

1CORINTHIANS

1:1-2 (A) *When was the church at Corinth founded?*

The church at Corinth was founded by Paul during his second Apostolic mission journey recorded in Ac 15:40 – 18:22 (CP Ac 18:1-21). See also comments on Ac 18:22.

(B) *Where was Paul when he wrote this Epistle?*

Paul was in Ephesus. He wrote this Epistle at the close of his three years stay in Ephesus during his third Apostolic mission journey recorded in Acts 18:23 – 21:17 (CP Ac 20:31-38 with 1Cor 16:8-9, 19). See also comments on Ac 18:23.

1:8 *What does the phrase “In the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” refer to here?*

(CP also V7; 5:5; 15:20-23; 2Cor 1:14; Php 1:6,10; 2:16; 1Th 2:19; 3:13; 5:23; 2Th 2:1; 2Ti 1:12; Jas 5:7; 1Jn 2:28). *In the day of our Lord Jesus Christ* refers to the time when Jesus comes again to take all the saints of God, both living and dead, back to heaven with Him at the first resurrection (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18; Rev 3:10; 20:6). The first resurrection is when Christ comes back for his saints. This is not to be confused with Christ’s second coming when he comes back with the saints and defeats Antichrist and his army at the battle of Armageddon, at the end of the great tribulation (CP Isa 63:1-6; Dan 2:44-45; 7:13-14,18,27; Joel 3:1-21; Zech 14:1-5,9,16-21; Mt 24:27-44; 25:31-46; Mk 13:24-27; Lu 21:25-28; 2Th 1: 7-10; Jude 14-15; Rev 1:7; 19:11-21). See also comments on Lu 21:36, Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3, Ro 14:10-12, 1Cor 15:51-58, 1Th 4:13-18, 2Th 2:7, Rev 19:11-21, 20:6.

1:10 *Does this mean that Christians have to agree on every point of doctrine?*

No, Christians do not have to agree on every point of doctrine. They can disagree on many aspects of scripture, but they must do so in love. It is more important that Christians love one another than allow a differing viewpoint on scripture to divide them (CP Jn 13:34-35; 15:12-17; 1Cor 13:1-7). We must however, be in unity regarding the fundamental truths upon which the Christian faith is founded, such as the virgin birth, the deity of Jesus; that Jesus died as a ransom for sin and was resurrected for our justification; that we will live together with Him throughout eternity, etc (See also comments on Ro 15:5).

1:14-17 *Does this mean that Paul did not deem baptism to be integral to the Gospel message?*

No! Paul is not minimising the importance of baptism here. Baptism is an integral part of the gospel message, as scriptures clearly teach (CP Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:37-41; 8:12,35-38; 9:17-18; 10:44-48; 16:14-15; 18:8; 19:1-5). In 1Cor 1:14-17 Paul was simply stressing the fact that God ordained him to preach the gospel for salvation, not baptise new converts as well. Jesus also did not baptise new

converts (CP Jn 4:1-2). It is the gospel that saves not baptism (CP Ro 1:16; 10:17; 1Cor 1:21; 4:15; 15:1-2; Jas 1:18, 21; 1Pe 1:23-25). Baptism signifies that one is saved (CP 1Pe 3:18-21). Paul merely said what he did about baptism because the Corinthian church was being split by factions arguing over their preference of spiritual leaders, and Paul did not intend to baptise a faction around himself (CP 1Cor 1:10-17). This is also a lesson for the contemporary church: Christians must always centre their loyalty, love and devotion upon God and His word, not on individual leaders. No individual leader is to be the focus of Christian fellowship, otherwise the cross of Christ is made void – it cannot accomplish its purpose. (See also comments on 1Cor 3:8-11, 3:16-17 (A), 3:16-17 (B), 3:18-20).

1:18 *Are we already saved as the KJV implies here, or are we being saved, as other versions teach?*

Scriptures speak of salvation in the past tense (CP Ac 15:11; Ro 8:24; Eph 2:5-8; 2Ti 1:9; Tit 3:4-7; Jude 3); present tense (CP 1Cor 1:18; 2Cor 2:15); and future tense (CP Ac 2:40; Ro 5:9-10; 10:9-10; 11:26-27; 13:11; 1Cor 3:15; 15:1-2; 2Cor 7:10; Php 1:28; 1Th 5:8-10; 1Ti 4:16; He 1:14; 9:28; 10:39; 1Pe 1:5,9-10; 2:2; 4:18). Scriptures which speak of salvation in the past tense do so on the basis that Jesus has already paid for it with His blood, and it is appropriated by faith (CP Jn 3:16-18, 36; Mk 16:16; Ro 1:16; 5:17-19; 1Jn 5:11-12). But clearly, salvation is future, it cannot become actual until the “redemption of the purchased possession” (CP Eph 1:3-14 with Ro 8:16-25). These scriptures and many others all teach that salvation is fully certain, but it is only fully certain for those sowing to the spirit at the end of their earthly life (CP Mt 7:21-27; Lu 13:22-27; Ro 2:13; Ga 6:7-8; Php 2:12, 2 Ti 2:12; Jas 2:22-26; Rev 2:1-7; 8-11; 12-17; 18-29; 3:1-6; 7-13; 14-22; 22:11-12).

1:24 *Who are “them which are called” that Paul refers to here?*

Them which are called in V24 are *them that believe* in V21 (CP V21-26 with Ac 2:37-41; Ro 8:28-30; 1Cor 7:17; Eph 1:18-19; 4:1-6; Php 3:13-14; 1Th 2:11-12; 2Th 1:11-12; 2:13-14; 2Ti 1:8-10; He 3:1; 1Pe 5:10; 2Pe 1:10-11). None of those scriptures teach that *the called* have been arbitrarily chosen for salvation by God while the rest of mankind has been consigned to hell, as some in the church teach. They simply reflect the fact that those who respond affirmatively to the universal call of God to salvation through the gospel of Christ, become *the called* (CP Mt 20:1-16 with 11:28-30; Lu 14:16-24; Jn 3:16-18, 36; 5:24; 6:27, 35, 40, 47, 51-54; 7:37-38; 8:12; 10:9; Ac 2:21; Ro 1:16-17; 4:4-5; 10:8-13; 1Cor 1:21; He 5:9; Jude 1; Rev 21:6; 22:17). See also comments on Mt 20:16, Jn 3:36, 6:37, Ro 8:28-30.

1:26-28 *What do we understand from what Paul says here?*

We understand from this that not many rich and famous and powerful people in the world order respond affirmatively to God’s call to salvation through the gospel of Christ. Their elitism resulting

from their status in the world order causes them to regard the simple message of the gospel as foolishness. Yet it is by this so-called foolishness that countless multitudes of lesser known sinners – by world standards – are saved (CP V18-25, 30). God chose the simple gospel message, which the world despises as the way of salvation, and used it to nullify the things the world esteems, so that on one can ever boast that they were saved because of their status in the world order. (CP V26-29, 31; Jer 9:23-24 with Job 5:13; Psa 20:7-9; 33:16-22; 44:8; 94:11; Isa 41:14-16; Jer 4:1-2; 1Cor 3:18-23 [Job 5:13 and Psa 94:11 are quoted here]; Ga 6:14; Php 3:3-11).

2:4-5 ***What does Paul mean by what he says here?***

Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians here that he did not use persuasive doctrines of human wisdom to win them to Christ. He preached the simple message of the gospel under the anointing of the Holy Spirit which demonstrated God's power to save, to heal, to transform lives, and to cast out demons etc. (CP Mk 16:15-20; Ac 8:5-8; Ro 1:16; 15:17-19; 1Cor 1:18; 1Th 1:5; He 2:3-4). Paul spoke as he did in 1Cor 2:4-5 so that the Corinthian Christians' faith would rest in the power of God, not in the wisdom of men. This is for our admonition too. Our focus must always be on God and His word, not in the wisdom of men, otherwise the cross of Christ is made void – it cannot accomplish its purpose (CP 1Cor 1:14-17). See also comments on 1Cor 1:14-17.

2:7-8 ***What is the "wisdom of God in a mystery" to which Paul refers here?***

(CP also Ro 16:25-26). The *mystery* in V25 here is also the *wisdom of God in a mystery* in 1Cor 2:7-8. It is God's plan to redeem fallen man through Christ's propitiatory death – The Gospel – which was hidden even from the angels and the old testament prophets (CP 1Cor 1:18, 21-23 and 2:1-2 with 1Pe 1:10-12). See also comments on 1 Cor 2:9.

A mystery in the context of New Testament teaching is a divine truth once hidden, but now revealed. There are fourteen such mysteries revealed in the New Testament, which are as follows: (1) The *mystery of the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God* (CP Mt 13:11; Mk 4:11; Lu 8:10). *kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God* are interchangeable terms – they both refer to the realm of God's rule, both in its present earthly aspect and the future eternal kingdom (CP Mt 19:23-24). (2) The *mystery of Israel's blindness to the gospel* (CP Ro 11:25 with 11:1-24 and Ac 28:23-29). We learn from this that the Jews rejected the Gospel of their own volition and blinded themselves to its glorious light. (See also comments on Ac 28:23-29, Ro 9:14-18 and Ro 9:30-33). (3) The *mystery of the Gospel of Christ* (CP Ro 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 6:19 with Ro 1:16-17 and Col 4:1-3). (4) The *mysteries of God* (CP 1Cor 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; Col 2:2). The *mysteries of God* here is God's full revealed truth which Paul was responsible for proclaiming (CP Ac 20:20-21, 27). (5) The *mystery of the rapture of the church* (CP 1Cor 15:51-58 with Jn 14:1-3 and 1Th 4:13-18). (6) The *mystery of God's will* (CP Eph 1:9-12 with 2:4-10 and Ro 8:28-30). The *mystery of*

God's will are again revealed doctrines, like the *mysteries of God* in 1Cor 4:1 (Mystery 4) which we have already studied. (7); *The mystery of Jews and Gentiles being brought together in one body – the church – in Christ* (CP Eph 3:1-11 with 2:11-22). Isaiah prophesied that salvation would come to the Gentiles, but as we learned earlier in 1Pe 1:10-12 he did not understand the prophecy. It was not revealed in scripture until Paul did so in Ac 13:46-47 (CP Isa 49:6 with Ac 13:44-48; 1Cor 12:12-14 and Ga 3:26-28). (8) *The mystery of marriage as a symbol of Christ and the church* (CP Eph 5:22-33).

This passage of scripture is used by many in the contemporary church as a proof text to teach that the church is the bride of Christ, but that is not correct as scriptures plainly teach (CP Rev 19:7-9 with 21:2, 9-10). These scriptures clearly teach that New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ, not the Church. New Jerusalem is allegorically the progenitor, or ancestor of all Christians, being called the *mother of us all* in scripture (CP Ga 4:25-27). New Jerusalem is the Lamb's wife that "made herself ready" in Rev 19:7, and was "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" in 21:2 (CP 19:7 with 21:2). She will be adorned as a bride for her husband with the jewels of Rev 21:18-21 (CP 21:18-21). It is granted to her that she be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints because New Jerusalem will be the eternal home of all the saints of God – Old Testament and new testament alike - from Abel to the very last soul saved in the great tribulation (CP 19:8 with 21:24-27).

In Eph 5:25-27 Paul is teaching us of Christ's infinite love for the church. He compares the relationship of Christ and the church to that of a husband and wife. He is not teaching that the wife symbolises the church or that the husband symbolises Christ. He simply teaches that the relationship of Christ and the church is more easily understood through the dynamics of the marriage relationship between a husband and wife (CP again Eph 5:25-32). See also comments on Eph 5:25-32 and Rev 21:9-10. (9) *The mystery of Christ indwelling believers* (CP Col 1:23-28 with 3:11 and Ro 8:8-11). (10) *The mystery of the spirit of lawlessness* (CP 2Th 2:7 with Mt 24:10-12; 2Ti 3:1-5 and 4:3-4). (11) *The mystery of faith* (CP 1Ti 3:9 with 1Ti 1:19). (12) *The mystery of Christ's incarnation* (CP 1Ti 3:16 with Jn 1:14; 1Pe 1:20; 1Jn 1:1-3 and 3:5,8). (13) *The mystery of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks* (CP Rev 1:10-16 with V20). The general consensus among Christians is that the *angels* of the seven churches here are the "pastors" because of the common belief in the contemporary church that "pastors" are the local New Testament church leaders. But that is not correct as scriptures clearly attest (CP 1Cor 12:28 with Eph 4:11-12). Apostles have been placed first in the divine order of leaders in the New Testament church and it is to them that the letters are addressed (CP Eph 2:19-22). Apostles and angels are both messengers, or sent ones, but angels are never leaders in the church, whereas apostles are. See also comments on Ro 11:13. (14) *The finished mystery of God* (CP Rev 10:7 with 11:15 and 12:7-17). The mystery here is the final consummation of all things as God establishes His eternal kingdom.

2:9 *To what exactly do these words refer?*

Paul adapted these words from Isa 64:4 (CP Isa 64:4). A great many Christians in the contemporary church believe the words Paul spoke in 1Cor 2:9 refer to the wonders of heaven awaiting believers in eternity. But a careful study of the context in which the words were spoken clearly shows that is not correct (CP V1-10). When kept in context it is plainly evident that what Paul said in V9 does not refer to the wonders of heaven awaiting believers in eternity, but rather to the knowledge of God's purpose for man which the Holy Spirit imparts to believers, in this life, which is what V10 clearly teaches. The *wisdom of God in a mystery* in V7 which believers speak, is the Gospel – God's plan of redemption for fallen man through the propitiatory death of His son, Jesus Christ (CP Ro 16:25-26). This wisdom, or deep knowledge imparted by God in respect of divine counsels, is hidden to all but mature Christians. Unbelievers and carnal Christians cannot acquire it, either intellectually or by observation or hearing – it is only revealed by the Holy Spirit, and then only to those that love God (CP 1Cor 2:11-16 with Job 32:8-9; Psa 31:19-24 and Ro 11:33-36). Had the religious leaders of Israel been open to receiving the knowledge of God, they would never have crucified Jesus (CP 1Cor 2:8).

2:15 *What does it mean here that the spiritual man judges all things yet no man can judge him?*

It simply means that because spirit filled believers have the mind of Christ through the impartation of the deep spiritual truths of God by the Holy Spirit, they can examine, reprove, and convince sinners of their evil ways (CP V16). This in no way is passing judgment upon sinners. It is simply a witness to them of their need for salvation. But sinners cannot judge believers, because sinners have no sense of spiritual values. They do not have the mind of Christ – the deep truths of God which the Holy Spirit imparts to believers are foolishness to them – so they are not qualified to evaluate any spiritual aspect of Christians or Christianity (CP V11-14 with Isa 40:13-14 and Jer 23:18). It should be noted here that even though spirit filled believers have the mind of Christ it does not mean that they know everything or that they do not need teachers (CP De 29:29 with Eph 4:11-12).

3:8-10 *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

We learn from this that those who minister the word are merely fellow-labourers together with God. They must not allow a party spirit to factionalize the assembly. God's work involves many different ministries and there is no one ministry superior to another in the divine order (CP 1Cor 12:28-30; Eph 4:7-16). Every minister of the word is equal in importance in the divine order. It is God Himself who is the most important. Nothing can come to fruition without Him, regardless of who initiates it.

Being God's building means that God indwells us through the Holy Spirit – we are the habitation of God through the Holy Spirit (CP 1Cor 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19-22). We should note here

however, that God dwells in men only as they live in union with Him (CP Lu 22:3, see also comments on 1Cor 1:14-17, 3:16-17(A), 3:16-17(B), and 3:18-20)). It should also be noted here too the scriptures which clearly refute the teaching by some that Peter is the rock upon which the church is built (CP 1Cor 3:11; Eph 2:19-21). It is Christ, and not Peter who is the foundation stone of the New Testament church. (See also comments on Mt 16:13-18(A)).

3:12-15 *To what is Paul referring here?*

Paul is referring here to the Judgement Seat of Christ where Christ will evaluate the earthly ministry of every Christian. Gold, silver and precious stones, which can withstand the refining fire symbolise works that endure to God's glory. Wood, hay and stubble represent works having no eternal value. They have not endured to God's glory and thus cannot withstand the refining fire, but Christians will not lose their salvation when this happens because the Judgement Seat of Christ is for all those who go to heaven. It is not to determine our eternal destination but our position in heaven. It is for rewards or loss of them, not salvation (CP Job 23:10; Zech 13:8-9; and Mal 3:1-3 with Ro 14:10-12; 1Cor 4:4-5 and Rev 3:18). See also comments on Ro 14:10-12.

3:16-17 (A) *Who or what is the Temple of God?*

The term *Temple of God* is used metaphorically in scripture of believers, individually and collectively, whose bodies are the dwelling places of the Holy Spirit (CP Ro 8:9 with 1Cor 6:19 and 2Cor 6:14-16). Paul is addressing believers collectively – the church – as the Temple of God in 1Cor 3:16-17 (CP V9 with Eph 2:19-22; He 3:6; 1Pe 2:5; 4:17).

(B) *How can the Temple of God be destroyed?*

While Paul is addressing the church – believers collectively – in 1Cor 3:16-17, his warning of the destruction awaiting those who destroy the Temple of God is directed to believers individually. They were destroying the church from within (CP 1Cor 1:10-15; 3:1-9, 18-21; 4:6-10; 5:1-11; 6:15-20; 7:1; 8:9-13; 11:18-22 with Ga 5:14-26; Eph 4:20-32 and Col 3:1-10). Here we see how the Temple of God can be destroyed by factionalism and contentions, envying and strife, division, pride, sexual immorality, idolatry, drunkenness and fornication etc. But 1Cor 3:16-17 is also a warning to Christians addicted to nicotine and narcotics which destroy the body. They too are destroying the Temple of God and will also forfeit their place in God's eternal kingdom, just as Christians addicted to alcohol in Ga 5:14-26 forfeit theirs. It is also a warning against destroying the Temple of God by suicide (See also comments on 1Cor 3:18-20).

3:18-20 *What do we understand from what Paul says here?*

Paul is teaching against sectarianism in the church here – believers are not to seek the security of partisan favour in men, for all things belong to them in Christ

(CP V21-23). The idea here is that all believers share equally in all the provisions of God and God will cause all things to work together for their good (CP Ro 8:28-30 with 2Cor 4:15-18). In the light of this it is ludicrous for Christians to make their boast in men. This takes us back to Chapter 1 where Paul had to admonish the believers who made up the church in Corinth for creating factions around the apostles (CP 1Cor 1:10-15 with 3:1-9). See also comments on 1Cor 1:14-17, 3:8-11, 3:16-17 (A), 3:16-17 (B).

4:1 *What are the mysteries of God Paul refers to here?*

The *mysteries of God* Paul refers to here is God's full revealed truth which Paul was responsible for proclaiming (CP Ac 20:17-21, 26-27; 1Cor 2:7-8). See also comments on 1Cor 2:7-8.

4:2-5 *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

Paul is teaching here that no human evaluation of anyone's faithfulness to their calling in God is of any account. The only one who can commend them is Jesus Himself, which He will do at the Judgement Seat of Christ (CP V5 and 2Cor 3:1-5 with Ro 14:10-12; 1Cor 3:11-15 and 2Cor 5:9-10). Paul did not consider himself qualified to judge even his own faithfulness. He believed he was blameless but only Jesus could vindicate him (CP 1Cor 4:3-4 with 1Sam 16:7; Pr16:2; 21:2; 24:12 and 2Cor 10:18). We also learn from this that no matter how sincere men's commendation of our faithfulness may be, Jesus Christ is the only one who can vindicate us.

4:6 *What is "that which is written" that Paul refers to here?*

That which is written refers to the scriptures Paul had previously quoted from the Old Testament when admonishing the Corinthian believers for glorying in men (CP 1Cor 1:19 and 31). 1:19 was quoted from Isa 29:14, and V31 was quoted from Jer 9:23-24. The Corinthian believers were full of their own importance and puffed up with pride and arrogance, boasting in favour of one leader above another (CP 1Cor 1:10-15; 3:1-9; 4:7-10,18; 5:1-2; 2Cor 12:20). Believers are to treat God's servants only within the bounds of what is scriptural. They must be honoured, but never exalted (CP 2Cor 3:5; 1Th 5:12-14; 1Ti 5:17; He 13:7, 17, 24).

4:9-13 *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

Here Paul ironically compares the humility and sufferings of the apostles with the puffed-up factional infighting of the Corinthians (CP V6). The apostles were exhibited as a spectacle in the world to both men and Angels to demonstrate the sufferings of Christ. They faced death daily, were scantily clad, and suffered hunger and thirst. Paul himself was lashed five times with thirty-nine lashes. He was left for dead from stoning, but God raised him up again. Three times he was beaten with rods. Three times he was shipwrecked – once he was in the water for a night and a day. He was attacked by robbers. He was

attacked by unbelievers. He was attacked by his own countrymen, and he was imprisoned many times (CP Ac 14:1-20; 2Cor 6:1-10; 11:23-33). Paul suffered many things for the sake of the gospel but he never once deviated from its salvation message.

Paul did not write these things to shame the Corinthians, but to warn them not to accept everyone who pretended to be an apostle and reject those truly raised up by God with the real salvation message of the gospel (CP 1Cor 4:14-17; 2Cor 12:10-12). See also comments on 2Cor 12:7.

5:1-5 *How can handing this man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh be a means of saving his spirit?*

Delivering the man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh does not mean that he was to be handed over to Satan to be literally killed. Rather, it refers to returning him to Satan's domain – the world – by excommunicating him from the church and removing him from its spiritual protection and the blessings of Christian fellowship (CP V13). The purpose of this was remedial, not punishment (CP 1Ti 1:20). Paul's purpose here in delivering Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan is also remedial – to stop them blaspheming. By exposing the man in 1Cor 5:1-5 to the destructive influences of the ungodly world system, the man's fleshly desires were defeated and he was brought back to repentance in order to be saved (CP Lu 15:11-24 with 2Cor 2:3-11)

5:6-7 *What do we understand from what Paul says here?*

To better understand what Paul says here we need to know first what leaven is. Leaven, or yeast, is a fermenting agent used in baking to make the dough rise. It requires time to fulfil the process, but once introduced to the dough, it permeates the whole mass, and the process is irreversible. Because of its pervasive nature leaven signifies a corrupting influence in the church, and throughout the New Testament it is used to symbolise evil (CP Mt 16:6-12; Mk 8:15; Lu 12:1-3; Ga 5:6-9 (see also comments on Mt 13:33)). Paul is teaching in 1Cor 5:6-7 that even as a little leaven permeates the whole mass to which it is introduced, so too one believer's sin can corrupt the whole assembly of believers who tolerate it. The believer who sins must be put out of the church (CP 1Cor 5:1-5, 13).

Paul's teaching here is for our admonition also. If there is any known sin in our own fellowship it must be exposed and the perpetrator excommunicated from the fellowship. If it is known and not exposed and dealt with, then every single member of the fellowship is a partaker of the sin (CP V7). It must be dealt with promptly or it will destroy the whole fellowship (CP De 13:12-17; Josh 6:18; 7:1, 12-13 with Eph 5:11-12; 2Th 3:6, 14-15; 1Ti 5:20). But, as scriptures also teach, we must welcome the perpetrators back into fellowship when they have repented (CP Lu 15:11-24; 2Cor 2:3-11).

5:8 *What feast is Paul referring to here?*

Paul is speaking here metaphorically of the Christian walk. Our Christian walk cannot be tainted with sin. Since Christ our Passover Lamb was sacrificed for sin the Christian walk must be one of sincerity and truth (CP V1-8). Paul used the permeating influence of leaven here in a spiritual sense to describe the manner in which sin defiles that with which it comes into contact (See also comments on 1Cor 5:6-7).

5:9-13 *Does this mean believers have the right to judge?*

Yes, not only do believers have the right to judge those who sin in the church, but the onus is upon them to do so (CP V5, 9, 11, 13 with Ro 16:17-18; Eph 5:11-12 and 2Ti 3:1-5). The fornicators, covetous, idolaters, railers (foul tongued abusers), drunkards, and extortioners referred to in 1Cor 5:11 are professing Christians, and Paul warns other Christians against fellowshiping with them. They are to be put out of the church – excommunicated from fellowship as stipulated in V5 and 13. Otherwise, as we saw in our study on V6-8, the entire fellowship is in danger of being destroyed (CP V1-8). Believers can only judge sinners inside the church though – God judges those outside it (see also comments on 1Cor 5:6-8)

A great many Christians believe that scriptures do not permit them to make any sort of judgement at all against others in the Lord, but as is quite clear from this study, that is not correct. However, when Christians do judge, they must do so as *fellow sinners*, not self-righteously or hypocritically. They must never esteem their morality above another's (CP Mt 7:1-5 [also Lu 6:37, 41-42]; Jn 7:24; 8:1-11; Ro 2:1-3; Ga 6:1-3; Jas 4:11-12). See also comments on Mt 7:1-5.

6:1-8 *Does this mean that Christians should never sue each other at law?*

Yes, although the point Paul is making here is not related to the relative merits of pagan courts to render just judgements, but to the self-identity of believers from the vantage point of eternity. Believers will rule and reign with Christ in eternity, and will judge the world (CP V2 with Psa 49:14; Dan 7:13-14, 18, 27; Mt 19:28; 2Ti 2:12; Rev 1:5-6; 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4; 22:4-5). Believers will also judge angels in the age to come (CP 1Cor 6:3 with Isa 24:21; 2Pe 2:4; Jude 6-7; Rev 20:7-10, 15). In view of the fact that believers have been appointed to judge both humans and angels in the age to come, they should be able to resolve minor matters in this present age among themselves instead of dragging each other to court to settle them (CP Mt 18:15-17).

When believers take each other to court, the witness of the church in the world becomes tarnished, and unbelievers hold the church up to ridicule. The question then arises, who will believe that Christianity is the answer to the world's problems, when Christians cannot even solve their own problems (CP 1Cor 6:4-6). Believers must settle their differences within the jurisdiction of the church itself, as Mt 18:15-17 teaches, or otherwise, if they are wronged, they must suffer it (CP V7-8 with Pr 20:22; Isa 50:6-8; Lam 3:30; Mt 5:38-40; Ro 12:17; 1Pe 3:8-12)

6:9-10 *How are these sins defined?*

The unrighteous here refers to sinful persons, those who break God's law (CP Mt 5:45; Ac 24:15; 1Pe 3:18; 2Pe 2:9). *Fornicators* in this context refers to whoremongers or male prostitutes (CP 1Cor 5:9-11; Eph 5:5; 1Ti 1:10; He 12:6; 13:4; Rev 21:8; 22:15). *Idolaters* are worshippers of idols or anything that is given pre-eminence above God. For New Testament Christians it could be a person, a business or employment, wealth, power, social status, sport, hobby, or even one's ministry. Whatever form it takes it involves the worship of demons, and will condemn the participants to hell (CP 1Cor 5:9-11; 10:7, 14:22). Anyone involved in any form of idolatry is communing with demons, which is what Paul is warning Christians against here. While New Testament Christians would not worship an idol made out of wood or stone, if they give pre-eminence to anything other than God, whether consciously or unconsciously, they are worshipping the demons behind idolatry. Christians must be constantly on guard against making anything other than God central in life because God is totally opposed to idolatry and will not let it go unpunished (CP 1Jn 5:21 with Rev 21:7-8). See also comments on 1Cor 10:14-22 for a detailed study on idolatry.

Adulterers' refers to married persons who engage in sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex other than their marriage partner (CP Lu 18:11; He 13:4). *Effeminate* (KJV), are catamites – males who allow themselves to be sodomised or sexually abused by other males against the order of nature. *Abusers of themselves with mankind* are sodomites – homosexuals, pederasts and lesbians – males and females who perform sexual acts against the order of nature with their own sex (CP Lev 18:22; Ro 1:24-27; 1Ti 1:10). *Thieves* refer to those who steal from others (CP Mt 6:19-20; Lu 12:33-39; 1Th 5:2, 4).

Covetous refers to one with an inordinate desire to have more, especially that which belongs to another (CP 1Cor 5:9-11; Eph 5:5). *Drunkards* are alcoholics – those addicted to alcohol (CP Prov 23:20-21; 1Cor 5:9-11). *Revilers* are those who use abusive speech toward others (CP Prov 25:24; 26:21; 27:15-16). *Extortioners* are those who take advantage of others' poverty or necessity to secure gain for themselves (CP Lu 18:11; 1Cor 5:9-11). The word extortioners is depicted as covetousness in 2 Cor 9:5 (CP 2Cor 9:5 (KJV)). Extortioners are also depicted in scripture as ravaging wolves who take advantage of unsuspecting believers (CP Mt 7:15). These extortioners are unbelievers – false prophets – who rob Christians of the truth of God's word by watering down the gospel. They prey on the immature, the unstable, the gullible (CP Eph 4:14; 2Pe 2:1-3, 9-22). See also comments on Ro 1:18, 1:24-28, 1:29-31, 1Cor 6:9-10, Ga 5:19-21.

6:12-14 *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

Paul is not saying here that all things in an absolute sense are lawful for him, eg. It would not be lawful for him to commit sins listed in the previous study. What he means is, that while certain things are permissible,

they may not be profitable, Paul would not allow himself to be controlled by anything that would not profit his Christian walk (CP 1Cor 9:24-27). It would not be profitable if Paul did things that were legitimate, but caused a brother or sister to stumble (CP Ro 14:13-21; 15:1-3). In 1Cor 6:13 Paul is in effect saying that God has made the appetite for food, and food for the appetite, but not the body for immoral acts. It is for God's glory (CP V13 with V15-20). In V14 we learn that God has resurrected Jesus as a guarantee of our future resurrection (CP V14 with Jn 14:19; Eph 1:3-14).

6:15-20 *Does what Paul says here only apply to prostitutes or is all sexual sin harlotry?*

All sexual sin is harlotry because the believer's body is the temple of God – the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (CP V19 with Ro 8:9; 1Cor 3:16-17; 2Cor 6:14-16; Eph 2:19-22; He 3:6; 1Pe 2:5; 4:17). As the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, believers' bodies are members – bodily parts – of Christ, and believers cannot take a part of Christ and involve Him in any form of sexual sin (CP 1Cor 6:13, 15). In the course of sexual sin believers violate the sacredness of their bodies because sexual intimacy is strictly reserved for the marriage relationship and is approved and blessed by God only in that state. It is only through marriage that the husband and wife become one flesh, as God purposed (CP V16 with Gen 2:24; Song 2:7; Mt 19:4-6; Eph 5:28-31; 1Th 4:3-5; He 13:4). Adultery, fornication, impure desire and degrading passions – evil concupiscence – are grave sins in the sight of God, and believers who commit them, except they repent, will forfeit their place in God's eternal kingdom (CP 1Cor 5:9-11; 6:9; Ga 5:19-21; Eph 4:22-24; 1Th 4:3-7; He 12:14-16).

7:1-2 *Is Paul teaching here that marriage is inferior?*

No, Paul is teaching here that rather than be involved in illicit sex it is better to marry. *To touch a woman* (V1) is a euphemism in scripture for sexual intercourse (CP Gen 20:6; Ruth 2:9; Pr 6:29). Paul personally preferred the single state but he is not advocating it for others. This is made clear in 1Cor 7:2 where he acknowledges that because of the potential for single believers to fall into sexual immorality, it is better that they marry (CP also V7-9). See also comments on 1Cor 7:7-9.

7:3-6 *What does Paul mean by what he says here?*

Paul teaches here that married believers are not to refuse to cohabit with each other because neither of them has complete authority over their body to deny the other's conjugal rights. Both must recognise their dependence upon each other. Abstinence is permitted for a period of time for fasting and prayer if mutually consented to (CP V5 with Joel 2:16) but the husband and wife must resume marital relations immediately afterwards. This is so neither of them will be tempted to sin through lack of self control when sexually aroused. If sexuality is not given its proper context

for expression, it is in danger of spilling over into sexual immorality.

7:7-9 *What is the gift Paul had that he alludes to here?*

Paul is not alluding to his unmarried state here as many in the church believe, but to his gift of self control which God gave him that led in turn to his being able to remain unmarried, or celibate – a state of being he chose for himself. We learn this from the phrase *...it is good for them if they abide* (KJV), *even as I* in V8, which refers to Paul's unmarried state. *Abide* or *remain* (NKJV), is a verb in what is known as the aorist tense in the Greek construction of the sentence signifying Paul's unmarried state as a permanent and final decision: *As I have always been and always will be*. Paul's unmarried state was his own choosing and he was able to maintain it through the gift of self control with which God had endowed him. Not every Christian has this gift and in V9 Paul commands those who do not have it, to marry. No one can serve the Lord effectively if dominated with unfulfilled sexual passion (CP also V1-2). All this clearly refutes the teaching by some in the church that Paul had at one time been married (see also comments on Mt 19:10-12, Ac 8:1 and Ac 22:3-5).

7:10-11 *See comments on Mt 5:31-32.*

7:12-15 *Why does Paul declare here that he is the originator of this command and not Jesus?*

This command originated with Paul and not Jesus because desertion by an unbelieving spouse did not arise as a ground for divorce during Jesus' earthly ministry. The church had not been founded then and so Jesus did not have to address it. It only became evident as the church expanded in Paul's time, and even though the command did not originate with Jesus, it is the inspired word of God nonetheless and must be obeyed by the church (CP V25 and 40 with 2Pe 3:14-16). We learn from V16 here that distorting Paul's teachings leads to eternal damnation. This clearly proves that whatever Paul taught was inspired of God and must be obeyed by Christians (CP 1Th 2:13 with 2Ti 3:16-17). See also comments on Mt 5:31-32.

7:14-16 *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

The word *sanctified* here does not mean salvation. It is used in a metaphorical sense of an unbeliever, through marriage, being brought under the sanctifying influence of the believing spouse. The unbeliever benefits from the spiritual influence and divine favour in the life of the believing partner, and while ever there is contact between them there is hope that the unbelieving partner will turn to faith in Jesus Christ. Children of the marriage are also included in the spiritual influence and divine favour in the life of the believing parent. Those under the age of accountability are legitimate before God and are already assured of a place in His eternal kingdom (CP Lu 18:15-16 with 2Sam 12:19-23)

If an unbelieving spouse wants to leave the marriage because of the other's faith they must be allowed to for the sake of peace in the family. The believing partner must not prevent the other from leaving. As we learned in our study on 1Cor 7:12-15 believers can divorce for this reason – God will not hold them responsible for the marriage break-up, and they can remarry. Conversely, as V12-13 clearly teach, if the unbelieving spouse is happy to remain in the marriage the believing spouse cannot force them to leave (CP V12-15). V16 teaches that though a believing partner may want to hang onto the marriage to try to convert their unbelieving spouse, there is no assurance that is what will happen, so it is better to let them go if that is what they want (See also comments on Mt 5:31-32).

7:17-24 **What is the theme of Paul's teaching here?**

The theme of Paul's teaching here is that the Christian calling is not defined by outward circumstances. Outward circumstances neither add to, nor detract from who we are in Christ, and therefore our status in life should not be altered to try to improve our standing with God – *circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing* (CP V18-19 with Ro 2:28-29; Ga 3:28; 5:6; 6:15). Our Christian calling is defined by obeying God's commandments, not by changing our status in life (CP 1Cor 7:19 with Jn 14:15; 15:14; Ro 2:13; 1Jn 2:3-5; Rev 22:14). Even being a slave does not hinder one being a Christian – Christians are serving God, not man, whether they be slaves or free (CP 1Cor 7:20-23 with Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-24; 1Ti 6:1)

Paul is not condoning slavery in 1Cor 7:20-23. The issue is remaining with God and not departing from Him to become a slave to human criteria for status (CP V24 with Ga 5:1; Php 4:1). The gauge for one's status is being in the Lord, which makes slaves free, and the free slaves (CP Ro 6:18-22)

7:26 **What was the "present distress" Paul refers to here?**

Most bible commentators believe the *present distress* Paul referred to here is persecution the church was suffering at that time, or impending political upheavals that would greatly affect the church. However, elsewhere in scripture the Greek word for distress, **anagke**, is only translated as such where persecution is explicit in the context (CP 2Cor 6:4-5; 12:10; 1Th 3:7). 2Cor 6:4 is a bit confusing too – *distresses* here is not from **anagke** but **stenochoria**, which has in view distresses from within, such as *anguish* or *discomfort*. They are not related to persecutions, whereas *necessities* is from **anagke** and therefore should have been translated *distresses* in light of the persecutions explicit in the context. In other places in scripture where **anagke** is used apart from persecutions it is translated *necessity* (CP 1Cor 7:37; 9:16; 2Cor 9:7; Phm14; He 7:12; 9:16).

In the context of 1Cor 7:26 persecutions are not explicit either. Paul's main concern here is that once Christians marry they can no longer give their undivided attention to the things of God. This is not teaching that Paul was against marriage, even though

he himself was unmarried by choice. Far from it as our study on 1Cor 7 clearly shows (CP V2, 8-16; 36-38). Paul is simply teaching us all in 1Cor 7:26 and the following verses that there is a higher loyalty than even that to our covenanted partners in marriage – God (CP V27-35 with Col 3:2).

Trouble in the flesh in 1Cor 7:28 refers to the demands of marriage that are not encountered in the single state. *Time is short* in V29 means that God's work is urgent and Christians cannot allow anything to hinder them doing it (CP V28-29, 31 with Lu 9:59-60; Ro 13:11-12; 2Ti 4:2-4; Jas 4:13-15; 1Pe 4:7). When studied in context it is clear that the *present distress* in 1Cor 7:26 is not referring to persecutions or impending political upheavals affecting the church, but to the compelling force or necessity for married Christians to look after each other which restricts their capacity to devote all of their attention to God. And it is in this context also that V36-40 must be understood (CP V36-40).

7:39 **What does "only in the Lord" mean?**

Only in the Lord means that while a Christian widow is free to remarry, the man she marries must also be a Christian. This applies to all believers who marry or remarry (CP Ro 7:2-3 with 2Cor 6:14-16). See also comments on Mt 5:31-32.

8:1-13 **What is the core teaching of this chapter?**

The core teaching here is that mature Christians demonstrate their love for those weaker in the faith by not participating in the things their faith allows, but which the weaker Christian's faith does not, and which would cause them to sin if they participated (CP Ro 14:13-23; 1 Cor 10:19-33). The specific issue of idol-sacrificed meat in 1Cor 8 is simply the vehicle Paul uses to teach the timeless truth that love for God results in love for His children. If we say we love God, how can we do anything that could cause another of His children to perish, for whom Christ also died (CP 1Cor 9:19-23; Ga 5:13). How Christians show their love for each other is how they prove their love for God (CP Jn 13:34-35; 1Cor 13:1-7; 1Jn 3:11, 14, 16, 18; 4:11-12, 16-21; 5:1-2). The teaching emanating from 1Cor 8 does not only apply to meat sacrificed to idols, but to anything at all – what we drink, what we wear, what we participate in – that could cause a weaker brother or sister to fall away from the faith and perish (CP Mt 18:6-14). See also comments on Ro 14:1-9.

8:5 **Is Paul acknowledging the existence of other divine beings here?**

No, Paul is not acknowledging the existence of other divine beings here. He is simply referring to the supposed beings represented by the idols the pagans worshipped and sacrificed meat to (CP V1, 4, 7, 10; 10:14-30). The pagans designated the idols *gods* and *lords*, but in 1Cor 8:6 Paul asserts that there is only one God – The Father, and one Lord – Jesus Christ (CP V6 with Eph 4:4-6). All other gods are false (CP Psalms 115:1-8; Isa 44:10; Jer 10:3-18; Ac 19:24-27).

9:1-2 *Why was Paul vindicating his apostolic office here?*

This ties in with Paul's teaching in Ch 8 where he taught the principle of self-control concerning meat sacrificed to idols; how Christian love dictates that it must be avoided if eating it offends other Christians (CP 8:1-13). In Ch 9 Paul illustrates how he applies this same principle of self-control in his own life as an apostle, but as is obvious in V3 there are some in the church who question his apostolic office (CP V3-14). Paul had the same right as other apostles, including Christ's brothers and Peter, to marry (although as we learned in Ch 7 he chose to remain celibate), and to be supported financially by the church. He rightly argues that soldiers do not pay their own way in a war, and neither do owners of vineyards not partake of the fruit they grow. He also argues that when God commanded Moses in the Old Testament not to prevent oxen from eating as they trod out the corn, he did not say it for the sake of the oxen, but for the sake of humans (CP V7-10 with Mt 10:9-10; Lu 10:7; Ga 6:6; He 7:1-11).

But it was more important to Paul to win souls to Christ than to exercise his rights to be financially supported by the church and hinder the gospel. His reward was preaching the gospel for free. No one could say that he was abusing his power in the gospel (CP 1Cor 9:15-18). Paul lived free from all obligations to men, yet he served every man as if he were his personal slave. He did this to win them to Christ (CP V19-23 with 2Cor 4:5; Ga 5:13). When Paul said he became all things to all men that he may win some to Christ, it was strictly within the bounds of God's word. He did not change scripture or compromise the truth. For example we find how he "became a Jew to win the Jews" three times in the book of Acts (CP Ac 16:1-3; 18:18; 21:17-26). Paul's main goal in life was not to exercise his rights, but to exercise self-discipline to win men to Christ (CP 1Cor 9:24-27 with V16 and Ro 1:14-16).

10:1-5 *What is Paul's purpose in saying what he does here?*

What Paul says here continues on from what he said in 9:27. Paul wants Christians to understand that one may be redeemed, partake of divine grace, and yet later be rejected of God because of evil conduct (CP 9:27 with 2Cor 13:5). Ancient Israel had a redemptive experience similar to the experience of believers in the New Testament. The cloud Paul refers to in V1 is the pillar of a cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, in which God dwelt, and guided the Israelites on their journey in the wilderness (CP Ex 13:21-22; 14:19-20, 24; Nu 14:14). The pillar of a cloud and the pillar of fire remained with the Israelites throughout the whole forty years of their wilderness journey (CP Ex 40:34-38 with Mt 28:20 and He 13:5). The sea they all passed through is the Red Sea (CP Nu 14:25; 21:4; De 1:40; 11:2-5 with Ex 14:9, 13-16, 21-22, 29).

The Israelites also had sacramental ordinances in the wilderness similar to those of New Testament Christians. Their baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea is illustrative of New Testament believers' baptism in water, and into Christ and His body, the church (CP 1Cor 10:1-2 with 1Pe 3:18-21

and Ro 6:3-5; 1Cor 12:13; Ga 3:26-27). The *spiritual meat* the Israelites ate and the *spiritual drink* they drank are typical of the elements of Christian communion (CP 1Cor 10:3-4 with Ex 16:4, 13-17; 17:1-7 and Jn 6:31-33, 47-58; 1Cor 11:23-26). The *manna*, or bread from heaven which the Israelites ate in the wilderness typified Jesus as the bread of life in the New Testament. And the *rock* from which they drank was another Old Testament type of Jesus as the water of life, or the living water (CP Ex 17:1-6 with Jn 4:6-14). As the Israelites received bread from heaven and water from the rock to sustain them in the wilderness, so New Testament Christians are also sustained by feasting on the living bread, and drinking of the living water – Jesus.

As despite all their blessings a whole generation of Israelites died in the wilderness because of unbelief, and so failed to enter the promised land, so too New Testament Christians for their part are exhorted to take warning lest they fail also (CP 1Cor 10:6-12). Paul teaches here that what befell the Israelites is a warning of what will befall us if we do not heed the warning. The words *examples* in V6, and *ensamples* in V11 mean type or figure. The history of the failure of the Israelites is summed up for us in Psa 78 (CP Psa 78:1-72). See also comments on He 3:7-11, 4:11-12, 6:4-6, 10:26-31; 2Pe 2:20-22.

10:9 *When was Christ tempted by the ancient Israelites?*

(CP Nu 21:4-9). The *Lord* here who sent the fiery serpents among the Israelites is **Jehovah** – God. Paul teaches in 1Cor 10:9 that this is Jesus, whom the Israelites tempted. (*Tempted* here means doubting God's power and aid). This proves that Jesus was not eternally the son of God as so many in the church believe – He was an equal member of the Godhead from all eternity (CP also Isa 6:1-5 with Jn 12:37-41). We learn from what John says here that *The Lord* Isaiah saw sitting upon the throne in Isa 6:1-5, was also Jesus, which is further proof that Jesus was not eternally the son of God – He was God (CP Psa 45:6-7; Mic 5:2; Jn 1:1-2; 3:13; 8:56-58; 17:5; Ac 20:28; Ro 9:5; Php 2:5-8; Col 2:8-10; 1Ti 3:16; Tit 2:13; He 1:8-12; 2Pe 1:1-2; 1Jn 1:1-2; 3:16; Rev 1:8, 11, 17-18; 2:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13). These scriptures all clearly refute the teaching in the church that Jesus was eternally the son of God. He became the son of God at His incarnation – when He took on human form (CP Gen 49:10; Nu 24:17; Psa 2:7; Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; Mt 1:18-25; Lu 1:26-35; 2:11; Jn 1:14; Ga 4:4; Php 2:5-8; He 1:5-6; 5:5). These scriptures are not exhaustive but representative of the many proving that Jesus was not eternally the son of God. (For a more detailed study on the subject see comments on Lu 1:35B, Jn 12:41, Ac 20:28, 1Ti 3:16 and 2Pe 2:1-2).

10:13 *What is the way of escape from temptation Paul refers to here?*

The word *temptation* here means a state of trial in which God brings His people through adversity and affliction in order to encourage and prove their faith and confidence in Him (CP Mt 6:13 [also Lu 11:4]; 26:41 [also Mk 14:38]; Lu 8:13; 22:28, 40, 46; Jas 1:2-3, 12; 1Pe 1:6-7; Rev 3:10). It should be noted

here that Mt 6:13 and Lu 11:4 are not inferring that God puts temptation in men's way. This simply reflects the petitioner's desire to avoid being in any testing situation whatever which could result in them sinning. This should be the desire of every believer. The way of escape God has made for Christians suffering temptation is not to escape the temptation itself, but to be able to bear it without succumbing to sin. God's grace enables Christians to do this. It empowers them to overcome every temptation and resist sinning (CP Ro 5:15, 17, 20-21; 6:1-2, 14; Php 2:12-13; Tit 2:11-14; 2Pe 1:2-4; 2:9; 1Jn 3:6-10; 5:4, 18). See also comments on Ro 5:15.

10:14-22 *What are we to understand from what Paul says here?*

The majority of Christians see this passage as merely referring to meat sacrificed to idols and idolatrous feasts, but there is much more to it than that. Paul teaches here that although an idol is nothing in the world, it does represent something that is not the true God. An idol is not only an image of something, it is also a representation, whether physical or imaginary, of some other thing. Idolatry manifests itself in various forms, but whatever form it takes it involves the worship of demons (CP V19-21 and 8:4 with Psa 106:36-39). Anyone involved in any form of idolatry is communing with demons, and that is what Paul is warning Christians against in 1Cor 10:14-22.

We should note here that the Old Testament conception of idolatry has been broadened in the New Testament to include covetousness (CP Eph 5:5; Col 3:1-5). Covetousness expresses the inordinate desire to make something other than God central in life (CP Lu 12:15-34 with Mt 6:19-21, 24 and Lu 16:13-15). This is a word in season for contemporary Christians in light of the proliferation of *prosperity doctrines* being taught in the church. While contemporary Christians would not worship an idol made out of wood or stone, those who accumulate wealth and possessions are nonetheless involved in idolatry, and worship the demons behind covetousness.

Christians must learn to distinguish between things idolatrous and the things of God because God is totally opposed to idolatry and will not let it go unpunished. (CP 1Cor 10:22 with De 32:16-17, 21; Jer 25:5-6; 1Cor 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21; 1Jn 5:21; Rev 21:7-8; 22:15).

10:23-33 *What does Paul mean by what he says here?*

Christians are permitted to eat food offered to idols on the basis of Psa 24:1 (CP 1Cor 10:25-26 with Psa 24:1 and 1Ti 4:4-5). The only qualification for eating food sacrificed to idols is that the law of love must be observed, and a Christian's own freedom to eat such meat must be waived if the conscience of a weaker Christian is likely to be damaged and cause him to stumble (CP 1Cor 10:23-24; 28-33 with Ro 14:13-23 and 1Cor 8:1-13). See also comments on Ro 14:1-9 and 1Cor 8:1-13.

11:3-16 *Is this teaching that women should wear a head covering in church?*

No. The head covering Paul is referring to here is long hair. He is not alluding to a veil or shawl as so many in the church believe. This is confirmed for us in V15 where the literal Greek to English rendering of the verse according to **The Interlinear Bible**, is as follows:

But if a woman should adorn her hair, it is a glory to her; because the beautified hair has been given to her instead of a veil.

Women have been given long hair as a head covering **instead** of a veil, not as well as a veil. Sadly this is not highlighted in most bibles, including the KJV, and therein lies the reason for it being a difficult passage to interpret (CP V15).

Power on her head in V10 refers to a woman's long hair as the sign of her subjection to her husband's authority over her (CP V3 with Gen 3:16; Eph 5:22-24 and 1Cor 11:10). The phrase *because of the angels* indicates that angels are always present in the assembly, and the divine order must always be observed (CP Eph 3:9-10). Paul closes the subject of head covering for women in 1Cor 11 with the assertion in V16 that if anyone wants to wear a veil or a shawl, they can, but they are not bound by any church ordinance to do so (CP V16). See also comments on Tit 2:3-5.

11:14 *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

Nature in this context means native sense of propriety; the natural sense of what is right and proper (CP Ro 2:14). *Shame* in 1Cor 11:14 means dishonour, ignominy, disgrace. What Paul is in effect saying in 1Cor 11:14 is that our own natural sense of what is right and proper tells us that it is dishonouring to a man to have long hair like a woman's. Long flowing locks are a woman's glory, but they degrade a man (CP 1Cor 11:15).

11:20-22 *What is this meal that Paul censures the Corinthians for partaking of here?*

The Corinthian Christians actually treated this meal as the Lord's supper, thinking that they were honouring Christ. But they had perverted the meal into a shameful orgy of sinful and selfish feasting by wealthy Christians which humiliated poor Christians. Paul was strongly critical of their behaviour and reminded them of the solemnity of the occasion for the Lord's supper (CP V23-26 with Mt 26:20-29; Mk 14:17-25 and Lu 22:14-22). Christians have to examine themselves before partaking of the Lord's supper (CP 1Cor 11:27-33). Paul draws out for us here the implications of the nature of the Lord's supper: to eat and drink unworthily is to partake of the Lord's supper in an indifferent, self-centred, careless and irreverent manner, treating the Lord's supper as a common meal and the bread and the cup as common things, not attributing to them their solemn symbolic importance as representing the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. Those who do this despise the ones for whom Christ died, and are held liable for Christ's death. They are guilty of the body and blood of the

Lord, and eat and drink future judgement upon themselves (CP V27, 29 with 2Pe 2:13 and Jude 12).

We must never treat the Lord's supper as though it were meaningless. The Corinthian Christians did and they paid for it, as V30 teaches. Many of them were weak and sickly, and many had died. None of this teaches however that we have to morbidly re-enact Christ's death every time we partake of the Lord's supper, but we have to be sensitive to His suffering and ignominious death on the cross that brought healing for our bodies and salvation for our souls (CP Isa 53:4-5; Mt 8:16-17; He 9:28; 1Pe 2:24). Before partaking of the Lord's supper Christians should examine themselves to ensure that they are where they should be in God, and judge themselves to see if there are any sins that need to be repented of and confessed before God (CP 1Cor 11:28, 31 with 2Cor 13:5). If any Christian is conscious of any sin in their life not yet confessed and repented of, or are cherishing anything in their heart not consistent with the Christian walk, they should not partake of the Lord's supper. This does not mean that Christians have to be perfect to partake; if they are honestly and earnestly striving after holiness, doing all that lies within them to live according to God's word, and being sincerely repentant over any sins committed and confessed, they are at perfect liberty to partake of the Lord's supper (See also comments on Mt 26:26-29).

11:31-32 *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

We learn from this how God chastens His children. It is not by inflicting sickness or calamity upon them, or by allowing them to be overcome by their circumstances in life, as so many Christians in the contemporary church believe. He chastens them by His word (CP V28 and 2Cor 13:5). Christians are chastened by God when they judge themselves by His word for any sins they may have committed. God's word judges us; it convicts us of sin and it causes us to repent of the sin and confess it before God (CP Psa 32:5; Pr 28:13; 1Jn 1:9). This is what Paul means in 1Cor 11:32 when he says *but when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord*. The word *chastening* refers to the activity directed toward a child to influence conscious will and action. It means to instruct, to educate, to correct (CP 2Ti 3:16 with Psa 94:12; He 12:3-11 and Rev 3:19).

Because sickness and calamities are generally thought to be God's chastening of His children, a great many Christians' faith to believe implicitly in God's word has been seriously undermined, and as a result they are unable to receive healing or overcome their circumstance in life. Christians must never sit under any teaching that would cause them to question the authority of God's word, which teaches that God does not inflict evil upon His children for any reason. He only gives His children good things (CP Mt 7:9-11 with Jas 1:12-17).

12:1-11 (A) *What exactly are these gifts and how do they operate?*

These are called the gifts of the Spirit. *Diversities of gifts but the same Spirit* in V4 means that there are

different gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit – the visible and tangible evidence of His activity – operating through individual members of the body (the church), to edify (build up), and sanctify (set apart), the whole body. *Differences of administrations but the same Lord* in V5 means that all the ministries in the church are intended to serve the church in one form or another, reflecting the servant ministry of Jesus Himself. Paul's assertion that there are "diversities of operations but it is the same God that worketh all in all" in V6, signifies that all gifts of the Spirit are direct operations of the power of God in believers producing sure results. **Kenneth Wuest's "Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament"** puts it like this:

"And there are different distributions of various kinds of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different distributions of divine energy motivating these gifts in their operation, but the same God who by His divine energy operates them all in their sphere."

Every member of the church has a spiritual gift, and the Holy Spirit displays God's power through each member as a means of helping the whole church (CP V 7 with Ro 12:5-6). All the gifts of the Spirit contribute to the common good - the life and growth of the church. They are distributed among the members of the church as the Holy Spirit sees fit (CP V8-11). Let us have a closer look at these gifts.

Word of Wisdom is a wise utterance applying the revelation of God's word or a flash revelation given by the Holy Spirit for a specific situation or problem that may already exist or which will arise in the future (CP Ac 27:27-44). This is not to be confused with the wisdom we are to seek from God for our daily living (CP Jas 1:5).

Word of Knowledge is an utterance inspired by the Holy Spirit that reveals certain knowledge about people or circumstances which the speakers could not possibly know by themselves. It is often connected closely with prophecy (CP Mt 16:13-17; 17:24-27; Lu 22:10-12; Jn 4:5-19; Ac 5:1-10; 27:8-26).

Faith, as a gift of the Spirit, is the supernatural ability to believe God implicitly without human doubt, unbelief or reasoning, for the extraordinary or the miraculous to happen (CP Ac 3:1-8; 14:8-10; 28:1-6). This is not to be confused with the faith we received to believe for our salvation (CP Ro 10:14-17). Neither is it to be confused with the faith given by God to every Christian with which to appraise or measure the character and extent of any spiritual gifts they have (CP Ro 12:1-3). Nor is it to be confused with the faith we have to exercise to believe that whatever we ask according to God's word, He will do it for us (CP Mk 9:23; 11:22-24; 1Jn 5:14-15).

Gifts of Healing are supernatural powers bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon certain individuals, empowering them to heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases or any physical ailment whatever without any human aids or the use of any medicines (CP Lu 13:10-13; Ac 28:7-9). Gifts of healing are not to be confused with the

authority of believers to lay hands on the sick or to pray over them for their healing, or to stand in agreement with other Christians believing for someone to be healed (CP Mt 18:19; Mk 16:18; Jas 5:14-15).

Working of Miracles is a supernatural power to alter the normal course of nature and to counteract natural laws (CP Mk 4:35-39; Jn 2:1-11; 6:1-14, 15-21; Ga 3:5; He 2:3-4). Working of miracles manifested many times in the Old Testament too - when Moses held out His rod toward the Red Sea (CP Ex 14:15-29), also Elijah performed 16 recorded miracles, and Elisha recorded 32 (CP 1Ki 17:1-2 - 2Ki 2:12 with 2Ki 2:13-9:3; 13:20-21), etc.

Prophecy is a supernatural utterance in the speaker's native tongue. It is a spontaneous utterance of a revelation directly from God under the impulse of the Holy Spirit to strengthen the faith of the congregation and to build up their spiritual life and moral resolve to remain faithful to Christ and His teachings. It can also expose the condition of an unbeliever's heart and bring him or her to a conviction of their need for God. It is the gift of the Spirit believers should covet the most (CP 1Cor 14:1-12, 22-26, 39). The gift of prophecy here should not be confused with the ministry gift of prophet in Eph 4:11 which Christ gave to the church to prepare and equip it for God's service. That is a ministry gift given only to certain ones in the church whereas the gift of prophecy as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit is potentially available to everyone baptized in the Spirit (CP Ac 2:17-18, 19:1-6).

Discerning of Spirits is a special ability to properly discern and judge prophecies and to distinguish whether or not any utterance is inspired by the Holy Spirit, demon spirits, or the human spirit. It is also the ability to detect the spirits behind certain human activities (CP Mt 24:4-5; Lu 9:51-56; Ac 8:18-23; 13:6-12; 16:16-18; 1Jn 4:1-6).

Divers Kinds of Tongues are supernatural utterances in other languages not known to the speakers. The speakers are communicating directly with God under the influence of the Holy Spirit, completely bypassing their minds. They may be offering up prayers, praise, blessings or thanksgiving to God, or they may be bringing a message for the congregation from God. Speaking in tongues must be regulated in meetings. Tongues are a sign for unbelievers to know that God is present in the midst of the congregation, but they will also put unbelievers off if the congregation does not regulate their use (CP Isa 28:11; Mk 16:17; Ac 2:1-11; 1Cor 13:1; 14:1-23, 27-28).

Interpretation of Tongues is the ability bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon individuals in the congregation to understand and make known the meaning of an utterance spoken in another language. This ability may be given to the one making the utterance or to someone else. Those who have the gift of tongues should also pray for the gift of interpretation. Tongues in the congregation must be accompanied by an Holy Spirit inspired interpretation that communicates the content and meaning of the utterance to the congregation. This is to edify (build up) the church. Tongues plus interpretation equals prophecy. Tongues on their own

do not edify but prophecy does (CP 1Cor 12:10; 14:5-13, 27-28).

These are all visible and tangible manifestations of the Holy Spirit operating through individual believers for the common good of the church. They are what the contemporary church calls the nine gifts of the Spirit. Some of the gifts may manifest through the same believers on a regular basis, and some believers may have more than one gift manifest through them, but all are given according to the will of the Holy Spirit when the need arises, and according to the earnest desire of the believer (CP Ro 12:5-8; 1Cor 12:7, 11, 31).

There are many other gifts, graces, talents, ministries and functions in both natural and spiritual areas to minister to the body of Christ, and it is the responsibility of every believer to find their gift and minister accordingly (CP 1Cor 12:28-31).

The gift of **helps** here does not refer to the function of deacons in the church as many suppose but to the practice of those who devote themselves to helping others in need in the church (CP Ac 20:34-35; 1Cor 16:15). *Addicted* in 1Cor 16:15 (KJV) means "devoted". The household of Stephanus was devoted to ministering to both the material and spiritual needs of other Christians. While Christians are expected to help all in need for God to be glorified in their works (CP Mt 5:16), other Christians needing help must come first (CP Ga 6:10).

Governments in 1Cor 12:28 (KJV) is derived from a Greek word **kubernesis**, which means to pilot, to steer, or guide a ship. Here it is used metaphorically of those who constitute the governing body of the church - the elders or presbyters (CP Ro 12:3-13).

Gifts of grace are inward desires as well as abilities given to believers by the Holy Spirit. In V3-4 Paul exhorts believers to stay within the sphere of service for which the Holy Spirit has fitted us. We are to avoid self-exaltation and render mutual service in the measure of the gift we each have. Our estimate of our gifts is to be governed by how much faith God has given us. *Office* in V4 means "function". The list of gifts both here and in 1Cor 12:28 is not exhaustive, but representative of ministries in the church.

The gift of **ministry** in Ro 12:7 refers to every sphere of service in the church: ministering to both the physical and spiritual needs of others in the church (CP Ac 6:1-6); visiting sick Christians and those in prison (CP Mt 25:31-40); older women ministering to younger women (CP Tit 2:3-5); being given to hospitality (CP Lu 14:12-14; He 13:2). It also includes music ministry, teaching religious education in schools, personal evangelism, handing out tracts, etc, the list goes on.

The gift of **exhortation** in Ro 12:8 is the special ability and power to proclaim God's word in such a way that it encourages the hearers and stimulates and strengthens their faith in God's word so as to produce in them a deeper dedication to Christ. Paul had the gift of exhortation and he is exercising it in Ro 12 where he delineates - shows by describing - our responsibility to God. In V1-2 he exhorts us to place our whole being at the disposal of God as a living sacrifice separated from

the world and totally conformed to the way of God (CP V 1-2). In V3-8 he exhorts us to find our function in God's work and in V9-21 he exhorts us to fulfil our function in holiness (CP Ro 12:9-21).

The gift of **giving** is the virtue of one who is free from pretence and hypocrisy, with an openness of heart manifesting itself in the liberality of the giver who generously supports the work of the gospel and contributes to the physical and financial needs of others in the church. This was undoubtedly one of the spheres of service in the church at Cenchræa for which Paul commended Phebe in Ro 16:1-2 (CP Ro 16:1-2; 2Cor 8:1-8; 9:10-15).

He who sheweth mercy - the gift of **mercy**, also in Ro 12:8, defines those who are called to function specially in the sphere of Christian relief or acts of charity to the sick, the poor and the afflicted in the church. It is a gift that has to be exercised with a readiness of mind, joyful eagerness and gladness of heart (CP Ac 9:36). Dorcas' "almsdeeds" here were the outward expression of her gift of mercy. *Almsdeeds* means active compassion or mercifulness.

All these scriptures prove that every Christian has a gift or a sphere of service in which to minister to the church. The important thing is to find our gift or sphere of service, and minister in it (CP 1Pe 4:10). But it is also important to remember that Christians have a measure of responsibility in all spheres of service; to the unsaved as well as the saved. Every Christian is a servant sent of God, whether it be to other members of the church or to the unsaved. The fact that we may not be an evangelist does not free us from the responsibility of personal evangelism (CP 2Cor 5:17-19). We may not be a teacher but that does not exempt us from teaching God's word (CP Mt 28:18-20; 2Ti 2:2). We may not have the gift of exhortation but that does not prevent us from ministering to those in need of exhorting (CP Ga 6:1-2; 1Th 5:11; He 3:12-14; 10:23-24). We may not have the gift of giving, but we are all responsible for giving liberally into the work of the gospel and to those in need (CP Lu 3:9-11; Ga 6:6-10; Eph 4:28; Jas 2:14-17; 1Jn 3:16-19). Finally we may not all have the gift of mercy, but we are to show mercy nonetheless (CP Pr 14:31; 21:13,21; Mt 5:7). There are many more scriptures designating our responsibilities to God but these will suffice for now.

(B) Are these gifts still valid for today?

Yes, although a great many sincere Christians claim they are no longer valid, having ceased with the first century church. But it is inconsistent with scripture to teach that God only empowered the first century church for service and that the empowering is not for today. The church Christ is building is not yet complete, and if His command to disciple all nations is to be fulfilled in the earth, the church today needs the same empowering the first century church had (CP Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:17-20; Ac 2:36-39; 5:32). *Them that believe* in Mk 16:17, *all that are afar off* in Ac 2:36-39, and *them that obey* in 5:32 all refer to every believer in Christ from the day of Pentecost until God's redemptive plan is fulfilled in the very last repentant sinner saved before Christ comes back to

take the church to heaven with Him at the first resurrection. This is qualified by Jesus when He said in Mt 28:20 *...and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*. This clearly refutes any teaching that something so integral to God's redemptive plan was only a temporary activity that would cease with the first century church. Christ was not only talking to His disciples of that era but to His disciples throughout the whole of the church age (CP 1Cor 13:8-10, 12). Most bible commentators agree that *when that which is perfect is come* refers to the consummation of this present age when Jesus comes again to take the church back to heaven with Him at the first resurrection (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18). When we see Jesus face to face in the eternal state there will no longer be any need for the gifts of the Spirit. But until then they are still valid, or scriptures are meaningless. (See also comments on Ac 2:1-4 (B), 19:11-12; 1Cor 13:8-12).

12:12-17 What is the point Paul is making here?

Paul is emphasizing here the equality of every member of the church, regardless of their spiritual gifts (CP V4-7, 11-12 with Pr 25:27; Ro 12:3-5; Eph 4:16). There is no room for pride, and no need to feel inferior in the body of Christ for every believer is essential to the proper function of the body. As the eye in a human body is no more important than the hand, nor the head more important than the feet, so too in Christ's body, the church - no member, or the gift they exercise, is more important than another (CP 1Cor 12:18-21). It is unscriptural and unwise to assume that because someone exercises a spectacular gift that person is more spiritual than someone with a less spectacular gift. Neither does possessing a gift mean that God approves of all the possessor says or does (CP De 1:17; 16:19; 2Chr 19:7; Ac 10:34-35; Ro 2:10-11; 1Cor 12:20-25; Jas 2:8-9).

God incorporated diversity into the body so there would be no division; that all the members alike should have a mutual interest and care for each other (CP Ro 12:10,16; 15:1-2; 1Cor 13:4-7; Ga 5:26; Eph 5:21; Php 2:1-4). If one member suffers, the others all share that suffering. If one is honoured, the others all share in that honour. The way God designed the human body is a model for understanding our lives together as a church. Every part is dependant upon every other part whether they are visible or not. Each part is essential to the well being of the whole (CP 1Cor 12:25-27 with Eph 4:12,16). Not everyone is an apostle or prophet or teacher. Neither is everyone a worker of miracles, or have gifts of healing. And they do not all bring messages in tongues, or interpret. But every member of the church has a gift, and that gift is as important as any other (CP 1Cor 12:7, 28-30 with Ro 12:5-6).

It should be noted here that the baptism referred to in 1Cor 12:13 does not refer to either baptism in water, or the Holy Spirit, as many in the church believe (CP V13 with Ro 6:3-11; Ga 3:26-28; Eph 4:1-6; Col 2:8-13). A great many Christians in the contemporary church believe that those scriptures all refer to water baptism or baptism in the Holy Spirit, but neither is correct, as is plainly evident here. It is the element

into which one is baptised that determines what type of baptism it is, and clearly neither water nor the Holy Spirit is the element here. Furthermore it is the Holy Spirit who is the baptiser here. These scriptures all teach how the Holy Spirit baptises believers into Christ, uniting them to the body of Christ – the church – and making them spiritually one with other believers. This is how the church is constituted, and it is the only baptism that saves. Neither being baptised in the Holy Spirit nor water saves. It is only by being baptised into Christ and into His body, the church, that one can be saved (for a better understanding of what being baptised into Christ means see comments on Ro 6:3-5).

12:28 *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

We learn from the fact that Paul specifically numbered them, that God has appointed Apostles first in the divine order of government in the church, with prophets second and teachers third (CP Eph 4:7-12). Paul's point though in 1 Cor 12:28 is not to highlight the divine order of government in the church, but to emphasize the fact that God incorporated diversity into the body (CP 1 Cor 12:29-30). Not everybody functions in the same ministry or spiritual gift, but all are integral to the well-being of the body, regardless of their gift (CP V18-24). For a more detailed study on the divine order of government in the church see comments on Ac 11:27, 13:1-4; 20:17, Ro 11:13, Eph 4:11-12, 1 Ti 3:1-7 and 1 Pe 5:1-3.

12:31 *What is the "more excellent way" Paul refers to here?*

While Paul is exhorting believers here to earnestly desire the best spiritual gifts, the mere possession of spiritual gifts is not a real indication of one's spirituality or closeness to God (CP 13:1-3). Love is the only real indication of one's spirituality and closeness to God - possessing spiritual gifts without having love amounts to nothing. *The more excellent way* Paul refers to in 1 Cor 12:31 is the exercise of spiritual gifts in love. Love is the only context in which spiritual gifts can fulfil God's purpose in the church, and it must be the governing principle of all the manifestations of the spirit (CP 1 Cor 13:4-7).

This is the love Christians are to manifest toward one another at all times: love that is long-suffering, patient, kind; never envious or jealous; never haughty or boastful, or proud; never acting unbecomingly or indecently; is not self-seeking; is never rude or discourteous; does not become irritated or angry; does not keep account of wrong done to it; does not rejoice in that which is evil, but in that which is true. It bears up against all things; is always eager to believe the best; always hopeful, always enduring. This is the same love wherewith Jesus loves us. It seeks the welfare of all and works no ill to any. It is not an option for Christians to love like this - it is commanded throughout scripture (CP Jn 13:34-35; 15:12; Ro 12:9-10,12-21; 1Cor 12:23-26; Ga 5:13-15; Eph 5:1-2; Php 2:1-4; Col 3:12-14; He 13:1; 1 Pe 1:22, 2:17; 4:8; 1 Jn 2:8-10; 3:10-21, 23-24; 4:7-12, 16-21). We learn from 1 Jn 4:7-12 and 16-21 here that it is only by the expression of our love for one

another like these scriptures all teach, that God's love is perfected in us. The effectiveness of God's love in us demonstrates itself in our love for each other. This is the perfect love that casts out fear in V18, which is the same thing which 1 Jn 3:13 teaches - Christians in whom God's love is perfected through their unconditional, self-sacrificial love for other Christians, need have any fear of not being saved. They can confidently look forward to Christ's coming again knowing they have ensured their destiny in eternity with Him. They have proved their love for God by their love for each other (CP Php 1:9-11, 1Th 3:12-13; 4:1, 9-10; 2Pe 1:5-11 with 1Jn 3:18-24). See also comments on Jn 13:34-35; Ro 13:8; Ga 5:1-8, 5:13; 1Th 3:12; 1Jn 2:7, 3:15, 3:16-18, 3:19-22, 4:7-21; Rev 4:7-13.

13:8-12 *When will the gifts of the spirit cease?*

The gifts of the spirit will cease *when that which is perfect* is come. Most bible commentators agree that this refers to the consummation of this present age when Jesus comes again to take all the saints of God back to heaven with Him at the first resurrection (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:19-23, 51-54; 1Th 4:13-18). When we see Jesus face to face in the eternal state there will no longer be any need for the gifts of the spirit. Our imperfect knowledge in this present age will be full and instantaneous in the future state of glory (CP Ro 8: 18-19). Some bible commentators claim that *when that which is perfect is come* refers to the completion of the canon of scripture at the end of the first century, at which time the gifts of the spirit also ceased. But there is nothing whatever in scripture that validates this claim. In fact the opposite is true - scriptures clearly attest that the gifts of the spirit will remain until the end of the present age (CP Mt 28: 19-20; Mk 16: 17-18; Jn 14:12-14; Ac 2: 36-39; 5:32).

Them that believe in Mk 16:17, *He that believeth on me* in Jn 14:12-14, *All that are afar off* in Ac 2:36-39, and *them that obey* in Ac 5:32 all refer to every believer in Christ from the day of Pentecost until God's redemptive plan is fulfilled in the very last repentant sinner saved and filled with the Holy Spirit prior to Jesus' return. It includes us today and all who will believe in Christ in the future. Jesus qualifies the life-span of what Mk 16:17, Ac 2:36-39 and 5:32 teaches with His declaration in Mt 28:20 *...and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*. Christ was not only talking to his disciples of that era but to His disciples throughout the whole of the church age. That clearly refutes any teaching that something so integral to God's redemptive plan for mankind was only a temporary activity that would cease with the first century church, when the canon of scripture, which instructs us to *covet* the gifts of the spirit, was completed. It is a contradiction in terms. The gifts of the spirit will cease one day, but that time is not yet. (See also comments on Mk 16:17-18, Ac 2:1-4(B), 19:11-12; 1Cor 12:1-11(A) and 1Cor 12:1-11(B)).

14:1-5 *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

We learn from this that while we are to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, we should give preference to the gift of prophecy over tongues. The reason for this is that unless they are interpreted tongues cannot be understood by anyone else in the assembly and therefore only edify the speaker. Whereas prophecy, because it is spoken in the everyday language of the assembly, edifies the whole assembly. (*edify* means to spiritually profit, build up, strengthen, and establish in the faith). Paul is not depreciating tongues as a lesser gift, but is simply contrasting them with prophecy on the basis that the main purpose in all spiritual gifts is to excel in edifying the church (CP V12, 26, 39-40). The Corinthian Christians were behaving like children in the assembly, talking over the top of each other in tongues, quoting Psalms, teaching doctrine, bringing down interpretations of tongues, prophesying and singing spiritual songs etc. There was no order in the assembly, only confusion. Paul rebuked them and commanded that every gift had to be exercised separately and in order, so everyone in the assembly would be edified, believers and unbelievers alike (CP V23-33).

This applies for today too. At the most only three messages in tongues can be spoken in an assembly, and then only if they are interpreted. Otherwise the speakers have to remain silent. The same applies to prophecy – only three prophecies can be proclaimed also, and if, while someone is speaking, another is hearing from the Lord, then the one speaking must defer to the one hearing from God. In this way all who have the gift of prophecy can speak, one after the other, and everyone will learn and be encouraged and built up in the faith. Anyone with a prophecy to proclaim has the power to stop themselves and wait their turn. Everything must be done decently and in order (CP V39-40).

14:34-35 *Is Paul only forbidding the women in Corinth speaking publicly in the church here or does this apply to all women in the church in all ages?*

Paul is dealing with the disruption of worship by women in the church in Corinth here. He is not forbidding them exercising spiritual gifts, otherwise he would be contradicting what is taught elsewhere in scripture (CP Ac 2:17-18 (Joel 2:28-29); 21:8-9; 1Cor 11:5, 13). Paul is forbidding wives in particular disrupting the service in 1Cor 14:34-35, by talking over the top of their husbands and asking questions which could more appropriately be asked of their husbands at home. The women were obviously out of control, having no regard for their husband's headship over them, because Paul had to rebuke them for not being submitted to their husbands as God had commanded after the fall (CP 1Cor 14:35 with Gen 3:13-16; 1Cor 11:2-10; Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1Pe 3:1). The Corinthians - both men and women – behaved as though God's word started and finished with them, and they were not accountable even to God for their behaviour. Paul rebuked them and told them that if they really were spiritual they would know that what he said was a Divine command that had to be obeyed, whether they liked it or not (CP 1Cor 14:36-38).

Although Paul was dealing with wives in particular in a specific situation in 1Cor 14:34-35, he was nonetheless laying down a principle of submission that is binding on all women, in all churches, in all ages (CP 1Ti 2:8-14). Paul is dealing with the general conduct of all women in the church here. It has to do with church order and the position of men and women in church and work. In V8 Paul wants men, as opposed to women, to conduct public worship in the church. *Men* here is from the Greek word **aner**, which refers specifically to a male person. In V12 he strictly forbids women holding any position of authority over men in the church. Women cannot be teachers to instil doctrine and instruct men. They can teach other women, girls, and children (boys and girls), and they can assist their husbands in their ministerial duties (CP V11 with Ac 18:24-26; Php 4:3; Tit 2:3-5), but women cannot hold any position of leadership in the New Testament church over men.

This has nothing to do with the culture surrounding women in Paul's time either as many in the contemporary church teach to justify the ordination of women today. There is no allowance in scripture whatever that allows God's word to be altered to suit the cultural changes in women that would justify their ordination to public ministry in the New Testament Church (CP Psalms 89:34; 119:89; Mt 24:35 (also Lu 21:33); 1Pe 1:23-25). God's word never changes - it is exalted even above His name (CP Psalms 89:34; 138:2). What Paul forbade in 1Timothy is still forbidden. Any claim that Paul's prohibition of women holding public office in the church had to do with the culture of the time is clearly refuted in the very next two verses in 1Ti 2 when Paul explained that his opposition to women in public ministry in the church is found in the original order of creation, and in the circumstances of the fall of man (CP 1Ti 2:13-14). Women's subordinate role to men was not decided by Paul due to the culture of the time. It was established by God as part of His divine order of creation. Man (Adam), was formed first, then woman (Eve). Man was not deceived but woman was, and it is as a result of woman's vulnerability to deception and her subordinate role to man in the divine order that prohibits women from exercising authority over men in the New Testament Church (CP Gen 2:18; 3:1-6, 13-16). See also comments on Ro 16:1-2; Ga 3:28; 1Ti 2:8-15, 1Ti 3: 1-7 and 1Ti 3:8-13.

15:1-11 *Why is Christ's resurrection from the dead so integral to the gospel?*

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is not just one of the held beliefs of the Christian faith; it is the primary and essential truth of the whole gospel of salvation. Without that truth the gospel of salvation has no purpose - salvation is not a reality for believers (CP V12-19). Christ's resurrection is the foundational principle of the new birth. Faith in a risen Saviour is the very essence of Christian belief. It is a condition of our salvation (CP Ro 10:8-10). It is the resurrection, not the cross, which is the focal point of the New Testament. As crucial as the cross was to God's plan of salvation, and without detracting in any way from the significance of Christ's pain and suffering on the cross as the central fact of christianity, because the cross was the price Christ

paid for our redemption, it was the empty tomb and the risen Christ that made resurrection life for believers possible. The resurrection transformed Christ's death on the cross into the gospel of life (CP 1Cor 15:3-4 with Ac 26:23; Ro 4:24-25; Eph 1:19-23; 1Pe 1:3-5, 21).

On the cross Jesus was no threat to His enemies, but in the tomb He was. His enemies were not concerned that He would get down from the cross, but they were concerned that He would rise up from the grave. His resurrection had been prophesied in the Old Testament, and He had foretold it Himself (CP Psa 16:10; 49:15; 68:18; Isaiah 26:19 with Mt 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; 27:63-66). As well, Jesus had also raised up three dead people: the daughter of Jairus (CP Mk 5:22-23; 38-43), the son of the widow of Nain (CP Lu 7:11-15) and Lazarus, Mary and Martha's brother (CP Jn 11:41-45). Their resurrection fulfilled God's purpose for that particular time, but they eventually died again, whereas Jesus can never die again, and neither will those who are redeemed unto eternal life with Him (CP Jn 3:16, 36; 5:24; 11:25-26; 1 Th 5:9-11; 1 Jn 5:11-12).

Christ won the victory over sin and death for believers through His resurrection, and since He is raised from the dead, believers have the assurance that the next step in God's plan of salvation is their resurrection into Christ's glory. This is the certainty we have because He has been raised from the dead, and He said, "...because I live, ye shall live also" (CP Jn 14:19; 16:16-22; Ro 5:10-11; 1 Cor 15:20-23; 2 Cor 4:10). Believers do not live anticipating physical death as unbelievers do, but in anticipation of Jesus coming again for us, and whether we be living or dead at that time we shall rise together with Him in glory (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1 Cor 15:51-58; 1 Th 4:13-18). We learn from these scriptures that not only does Christ's resurrection from the dead guarantee the future resurrection of the righteous dead, but it also guarantees the *catching away*, or the *rapture* of the saints still living when Jesus comes back. The scriptures also clearly express the Lord's eternal purpose and plan for believers. The ultimate purpose of His coming back for them is so that they will be with Him in all eternity, and taking them to heaven is simply the first step in His purpose (CP Ro 8:28-30; Eph 1:5, 11-12; Col 1:15, 18; 2Ti 1:9). See also comments on Lu 21:36, Jn 5:28-29, Jn 14:1-3, Ro 10:9, 1Cor 15:51-58, 1Th 4:13-18, 2Th 2:7.

15:24-28 *How are we to understand this?*

The end here refers to the end of Christ's millennial reign when all enemies of God have been defeated and cast into the lake of fire at the great white throne judgement (CP Rev 20:7-15). At this time Jesus will hand the kingdom over to God. Heaven and earth will be renewed and together, Jesus and God will reign over the kingdom in the new earth for all eternity (CP Dan 7:13-14; Rev 21:1-3, 22-23; 22:3). We should note in closing here that the one excepted from being put under Jesus' feet is God Himself (see also comments on Rev 20:4-6, 20:11, 20:11-15, 21:3-8).

15:29 *What is the meaning and purpose of baptism for the dead and is Paul validating the practice here?*

Paul offers no opinion on whether being baptized for the dead is right or wrong here and there is no elaboration on the practice anywhere else in scripture so we cannot speculate on its meaning and purpose. Paul is simply showing up the inconsistency of the Corinthians; they rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, yet embraced the practice of being baptized for the dead. It was a contradiction in terms – if there is no resurrection, why be concerned for the dead at all (CP V12 and V20 with V29). Also, why would Paul risk death for the gospel's sake if there is no resurrection of the dead and this life was all there was. If there is no life to come Christians would be better off eating, drinking and being merry before they died (CP V19,30-32 with Jn 3:3-5; Ac 26:23; Ro 4:24-25; Eph 1:19-23; 1 Pe 1:3-5, 21).

15:33-34 *What are we to understand from what Paul says here?*

In view of the future resurrection of believers Paul exhorts the Corinthian Christians here to stop sinning and live righteous lives (CP Ro 13:11-14; Eph 5:14-17; 1 Th 5:6-8). Some in the church who did not know God were corrupting the morals of those who did and Paul rebuked the Christians for fellowshiping with them when he said, "I speak this to your shame."

15:35 *What is the point of these questions Paul raises here?*

Paul pre-empts the doubters here by raising these questions himself which he then goes on to answer (CP V36-38). By using the analogy of a seed planted in the ground that dies and produces a new bodily form, Paul illustrates how God will give believers who die a new resurrection body (CP V39-41). Here Paul explains that with so many bodies already existing in God's created universe - both earthly and heavenly, and so vastly different from each other - creating a new resurrection body for believers who die is nothing out of the ordinary (CP V42-44). The believer's old body is subject to corruption - death - but their new resurrection body will be incorruptible - it will never die - just like Jesus' body. It will never again be shamed by the vileness of sin, but will forever be glorified. It will never again be weak and sickly, but will forever be strong, and it will never again be just a natural human body, but will forever be a supernatural spiritual body. Paul then goes on to say that the first man, Adam, was made a living being, but the second Adam - Jesus - was made a life-giving spirit. Every human being received their natural bodies through the first Adam, but every believer who dies will receive their supernatural spiritual bodies through Jesus. Adam's body was the prototype of the natural, Christ's is the prototype of the supernatural (CP V45-49). Every human being has a body like Adam, but in the resurrection every believer will have a body like Jesus (CP V54-58 with Php 3:20-21; Col 3:4; 1 Jn 3:2).

15:51-58 *What is Paul describing here?*

Paul is describing here both the resurrection of dead saints and the "catching away", or *rapture*, of those still living at the time (CP V19-23 with Php3:20-21 and 1Th 4:13-18). We learn from 1Th 4:14 that when Jesus comes back for the saints who have died He will bring with Him their spirits and souls to be united to their resurrected bodies. The corruptible bodies of all the dead saints will rise up from their graves and be made incorruptible - they will no longer be subject to decay and degeneration and death – while the mortal bodies of those still living will be made immortal – they too will no longer be subject to death. Everyone will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Php 3:21 tells us that our new resurrection bodies will be like Christ's, after His resurrection. That does not mean that they will look the same, but that they will be changed from mortal to immortal; from a natural body to a spiritual body; from corruptible to incorruptible; and from weakness and humiliation to glory and power (CP 1Cor 15:53-54 with Lu 24:36-43; 1Jn 3:2). See also comments on Jn 5:28-29, Jn 14:1-3; Php 3:20-21; 1Th 4:13-18, 5:1-11; 2Th 2:1-3, 2:6-8; Rev 1:19, 3:7-13.

The dead in Christ in 1Th 4:16 refers to all the righteous dead – Old Testament saints and New Testament alike. Christ died for all the saints of God from Abel onward. It was the death of Christ as full payment for all men's sins that made it possible for God to justify sinners and vindicate His righteousness, regardless of the biblical era (CP Mt 1:21; 26:27-28; Lu 1:68-79; Jn 1:29; Ac 17:30-31; Ro 3:23-25; 5:12-19; 2 Cor 5:17-19, 21; Ga 3:22; He 9:15; 1 Jn 2:2), see also comments on Ac 17:30, Ro 3:24-26 (B) and Ro 4:1-5.

When our corruptible bodies have been made incorruptible, and our mortal bodies have been made immortal in resurrection power, then death will have lost its sting and the grave will have been defeated (CP 1Cor 15:54-56 with Isaiah 25:8 and Hos 13:14). The hope of resurrection from death for believers makes all their efforts and sacrifices in the work of the Lord worthwhile. Nothing done in Christ's name is

wasted in light of the future resurrection and eternal glory for believers. (See also comments on Ro 10:9).

16:1-4 *See comments on 2Cor 8:1-7*

16:10 *What was Timothy's fear which Paul alludes to here?*

Timothy was of a timid disposition and Paul is exhorting the Corinthians here not to do anything to provoke fear in Him. They were to receive him as a labourer in the Lord the same as Paul himself, and not despise him in any way (CP V11). There appears to be an element of fear in Timothy's natural disposition because of his youth (CP 1Ti 4:12-16; 2Ti 1:6-8). Timothy had allowed some in the church at Ephesus to treat him contemptuously and it obviously affected him physically (CP 1Ti 5:23). Timothy had a stomach disorder. In 1Ti 4:12 Paul was encouraging Timothy to assert the dignity of his office in the church at Ephesus and not let anyone push him around (CP V12). See also comments on 1Ti 5:23, 6:14, 6:20, 2Ti 1:7.

16:22 *What does "Anathema Maranatha" mean?*

What Paul is saying here concerns believers, not unbelievers. 1Cor 16:22 is a reminder to all those who profess to love Christ, that if they do not love Him, they are given up to the curse and doomed to eternal damnation (CP Ga 1:8-9). *Anathema* does not mean punishment intended as discipline, but being given over to Divine condemnation. *To not love the Lord* means to not obey Him. Many professing Christians claim to love the Lord yet do not obey His word, and the only way we can prove our love for Him is by our obedience to His word. (CP Jn 14:15, 21; 1Jn 2:3-6; 3:24; 5:2-3; Rev 14:12; 22:14 with Mt 7:20-27). *Maranatha* means "O Lord come", or "our Lord cometh". It focuses on the time when Jesus returns and will visit judgement upon all those who do not love Him (CP Jude 1:14-15; Rev 22:11-12).