⁴⁸¹

¹ Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφὸς – 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 Corinthian 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 οὐσῃ 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 group that belongs to 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 ἡγιασμένοι 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.

⁴ κλητοὶς 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 God in the midst of their continued moral depravity. 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 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. 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 says that God has given His grace, i.e., a gift, to the Corinthian Christians, and he 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 the biblical message with quite a complete understanding of God's project. 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.

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 wait for 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.

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 and 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 insure 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.

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 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 (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), and 3) judicial disputes among one another and even going to unbelieving, pagan judges in the Roman court system for a ruling on their disputes, instead of loving and forgiving one another even if they never actually settle the dispute. 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, i.e., Paul, Apollos, Cephas (Peter), and Jesus (cf. v. 12)—while also claiming to be Christians. Cf. 1 Corinthians 2 & 3. 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.” 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 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 ones 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 νοῖ 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.

¹⁶ ἐδηλώθη γὰρ 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 (כֶּפֶן) 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 (cf. Galatians) 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. 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 morally depraved man, and someone other than himself? Not in an eternity!

²⁰ ἵνα μὴ τις εἶπη 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 Στεφανάου οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἶ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα – Paul thinks again and realizes that he did baptize some others besides Krispos and Gaios. 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 students of his (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 learning about Jesus, not Paul.

²² οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν 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, 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 morally depraved human being who prides himself in his performance (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 morally depraved 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 earthly leaders as that which validated their faith in Jesus. Man’s tendency is to try to find a way to make an unattractive message attractive to the world. This is what Paul calls “wisdom.” But adding to 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 moral depravity, 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 ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω – Isaiah 29:14, וְיִבְנֶתָ נְבוּיֹוֹ תִסְתַּהַר, וְיִכְזְבוּ יִיִּי כְחָכְמָהּ כְּחָכְמַתְּ הַבְּבַיִתִּי (LXX – καὶ ἀπολῶ 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 moral depravity, 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 – In vs. 20-31 Paul 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 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. In this way, Paul is comparing these three categories of teachers to the current tendency in the Corinthian church to grant divide themselves into groups based upon their preferred apostolic-like teacher.

Paul is also asking for anyone of these 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 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. In each case, these people would not include the Jewish crucified Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, 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), 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 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 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.

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 unpaid authorized spokesmen, the apostles.

²⁷ ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν θεόν – Man never figures out God on his own, because he is in rebellion against God. In the midst of all the philosophers and Bible scholars who have 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.

²⁸ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας – Paul is saying that God has used the apparent preposterous 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

morally depraved 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 morally depraved human beings. In fact, it will require God's own power 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 rightly looking for biblical signs to indicate that the Messiah has appeared while Greeks are rightly looking for a good, rational explanation that allows them to think that they completely understand reality, but in both cases they reject Jesus because of the hardness of their hearts. 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 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, but by trying to find it from popes, seminary professors, councils, creeds, and tradition, rather than relying on the apostolic documents 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 of the Jews is an erroneous OT perspective, while the second is an erroneous pagan/philosophical perspective. 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. 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 believed 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 who legitimately hear the call of God and believe His "foolish" message and who do so because of God's miraculous inward work of changing their hearts. They 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.

³³ Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν – 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 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 morally depraved 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 depraved human beings 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 morally depraved 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 evil. In other words, man's evil appears more powerful than God's goodness.

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. God has changed the hearts of people in Corinth who were not considered the most intellectual, the most powerful politically, or members of the social elite. His "followers" were the least desirable of society from a worldly perspective. Therefore, they probably had 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 does not help them be cool. 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 teachers as their leaders instead of promoting the message by itself.

³⁶ ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνη τοὺς σοφοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνη τὰ ἰσχυρά, καὶ τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ – A standard principle? Should we look at church history and figure that many of the powerful and successful Christians within the church were usurpers? This makes sense in the light of how Paul presents these ideas, so that the ultimate in base persons rejected by the world is Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter from an obscure city in Galilee and, when we arrive in the eternal Kingdom of God, we will find that most of the people were the obscure, powerless, and the less than intellectually stellar in 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!

³⁷ ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ – Is Paul here 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 all humanity how foolish we are to place so much emphasis on what we consider to be important in the present realm in contrast to what God considers important? If so, how do we account for 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?

The general principle that Paul is teaching here is that the underdogs of society will gain eternal life according to God’s plan, while those on top in the culture and society through their power, wealth, and intellectual respectability will mist out. God is the ultimate in being cool, 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.

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 choosing 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 ἀγιασμός 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 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 being 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 free us from sin and its consequence of eternal death (“redemption,” a Roman Empire word regardind the prevailing practice of slavery).

⁴⁰ ἵνα καθὼς γέγραπται ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω – cf. Jeremiah 9:24, But let him who brags brag of this, that he understands and knows Me... (כִּי אִם-בְּאֵתְּהָא לְהַתְּהַלֵּל בְּשֵׁבֶל יְהוָה אֲנִי מֵעַתָּה) (LXX – ἀλλ’ ἢ ἐν τούτῳ καυχάσθω ὁ καυχώμενος, συνείναι καὶ γινώσκειν ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος). Not a direct quote of any OT passage, but a paraphrase of ideas expressed in Jeremiah 9:23,24; Judges 7:2; 1 Sam 2:3,10 (LXX). In Jeremiah 9, God indicts the southern kingdom of Judah for abandoning His Torah (אֲתֵתְהַרְהֵי אֲשֶׁר נִתְּתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, διὰ τὸ ἐγκαταλιπεῖν αὐτοὺς τὸν νόμον μου, ὃν ἔδωκα πρὸ προσώπου αὐτῶν – Jeremiah 9:13) and declares to them that He is going to bring devastation on them by poisoning them and also scatter them among the Gentiles (וְהִפְצַלְתִּים בְּגוֹיִם, καὶ διασκορπιῶ αὐτοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν – Jeremiah 9:15,16). At the end of Jeremiah 9, God exhorts the wise, powerful, and rich men to boast only in Him, that He is the God who does *hesed*, *mishpat*, and *tzedekah* on the land of Israel (יְהוָה עֲשָׂה בְּעַמּוֹתָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ποιῶν ἔλεος καὶ κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) (cf. Jeremiah 9:23,24).

Thus, Paul is saying that all that is necessary to be wise is to have a firm grasp on one’s moral depravity, inability to please God, and dire need for Jesus’ advocacy at the final judgment in order to acquire God’s eternal mercy. In the final analysis, no individual existing human being who is created by God has anything to brag about except his Creator and knowing/believing his Creator as Judge and Savior in the midst of his moral depravity. By having and embracing the correct knowledge of Jesus as the crucified Messiah, a person becomes one of the smartest morons in the world, an absolute genius and brilliant moron, regardless of his IQ.

⁴¹ κἀγὼ ἔλθων πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ’ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ – In 2:1-8 Paul is saying that his purpose was not to proclaim that is obvious to the world and which they easily can accept, but instead to proclaim the “mystery” of God, that He has sent His Messiah to die, rise from the dead,

ascend off the earth, and become sinners' savior and king.

The Greeks had a history of people going back to the early Greek philosophers who had all applied their minds to reasoning through the available data within them and around them in Greece to come up with an explanation of reality. And there were those in Paul's day, the sophists, who claimed to have taken the best of all the Greek thinkers and developed a curriculum for young people that, for a price, would make them wise. Paul is saying that his presentation of information to the Corinthians around A.D. 52 did not have this as its basis. He never intended to impress them with his wisdom but instead to present the simply messaged that he labels as the "mystery of God," that which God had spoken of through the Old Testament authors but was not fully revealed until the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth in the world as the final Jewish Messiah, priest, and Davidic King, especially the fact that the Jews' final king would be required to die on a cross in order to qualify for his eternal role of ruling over, interceding for, and teaching his followers (from both the Jews and the Gentiles! Cf. Ephesians). It was the fact of a crucified Messiah that good, Jewish Bible students never really figured out from the OT.

In addition, while it is possible for any human being to examine the available data inside and outside himself and come to the correct conclusion that not only is there a God, but that he is eternally accountable to this God while also being inclined to rebel against him (cf. Romans 1:18ff.), the only way that someone can learn about the "crucified Messiah" is to have this idea presented to him. Otherwise, it is not inherently obvious not only that has God created this Messiah within human history, but also that this is the central idea that God has communicated. Thus, with his message, it was impossible for Paul to match the rational reasoning from the immediate data in Greece of the local wise men, i.e., sophists and philosophers. Instead, he had to rely on a direct revealing from God through the Messiah of the information regarding this "crucified Messiah" (cf. Acts 9).

Somehow the Corinthian Christians have become rather dismissive towards Paul. They prefer Apollos or Peter, but probably not for good reasons. Perhaps these other men are better and more impressive speakers than Paul. Paul's defense is that the important thing is the message of a crucified Messiah, regardless of how foolish it may sound to people and how it appears to lack the wisdom the Greek philosophers (or OT scholars who are focused on the Mosaic Covenant).

⁴² οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὅμιν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον – Paul's message was quite simple and biblical. He did not reason through all the data in Greece to come to his conclusions, and the center of his message was the very short but profound phrase "Jesus the Messiah and him crucified," or a "crucified Messiah" (1:23). All Paul knew that was important about the nature of reality was that the man Jesus of Nazareth is the Davidic King who qualified, by his being executed by his own people and the Romans as a criminal, to act the role of Priest and advocate at God's judgment of evil human beings who stand condemned before God and are utterly incapable of pleasing Him. By implication, the sophists of Paul's day could never arrive at this conclusion.

Nevertheless, the simplicity of Paul's message does not mean that it lacks complexity and profundity, because by the time someone has examined the entire OT and heard all that Jesus through the apostles has to say about himself, there is so much more information and understanding than any of the Greek philosophers or OT scholars could imagine needing to comprehend for an accurate understanding of God and reality. 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 κάγω ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς – Astonishing that the apostle Paul was fearful in his presentation of the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah. But it was intimidating even for him to be in a place where 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.

He knew the possible consequences, being mistreated and rejected like Jesus. Indeed, he had 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 λόγους ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως – Paul did not have in mind to try to persuade the Corinthians with his finely developed reasoning and logical argumentation from the data of his day that could be gathered apart from the Hebrew scriptures. In other words, he had no intention of matching wits with the wisest Greeks 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, that of healing people and probably mostly 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, etc.). These miracles, as in the case of Jesus, 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.

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 convincing them to believe it, in spite of the fact that their natural response to it would be completely negative by rejecting the message.

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 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, because these, by definition, are of the former category where people are more concerned about the appearance of brilliance and wisdom than they are of the truth. And he wants them to keep the apostolic message pure and uncontaminated by the world, so that they live out its implications correctly and believe it because 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.

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 ἀργέω, 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 παρα 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*. 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. Nevertheless, God will show even his earthly government to be far superior to any others that have ever existed in this temporary realm.

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 to recognize the wisdom of the gospel and to embrace it as the most profound information ever available to mankind.

Also, Paul switches 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 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.

⁴⁷ ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην, ἣν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰῶνων 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 OT taught that the Messiah would have to die. Therefore, God 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. 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 with the Jewish religion and 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 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 ἃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὖς οὐκ ἤκουσεν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, ἠτοίμασεν 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.

Not a direct quote from the LXX. Therefore, an interpretation of Isaiah 52:15; 64:4; 65:17 and all the rest of 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, 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 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.

⁵⁰ ἡμῖν δὲ ἀπεκάλυψεν 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 had 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. 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.

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 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, is intelligently and correctly aware of His thoughts, plans, and actions, so that He communicates exactly who He is, making Him, His character, and His plans known to the apostles as God’s authoritative spokesmen. Thus, 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 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 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.

⁵⁵ ἃ καὶ λαλοῦμεν οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ’ ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος, πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες – 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 that the apostles understood to comprise the gospel.

⁵⁶ ψυχικός δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ μωρία 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 grasped by morally depraved 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 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.

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, LXX – 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.

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 he and the other apostles, along with Sosthenes and Timothy (cf. 4:16 and Acts 18:5) as his close traveling apostolic 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.

Again, Paul is implying that the Corinthians’ competitive and divisive efforts are a kind of 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 λαλήσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ’ ὡς σαρκίνοις, ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ – cf. Hebrews 6. This past tense verb “was” 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. He did so with the thought in mind that he was speaking to abject rebels against God. And

apparently they remained quite immature and unable to grasp the gospel well during his entire 18 month stay. Now, he has noticed that these new believers still do not have the ability to connect certain dots of the NT message to the extent that they are behaving like non-Christians and abject rebels against God. Thus, an immature “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. This is because the Spirit of God has not made him open 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. Paul does not know which. Who would, but God Himself?

⁶¹ γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρωμα· 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 beyond that point. Thus, the long letter!

Paul is not talking about such things as typology, etc. as the meat of the gospel. These people are not able to grasp the full implications of the gospel, for example, whether or not Gentiles can be genuine followers of Jesus without taking on all the requirements of the Mosaic Covenant? The answer is, yes, but these Corinthian Christians are having trouble grasping this. Cf. 2 Corinthians where this same issue comes up. They cannot understand the subtleties of God with respect to the cross of the Messiah.

⁶² ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε. ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζήλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε – The competitive atmosphere among the Corinthians was the tipoff to their behaving like non-Christians. Human beings like to show off by stating who are their leaders, and the bigger, better, stronger, more popular the leader is, the better they feel about themselves. In addition, the more status they believe that they have—rather than finding their sense of well-being in God alone. Thus, Paul still sees way too much rebellion against 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 ἐστε – cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. 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 within the overall Christian community, are you not acting like unbelievers?”

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).

⁶⁴ Τί οὖν ἐστὶν Ἀπολλῶς; τί δὲ ἐστὶν Παύλος; Ἦ διάκονοι δι’ ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε, καὶ ἐκάστω ὡς ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν – In this section of vs. 5-23, Paul is saying that it is all about God, not about his servants such as Apollos and him. Boasting in man is meaningless and rebellious towards God, while boasting about God 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 ἠύξανεν – 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 is nothing in comparison to being inwardly changed by God. I added the words in italics “*is everything*” 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.

⁶⁷ ὁ φυτεύων δὲ καὶ ὁ ποτίζων ἓν εἰσιν – Both Paul and Apollos have the same goal, to present the truth of Jesus as the Messiah to people so that they become authentic believers. In other words, Paul does not deny that he and Apollos 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 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 ἐσμεν συνεργοί, θεοῦ γεώργιον, θεοῦ οἰκοδομή ἐστε – Here the metaphor relates the building to the people. 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, by virtue of the message, the tool, that they proclaim for people’s intellectual benefit and to which they respond with belief.

⁷⁰ κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεισάν 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 instruction by Jesus over a period of time of fourteen years, which resulted in Paul’s exceptional understanding of the biblical message (cf. Galatians 2:1). All of this is God’s “grace” to Paul in this context.

⁷¹ ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα – Here Paul uses the building metaphor to refer to people who authentically believe the apostolic message and only the apostolic message, i.e., the foundation of the building. 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). Yet, he can call 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 Paul restudied the OT in order to learn it correctly.

⁷² ἄλλος δὲ ἐποικοδομεῖ – As an apostolic 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.

Here we see 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 βλέπῃ 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 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 παρὰ τὸν κείμενον. ὃς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός – 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, 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 δὲ 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. 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 the Christian community, 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 and the Mosaic Covenant for the Gentiles), which is a kind of worldly wisdom (as Paul talked about in chapter 1).

⁷⁶ ἢ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει...καὶ ἕκαστος τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ αὐτὸ δοκιμάσει – Paul uses “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). 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 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 or miracles), 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.

⁷⁷ εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον μὲν εἰ δὲ 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 demonstrate 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 conveyer 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. This kind of teacher was immature in his understanding the implications of the gospel, yet he had a heart to be saved himself.

⁷⁹ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν – The Corinthian Christians as a group are themselves 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 them.

⁸⁰ εἴ τις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει, φθερεῖ τοῦτον ὁ θεός ὁ γὰρ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιός ἐστιν, οἳτινές ἐστε ὑμεῖς – If someone intentionally corrupts a group of Christians by 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, thinking that it defines a person as a true disciple of Jesus as the Messiah, ought to be 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 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.

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 condemnation, not His salvation.

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. 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.

⁸² ἡ γὰρ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου τούτου μωρία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ἐστίν. γέγραπται γὰρ ὁ δρασσόμενος τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτῶν – cf. Job 5:13 – ὁ καταλαμβάνων (ܩܪܝܢܐ – 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 moral depravity, our tendency is to look both in the world and in ourselves without taking into account the transcendent Creator and human beings’ moral depravity, thus concluding in our opinion that what “works,” i.e., what produces or will produce “success” 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 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 (נַפְתָּח – 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 or even doctrinal statement that points people to something other than the Bible for an explicit statement of that which they believe) 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 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 ἐνεστώτα 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 connection to a crucified and executed king, Jesus the Messiah, who himself is connected to all things within the creation, because he is the ruler of it. This connection for the Messiah, in turn, connects his followers to everything, 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.

⁸⁷ Οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιέσθω ἀνθρώπος ὡς ὑπηρέτας 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, who become genuine believers in Jesus as the Messiah and advocate for God’s mercy and eternal forgiveness. God had consistently been revealing in the OT His plan 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 24:18ff. 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. ὑπηρεταί – cf. Luke 1:2.

⁸⁸ ὁδε λοιπὸν ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις, ἵνα πιστός τις εὐρεθῇ – 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. 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 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 ἐμαυτὸν 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 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, and sinful human being.

Paul uses the word ἡμέρα in 3:13 to refer to God’s final judgment. Here, with the adjective ἀνθρώπινος, 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.

⁹⁰ ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ δεδικαίωμαι, 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 morally depraved and yet that He has changed. 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. He 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, even the popular pastors and their churches.

⁹¹ ὥστε μὴ πρὸ καιροῦ τι κρίνετε – There will be a season 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 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 ἕως ἄν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος, ὃς καὶ φωτίσει τὰ κρυπτά τοῦ σκοτοῦς 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, i.e., as to whether or not it is biblically authentic. These are the things “hidden in the darkness” 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.

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 moral depravity, 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 teachers who are accused by others of having impure motives, because yes, everyone has impure motives, and teachers of the Bible simply need to keep doing what they are doing in spite of their mixed motives, while also repenting of any pride, arrogance, and selfishness of which they are aware. 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 μάθητε τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ αὐτὰ γέγραπται, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐνὸς φυσιοῦσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἐτέρου – “what has been written” = 1) The Old Testament, 2) NT-like documents by other biblical authors that the Corinthians possess, or 3) Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, and maybe just this letter and what he has said so far. #3 makes the most sense.

Thus, Paul is looking back on his argument and basically saying that the biblical message, and what Paul has said in this letter so far, has stated 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 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 actually resistant to him and his message. Indeed, as Paul goes on to say in the next verse, they consider themselves superior to him.

⁹⁵ τίς γάρ σε διακρίνει; τί δὲ ἔχεις ὃ οὐκ ἔλαβες; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔλαβες, τί καυχᾶσαι ὡς μὴ λαβών – 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 the 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 κεκορησμένοι 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 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 the better 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.

⁹⁷ καὶ ὄφελόν γε ἐβασιλεύσατε, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν συμβασιλεύσωμεν – 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 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 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 persecution and even perhaps execution in the present realm as a result of other people’s moral depravity 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 to all thinking beings within the created reality, men and angels, of God’s intentions and purposes for those who embrace the truth in the present realm. The most important people, Jesus and the apostles, are also the most dispensable and mistreated. Should not the Corinthians consider themselves likewise instead of viewing themselves as superior the way they are now?

⁹⁹ ἡμεῖς μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰσχυροί· ὑμεῖς ἔνδοξοι, 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 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 glorious 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 again being ironic. The Corinthians think that they are wise, strong, and glorious, when they should consider themselves as following in the footsteps of the apostles and being “fools for the sake of Christ,” slated for mistreatment by the world like the apostles.

¹⁰⁰ ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ πεινώμεν καὶ διψῶμεν 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 experiences that they have had because of the apostolic responsibility that God has given to him.

¹⁰¹ καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν· λοιδορούμενοι εὐλογοῦμεν, διωκόμενοι ἀνεχόμεθα, δυσφημούμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν ὡς περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν, πάντων περίφημα ἕως ἄρτι – Continuing with the list of experiences that he and his apostolic workers 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 διψῶμεν 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 in the present realm Paul and the other apostolic 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 workers are the scum of the earth, the dregs of society.

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 and then be willing to follow their example and become rejected by the world as they are. And 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.

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, 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). He 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 children.

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 he 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 he and Jesus have been.

¹⁰⁶ Διὰ τοῦτο ἔπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον, ὃς ἐστίν 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 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.

¹⁰⁷ ὡς μὴ ἐρχομένου δέ μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐφουσώθησάν 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. They think that they will probably never see Paul again.

¹⁰⁸ ἐλεύσομαι δὲ ταχέως πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ, καὶ γνώσομαι οὐ τὸν λόγον τῶν πεφουσιωμένων ἀλλὰ τὴν δύναμιν – 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 quickly 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, then they are clearly mistaken with respect to the biblical message. This is what he will be looking for. 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 kind of miracles.

¹⁰⁹ οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει – See previous footnote.

¹¹⁰ τί θέλετε; ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνευματί τε πραύτητος – 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 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.

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.

¹¹² Ὅπως ἀκούεται ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία, καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν τ', ὥστε γυναῖκά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν – So Paul now moves on to a second problematic issue that he has heard about 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 his new "wife" (or just sharing is father's wife) believe 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.

¹¹³ καὶ ὑμεῖς πεφουσιωμένοι ἐστέ καὶ οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐπενθήσατε, ἵνα ἀρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας – Cf. Gen. 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 ἀλλοτρίους τοὺς μεθ' ὑμῶν ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν)." Cf. notes at v. 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 outward 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 avoid 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.

¹¹⁴ ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, τ ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἥδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον – Assuming that Paul’s information is correct, he has concluded that the man’s 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. 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 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.

¹¹⁶ παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῆ 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 moral depravity 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 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). 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 Ὅυ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν. οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ἔζυμοί – 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.

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 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 ἦτε 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 immorality within their 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 τ ἐτύθη 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 physical death that God caused throughout the whole land of Egypt. It is this that should motivate the Corinthian Christians and Paul to pursue morality at the highest biblical level.

¹²⁰ ὥστε ἐορτάζωμεν μὴ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ μηδὲ ἐν ζύμῃ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας ἀλλ' ἐν ἀζύμοις εὐλικριθείας 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 leaven of evil in their behavior. It is following only Jesus' teachings and putting only him on a pedestal that will result in the pursuit of repentance, morality, and identifying and dealing with any kind of immorality 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, Paul had encouraged the Corinthian Christians not to be like-minded 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 εἰδωλολάτραις, ἐπεὶ ὀφείλετε ἄρα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελεῖν – Paul emphasizes the importance of not imitating the lifestyles of immoral people in the present real by listing particular ways that people willfully engage in rebellion against God. Then, Paul reminds the Corinthians that they were obligated to abandon the immorality in their own lives that stemmed from their culture 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 not boundaries to their getting what they want. Cf. 1 Corinthians 5:10,11; 6:10 and Ephesians 5:5.

¹²³ νῦν δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι εἰάν 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 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 immoral 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 ἐντραπή).

¹²⁴ ἢ πόρνος ἢ πλεονέκτης ἢ εἰδωλολάτρης ἢ λοιδορὸς ἢ μέθυσος ἢ ἄρπαξ, τῷ τοιοῦτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν – Paul again lists various examples of immorality in the Corinthian culture.

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 with respect to people's worldview, Paul could be saying 1) that it is a good idea to avoid this cultural symbol with the person who is willfully pursuing obvious, outward immorality. In chapter 11, Paul will go on to describe his accommodating their need for this symbol by giving them the ceremony of the "Lord's Supper" in imitation of what Jesus did with his apostles at Passover the night before his crucifixion. Thus, it would make sense that Paul is encouraging the Corinthian Christians not to symbolize their unity with this man by eating this specific meal with him. Cf. Luke 15:2; Acts 10:41; 11:3; Gal. 2:12.

Or Paul could be saying 2) that they should not "partake" of their Passover Lamb, Jesus, with this man, i.e., they should not believe the same ideas that he does while also claiming to follow Jesus, by condoning his behavior as if it were in line with the New Testament and apostolic message. Their Christian celebration of the feast of Passover is by believing correctly and only the apostolic message without distorting it. In this way, they eat the message. Paul is exhorting them not to eat the message of this man who is committing immorality by condoning his immorality. They should believe on the genuine ideas presented by Paul and the other apostles.

EBC – "In sharing in a common meal Christians show their union with one another. This 'eating' is not to be understood as the Lord's Supper, and probably indicates any meal, including the Christian agape (love) feast. The application then and now is that Christians are not to have this kind of association, for if a believer does so, he may raise a question concerning the validity of his own Christian profession."

¹²⁵ τί γάρ μοι τὸ τοῦς ἔξω κρίνειν; οὐχὶ τοῦς ἔσω ὑμεῖς κρίνετε; – Paul asks if even his role as an apostle permits him to judge unbelievers outside the community of Christians. The answer is, no. This is God's responsibility. Nevertheless, it is the believers' responsibility to discern good and evil within their own Christian community and to deal with it accordingly—as with this situation involving the man who is committing sexual immorality with his stepmother.

¹²⁶ τοῦς δὲ ἔξω ὁ θεὸς κρίνει – Paul states that it is God's responsibility to deal with the immorality of people outside the community of believers, i.e., with the immorality of people who are not Christians.

¹²⁷ ἐξαρείτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν – Paul paraphrases Deut. 13:5 "But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against Yahweh your God who brought you from the land of

Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which Yahweh your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you (LXX – v. 6) – και ἀφανιεύεις τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν (הַפְּנִימָה אֶת הַרְעָה מִבְּתוֹכְכֶם).” This verse, pertaining to false spokesmen for God who were leading the Israelites away from worshiping Yahweh and towards worshiping false gods (Deut. 13:1-5), exhorts the Israelites to put them to death in order to extract the evil *physically* from the midst of the people of Israel. Cf. Deut. 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21; 22:24; 24:7.

Likewise, God will prevent evil from even entering into the eternal Kingdom of God, and Paul, similarly, would have the Corinthians extract evil behavior from their community, not by excommunicating the man physically from the Corinthian Christian community, but by not allowing their arrogance and competitive spirit to cloud their judgment in regard to his sexual immorality so that, instead, they view all immorally inclined people to be in league with God’s adversary, the devil, and with unbelievers. Thus, they say as much and act in such a way for the sake of publicly declaring their allegiance of to the truth and God’s moral values in contrast to the world’s immoral values.

¹²⁸ τοῖμα τις ὑμῶν πράγμα ἔχων πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον κρίνεσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων καὶ οὐχὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγίων – This chapter describes the third issue which Paul addresses as a result of his conversation with Chloe’s people. The Corinthian Christians are not only having judicial disputes with one another instead of loving and forgiving one another, but they are taking their disputes to court within the Roman judicial system and before pagan, unbelieving judges who do not share their moral values and understanding of reality. In addition, the court system of that day depending on bribes from the wealthy so that people could easily play the system and buy “justice” for themselves. However, this may not have been available so much to the Corinthian Christians because of their being of the lower, poorer class of citizens of Corinth (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26ff.).

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 to settle. It must be that their pridefulness 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, he 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.

¹²⁹ ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἅγιοι 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.).

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 have the divinely given insight to understand where the world is being obedient to God and where it is not—morally speaking. Then why not 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 trivial, meaning trivial in comparison to the final judgment that will determine their eternal destiny.

¹³¹ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἀγγέλους κρινόμεν, μήτι γε βιωτικά – 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.

Or if the tense is future, then Paul is talking about the content of the complaints and disputes. They constitute a kind of messenger similar to the Genesis passages quoted in 1 Corinthians 11.

¹³² βιωτικά μὲν οὖν κριτήρια εἰάν ἔχητε, τοὺς ἐξουθενημένους 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 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.

¹³³ πρὸς ἐντροπήν 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.

¹³⁴ οὕτως οὐκ ἐνὶ ἑνὶ ὑμῖν οὐδεὶς σοφός, ὃς δυνήσεται διακρίναι ἀνά 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.

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

¹³⁶ ἤδη μὲν οὖν ὅλως ἤττημα ὑμῖν ἐστὶν ὅτι κρίματα ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν – Paul's conclusion in this whole matter is that, 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. Or he could be simply saying that allowing disagreements between themselves to escalate into full-blown disputes 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 μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθε διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον 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 ask unbelievers to determine who is right and who is wrong, and to decide what to do to settle the situation, or that they even allow their conflicts to escalate to the point where they even need someone wise to settle the conflict for them. Therefore, overall, it is better to experience injustice in the present realm than seek justice by having non-believers mediate between believers (or even a believer mediate), 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 fraud, 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 could be referring to the fact 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 οἶδατε ὅτι ἀδικοὶ θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν – Here Paul draws on all three issues of chapters 1-6 and provides says that the Corinthians' dismissive attitude towards him, their cavalier attitude towards the sexual immorality of the man of chapter 5, and their rivalistic 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 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 that they will do all they can to avoid evil and wrongdoing in their lives is that people who mistreat others will not obtain life in the eternal Kingdom of God, whether they mistreat them by suing them before unbelieving judges, or they mistreat them by engaging in any one of the immoral 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.

¹⁴⁰ μὴ πλανᾶσθε· οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλόλατραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενικοῖται – Our natural tendency as morally depraved 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. 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 οὔτε κλέπται οὔτε 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.

¹⁴² καὶ ταῦτά τινες ἦτε· ἀλλὰ ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλὰ ἠγιάσθητε, 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 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 immoral 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 goes on to try to encourage 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 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 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 to avoid any of their pre-Christian behavior that Paul lists.

¹⁴³ πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπό 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.

The statement “all things are permissible” must be what the Corinthians are claiming 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.

¹⁴⁴ τὰ βρώματα τῆ κοιλίας 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. 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.

¹⁴⁵ τὸ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῆ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι – On the other hand, while eating food is not a moral issue, sexual intimacy is.

¹⁴⁶ ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ τὸν κύριον ἤγειρεν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξεγερεῖ διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ – Paul makes it clear that our physical bodies are indeed important, because God raised Jesus' physical body from the dead. 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). 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. 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 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 at the judgment.

¹⁴⁷ οὐκ οἴδατε 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 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 ἔσονται γάρ, φησίν, 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., a man and woman 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 catamites and pederasts 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 πνεύματι ἐστίν – By believing in Jesus as the Messiah, a 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 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.

¹⁵⁰ Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν. πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ὃ ἐὰν ποιήσῃ ἄνθρωπος ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὃ 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 he stole is also. If he murders someone, the person is outside his body. 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. Thus, sexual immorality for a married person involves breaking the unity of the marital relationship that should maintain a 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.

¹⁵¹ ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστιν οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐάντων – Another way to argue the importance of pursuing 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.

¹⁵² ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς – A third way to argue the importance of pursuing morality as Christians is to consider the “price” that Jesus paid to qualify to be our advocate at the judgment—his death on the cross. Thus, God 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, along with harsh conflicts, 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.

¹⁵⁴ περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε, καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι – 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 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 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 ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην). Thus in Paul's explanation that follows, γυναικὸς actually means “his wife.”

But 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.

¹⁵⁵ διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχεται καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχεται – 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 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.

¹⁵⁶ τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρὶ – In addition, marriage contains within its design a moral obligation for spouses to be involved sexually with one another. 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.

¹⁵⁷ ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ἡ γυνὴ – 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.

¹⁵⁸ μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, εἰ μὴτι ἂν ἐκ συμφώνου πρὸς καιρὸν, ἵνα σχολάσῃτε τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε, ἵνα μὴ πειράξῃ 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 moral depravity! It also points to the highly sex oriented culture of Corinth, that along with the lack of self-control by the Corinthian Christians who had been full-fledged devotees 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 of succumbing to sexual immorality. Seems obvious, but Paul still states it. In addition, Satan’s goal is to encourage Christians towards 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 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 – A second question is being asked here, What about marriage itself? Is it in line with biblical morality? This is also probably 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 ἐνεστῶσαν 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 ἐὰν μείνωσιν ὡς καὶ ἐγώ – Paul clarifies that his “wish” is for the unmarried and widows. In the light of the present distress (v. 26 – διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην), Paul encourages the single people to remain single.

¹⁶² εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεῦνται, γαμησάτωσαν, κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι – 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). 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.

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 or their Platonic thinking, 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 divorce from their husbands

just as husbands have felt it legitimate to do so in the male chauvinistic Corinthian culture. Thus, no one can use Christianity as an excuse to become single after having gotten married.

¹⁶⁴ ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῆ, 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, this has 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. 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.

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 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.

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

¹⁶⁷ ἡγίασται γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ ἡγίασται ἡ γυνὴ ἢ 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 ἁγία ἐστίν – 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 – **נִזְנֵז**, **מֵאִיִּו**) (cf. Leviticus 13:11, **נִזְנֵז**, **אַכָּאֲרָטוֹס**) by placing him in a situation that was not the way God ultimately intended for things to be. 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, χωριζέσθω· οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφὴ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις· ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν 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 divorce 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 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. He has not called us to make everything perfect in this life, even as Christians. Therefore, the Christian relies upon his 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, γυναῖκα, 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 ἐκάστω 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 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 him 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 περιτομή 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.

¹⁷⁴ ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἢ 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 δούλος ἐκλήθη, μὴ σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ’ εἰ ὁ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μάλλον χρῆσαι – Even though making changes is not necessary as a new Christian, neither is avoiding change when it is possible.

¹⁷⁶ ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δούλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν, ὁμοίως τὸ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δούλος 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 τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δούλοι 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.

¹⁷⁹ περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἠλεημένος 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 either in Corinth (natural persecution) or in the world (the time in which Jesus possibly is returning and which will be filled with the attack on Israel by the Man of Lawlessness) or in human existence in general, i.e., that it is hard, that leads to its making sense that people not get married, if they have been “gifted” with singlehood. The third option makes 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.

¹⁸¹ ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἡγάμησῃς, οὐχ ἡμαρτες, καὶ ἐὰν γήμη ἡ παρθένος, οὐχ ἡμαρτεν· θλίψιν δὲ τῇ σαρκὶ ἔξουσιν οἱ τοιοῦτοι, ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῶν φειδομαι – Marriage is difficult, no matter how godly people are, because two morally depraved sinners are going to share their sinfulness with each other. 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 δὲ 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. As a result, he is here 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 trying to get all we can out of this life. The Kingdom of God will be so incredibly fantastic that it will put all experiences in this life, no matter how enjoyable, to shame as to their being satisfying and fulfilling.

¹⁸³ ὅτι λοιπόν, ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες γυναικας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες ᾄδωσιν – 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.

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.

¹⁸⁶ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους 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 the present realm brings heartache, then why go there if it can be helped?

¹⁸⁷ τοῦτο δὲ πρὸς τὸ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν σύμφωρον λέγω, οὐχ ἵνα βρόχον ὑμῖν ἐπιβάλω ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ εὐσχημον 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 suffer for the gospel when those who are married have a loving obligation to their spouses to limit their suffering. 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.

¹⁸⁸ εἰ δέ τις ἀσχημονεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ νομίζει ἂν ἢ ὑπέρακμος καὶ οὕτως ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι, ὃ θέλει ποιεῖτω, οὐχ ἀμαρτάνει, ἡγαμείωσαν – If a young man really wants to get married, in spite of the present distress of this life's existence, then he should get married.

¹⁸⁹ ...τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον, καλῶς ποιήσει – If a young man decides to keep his fiancée by fulfilling his responsibility to her as a husband, then this is good.

So this is coming at the issue from a different angle of a young man's deciding in his own heart in a wise and responsible manner to marry his fiancée.

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.

¹⁹¹ ἂν δὲ κοιμηθῇ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἔλευθέρα ἐστὶν ᾧ θέλει γαμηθῆναι, μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ – Paul is answering another question. It is also better to marry an authentic believer, if one desires to keep his sources of possible suffering 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 μακαριωτέρα δὲ ἐστὶν ἂν οὕτως μείνη, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην· δοκῶ δὲ κάγω πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν – Again, Paul firmly believes that he understands God and His purposes pretty well so that remaining single in the light of 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.

¹⁹³ περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων – Paul now moves on to another question 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 worshiping 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 physically satisfied.

¹⁹⁴ οἶδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γινώσκον ἔχομεν ἢ γινώσκον 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, know 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).

However, Paul still identifies a danger in inherently morally depraved 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). 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 εἰ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὐπω ἔγνω καθὼς δεῖ γινῶναι – 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 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.

To be loved by God is for God to have knowledge of a person, both 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 loved and known 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, οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς – vs. 4-7 are about knowledge, while 8:8-10:33 is 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.

¹⁹⁸ καὶ γὰρ εἴπερ εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς, ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοὶ – 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.

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.

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. 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 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.

²⁰² τινὲς δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς 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 would do that is associated with these false gods, even 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.

Therefore, Paul can say that their understanding both is “weak” (ἀσθενής) and becomes “dirty” (μολύνεται) if they were to eat this food in the midst of worshiping only the one, true God, Yahweh. Thus, they think that they would be committing immorality by eating food that has been offered to these false gods, as though they are participating in idol worship which is forbidden by God.

²⁰³ βρώμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ οὔτε ἂν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα, οὔτε ἂν 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 God 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 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).

²⁰⁴ βλέπετε δὲ μὴ 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 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.

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) 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 strong theoretical understanding of God.

²⁰⁵ ἂν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὸν ἔχοντα γνῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οικοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν – Paul asks rhetorically regarding the weaker Christian that if he sees a stronger Christian eating food that the former think constitutes worshiping a pagan god, then he too may be led into into the sin of doing so because he lacks the conviction that it is not sin.

²⁰⁶ ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῆ 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 ultimate eternal ruin and destruction.

²⁰⁷ οὕτως δὲ ἀμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς 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. 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).

²⁰⁸ διόπερ εἰ βρώμα 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 immoral by Christians with a less mature understanding of the nature of reality—because God loves and knows him.

²⁰⁹ οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἔώρακα οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ – The first part of this verse goes with the previous discussion. Paul is simply declaring that he is not free to do whatever he knows is permissible because love may forbid and trump it.

The rest of this verse begins another section where Paul is presenting himself as a good example of someone who foregoes his right to do some, e.g., 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 right while not exercising this right in order to love people, specifically the Corinthian Christians.

Paul begins by asking the rhetorical questions, “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 anyway which he wants, as long, of course, as he is not committing sin or immorality. As he will go on to argue, 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 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 and been taught by Jesus, in the light of the fact that the false apostles/teachers claim to have been taught by Jesus, and perhaps 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 ἢ γὰρ σφραγίς 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 in order to love them).

²¹¹ Ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν ἐστὶν αὐτῆ – 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!

²¹² μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν – 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, 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 ἄδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὡς 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.

Once again, as in 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. This is the point—his freedom to act as he wants within the boundaries of morality, *because of the foundational concept of divine grace within the gospel*.

²¹⁴ ἢ 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.

²¹⁵ τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίοις ὀψωνίοις ποτέ; τίς φυτεύει ἀμπέλωνα 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 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. Therefore, this is divine wisdom, not human wisdom that he is setting forth to the Corinthians.

²¹⁷ ἔν γάρ τῳ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται· οὐ κημόσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῳ θεῷ – cf.

Deuteronomy 25:4, Heb – יְשִׁיבָה רִשָּׁה מִבְּהֵמַתְּנָה; LXX – οὐ φημόσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα. κημόω = muzzle; never used in the LXX, but the noun, κημός, is in Psalm 31:9; Ezekiel 19:4,9. φημόω = 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.

²¹⁹ εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπεύραμεν, μέγα εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικὰ 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 providing 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 δώμεν 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 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, 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 their 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 human beings and then eliminated. The only offering which has genuine eternal propitiatory value is Jesus' death on the cross.

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 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 just asserted that the Messiah sanctions his being paid for doing his job as the apostle to the Gentiles. However, he has stayed away from exercising his right and instituting this principle in his own life. In addition, his 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, even if it means not looking legitimate to any 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 κενώσει – 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 accomodating a natural human inclination of work and worth 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 εἴαν γὰρ εὐαγγελίζομαι, οὐκ ἔστιν μοι καύχημα: ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπίκειται: οὐαὶ γάρ μοι ἔστιν εἴαν 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 faith without Paul’s performing his apostolic responsibility 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 communities. 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 error in others 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” (cf. v. 18). However, there are 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.

²²⁸ τίς οὖν μοῦ ἔστιν 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 *gratis* (free of charge), 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, it is better that he not exercise this right 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 and are not led into sin inadvertently because their exercising their freedom and rights which are confusing to these other Christians. In other words, their freedom is to choose not to act in a maturely free way but to act in an immature enslaved way for the sake of love.

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 being attached to him through paying him a wage. They are not attached to him. They are attached to God. They 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. Nevertheless, Paul has chosen to be every man's slave by being obligated by God and to God to proclaim the message. 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. 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 Ἰουδαίος, 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 example, he is free to obey all the instructions of the Mosaic Covenant, 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, 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, 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.

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 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 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 συγκοινωνὸς 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. 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 those of weak (or even no) belief and understanding.

²³⁴ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες πάντες μὲν τρέχουσιν, εἷς 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 ἄερα δέρων – 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, μὴ 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 νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διηλθον – 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 moral depravity was urging them to pursue.

Paul calls these Jews “our fathers” because he and his Gentile Christian readers in Corinth 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 moral depravity to risk being unacceptable too.

²³⁹ *καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ* – 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 the plans and purposes of God as they followed Moses who was getting his instructions directly from God. They were drinking in the experience of God so to speak 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 moral depravity and its evil desires.

²⁴¹ *ἔπιον 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.

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 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).

²⁴⁴ *μηδὲ εἰδωλόατραι 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 worshiping 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. קָנַח and קָנַח 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 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.

²⁴⁵ ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πειν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζουσιν – cf. Exodus 32:6, קָנַח וְקָנַח וְשָׂתוּ וְשָׂתוּ לְאַכֹּל וְלִשְׂתֵּי הָעָם לְאַכֹּל, LXX – καὶ ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πειν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζουσιν. In Paul's quote the aorist active infinitive is *πειν* instead of *πειν* 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. It seems the best way to understand קָנַח (= to laugh) and παίζουσιν (= to amuse oneself) is "to feel good and congratulate one another in providing themselves with an enjoyable religious experience." Therefore, the Israelites' idolatry was supposed to make them feel good about God and themselves, but it did so at the expense of truth. 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 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 worshipping God and using their effects as idols whose purpose is to produce enjoyable feelings for the sake of the feelings.

²⁴⁶ μὴδὲ πορνεύωμεν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ ἑξήκοσι 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 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.

²⁴⁷ μὴδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπειράσαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄψεων ἀπόλλυντο – 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 in the eternal kingdom. 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. To change the apostolic message of the gospel in any way, making it more religiously complex or apparently satisfying than it is, would be to doubt God's provision and potentially incur His judgment and destruction. And Paul does not want his readers to do this.

²⁴⁸ μὴδὲ γογγύετε, καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπόλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄλοθρευτοῦ – 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 συνέβαιναν ἐκεῖνοις, 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. 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.

²⁵⁰ ὥστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλέπew μὴ πέση – Just as the Israelites thought that it would be legitimate for them to complain to God without any negative recourse 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 participating in the Christian community of Corinth and 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, 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.

²⁵¹ πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος – All human beings experience temptations that test their faith, with God's desire to authenticate the faith of true believers and Satan's desire to destroy it. The question is when people are confronted with error and sin 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, 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 have endured?

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 escape from failing the test by causing the believer to endure in his 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 as both are important to the whole process of a human being's acquiring salvation and eternal life. 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.

²⁵³ διόπερ, ἀγαπητοὶ μου, φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας – Continuing with the issue of possibly causing weaker brothers to sin by eating meat sacrificed to idols that would wound their consciences 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 idolatry 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 false gods' per se.

²⁵⁵ κρίνατε ὑμεῖς ὃ φημι – Paul wants his readers to use their minds, their “dialectical intrepidity,” 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 idolators of their own culture, these Christians share a meal together before their God as a 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 drinking a cup of wine together, they acknowledge 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 eat a meal together, they acknowledge 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).

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.

²⁵⁸ βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα οὐχὶ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου εἰσὶν – 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* as 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 idolators in Corinth with respect to their gods and Christians with respect to Jesus. Thus, 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).

²⁵⁹ τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστὶν ἢ ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστὶν – 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’ perception 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.

²⁶⁰ ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἂ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ 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 consciences are damaged and maybe even give up their faith or non-believers who do not have this level of understanding of reality and think that the Corinthian Christians condone their belief.

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 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.*

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) and 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 “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 ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντα συμφέρει πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ’ 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 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, $\text{הַיְהוָה הָאֵלֹהִים הַיְהוָה הָאֵלֹהִים}$, 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 as in control of nature is to engage in idolatry and to anger God.

²⁶⁷ εἰ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε πορεύεσθαι, πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε μὴδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν – As a result of the Corinthians’ understanding correctly the nature of reality, that all things come from God, 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 εἶπῃ τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν, μὴ ἐσθίετε δι’ ἐκείνον τὸν μηνύσαντα 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.

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 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 eternal condemnation and destruction.

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 potentially 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 Ἕλλησιν 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 ἀρέσκομι μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σύμφωρον 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 μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθώς κἀγὼ 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, καθώς 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 worked through the OT again in order to learn it correctly after being a student of Gamaliel and not quite getting the biblical message correct.

²⁷⁸ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός – 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 of 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 source of the Messiah's existence within the creation, so also the wife should demonstrate outwardly in her culture 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” (κεφαλή) 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 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 leads him, and he leads husbands, who in turn lead their wives in the direction of God’s fulfilling His promises. This of course assumes that God, the Messiah, and husbands are all leading those who directly align themselves with them, 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 with 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 primary person in his relationship with him, so that he derives his role from the Messiah. Thus, the main way culturally that this was shown was by his NOT covering his actual physical head. We can 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 primary 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 cultural mores, so that men and women can wear a headcovering or not when worshiping Yahweh, and 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. It is important for her to demonstrate clearly within her culture that her husband is the primary person in their relationship, that she finds her purpose in her marriage from her husband and that to which God has called him, and not from herself. She does this by showing that her own husband is responsible within the created realm to align himself with the Messiah so that she can align herself with him. Thus, she demonstrates proper respect for 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) 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 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.”

²⁸¹ εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνὴ, καὶ κείρασθω – 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.

²⁸² εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυράσθαι, 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 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 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 their submission to the Messiah by wearing a headcovering in the same manner that their wives show theirs to their husbands would not be wise in this 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 primary position with respect to his wife because of Adam's being created first and then Eve's being created as a helper 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.

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 primary position above them.

²⁸⁴ οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός – Adam was first created 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 that characterize God while the wife reveals the elements that characterize the husband. Therefore, it is clear that the wife characterizes God just as much as her husband, but God intended there to be a specific order of aligning oneself with 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 aligning oneself by the wife with her husband is intended to highlight and emphasize the primary relationship of the Messiah's aligning himself with God, and then right after this, of the husband's aligning himself with the Messiah.

²⁸⁵ καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ 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 "helper like him, who is correspondingly opposite to him." In line with this, God made the 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 her 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 a conclusion that, in light of both the truth of God as presented in the Bible, i.e., the *angeloi* (the messages of God and specifically Genesis 2), and the cultural situation in Corinth regarding women with head coverings and shaved heads, it is vital that women 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 husbands, who have a right to speak alongside the Messiah and his God as the chief instructor of the message, but by showing respect for them in their culture.

²⁸⁷ πλὴν οὐτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρός οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ – Here Paul comments on an interdependency between men and women on the basis of their origins—the first woman's origin from the first man, and the first man's origin with a view to his wife, Eve, who was definitely going to be created after him and as his helper. And both these human beings and the truth about them is from God.

This also speaks to a mutual symmetry in the marital relationship, that both the husband and wife receive their marital roles from the transcendent Author of all reality, thus making them "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

²⁸⁸ ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός: τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ – Paul states more explicitly what he said in v. 11, that both a man and his wife exist because of both a man (Adam) and a woman (their mother). Thus they should demonstrate to their culture that together their apostolic worldview ultimately comes 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 role which his wife respects, just as the husband respects the role of the Messiah in the light of his respect for God.

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 source and sources of a person's worldview should be obvious to the Corinthians. 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. Thus, it is allowing for the fact that circumstances may call for these Christians to decide differently from what he is presenting her and wives would actually remove their head coverings.

²⁹⁰ οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτῆ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾶ 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 of 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 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 everyone 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, 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, is the correct approach in that culture.

The 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.

²⁹¹ γυνή δὲ ἐὰν κομᾶ δόξα αὐτῆ ἔστιν· ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται αὐτῇ – see above

²⁹² εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνοικος 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 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 κρείσσον 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 point that they are definitely not helping each other remain committed to it and grow in it. It is not clear how he found 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 involved a question but maybe just some statements that provided Paul with enough information to know what was happening. It is clear from v. 23 that Paul had already set up this particular practice from the Corinthians. Now, however, they are mistreating each other in the midst of the practice.

²⁹⁴ πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν καὶ μέρος τι πιστεῦω – 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.

Nevertheless, Paul goes 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 – Paul goes on with this mentioning of the issue of divisions to say that actually divisions are a necessary part of the Corinthian Christian community, at least the *one* division between authentic believers and pretenders. Paul is implying that authentic believers will become evident by their willingness to adhere to the apostolic message as he is presenting it in this letter. Cf. 1 Corinthians 5. Sometimes, people come into a Christian community and participate it for a reason other than to be saved from God’s eternal condemnation through Jesus. Over time, their lack of authentic belief and their commitment to this world becomes more and more obvious, so that eventually their opposition to Christian becomes clear to authentic believers.

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 them to eat together similarly to the way Jesus did with his apostles, 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.

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.

²⁹⁸ καὶ ὅς μὲν πεινᾷ ὅς 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 when this could easily be avoided a better sharing of 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 κατασιχύνετε 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 causing them to mistreat their fellow Christians by first eating something at home before they gather together so that they can share with others, then they are missing the point of this community meal. They 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 is 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. Of course, to Paul this is unacceptable behavior for those who claim to believe in the Jewish Messiah.

³⁰⁰ ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ 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 advocate for them to obtain God’s eternal mercy. An important ramification of understanding Jesus’ death would be that they love one another by sharing their food with those who do not have enough because of their poverty.

Obviously, the Corinthian Christians misunderstand both the message of Jesus as the Messiah and the gracious and loving content of Jesus’ last meal with his apostles before his crucifixion. Therefore, Paul recounts 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 this detail, 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).

³⁰¹ καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τοῦτο 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 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 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.

³⁰² ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ 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 a whole generations’ 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.

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 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 intimating is somewhere out there in the future.

³⁰⁴ ὥστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνη 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 by now 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 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, so that the Corinthian Christians might as well be nailing Jesus to the cross themselves and spitting on his grave.

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. If they cannot control their hunger or thirst with the result that people are left out of sharing in the meal, 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 its 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 moral depravity 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.

³⁰⁷ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἄσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοι καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί – And 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 whatever reason. 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, and 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*.

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 ἱκανός 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.

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 παιδευόμεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν – In addition, Paul reveals the mindset of believers, that because God will scrutinize them and their belief, He also provides them with instruction on how to live life, 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 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 is a simple matter of their waiting on and serving each other by sharing their food with one another. 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 goes home hungry. 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’ death that is equally effective towards all of them. Each of them is of equal 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 πεινῶ, 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 to demonstrate the authenticity of their belief.

³¹² τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω διατάξομαι – We can only wonder what else Paul was going to have to deal with along the same lines as the issues he has discussed so far, particularly in chapters 8-11.

³¹³ περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν – Paul moves in to another topic he somehow knows needs attention and addresses the issue of 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 in a specific way vis-à-vis one another (beneficially through their individual roles in the entire Christian community). 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. 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 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 be come 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 granting more importance to the more miraculous looking roles such as healing, miracles, and speaking in foreign languages.

³¹⁴ Οἴδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι – In this whole section, Paul is contrasting pagan worship with the Christian life. The Greek polytheistics believed that their practice of worshiping 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 led along” refers to the cause of their ecstatic and erratic behavior which is anybody’s guess.

³¹⁵ διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ὁ λαῶν λέγει Ἑν Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν Ἐν Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ – In pagan worship, people counted on an ecstatic and out of control state 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 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 is centered on this fact and this confession by a sinner. In other words, the Holy Spirit 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 understanding all that this means. And, indeed, it is God through His Holy Spirit who causes all this to happen. A sinner cannot do these things in and of himself.

³¹⁶ διαίρέσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσιν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα – The Spirit of God bestows different ways and roles that constitute Christians’ serving 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. People are not influenced by different gods 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 is 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 διαίρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος – Some Christians serve God and their community in one way, while other Christians serve in another way. There is not template or set way to serve God. Therefore, looking down our noses at people who do not do their Christianity exactly the same way we do it is to misunderstand God.

³¹⁸ καὶ διαίρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσιν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πάσιν – Some Christians have a huge effect on their culture and the world such as the apostle Paul, and some have very little effect. The size of the effect is not what matters. It is the fact that God is bringing about these effects according to his sovereign will. Therefore, comparing ourselves as Christians with one another and the effects we are having misunderstands that God is the cause of both our service and our effect.

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 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.

³¹⁹ ἐκάστῳ δὲ δίδεται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον – The purpose of God in causing a variety of roles and effects with respect to authentic believers within the community of believers is to benefit them in their growing in their understanding of the gospel and remaining faithful to it, so that each one 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 than others (cf. vs. 12-26), which they are if the effect that someone has is to enhance another person’s understanding of the truth (cf. 12:31 and chapter 14). But the Corinthians desire to be showy in their serving each other, which is leading to factions within their community and therefore a lack of unity. 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.

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 ἐπι, 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 anytime He wants to 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 is the show that the “Christians” are putting on for themselves.

³²⁰ ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλῳ δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα – In verses 8-10, Paul provides a list of certain manifestations and actually labels them, something which could not be done in pagan worship that involved out of control practices. Thus, 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 and effects 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 gospel and its practical implications, as Paul has been displaying in this letter. The “message of 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.

³²¹ ἑτέρῳ 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. So the production of belief in a person is ultimately the work of God through His Spirit.

³²² ἄλλῳ 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.

³²³ ἄλλῳ δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων – Working powerful actions, i.e., miracles, which certainly both Jesus and the apostles performed and brought about by the Spirit of God. Again, it is God who chooses who performs miracles and when they perform them.

³²⁴ ἄλλῳ 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 ἄλλῳ 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 ἑτέρῳ 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 about the mighty 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 ἄλλῳ δὲ ἑρμηνεία 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 διαίρουσιν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστω 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 ἔν ἐστιν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἔν ἐστιν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός – Here Paul launches into a lengthy explanation of the human body and its various parts in order to use them as an analogy for the community of believers comprised of all Christians currently in the Roman Empire who have come to faith in the Messiah by means of the proclamation of the gospel by the apostles and those who have heard them. In this way, Paul says that the collection of believers is “the Messiah.” They are those who consider Jesus to be their leader, so that everything which they do is 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 must 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 other people. And this is in spite of any human differences attributed to ethnicity, economic status, etc., but 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 an immoral 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 νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἑκάστων αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν – God is ultimately the wise manufacturer of the human body with all its different 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.

³³² εἰ δὲ ἦν ὅτι πάντα ἐν μέλος, ποῦ τὸ σῶμα – 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 which perform different functions or roles, thus making each “member” or part a necessary element within the boundaries of its own function for the proper operation of the whole body. The “Messiah” does not function well if each individual Christian is not functioning well within the boundaries established by God Himself in relation to all other Christians.

³³³ ἀλλὰ πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν ἀναγκαῖά ἐστιν – What is the use of an eye seeing an object if the person cannot reach out and touch or grab 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 may not seem as important to human existence as the eye, and while the feet 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.

³³⁴ καὶ ἃ 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.

³³⁵ τὰ δὲ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρεῖαν 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 are just as important.

³³⁶ Ἄλλ' ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα τῷ ἴσπερουμένῳ περισσοτέραν δὸς τιμῆν – 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.

³³⁷ ἵνα μὴ ἦ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σῶματι 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 discord or conflict that could arise from thinking that one part is more important and ought to be more honored than another. 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, even apostles, or any other members of the collection of Christians if we want to honor what Paul is saying about the Christian community.

³³⁸ 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. If one part experiences joy, the whole body feels 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.

³³⁹ ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ, καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους – After the previous explanation of the unity of the human body with its individual parts, Paul identifies each believer within the Corinthian Christian community similarly within the “body” of the Messiah. And the conclusion which the Corinthian 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 role within the Christian community.

³⁴⁰ καὶ οὗς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεῦτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήμψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν – It is God who has placed different people with different roles within the overall Christian community. He chose who was going to be an apostle, a prophet, a teacher, et al. The apostles are the primary source of truth for all Christians, regardless of where they live. Then, prophets and teachers sanctioned by the apostles are important secondary sources of truth—as long as the apostles are alive.

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. 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 could be considered discussion leaders of Christians studying the biblical texts together without there being anyone who is actually an authority on the Bible. This insures that the Bible remains the sole authority in everyone’s life.

As stated above, Paul 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), but the primary way by which the “body” of the Messiah retains its unity is through repetition of the apostolic message so that people can think through its implications and live in a wise and loving way with respect to one another.

³⁴¹ μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφῆται; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις – 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.

³⁴² 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 not even all the Corinthian Christians should expect to “speak in tongues.” But rather than consider this, people focus on 14:5, “I do desire that all of you speak with languages” and misinterpret Paul.

³⁴³ 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, i.e., those who can help people to think rightly about truth—apostles, prophets, and teachers, in order to enable others to think well enough 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.

³⁴⁴ καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι – There is a more important issue than truth. It is love, regardless of how much or how accurately a Christian knows the truth.

³⁴⁵ Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἢ ἡχῶν 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 conventional angels “in heaven” 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.

³⁴⁶ καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνώσιν καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθὲν εἰμι – Paul defines prophecy, but with hyperbole as he did in the previous verse to emphasize his point about love. It is knowing what 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.

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). Therefore, there it is not necessarily the classic, OT use of the word prophet, because the the situation is different whereby people within the local Christian communities are repeating the apostolic message taught by Paul (in this case), while others make sure they are doing a good job. As a result, this action by prophets is obviously a bit risky. However, Paul is planning on having love prevail so that people work out even their intellectual differences with humility, gentleness, and patience (cf. Ephesians 4:1-6).

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, then he is basically a nobody.

Similarly with hyperbole, belief is understanding that God is the Creator of all reality who can adjust the creation 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.

³⁴⁷ 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 present his body as an offering 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.

³⁴⁸ Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ. ἢ[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 certain individuals, if not most people, in the Corinthian Christian community were lacking them.

Love waits for God to accomplish His plans and purposes in His own time and extends this same patience to other Christians. Love extends 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. The loving person 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 loved by God. The loving person 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. Similarly, the loving person is soberly honest about exactly who he is in God's eyes, a morally depraved sinner who deserves God's condemnation and destruction, thus rendering him quite humble before other Christians.

³⁴⁹ οὐκ ἱσχυροῦμαι, οὐ ζητεῖ ἑτά εἰς ἐναντίον, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογιζεται τὸ κακόν – Continuing along, Paul says that a loving person 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. The loving person does not also pursue his own self-interests in order to make sure he "gets ahead" in the Christian community, i.e., 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 regardless of how prominent or obscure it is. In addition, the loving person does not allow his irritation with other people within the Christian community to destroy his relationship with them, such that he basically writes people off and refuses to deal with them at all. The loving person also does not entertain evil as an option for how he will act in the presence of his fellow Christians (and other people). He is committed to goodness and morality as that which defines his actions.

³⁵⁰ οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ – The contrast here is between rejoicing alone (χαίρει) when another person is unjustly treated and results in my getting ahead in the Christian community and rejoicing with my fellow Christians (συγχαίρει) in the truth of God's work within everyone for the mutual benefit of each Christian's growing in understanding the gospel and persevering in belief for the sake of obtaining God's eternal mercy and life.

³⁵¹ πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει – A biblically loving person 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.

³⁵² ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθῶσιν εἴτε γλῶσσαι, παύσονται εἴτε γνώσεις, καταργηθήσεται – 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. In contrast, 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 will end. Thus, Paul is not speaking of understanding or speaking about truth *per se*. He is referring to these specific roles within the Christian community this side of eternity.

³⁵³ ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκουμεν 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.

³⁵⁴ 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 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.

³⁵⁵ ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήγηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου – Now Paul spells out in more detail the idea that even he lacks as complete understanding of reality as will be possible later in the Kingdom of God. He likens existence in the present realm as a Christian, who needs and seeks out the functions that God has assigned within the Christian community, to that of a child, while living as a morally transformed human being in the eternal Kingdom of God will be like an adult who does not need these things. 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.

³⁵⁶ βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι 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 provided a less than complete and accurate reflection of the person using it, while if he could actually look at himself face to face so to speak, then his "knowledge" of what he looks like 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 accurately and completely, 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, and 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.

³⁵⁷ νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη – Three things are important to an individual Christian—his belief in the biblical truth, his expectation of mercy and 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).

³⁵⁸ διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, μάλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε – Because authentic, biblical love is greater than either accurate or complete knowledge, 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, especially those functions which provide people with truth for their minds, i.e., the functions which provide good, clear teaching of the apostolic message. 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. Here "utter prophetic sayings" (προφητεύητε) refers to educating people in the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah, the very ideas which Paul would have conveyed to the Corinthians during the 18 months of his visit in that city.

³⁵⁹ ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλώσση 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 an foreign language unknown to the speaker while the speaker actually understands what he is saying. 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 other and miraculously caused by the Holy Spirit. Thus it appears that God was manifesting Himself in the Corinthian Christian community by causing believers to speak

in foreign languages without there necessarily being an interpreter. 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 of the apostolic message through "uttering prophetic sayings" (προφητεύετε).

³⁶⁰ 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 people 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. Only speaking in a known language provides true intellectual growth in understanding of the biblical message.

³⁶¹ 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.).

³⁶² θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύετε· μεῖζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτός· εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύῃ, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομῆν 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, which Paul has also said is not going to happen (cf. 12:30).

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. While Paul said that love is greater than belief and hope, nevertheless a person's understanding of exactly what love is is what permits him to be loving.

Because speaking of the things of God to an audience in their language is what brings "edification" (οἰκοδομῆν), Paul says that it makes sense that explaining to an audience in their language what one 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 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 permits to translate miraculously what the person who is speaking in a foreign language is saying that is the means by which others in the Corinthian Christian community come to understand what the latter is saying.

³⁶³ 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 διδασκίᾳ – Only the latter four involving speaking in the Greek language that the Corinthians can understand will be beneficial for the Corinthian Christian community. 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 common to Corinthians.

³⁶⁴ καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ἀδηλον σάλπιγγος φωνὴν δῶ, τίς παρασκευάζεται εἰς πόλεμον – Paul can use the analogy of a musical instrument such as a trumpet because we human beings have chosen to use specific sounds to convey ideas which are important to proper behavior, including certain notes from a trumpet that mean battle for the soldiers.

³⁶⁵ οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς γλώσσης ἐὰν μὴ εὖσημον λόγον δώτε, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ λαλούμενον; ἔσεσθε γὰρ εἰς ἄερα λαλοῦντες – This should be obvious. Only well-signed language (literally – εὖσημον 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.

³⁶⁶ τοσαῦτα 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, as opposed to someone's simply being silent, the literal meaning of ἄφωνον. Silent conveys no intelligible meaning. Only the sound of words placed together in a conventional way does.

³⁶⁷ ἐὰν 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, 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.

³⁶⁸ 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 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 want to act toward one another in line with what God is doing and the dynamics which exist in their relationships with God as he is explaining in chapters 12-14, then will 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 even miraculous speaking of unknown and foreign languages.

³⁶⁹ Διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ – Paul has mentioned this possibility as something certainly which God can do. So if God is willing, then ask Him to permit the speaker of an unknown foreign language in a gathering of Christians to translate what he is saying in order that everyone else may grow in their knowledge or commitment to their knowledge of God.

³⁷⁰ ἐὰν γὰρ προσεύχομαι 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 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.

³⁷¹ τί οὖν ἐστιν; προσεύχομαι τῷ πνεύματι, προσεύχομαι δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῦ ψαλῶ τῷ πνεύματι, ψαλῶ δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῦ – 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.

³⁷² ἐπεὶ ἐὰν εὐλογῆς ἐν πνεύματι, ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ιδιώτου πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀμὴν ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστίᾳ; ἐπειδὴ 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. 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.

³⁷³ σὺ μὲν γὰρ καλῶς εὐχαριστεῖς ἀλλ’ ὁ ἕτερος οὐκ οἰκοδομεῖται – 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.

³⁷⁴ Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι, πάντων ὑμῶν μᾶλλον ἢ γλώσσαις ἔλαλῶ – Paul acknowledges that God has caused him to speak in foreign and unknown languages more than anyone in the Corinthian Christian community.

³⁷⁵ ἀλλὰ ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ θέλω πέντε λόγους τῷ νοῦ μου λαλήσαι, ἵνα καὶ ἄλλους κατηγήσω, ἢ μυρίου λόγους ἐν γλώσση – 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 speakings 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. Thousands of 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 language.

³⁷⁶ ἀδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσὶν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε, 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 effect, because it is not understood intellectually by the listeners.

³⁷⁷ ἐν ἑτερογλώσσις 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.

³⁷⁸ ὥστε αἱ γλώσσαι εἰς σημεῖόν εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ἢ δὲ προφητεία οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν – Perhaps the Corinthian Christians in their hyper-enthusiasm for speaking in tongues 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

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 did neither understand 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. 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. 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 tongues" or simply by the "gift of prophesy" and repeating what everyone learned from the apostle Paul when he was in Corinth.

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) is better to the point that the benefit of a sign which is incomprehensible is very much relativized in comparison to symbols (words) which are comprehensible.

³⁷⁹ ἐάν οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις, εἰσέλθωσιν δὲ ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι, οὐκ ἐροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε – Now Paul gets back to the issue at hand, that the use of 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 foreign languages can be of benefit is if local unbelievers or believers who do not understand what is being said but 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, which is NOT a good thing, if they hear 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*.

³⁸⁰ ἐάν δὲ πάντες προφητεύωσιν, εἰσέλθῃ δὲ 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 by virtue of their fellow citizens' clearly communicating the truth of the gospel. It is this that Paul really wants his readers to grasp well—for the edification of people vs. being obsessed with the drama of "tongues."

³⁸¹ 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, לַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ (LXX – ὅτι ἐν σοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐστίν) & Zech. 8:23, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ (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.

³⁸² τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλώσσαν ἔχει, ἐρμηνείαν ἔχει πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω – 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 "prophesy" and thus clearly declare biblical concepts. Instead, God causes a variety of functions to occur, and one of them just might be the speaking in an unknown, foreign language. However, it only makes sense for this latter to occur if there is a translator who can make what is said intelligible to everyone. This would all constitute the orderly process of a Christian's meeting together with the goal of people being edified, i.e., growing in their intellectual grasp of the gospel for the sake of their living it well and persevering in their belief.

³⁸³ εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ, κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνά μέρος, καὶ εἰς διερμηνεύτω – Thus, the orderliness of a Christian gathering for intellectual growth purposes.

³⁸⁴ ἐάν δὲ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἐαυτῷ 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 saying that this is better than speaking and risking an unbeliever saying that the speaker is crazy.

³⁸⁵ προφήται 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. However, the rest of the people should evaluate whether or not what is being said corresponds to the apostolic message. Does what they say make sense in the light of the apostolic message that they all have heard from Paul?

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.

³⁸⁶ ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένω, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω – If someone detects that the "prophet" is not speaking in line with the apostolic message, then the "prophet" should not "prophesy." This detail also seems to go by the wayside, that one's fellow teachers should evaluate his teaching right there on the spot and tell him to shut up if what he is saying is not in line with the apostolic message.

³⁸⁷ 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.

³⁸⁸ καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται – Even though God is miraculously working in individuals to cause them to function individually within the gathering of Christians, 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 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 cacophony of foreign languages in their midst. While all that noise may impress them, it is not an orderly presentation of God, and Paul is encouraging them to remain orderly.

³⁸⁹ 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 shalom and wholesomeness for the sake of everyone's living out the gospel in a wise and loving manner.

³⁹⁰ ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἀγίων – Paul has had to deal with the following issue in other Christian gatherings during his travels.

³⁹¹ 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), here he must be talking specifically about a problem that wives 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 a status equal to their husbands before God, went to their heads a little bit so that they took undue advantage of these and used them inappropriately, i.e., in a way that actually became disruptive instead of helpful.

³⁹² εἰ δὲ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἐστὶν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ – Cf. v. 32., so that it makes more sense to translate the εἰ as "since" and not "if." Yes, the wives 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 "disgraceful" (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.

³⁹³ ἢ ἄφ' ὑμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν, 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.

³⁹⁴ 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.

³⁹⁵ εἰ δέ τις ἀγνοεῖ, ἀγνοεῖται – If a person does not embrace Paul (and other apostles) as the only authorities on 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 embrace, right on down to our own time.

³⁹⁶ ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεῦν καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις – Again, Paul emphasizes that the main function within a Christian gathering is learning the biblical message, while watching God work miracles through people’s speaking in foreign languages is certainly something that could happen 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.

³⁹⁷ 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 perseverance of their faith.

³⁹⁸ γνωρίζω 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 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.

³⁹⁹ δι’ οὗ καὶ σόξασθε, 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.

⁴⁰⁰ 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 under the tutelage of Jesus 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).

⁴⁰¹ καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς – There is plenty of evidence in the Old Testament to the effect that the Messiah would suffer death but be raised from the dead in order to fulfill his responsibility as Messiah and high priest (cf. Psalm 22; 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.

⁴⁰² καὶ ὅτι ὡφθη Κηϋᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα – Here Paul refers to Jesus’ immediate appearance after his crucifixion and resurrection to 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—key to his role and our belief.

⁴⁰³ ἔπειτα ὡφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίους ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ, ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἕως ἄρτι, τινὲς δὲ ἔκοιμήθησαν – 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 twenty or so years later. Jesus’ appearance to such a large crowd probably took place in Galilee (cf. Matthew 28).

⁴⁰⁴ ἔπειτα ὡφθη Ἰακώβῳ ἔπειτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν – Jacob is probably Jesus’ brother, 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).

⁴⁰⁵ ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερὶ τῷ ἐκτρόματι ὡφθη 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).

⁴⁰⁶ Ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμι ἰκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ – Paul, as a disciple of Gamaliel (cf. Acts 22:3) and a staunch Pharisee, had been committed to destroying the Christian movement before his conversion on the road of Damascus in Acts 9.

⁴⁰⁷ 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 transcendent kindness of the 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 Paul to rescue from His eternal condemnation and 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 it and God, 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 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 apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Ephesians 3).

⁴⁰⁸ εἶτε οὖν ἐγὼ εἶτε 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.

⁴⁰⁹ 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 are actually claiming that Jesus did not rise from the dead and that there is no general resurrection from the dead, i.e., no eternal life. How strange, because eternal life is the best benefit of Christianity (cf. 15:14-19), and it was central to the gospel which Paul had presented to them. Where did they get the idea that there is no resurrection? From pagan idolatry? 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."

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.

⁴¹⁰ εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται – Paul's logic is that if there is no general resurrection of the dead, then the resurrection of the Messiah has not even taken place.

⁴¹¹ εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα ὁ[καὶ] 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.

⁴¹² εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν ἢ ἔπειτα ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται – Paul has 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 really wants to be accused and found guilty of such an act.

⁴¹³ εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται – The same logic applies here, too.

⁴¹⁴ εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν – Sin results in death and condemnation 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.

⁴¹⁵ ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπόλωντο – 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 transition of human existence 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.

⁴¹⁶ εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἠλπιότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμὲν – Paul states bluntly how ridiculous it would be for the apostles to proclaim a message that does not deal with sin and 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 death 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 forgiveness by God that leads to eternal life ought to be the main concern of any human being. It is the main concern of God.

⁴¹⁷ 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 and remained alive, 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.

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, Jesus has and remains alive just as

appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9). But where is he during the other times? We simply are not told—somewhere else in this cosmos, or in another dimension, but definitely alive.

⁴¹⁸ ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν – Adam's disobedience resulted in death and condemnation for all human beings who have followed in his footsteps and disobeyed God, i.e., everybody by Jesus. Jesus' obedience results 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. Cf. Romans 5:12-21.

⁴¹⁹ ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται – Death and condemnation have come about because of Adam's own moral depravity and disobedience, while eternal life and salvation have come about because of Jesus' moral perfection and obedience as the Messiah. Those who live their lives only as Adam did by being a morally depraved 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 according to 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).

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 a transformation into immortal and morally perfect people. Therefore, this word “will be made alive” (ζωοποιηθήσονται) refers to only resurrection from the dead in this context.

⁴²⁰ 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 coming,” all those who have had genuine belief like Abraham's (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, will be resurrected from the dead by God and granted both immortality and moral perfection (cf. Revelation 20).

⁴²¹ εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν – 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.

⁴²² δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ θῆ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθρούς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ – cf. Psalm 110:1, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου (יְהוָה יִשְׁמַח בְּאֹיְבֹתָי וְיַבִּיחֵם בְּרַגְלָיו). 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 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, 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. 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.

⁴²³ ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος – This enemy, death, is abolished at the final judgment when God both destroys unbelievers and grants mercy and eternal life to believers. However, this is even 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 still existed in the millennial kingdom of Israel on the present earth.

⁴²⁴ πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ – cf. Psalm 8:6, כָּל־בְּרִיאַתְךָ־יְהוָה־תִּתְּנָהּ־לְךָ־יְהוָה־יְהוָה־יְהוָה (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 the verse 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.

⁴²⁵ ὅταν δὲ εἶπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δηλον 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.

⁴²⁶ ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῇ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν πάσιν – 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.

⁴²⁷ 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 believing dead had already died in order to gain eternal life. And Paul’s point is, why make such an expression of belief 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 moral depravity, 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.

Thus Paul reflects 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.).

⁴²⁸ 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?

⁴²⁹ καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, 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 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, 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 these make sense only if there is a resurrection from the dead.

⁴³⁰ εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθρησιόμαχῃσα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγομεν καὶ πίνομεν, αὔριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν – Cf. Isaiah 22:13, φάγομεν καὶ πίνομεν, αὔριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν, where Isaiah is rebuking the Jews for their disobedience of God. Here, “human motives (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον)” refer to only the present realm, i.e., if 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. 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 (cf. 16:9).

⁴³¹ μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἥθη χρηστὰ ὁμίλια 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 the important idea of the resurrection of the believing dead.

⁴³² ἐκνήψατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε – Paul likens the Corinthians to drunkards who have lost their senses, 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 God’s truth, then they are committing immorality against God, which obviously Paul does not want them to do.

⁴³³ ἀγνωσίαν 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.

⁴³⁴ 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.

⁴³⁵ ἄφρων, σὺ ὁ σπείρεις, οὐ ζῶοποιεῖται ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ – Paul will now liken 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 dead. For example, the seed of a plant, e.g., wheat, must “die” and be buried in the ground. Indeed, it does not sprout into wheat or whatever unless it does “die.” 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.

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?

⁴³⁶ καὶ ὁ σπείρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ τινοσ 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.

⁴³⁷ 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.

⁴³⁸ Οὐ πᾶσα 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, 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 different kinds of organic entities, then it stands to reason he can raise people from the dead and give them different bodies suitable for the eternal realm.

⁴³⁹ καὶ σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια· ἀλλὰ ἑτέρα μὲν ἢ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα, ἑτέρα δὲ ἢ τῶν ἐπιγείων – “Bodies” here refer to the substantive enclosure which human beings experience in both the present realm on this particular earth and the future realm on the eternal earth. The former Paul calls an “earthly body” while the latter he calls a “heavenly body.” They are both great and important, but they also have a different level of greatness and importance.

⁴⁴⁰ ἄλλη δόξα ἡλίου, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα σελήνης, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα ἀστέρων· ἀστὴρ γὰρ ἀστερός 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.

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 with a different and greater awesomeness than the temporary bodies we inhabit.

⁴⁴¹ 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, which will be their state even when they return with Jesus to instruct mainly Jewish believers in the messianic Kingdom of Israel for the “1,000 years” of the millenium (cf. Revelation 20).

“Decaying” = will die and will not last forever. “Not decaying” = eternal and lasting forever.

⁴⁴² 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 organic bodies which are morally perfect and subject to only life, i.e., eternal life.

⁴⁴³ σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν – “Physical” means morally deficient and subject to death and dying. “Spiritual” means morally perfect and subject to only eternal life. In other words, Paul is not using the word “spiritual” to refer to something which cannot be touched and has no real substance, but to that which is materially different when God transforms our earthly bodies into immortal and morally perfect ones.

⁴⁴⁴ οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν – cf. Genesis 2:7, הָאָדָם הָיָה לְפַחַד חַי (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 blood flowing and a heart pumping, but Paul is also saying that Adam was a morally depraved 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.

⁴⁴⁵ ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν – Adam was the first of a dying kind of blood-flowing organic material that was a human being. Jesus, in his state of resurrection from death and, therefore, with an eternal body, is the first of an eternal kind of human being, and he, by his advocacy at the final judgment, provides eternality 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., person, because those who are authentically associated with him through their belief will follow him into eternal life at his second coming.

⁴⁴⁶ ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν. ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν – There is a divine 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. Then, a human being can experience an eternal existence where there is no decay.

⁴⁴⁷ 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 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 temporal while being morally depraved, especially with his coming from the ground of the present earth and being subject to physical death. 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 miraculously out of nothing 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, while Jesus' role was to present the inevitable process being miraculously resurrected from the dead and granted immortality (and moral perfection for sinners) by God.

⁴⁴⁸ 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 die. The purpose of our spirituality and authentic belief like that of Jesus is for the eternal realm—to live with immortality, like Jesus after his resurrection.

⁴⁴⁹ καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ – We certainly share the physical and ending-in-death characteristics of Adam, while we also will share (future tense!) the spiritual and ending-in-eternal life characteristics of Jesus, which after our own resurrection from the dead.

⁴⁵⁰ τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσει 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 and end their existence in the present realm.

⁴⁵¹ ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω ἧ πάντες ἴσως οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα – A mystery is not something that is unreasonable and cannot be understood by the human mind. It is something that has not yet been made clear by the biblical message, but now it is, i.e., Paul is explaining it. Plus, 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.

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 transformed immediately by being given their permanent, eternal, and therefore morally perfect bodies. This is the change to which Paul is referring in this verse.

⁴⁵² ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι: σαλπίζει γὰρ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἀφθαρτοὶ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα – Sure sounds as the 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 thinks he 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).

⁴⁵³ 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 morally depraved 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.

⁴⁵⁴ 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, לַיְהוָה יִהְיֶה כְּחֹדֶן מְלַחֵם (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 or the believers who have died are resurrected and transformed.

⁴⁵⁵ ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος; ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον – cf. Hosea 13:14, לֹא יָשָׁע יִהְיֶה קִבְּרֵךְ לָךְ אֲנִי מְנַתְּ יְהוָה יִהְיֶה לָּךְ (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 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., moral depravity, which Paul goes on to mention in the next verse.

⁴⁵⁶ τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία, ἢ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος – Human moral depravity keeps goading and stimulating death into making itself known in human existence, while the biblical message, the Torah, grants depravity this power by stating clearly what God's purposes are 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 Torah properly, so that in a sense the Torah provides sin with its power to keep being sin and not be able to change into righteousness.

⁴⁵⁷ 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, life eternal is victorious over us in the next realm due to Jesus' death and resurrection which have qualified him to be our advocate at the judgment.

⁴⁵⁸ 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 the 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 that worshiping pagan gods is 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.

⁴⁵⁹ περὶ δὲ τῆς λογεῖας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ὥσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε – Probably the same collection Paul writes about in 2 Corinthians 8,9

⁴⁶⁰ κατὰ μίαν ἑκαστὸν ἑκάστου ὑμῶν παρ' ἐαυτῷ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὅ τι ἐὰν ἔυδοῦται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται –

⁴⁶¹ ὅταν δὲ παραγένομαι, 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.

⁴⁶² ἐὰν δὲ ἄξιον ἦ τὸ κάμε πορεύεσθαι, σὺν ἐμοὶ πορεύονται –

⁴⁶³ Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω Μακεδονίαν γὰρ διέρχομαι –

⁴⁶⁴ πρὸς ὑμᾶς δὲ τυχὸν παραμενῶ ἢ καὶ παραχειμᾶσω, ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε οὐ ἐὰν πορεύομαι – 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.

⁴⁶⁵ οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ –

⁴⁶⁶ ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς –

⁴⁶⁷ θύρα γὰρ 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.

⁴⁶⁸ Ἐὰν δὲ ἔλθῃ Τιμόθεος, βλέπετε, ἵνα ἀφόβως γένηται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ ἔργον κυρίου ἐργάζεται ὡς ἡμέτερον –

⁴⁶⁹ μὴ τις οὖν αὐτὸν ἐξουθενήσῃ. προπέμψατε δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν εἰρήνῃ, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς με· ἐκδέχομαι γὰρ αὐτὸν μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν – Had there been some sort of problem between the Corinthians and Timothy? Paul wants them to treat Timothy as they would treat him.

⁴⁷⁰ 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.

⁴⁷¹ γρηγορεῖτε, στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε – Paul begins his conclusion and final encouragement to the Corinthians by encouraging them to stand firm in their belief in the apostolic message.

⁴⁷² πάντα ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ γινέσθω – Paul wants them to remain in a state of being loved by God.

⁴⁷³ παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί· οἶδατε τὴν οἰκίαν Στεφάνου, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀχαΐας καὶ εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτοὺς – Stephen's household seem to have learned the apostolic message from Paul the best.

⁴⁷⁴ ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτάσσησθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις καὶ παντὶ τῷ συνεργῶντι καὶ κοιῶντι – Paul has confidence that Stephen and some others grasp the apostolic message well so that others should listen to what they have to say. It stands to reason that this cannot be said about anyone today, because no apostle is alive to evaluate our understanding 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.

⁴⁷⁵ χαίρω δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφάνου καὶ Φορτουνάτου καὶ Ἀχαϊκοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν – These men must have visited Paul and helped him in his own difficult situation. This gave him the opportunity to teach them some more and send them back to the Corinthians better equipped to convey the apostolic message to them. Thus, he can encourage the Corinthians to “subject themselves” to these men, because Paul has just spent even more time with them ensuring their grasp of the apostolic message is as good as possible. The “need” that

these men can supply the Corinthian Christians is an adequate grasp of the apostolic message to lead them through potentially problematic situations in the Christian lives, e.g., whether or not they should compete with one another by declaring loyalty to their favorite teacher (or church—in our modern times).

⁴⁷⁶ ἀνέπαυσαν γὰρ τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν. ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιούτους – The commitment of these men to the biblical truth encouraged Paul and can do the same for the Corinthians. Consequently, Paul wants the Corinthians to acknowledge his stamp of approval on these men and follow their teaching for their own benefit—because of their direct, personal contact with Paul the apostle, which no one else has had since then.

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 been sent back to Corinth by Paul with this letter.

⁴⁷⁷ ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας. ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ - In Ephesus? Definite house assembly of Christians, probably each Jewish Sabbath (cf. 16:2).

⁴⁷⁸ ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου – Paul writes these last lines himself.

⁴⁷⁹ εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἦτω ἀνάθεμα. μαράνα θά – Here is the bottom line. Love Jesus, and receive eternal mercy and life. Hate Jesus, and receive eternal condemnation. Come Jesus and bring the present realm to an end.

⁴⁸⁰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν

⁴⁸¹ ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ