

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year Five
Lessons 40-52

Fourth Quarter
I Corinthians 5--II Corinthians 1

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FOREWORD

STANDARD-SETTERS

A timid boy entered Rugby, the famous preparatory school of England. The boy slept in large halls, twenty or thirty in a room. The lad came from home where he had been accustomed to kneel for prayer before he slept. The first night his mind was troubled as to WHAT TO DO ABOUT HIS PRAYERS. The temptation was to say his prayer in bed, but he knew that would be cowardly. After a hard struggle he dropped on his knees for prayer. The roughest boys in the room were touched, and many followed his example. His act stamped itself indelibly on the school, making it easier for hundreds of boys to live TRUE TO THEIR HOME IDEALS.

The world's greatest need today is for STANDARD-SETTERS! Most of our lives are spent in the presence of other lives. The great need is for stalwart souls that can rise about the atmosphere about them and CREATE A NEW ATMOSPHERE OF MORAL HEALTH AND POWER. Every man who can do this is like the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2)

Standard-setters would have stood in Corinth for

- I. The Divine Origin of Christianity (I Corinthians 1-3).
- II. The Divine Order in the Church (I Corinthians 4-11).
- III. The Divine Objectives of the Christian (I Corinthians 12-16).

Standard-setters anywhere will be, like Boy Scouts, prepared for

- I. The Endurance of the Christian (II Corinthians 1-7).
- II. The Ministrations of the Christian (II Corinthians 8-9).
- III. The Commendations of the Christian (II Corinthians 10-13).

Will you be a STANDARD-SETTER in your home, your church, your community, and on your job?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 40

Page 1

I Corinthians 5

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 5:5

Memory Verse:

“Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (I Corinthians 5:5).

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

“CHURCH DISCIPLINE properly includes the whole work of educating, training, admonishing and correcting the members of the church ‘in all things that pertain unto life and godliness.’” (Hayden, “Church Polity,” page 97).

Discipline includes EXCLUDING THE UNREPENTANT WICKED MEMBER when all measures to win him have failed (Matt. 28:18-20; II Tim 3:16, 17; Titus 2:11, 12; I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6, 11-15).

The Church Is God’s Household

The Church IS God’s Household. His Household is made of “living stones,” men and women and young people. “Firmly beneath is the foundation, God’s messengers and prophets, the actual foundation-stone being Jesus Christ himself. In HIM each separate piece of building properly fitting into its neighbor, grows together into a temple consecrated to God You are all part of this building in which God himself LIVES BY HIS SPIRIT” (Eph. 2:21, 22; I Pet. 2:4-8). The members who compose this church, God’s building, must be HOLY, PURE IN WORD AND DEED “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

“Shall I come... with a rod... Love?” (I Cor. 4:21)

In closing his section on divisions among the Corinthians (I Cor. 1:10-4:21), Paul asks, “Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” (I Cor, 4:21). “The rod” here refers to discipline strong, plain teaching to chastise them for their bad behavior. The church was derelict, guilty of neglect of duty. “Orthodoxy,” straight thinking, and “orthopraxy,” straight living, are scriptural Siamese twins. They cannot be separated without death to both!

I. Scandal in the Church (I Corinthians 5:1-5)

A. The deed – dirty and devilish (I Cor. 5:1, 2).

“It is reported commonly...” (I Cor. 5:1): It is “Everywhere noised abroad.” It was not the case of secret sinning but bold and brazen and publicly accepted vice. It was such a sin as one blushes to mention. Probably the household of Chloe (I Cor. 1:11) brought Paul this sad news. The church had not written about this problem (I Cor. 7:1).

“There is fornication among you.” One of the members was living with his “father’s wife,” his step-mother. “She was probably a pagan and hence is not rebuked.”

Unchastity was not in disrepute in Corinth. The temple of Aphrodite (Venus) in the time of Paul had a thousand priestesses, harlots, a gigantic brothel in the name of religion. “Corinthianize” meant to live in sexual wantonness and license.

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The Corinthian Christians were permitting sin to go on in the church fellowship which even the pagan Corinthians did not practice! The man had taken, probably after the death of his father, his father's wife, his own stepmother. Greeks and Romans (Cicero, Oratio pro Cluentio) condemned this sort of incest. The Jewish law condemned such incest (Lev. 18:8; Deut. 27:20).

“And ye are puffed up...” (I Cor. 5:2): Instead of administering discipline, the church was proud of its liberality in harboring such a person. Those of the same faction with this scoundrel justified his rascality! The least the church could have done, rather than be puffed up, was to mourn for shame as if for one dead. Decent self-respect demanded instant repentance or expulsion, instead of pride in his rascality! Shame that this church had TIME FOR DIVISIONS, but none to correct this immoral derelict.

B. The duty (I Cor. 5:3-5).

“For I... have judged already” (I Cor. 5:3); Paul had already decided or judged, as an inspired apostle, as though present, that **DRASTIC ACTION WAS NECESSARY**. As a “called apostle” (I Cor. 1:1) The action was not Paul's individual judgment, but God's will for the church at Corinth, and for us today. The entire church membership was to gather. The entire body was to administer discipline (verse 4). Notice Paul does not usurp the prerogatives of the local church. He does not do the disciplining himself for that belongs to the church. He does not exercise autocratic powers but directs their course of action.

The church had neglected to follow Christ's instructions while only a few knew of the sin (Matt. 18:15-19). Now a sin commonly known must be publicly dealt with by the church. Elders and minister must not be derelict in their work and allow such conditions to exist in a local church.

“To deliver such an one unto Satan...” (I Cor. 5:5): This certainly means expulsion from the church (verse 2). This moral derelict was to be excluded from church fellowship. He has surrendered to the lust of the flesh. Hand him over to the devil's domain. Let him know he has forfeited all title to a place with God's holy people. Willful offenders have to be expelled. Do not regard them as enemies, but admonish them as brothers (II Thess. 3:14, 15).

“For the destruction of the flesh...” Both for physical suffering as in the case of Job (Job 2:6) and for conquest of the fleshly sins, remedial punishment. Fleshly desires had caused the sin. These evil desires must be destroyed. The humiliation of excommunication, the sense of one's lost condition, was well adapted to bring the immoral man to himself by repentance.

“That the spirit may be saved...” The purpose of excluding the man was to **WAKE HIM UP**, let him come to himself like the prodigal son (Luke 15:17-20). He could “deny himself” (Matt. 16:24) the shameful sin of incest with his stepmother. He must decide to “**DIE**” to the practice of sin; he must **STOP SINNING** (Rom. 6:6-13). This “destruction of the flesh” merely means that in repentance he breaks off the shameful alliance with his stepmother. The actual act of sin is not a sudden occurrence. Men do not go to pieces suddenly. When a dam gives way, it appears as if the destruction was the work of a few seconds. But back of those seconds were months of deterioration and weakening of the vital foundation. So sin in a carnal Christian, like a cancer, slowly destroys character. The crash comes in time, unless sin is forsaken!

Paul's motive is not vindictive. He wants to reclaim the man to Christ. The final salvation of the man in the “day of Christ” is the goal. This is to be attained not by condoning his sin, but by his forsaking the sin. Sensuality is not far from carnality. The carnal Corinthians were walking as men instead of “new men.” They were living out of character. Such; spirit led to jealousies, quarreling and boastings. It also led one of them to the gross and wicked sin of sensuality – incest – with his stepmother. The only security is to live in the strength and power of Christ.

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II. Discipline in the Church (I Corinthians 5:6-13)

A. The design of the discipline (I Cor. 5:6-8).

“Your glorying is not good” (I Cor. 5:6): The object of Christian discipline is “that the spirit may be saved” (verse 5b). What shall be done to prevent a repeating of this scandal? Paul dwells upon the criminal carelessness of the Corinthians in their failure to punish the gross offender. He intimates another prime purpose of church discipline – the protection of the moral life of the church. “Your glorying is not good,” not beautiful in view of this plague spot, this cancer of immorality on the church. They needed a surgical operation at once instead of boasting and pride, “puffed up” (verse 2). They were blind and stupid by rejoicing in their teachers and in their spiritual attainments, while tolerating such shameless sin.

“Know ye not that a little leaven...” This is a familiar figure of speech. A small amount of yeast soon affects the entire lump of dough. Leaven is the Scripture’s type of evil, never of good. One drop of foul water will contaminate a whole reservoir of pure water. YET ONE DROP OF PURE WATER does not appreciably improve the foul water. A “little sin, IF LEFT ALONE, WILL CONTROL THE WHOLE MAN, and all whom he influences (Rom. 6:16, 23).

“Purge out therefore the old leaven...” (I Cor. 5:7). The church by united action was to clean out the leaven of impurity by putting out the fornicator, before this awful sin and sinner contaminates the whole church. The Jew was required to GET ALL LEAVEN OUT OF HIS HOUSE BEFORE THE PASSOVER (Ex. 12:15f; 13:7).

“A new lump”: Modern methods of disinfection after a contagious disease suggest the complete putting away of the infection. The church at Corinth was to make a fresh start as a new community with the contamination removed.

“For even Christ our Passover...” This refers to the death of Christ on the cross as the paschal Lamb (Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7; John 1:29; Heb. 9:22; I Pet. 1:18, 19). The Lamb was slain on Calvary, yet the Corinthian Christians HAD NOT GOTTEN RID OF THE LEAVEN OF OPEN, SHAMEFUL SIN.

“Therefore let us keep the feast...” (I Cor. 5:8):

Life for us as followers of Christ is a holy feast. If we have accepted Christ, we should exclude from our lives all sin, all the old leaven” which characterized us before we knew and obeyed Christ, all “malice and wickedness.” Christians must ransack the soul as carefully and religiously as the Hebrew would ransack his house from cellar to garret for any trace of evil.

Paul was writing about the time of the Jewish Passover, since it was before Pentecost (I Cor. 16:8). Let the Christian keep on keeping the feast, a perpetual feast, and KEEP THE LEAVEN OUT. The Lord’s Supper is the spiritual equivalent of the old Passover (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-29). Not to keep the communion is to die spiritually (John 6:53-58). The Christian must put away a vicious disposition and all evil deeds.

B. The limits of discipline (I Cor. 5:9-13).

1. As to the world (I Cor. 5:9, 10).

“I wrote unto you in an epistle...” (I Cor. 5:9): In an epistle earlier than our First Corinthians. It has not been preserved to us. What a “find” it would be if a bundle of papyrus in Egypt should give it back to us!

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Paul commanded the Christians not “to company,” **HAVE NO DEALINGS WITH THOSE GUILTY OF IMMORAL CONDUCT**, those who sell their bodies for lust. Treat such as outcasts unless they repent (Eph. 5:5; Gal. 5:19-21).

“Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world...” (I Cor. 5:10): Paul’s instruction had been misunderstood as forbidding all dealings with immoral persons, and had been denounced as an impossible requirement.

Paul puts a limitation on his prohibition and confines it to members of the church. He has no jurisdiction over the outsiders – this world of the covetous or over-reachers; the licentious and the idolaters like the modern gangsters who form a combination of liquor, lewdness, and lawlessness for money and power. They would be called bandits, hijackers, and grafters today. The apostle gives no encouragement to needless association and intimacies with men of the world.

2. As to the church (I Cor. 5:11-13).

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company...” (I Cor. 5:11): Paul plainly tells the Corinthian Christians to “have no interchange of hospitality which would imply brotherly recognition” with immoral people, and

“Covetous”: A person greedy for gain for self-indulgence.

“Idolater”: An idol worshipper.

“A railer”: One whose tongue is loose at both ends. A vicious gossip (James 3:6).

“Extortioner”: Grafter.

For a Christian to have social intercourse with such people and to act as if **THEY WOULD BE SAVED**, if they **KEEP WILLFULLY ON SINNING**, IS TO **DISGRACE THE CHURCH AND POSSIBLY CORRUPT IT** (I Cor. 15:33). The church must “judge those... within” (verse 12). God will take care of those “without” (verse 13). “Therefore put away from among yourselves (withdraw fellowship of the church from him) that wicked person.” The church tolerant toward evil is the church paralyzed. In the spirit of Christ let discipline be carried out in every Church of Christ, for three reasons:

1. To reform the offender (verse 5).
2. To preserve the moral purity of the church (verse 7).
3. To defend the good name and fame of the church (verses 11-13).

Do you agree that “Possibly the time has come now for the Church to consider the discipline, not only of men guilty of the gross sins with which this section of the epistle especially deals, but also of those who are ‘greedy of gain,’ and ‘guilty of extortion,’ and ‘abusive in their language?’” He concludes by saying, “Such action might cause some consternation in our complacent modern Church, but it might bring a stirring, surprising, awakening message to an unbelieving world.”

Questions

1. What does “Church discipline” include according to Hayden in “Church Polity,” page 97?
2. Does discipline include “EXCLUDING the unrepentant wicked member when all measures to win him have failed?”
3. If this is true, do you know of any recent cases where “wicked unrepentant members have been excluded? If not, why not?
4. In what two ways did Paul say he “will come to you shortly” (I Cor. 4:19, 21)?
5. What is the meaning of “rod” as used by Paul (I Cor. 4:21)?
6. Will you read Numbers 5 in connection with this lesson? What is the general teaching of Numbers 5?
7. Who had probably brought the sad news to Paul of the immorality at Corinth (I Cor. 5:1; 1:11)?
8. Was unchastity in disrepute in Corinth? What is the meaning to “Corinthianize?”
9. How many of the Corinthian Christians had committed gross, immoral sin (I Cor. 5:1)?
10. Why, then, did Paul rebuke the entire church (I Cor. 5:2; 12:26)?
11. What had Paul decided (I Cor. 5:3) and why (I Cor. 1:1)?
12. Was this to be an action by the entire church (I Cor. 5:4)? By being “puffed up” what teaching of our Lord had the church neglected (Matt. 18:15-19)?
13. What is the meaning of “deliver such an one unto Satan” (I Cor 5:5; II Thess. 3:14, 15)?
14. What is the purpose of delivering the fornicator to Satan (I Cor. 5:5)?
15. To what is the influence of evil compared (I Cor. 5:6)?
16. What are the believers told to do with the leaven (I Cor. 5:7, 8)?
17. Who is “our Passover” (I Cor. 5:7)? To what does this refer (Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7; John 1:29; Heb. 9:22; I Pet. 1:18, 19)?
18. How are Christians to “keep the feast” of living the Christian life daily with Christ “our Passover” (I Cor. 5:8; 16:8; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-29; John 6:53-58)?
19. How should our treatment of wicked unbelievers who are “without” in the world differ from our treatment of the wicked who call themselves brothers in Christ (I Cor. 5:9-13)?
20. For what three reasons should Christian discipline be carried out (I Cor. 5:5, 7, 11-13)? Should this discipline include those “greedy of gain,” the “guilty of extortion,” and those “abusive in their language?”

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 41

Page 1

I Corinthians 6, 7

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 6:19, 20

Memory Verses:

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (I Corinthians 6:19, 20)

THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

The lack of discipline among the Corinthian Christians resulted in Divisions (I Cor. 1:1-4:21). Three cases of DERELICTION are dealt with in I Corinthians 5 and 6, Last Lord’s Day we studied about the discipline of the wicked man who was living with his stepmother (I Cor. 5:1-13). Today let us consider

I. The Church and Its Controversies (I Corinthians 6:1-20)

A. Disputes – the church and legal controversy (I Cor. 6:1-11).

“Dare any of you... go to law before the unjust” (I Cor. 6:1) Paul chides the Corinthian Christians for having lawsuits before pagan courts. Christians will be associated with God in the final judgment (verses 2-7). Disputes among saints should be settled between saints, and wholly within the confines of the church.

Two principles were stated by the apostle:

1. It is shameful for Christians to be continually contending before pagan judges (verses 1-6).
2. Lawsuits between Christians indicate a lack of righteousness and love (verses 8-11).

This does not mean we are never to use our courts of justice. Paul “APPEALED UNTO CAESAR” (Acts 22:28; 25:11; 16:37).

B. The church and personal purity (I Cor. 6:12-20).

1. The danger of transgressing liberty (I Cor 6:12a).
2. The danger of moral slavery (I Cor. 6:12b).
3. The danger of desecrating the body (I Cor. 6:13-20).

“The body is not for fornication...” (I Cor. 6:13): The human body has a higher mission than the mere gratification of sensual appetite. Sex is of God for the propagation of the race, not for prostitution. The immoral spirit of Corinth had infected the church. The church must not catch the spirit of the age. It must correct the evil of the age (John 17:15) We must be “washed” from those things contrary to Christ (I Cor. 5:9-11) The Christian has LIBERTY IN CHRIST. He must remember to USE LIBERTY TO HELP OTHERS, not to hurt them (verse 12)!

To DESECRATE the body is dangerous (verses 13-20). Our bodies are members of Christ (verses 15-18). Our bodies are the temples of God (verses 19-20). If we ignore the presence of the Holy Spirit (verse 19), the purchase of Christ (verses 19a, 20a) and the PURPOSE OF LIFE (verse 20b), our God will destroy us (I Cor. 3:17).

Certain difficulties had arisen in the Corinthian church. After dealing with the problems of CHURCH UNITY and SOCIAL PURITY, the apostle now seeks to establish the sanctity of marriage and the home in the midst of paganism and persecution.

II. Marriage and Celibacy (I Corinthians 7:1-9)

A. Celibacy is honorable (I Cor. 7:1).

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“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote...” (I Cor. 7:1): Extreme opinions had arisen in the church concerning marriage. Some insisted ALL SHOULD MARRY. They believed that celibacy, the state of being unmarried or single, was a sin. They wrote Paul for inspired counsel.

“It is good for a man not to touch a woman”: It is advisable for a man NOT TO MARRY during “the present distress” (verse 26). The apostle does not advocate celibacy or the unmarried state as the general rule, or the common practice. He states it in view of two things:

1. In view of the opinion of some that all that do not marry are committing sin, Paul says it is “good.”

2. In view of the abnormal conditions prevailing in their time which were purely local and temporary.

Paul did not teach that the unmarried man or woman was holier than the married man and woman. The apostle was not a narrow ascetic who despised women and discouraged marriage!

B. Marriage is desirable (I Cor. 6:2):

“Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife...” (I Cor 7:2): Paul does not discourage marriage, much less forbid it. “Forbidding to marry” is one of the signs of the apostasy (I Tim. 4:3). “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Heb. 13:14). To guard against immorality, the apostle counsels marriage – the right kind of marriage, monogamous marriage. Marriage was ordained of God in Eden (Gen. 2:21-25), and sanctified by the gracious presence of Christ and His miraculous gift at Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-12). Upon it as a Christian institution, Paul places his unqualified seal and approval

C. The mutual obligation of marriage (I Cor. 7:3-5).

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence...” (I Cor. 7:3): Some of the Corinthians held the strange error that marriage, in contrast to celibacy, was such an inferior condition that it would be meritorious for married Christians to cease to live in marriage relations. Paul rebukes this error. Such a practice would involve needless temptations. The husband must continue to minister to his wife his usual duties of support, protection, and personal affection. The believing wife must continue her domestic ministrations and personal affections. Both husband and wife have a mutual obligation to the other. Each must yield to the other what those obligations require.

In a city where the temple to Venus had 1000 public supported prostitutes for her immoral pagan worship, it was imperative that every relationship of marriage be faithfully observed by the Christian married men and women (verse 4). The body of each belongs to the other, and cannot be yielded to other parties. The spirit of the passage not only forbids adultery, but polygamy as well.

“Defraud ye not one the other...” (I Cor. 7:5): Married couples are not to live apart, except by mutual agreement, and that only for limited time, while devoting themselves “to fasting and prayer.” In the East, the women have separate apartments. During this time the husband would not enter the wife’s apartment.

D. Get married if you desire (I Cor. 7:6-9).

“But I speak this by permission...” (I Cor. 7:6): “Permission” is an old word for pardon, concession, indulgence. Paul has not commanded people to marry. One is not bound to marry. The decision rests with the individual.

“For I would that all men were even as I myself...” (I Cor. 7:7) Paul was not then married and it is confirmed by I Cor. 9:5. There are two reasons why some think Paul was a widower, and lost his wife while yet young: (1) He VOTED in the Sanhedrin (Acts 26:10), and (2) Marriage was necessary to be a member of the Sanhedrin. Paul had absolute self-control. While celibacy is excellent, he declares the capacity for celibacy to be a special gift. Those who do not possess this gift should marry. The single state is preferable

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in critical times (verses 8, 26) There are times still when it is best to remain unmarried, as in a time of war and invasion.

“But if they cannot contain...” (I Cor. 7:9). If one wants to get married, do so; “for it is better to marry than to burn” with continue sexual passion or desires, Paul has not said that celibacy is BETTER THAN MARRIAGE though he has justified it and expressed his own personal preference for it.

II. Marriage and Conversion (I Cor. 7:10-16)

A. The believer’s relationship (I Cor 7:10, 11).

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord (I Cor. 7:10): The Lord Jesus with his own lips gave the only basis for divorce – infidelity to the marriage relationship (Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-12, Mark 10:12; Luke 16:18). The Master had spoken plain words about divorce. Paul reinforces his own inspired command by the command of Jesus.

“Let not the wife depart...” (verses 10b, 11): If after marriage one becomes a Christian without the other’s conversion, he or she is NOT TO SEEK SEPARATION. Conversion was NOT TO INTERRUPT OR DISRUPT THE EXISTING FAMILY RELATIONS. The wife ‘departs,’ because she leaves the home; the husband “puts away his wife” by sending her off. Both are equally prohibited. Christians who separate must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to one another.

B. The believer’s duty (I Cor. 7:12-16).

“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord...” (I Cor. 7:12): The Lord had before Paul given the basis for divorce. His ministry was mainly among Jews where intermarriage was not permitted (Deut. 7:1-3; Ezra 9:1, 2; 10:3) Children of a Jew-Gentile marriage were considered illegitimate, born out of lawful wedlock.

Paul is speaking to Gentiles. It was a common thing for one member of the family to be converted and the others not. Jesus while on earth with His own lips had not given commandment regarding such things. He promised the Holy Spirit’s counsel (John 16:13) to guide the apostles “into ALL TRUTH.” Paul was thus inspired.

If either husband or wife is converted, and the other is not, they must not on this account forsake the unbelieving helpmeet, provided he or she is pleased to remain.

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife...” (I Cor. 7:14): Paul does not mean that the unbelieving husband is saved by the faith of the believing wife. He means that the marriage relation is sanctified so that there is no need of a divorce. If either husband or wife is a believer and the other agrees to remain, the marriage is holy and need not be set aside. The children born of a mixed marriage (a pagan man, and a Christian wife, or vice versa) are not UNCLEAN OR UNHOLY AS IF BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK. “Holy is contrasted with unclean and means the same as sanctified.”

If the unbelieving partner INSISTS ON SEPARATION, the believing partner is to let him or her go. If there is no possibility of conversion of the unbelieving partner, the Christian “is not under bondage in such cases” (verse 15). Willful desertion of the unbeliever sets the other free, a case not contemplated in Christ’s words in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9. Luther argued that the Christian partner, thus released, may marry again. But that is by no means clear, unless the unbeliever marries first.

“For how knowest thou, O wife...” (I Cor. 7:16): The Christian is to be gentle, forbearing and true to Christ. The Christian mate may be the means used of God to win the other to Christ. This has occurred in many instances (I Pet. 3:1, 2). The believer ought to be sure that there is no hope before he agrees to break the marriage bond.

III. Marriage and Customs (I Corinthians 7:17-24)

A. The principle (I Cor. 7:17).

“But as God hath distributed to every man...” (I Cor. 7:17): Way translates this: “Let each member go on living in the same conditions which the Lord originally allotted to him, and in which he was when he heard God’s call.” Each has his lot from the Lord Jesus, his call from God. He is not to seek a rupture of the marriage relation if the believer does not ask for it.

B. The principle applied to the converted Jew (I Cor. 7:18, 19).

“Is any man called being circumcised?” (I Cor. 7:18): The circumcised Jews were to be content that they were circumcised; the uncircumcised Gentiles were to remain so when they became Christians. Becoming a Christian does not dissolve our social, racial and economic relationships. To the converted Jew, Paul said in substance: “Be a Christian Jew. Do not try to be a Christian Gentile. Be what you were, but by the grace of God.”

“Circumcision is nothing...” (I Cor. 7:19): Circumcision has no bearing on salvation. The one essential condition is “keeping the commandments of God” (John 14:15). Only the inward or spiritual Jew counts (Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Rom. 2:25-29).

C. The principle applied to the converted slave (I Cor. 7:20-24).

“Let every man abide in the same calling...” (I Cor 7:20): Each is to abide wherein he was called of God and saved, whether a Jew or Gentile, a slave or a free man.

“Art thou called being a servant” (I Cor. 7:21): Half the population of the Roman Empire at this time was in slavery. If a slave became Christian his inferior position was not to cause him anxiety. He was to use his very servitude in a Christian way and not seek to become free on the ground that he had become a Christian. In Christ social distinction disappear in a higher unity. The Christian slave is Christ’s freeman, and the Christian freeman is Christ’s slave (verses 22-24; I Cor. 6:20; I Pet 1:18, 19), We have been bought with a great price and belong to on Master (verse 23). In respect to his social or political state, each on should abide in relationship to God (verse 24).

IV. Marriage and Expediency (I Corinthians 7:25-38)

A. Expediency from the parental viewpoint (I Cor. 7:25-28).

“Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord.” (I Cor. 7:25): About mixed marriages (verses 12-16) Paul had the command of Jesus concerning divorce to guide him. Here he has no such command from Jesus. So he gives no “command,” but only “a judgment, a deliberately formed decision from knowledge (II Cor. 8:10), not a mer passing fancy, but an inspired opinion.

Paul had been asked advice as to the duty of parents in reference to their unmarried daughters. Ought they to give them in marriage, or should they withhold their consent? In the East to this day the marriage the parents make arrangements.

“I suppose... for the present distress” (I Cor. 7:26): Paul give his inspired opinion in the light of the great persecution or suffering while Christians then faced. He is not saying this for all times and all young women. For the present remain as you are whether married or unmarried.

“Art thou bound unto a wife?” (I Cor. 7:27): If married, he is t remain true to the bond. If unmarried, at present, it seemed best t remain so.

“But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned...” (I Cor. 7:28) While it seemed prudent with impending persecution, not to marry, it was not wrong to marry. “But if thou also commit matrimony or get married you

have not sinned, but you expose yourself to unnecessary hazards and troubles. Paul would “spare you” such things.

B. Expediency from the worldly viewpoint (I Cor. 7:29-35).

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short...” (I Cor. 7:29): Calvin takes this for the shortness of human life, but apparently Paul picture the shortening of time and opportunity because of the possible nearness of and hope for the second coming. It was but a short time until Jerusalem would be destroyed by Titus in 70 A. D. Within half a generation the whole Roman world was turned up by civil war. Three emperors in succession were slain,

“They that have wives... weep... buy... use this world (I Cor. 7:29b-31): We all have to use the world. We must not misuse it! The Christian’s relation to the Lord is the main thing. It must be zealously guarded. Everything else must be secondary to it. All earthly relations are to hang loosely about us in view of the Second Coming.

“But I would have you without carefulness...” (I Cor. 7:32): Paul would free them from causes that bring cares. The less the Christian is entangled with social ties, the freer he is to perform the Lord’s service. Those who have no desire to marry have larger liberty to serve the Lord “without distraction” (verses 33-35). The sole thought of the unmarried person who is consecrated to Christ is to please Christ. Paul had no desire to interfere with your freedom to marry. A “snare” (verse 35) is thrown over the head made the victim helpless. Paul merely advises what, under the circumstances of that period, seemed most prudent.

C. Shall the parent give the daughter in marriage (I Cor. 7:36-38)?

“But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin...” (I Cor. 7:36): The Corinthians apparently had asked Paul about the duty of a father towards his daughter old enough to marry. While giving a judgment in favor of the unmarried state, at that time because of the “present distress” (verse 26), he gives liberty. A man may give his daughter in marriage. Roman and Greek fathers had the control of the marriage of their daughters. “My marriage is my father’s care; it is not for me to decide about that” (Hermione in Euripides’ *ANDROMACHE*, 987).

“Behaveth uncomely”: Improperly in withholding her from marriage.

“If she pass the flower of her age”: If she is fully matured.

“And need so require”: If circumstances of any kind seem to require her marriage. The father does no wrong in giving his daughter in marriage. “Let them marry “

“Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast... doeth well” (I Cor. 7:37): If no need makes marriage necessary, and the purpose that she remains unmarried continues steadfast, the father does well to let her remain unmarried. To choose either course is well, but the unmarried state is better where circumstances permit (verse 38), on account of the “distress” (verse 26). When all is said, Paul leaves the whole problem of getting married an open question to be settled by each individual case!

V. Marriage and Re-Marriage (I Corinthians 7:39-40)

A. Marriage vows and the wife (I Cor, 7:39a).

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband is living...” (I Cor. 7:39): “So long as he liveth” (Rom. 7:2). Here is a strict monogamous marriage. It will neither compromise with the pagan marriage views of the first century, or the equally pagan marriage views of the twentieth century. Hollywood may be another Corinth, but Christians are to get their marriage ideals from heaven, not from Hollywood.

B. Marriage vows and the widow (I Cor. 7:39b-40).

“If her husband be dead...” Cor. 7:39b): The matter of re-marriage as dealt with here is not of a

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divorcee but of a widow. The widow “is at liberty” in case of her husband’s death, she is free from the marriage bond, she can marry whom she wills “only in the Lord,” one who is a Christian. Paul will discuss the question again in I Tim. 5:9-13; then he advises the younger widows to marry. Every marriage ought to be “in the Lord!”

“But she is happier...” (I Cor. 7:40): In Paul’s judgment, and because of the prevailing conditions of “the present distress” (verse 26), she will be happier if she abides as she is. The question of marriage or remarriage is one of prudential considerations. Paul concludes the chapter of advice which should be kept in mind by many who feel that in certain earlier verses he has disclaimed inspiration: “And I think (whatever others may say of me) that I also have (an inspiration of) the Spirit of God.”

Questions

1. In what had the lack of discipline among the Corinthian Christian resulted (I Cor. 1:14:21)?
2. What was the church to do with the derelict, “wicked person,” in the church (I Cor. 5:5,13)?
3. Does God forbid lawsuits between two Christians (I Cor. 6:1)? Are we never to use courts of justice (Acts 22:28; 25:11; 16:37)?
4. Who should settle all questions upon which two Christians cannot agree (I Cor. 6:1-5; Matt. 18:15-17)?
5. What evidence did Paul give that saints are capable to judge these matters (I Cor. 6:2, 3)?
6. What shall the Christian do who cannot get justice (I Cor. 6:7)?
7. Who cannot enter the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10)?
8. How is it possible for one who is guilty of these sins to enter the kingdom (I Cor. 6:11, 12)? Why did Paul shun certain legitimate practices (I Cor. 6:12)? How does the sin of fornication differ from all other sins (I Cor. 6:12-19)? What is Paul’s argument for holy living (I Cor. 6:19, 20)? What will God do if we desecrate our body (I Cor. 3:17)?
9. What were “the things whereof ye wrote unto me” (I Cor. 7:1)? What was Paul’s advice during “the present distress” (verse 26)?
10. “To avoid fornication” in a pagan society, what does Paul advise (I Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4)? What mutual obligation, and exception, is stressed in I Cor. 7:3-5?
11. If Paul was not married when he wrote I Cor. 9:5, do you think he was ever married (I Cor. 7:7)? When are times that it is best to remain unmarried (I Cor. 7:8, 26)?
12. On what basis did Jesus allow divorce (I Cor. 7:10; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-12)? What joint prohibition does Paul give in I Cor. 7:10b, 11?
13. What is the believer’s duty toward his or her unbelieving mate (I Cor. 7:12-16)?
14. What principle did Paul ordain in “all churches” (I Cor. 7:17), and how was it applied to the converted Jew (verses 18, 19), and to the converted slave (verses 20-24)?
15. What “judgment” did Paul give Christian fathers toward virgin daughters (I Cor. 7:25-28, 36-38)? Was it wrong to marry despite “the present distress” (verses 26-28)?
16. In view of “the time is short,” what attitude should the Christian take toward mates, joy, sorrow and the world (I Cor. 7:29-31)?
17. What major attitude would the consecrated unmarried person possess (I Cor. 7:33-35)? What normal and right attitude would a husband and wife have toward each other?
18. When is the wife free from the marriage bond (I Cor. 7:39a)?
19. Is a Christian woman free to marry an unbelieving man (I Cor. 7:39b; II Cor. 6:14)?
20. Why is the question of marriage or remarriage one of prudential considerations whether in Paul’s day or ours?

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Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 42

Page 1

I Corinthians 8

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 8:13

Memory Verse:

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (I Corinthians 8:13).

MEATS AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

The apostle next dealt with the subject of “things sacrificed to idols” (I Cor. 8:1). The question was evidently of vital importance, It involved the influence of the Christians in a pagan city. There were many pagan gods in Greece, and much of the meat offered for sale in the public market places had first been offered in SACRIFICE TO SOME IDOL.

The Greeks of Athens didn’t want to offend any god, so they erected an altar “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD” (Acts 17:23), THE ONLY TRUE GOD WHOM PAUL PREACHED!

Remember that in Corinth the question at issue involved not only the eating of meat, but the matter of taking part in social functions of their heathen friends either in the heathen temples or in their private homes. Such functions were often accompanied with shameful immorality Tax supported temple prostitutes and all pagans looked upon sexual indulgence as an act of pagan worship! What should the Christian do? Paul commanded “Flee fornication” (I Cor. 6:18). The connection between idolatry and sexual impurity was, and is, very close (Rev. 2:14, 20).

I. The Subject Under Consideration (I Corinthians 8:1a)

“Now as touching things offered unto idols...” (I Cor. 8:1a): In Corinth certain portions of the sacrifice was offered to the pagan god; very often in Greek rites that meant offering to the priests who were considered sacred. Then parts of the carcass not so used in sacrificial worship were put on sale. ANYONE COULD BUY AND EAT SUCH MEAT FOR FOOD. It would be offered at a lower rate of exchange. People would buy it, for human nature is the same in all ages about buying a bargain

Now the question is, IF A CHRISTIAN BOUGHT AND USED SUCH MEATS, DID IT NOT INVOLVE HIM IN COMPROMISE WITH THE IDOLS THAT WERE WORSHIPPED? What should Christians do when, as invited guests, such meat offered to idols appeared on the table of their hosts?

While the subject of meats offered to idols may have no meaning for us (it has for many western Indians who become Christians and in many foreign countries), the principles enunciated by Paul are BINDING TODAY!

III. Two Motives of Life Contrasted (I Corinthians 8:1b-3)

A. The admission (I Cor. 8:1b).

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“We know that we have all knowledge...” (I Cor. 8:1b): This does not mean they KNEW EVERYTHING. It does mean that in becoming Christians they KNEW THE ONE TRUE GOD and the FOLLY OF IDOLATRY. We may know certain things that others do not, and act in such a way as to put a stumbling block in the path of someone else. If we understand that there are NO SUCH BEINGS IN THE WORLD AS THOSE REPRESENTED BY THE IDOLS, that does not do away with the fact that BACK OF THE IDOLATRY IS SATANIC POWER (I Cor. 10:20). There can be NO COMPROMISE between Christianity and pagan religions. While all Christians since their conversion know the emptiness of idol worship, the problem cannot be solved by knowledge.

B. The contrast (I Cor. 8:1c).

“Knowledge puffeth up...” (I Cor. 8:1c): Those who professed to be ‘knowing ones’ put on an air of superiority. This is inflation, and anything “puffed up” is liable to collapse, to burst. Montagne observed that “many persons, after once they become learned, cease to be good.” Mere knowledge inflates with conceit. Love moves us with concern. “Charity” or love “edifies.” Love is the solution, not knowledge, in all social problems.

C. The illustration (I Cor. 8:2, 3).

“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing...” (I Cor. 8:2): Humility comes before true knowledge. Knowledge at best is imperfect. It must always be accompanied by love. The Corinthians knew there were no idols. Here is meat sacrificed to idols. It was absurd, for there are no idols. There is NO REALTY IN IDOLS. There can be no meaning in things sacrificed to what does not exist! Actually the meat is not hurt. With such knowledge shall the Christian eat the meat?

“He knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know:” If the Christian is inflated with a sense of knowledge, he has not got on the right track for true knowledge. Humility is essential. “Newton’s remark that he was only gathering pebbles on the shore of the ocean of truth is pertinent. The really learned man knows his ignorance of what lies beyond. Shallow knowledge is like the depth of the mud hole, not of the crystal spring” (Robertson).

“But if any man love God...” (I Cor 8:3): Love perfects ALL HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS (I John 4:8, 19; II Tim. 2:19). Those who “know God” are known of God (Gal. 4:9). Love illuminates what knowledge might leave in obscurity. Knowledge may go astray, but love will lead us to think of others. We may have a perfect knowledge that an idol or meat offered to an idol is nothing. We may have a perfect right to EAT SUCH MEAT, BUT LOVE WILL SUGGEST THAT WE FOREGO OUR RIGHT and REFRAIN FROM EATING IF OUR EATING CAUSES SOMEONE TO STUMBLE AND BE LOST! WILL YOU INSIST ON YOUR RIGHTS IF BY SO DOING A BROTHER WOULD BE LOST (Rom. 14: 12-17, 20, 21)?

IV. The Regulation of Conduct (I Corinthians 8:4-13)

A. Our conduct to be regulated by knowledge (I Cor. 8:4-8).

“..we know that an idol is nothing” (I Cor. 8:4): Idols are manufactured gods. Read carefully Isaiah

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44:9-20. There were many such gods in Corinth, but they meant nothing to knowing Christians. They knew the idol was a mere creation of the imagination, a mere matter of superstition, a picture or symbol of a god. If the god has no existence, the idol is a non-entity. Gentile Christians had come to know as Jews and Jewish Christians already knew that celestial bodies, or myths, idols in many Greek temples, or Roman emperors and lesser dignitaries who demanded divine honors were nothing (verse 5).

“But to us there is but one God...” (I Cor. 8:6): A Christian knows that “there is no God but one.” The worship of Jesus as God’s Son and the Holy Spirit does not recognize three Gods, but ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS. It was the worship of Mary the Mother of Jesus that gave Mahomet his cry: “Allah is One.” The cosmos, the ordered universe, can only be ruled by one God (Rom. 1:20).

God subsists in three persons: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). Christianity is not a religion; it is a divine revelation of the one true God to man through Jesus Christ (I Tim. 3:16, 17; II Pet. 1:21). “One God” instead of “gods many”; “one Lord, Christ,” instead of the “lords many” of heathenism; ONE GOD, and one Mediator between man and God (I Tim. 2:15).

“Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge...” (I Cor 8:7): While “we,” the better informed, know better, still there were some in the church who had not entirely outgrown their former superstitions. They could not realize that an “idol was nothing.” Meat that came from idol sacrifice was to them the meat of the idol. They could not eat it without their conscience being defiled, “The idol-taint clings in their minds to this meat.” Their conscience “is defiled, not by the partaking of polluted food, for food cannot pollute (Mark 7:18f; Luke 11:41), but by the doing of something which the unenlightened conscience does not allow” (Robertson and Plummer). Even if unenlightened, one must act according to his conscience, a sensitive gauge to one’s spiritual condition. Knowledge breaks down as a guide with the weak or unenlightened conscience.

“But meat commendeth us not to God...” (I Cor. 8:8): Food will not give us an entree to God for commendation or condemnation, whether meat-eaters or vegetarians. There is no virtue in eating or fasting.

“Are we better... worse”: Do we overflow, do we have excess of credit. Paul here disposes of the pride of knowledge (the enlightened ones) and the pride of prejudice (the unenlightened). Each was disposed to look down upon the other, the one in scorn of the other’s ignorance the other in horror of the other’s heresy and daring. Is it not foolish to think that abstaining from some foods on Friday, or during Lent help or hurts one?

B. Our conduct to be regulated by love (I Cor. 8:9-13).

“But take heed lest... this liberty... become a stumbling block” (I Cor. 8:9): This is a warning to the enlightened Christians. “Liberty” means a grant, allowance, authority, power, privilege, right, liberty. “I becomes a battle cry, personal liberty does, to those who wish to indulge their own whims and appetites regardless of the effect upon others.”

Our behavior while right in itself and intelligent to us must be edifying to others. I must consider not only my pleasure, but another’s, profit. IF YOUR PLEASURE IS ANOTHER’S HINDRANCE, then OUR LIBERTY WHICH IS GOOD BECOMES EVIL.

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“A stumbling block”: This is literally an obstacle for the foot to strike and figuratively the occasion of the fall of those who were not so well informed and were weaker. The enlightened must consider the welfare of the unenlightened, else he does not have love.

“For if any man see thee which have knowledge.” (I Cor. 8:10) In the heathen temples, great banquets often followed the sacrifice. Paul draws the picture of the enlightened brother exercising his “liberty” by eating in the idol’s temple. Later he will discuss the peril to the man’s own soul in this phase of the matter (I Cor. 10:14-22), but here he considers only the effect of such conduct on the unenlightened or weak brother.

A weaker Christian will see the stronger one, a leader, sitting at such a banquet. This leads the weaker brother to believe that his brother was honoring the idol. The example of the stronger brother would encourage idolatry! Our weak brother will be emboldened to go on and do what he still believes to be wrong -- to eat things sacrificed to idols.

“And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish

(I Cor. 8:11): Ruin follows in the wake of such daredevil knowledge. The strong brother has knowledge that made him dare eat, because he knew an idol was nothing. Such action might be the means of destroying him by leading him to idolatry. Will you as a Christian insist on your rights even if a weak brother be lost and eternally damned?

“But when ye so sin against the brethren...” (I Cor. 8:12): To “wound the weak conscience” of one’s brother is to “sin against Christ.” To “wound” is to smite with fist, staff or whip. The conscience is sensitive to a blow like that, a slap in the face. To injure a weak brother is to sin against Christ. It injures the cause of Christ. Our Lord denounces those who cause the weaker ones to stumble (Matt. 18:6). Jesus had said to Paul that he was persecuting him when he persecuted his disciples (Acts 9:5). Did Paul know the words of Jesus in Matt. 25:40, “ye did it unto me?”

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh...” (I Cor. 8:13): Food it should be, not flesh. “Make my brother to offend,” is to set a trap-stick (Matt. 5:29), or stumbling block. Out of LOVE FOR HIS BROTHER, Paul summarizes the whole position of this section, “I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” Here Paul has “flesh” with direct reference to the flesh offered to idols. This is Paul’s principle OF LOVE applied to the matter of eating meats offered to idols. Paul had rather be a vegetarian than to lead his weak brother to do what he considered sin.

A former Mohammedan from India in Detroit, Mr. Mohammed Ali, had become a Christian. He attended a church picnic. A young woman offered him a fresh pork sandwich. “Have you any beef, lamb, fish?”

“No,” she replied,

“Thank you, my dear young lady, but I won’t take any.”

“Why, Mr. Ali, you surprise me, Are you so under law you cannot eat pork? Don’t you know a CHRISTIAN IS AT LIBERTY to eat any kind of meat?”

“I am at liberty, my dear young lady, to EAT IT; BUT I AM ALSO AT LIBERTY TO LET IT ALONE. If I ate pork, my father would NEVER LISTEN to me preach Christ.”

The principle applies to many things. Some Christians can, perhaps, dance or drink or engage in other things without falling. Yet the EXAMPLE OF THE STRONG WILL LEAD THE WEAK TO ENGAGE IN THESE THINGS. Hence that example will lead them to spiritual death. The Christian principle of LOVE is: “IF EATING MEAT, or going dancing or drinking, or... (you fill it in, Christian) causes my brother to offend, I will not do these things while the world standeth.”

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Questions

1. With what subject did Paul deal in I Corinthians 8?
2. What was involved in the eating of meat offered to idols, and what had Paul commanded about immorality (I Cor. 6:18)?
3. Is there a close connection between idolatry and sexual impurity (Rev. 2:14, 20)?
4. After a part of the animal was sacrificed in the pagan temple, what was done to the rest of the carcass (I Cor. 8:1a)?
5. Could anyone buy such meat, and why would people buy it?
6. What did some of the Christians “know” (I Cor. 8:1, 4, 8)?
7. What did “knowledge” do to some of the Corinthian Christian (I Cor. 8:1c)?
8. What “edifies” or is the solution to the Corinthian problem (I Cor. 8:1c)
9. What comes before true knowledge (I Cor. 8:2)?
10. “If any man love God,” what is the result (I Cor. 8:3; I John 4:8, 16; II Tim. 2:19)?
11. What is an idol (I Cor. 8:4; Isa. 44:9-20)?
12. If to the pagan there are “gods many, and lords many,” whom does the Christian worship (I Cor. 8:8; Rom. 1:20)?
13. Is Christianity a “religion” or a divine revelation through Jesus Christ (II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Pet. 1:21)?
14. Did all of the believers at Corinth have this full knowledge (I Cor. 8:7)?
15. Can the eating of food pollute one (Mark 7:18f; Luke 11:41)? What does pollute one?
16. Does eating meat or vegetables commend us to God (I Cor. 8:8)?
17. In the light of this New Testament teaching, does abstaining from meats on Friday or during Lent help or hurt a believer? Why?
18. What warning does Paul give to enlightened Christians (I Cor. 8:9, 10)?
19. If a man has love in his heart for God and the weak brother, will he insist on his liberty though the “weak brother perish” (I Cor. 8:11)?
20. What was Paul’s conclusion about “things offered unto idols” (I Cor. 8:1, 13)? As you apply the principle to modern life, what is YOUR conclusion as a Christian?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 43

Page 1

I Corinthians 9

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 9:14

Memory Verse:

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:14).

THE CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS

False teachers had come to Corinth expecting to be supported by the church, as was the usual custom. Paul had taken nothing for his services in Corinth, for which he later stated: “For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? FORGIVE ME THIS WRONG” (I Cor. 12:13).

“To justify themselves and to discredit Paul, some of them appeal to have gone so far as to deny Paul’s appointment as an apostle, and to use his failure to demand wages as an evidence of their assertion!”

The Corinthians asked some question such as: “Paul, explain why, being an apostle, you did not take the WAGES DUE YOU AS SUCH.” To the critical, covetous minds of some in Corinth this looked suspicious.

I. The Christian Worker’s Privilege (I Corinthians 9:14)

A. The worker’s identity (I Cor. 9:1-3).

“Am I not an apostle?” (I Cor. 9:1): Paul begins his answer with four questions. Paul had seen the Lord (Acts 26:16-18), from whom he received his commission. Being free, from Mosaic ceremonialism (verse 19) as much as any Christian, and yet he adapts his moral independence to the principle of considerate love (I Cor, 8:13). He was entitled to receive wages for work done. Being an apostle made him **MORE ENTITLED TO WAGES THAN AN ORDINARY CHRISTIAN WORKER OR MINISTER.**

“Are ye not my work in the Lord?” They were themselves proof of his apostleship, Paul’s faith was right; the church at Corinth was **HIS FRUIT FOR CHRIST**, proof enough that he was chosen of God as an apostle (Matt. 7:15-20).

“The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (I Cor. 9:2): A seal vouches for the genuineness of the document to which it is attached, The Corinthian converts **BY THEIR EXISTENCE VOUCHERED FOR PAUL’S APOSTLESHIP.**

“Mine answer to them that do examine me...” (I Cor. 9:3): The words “Answer” and “examine” are legal terms. The critics in Corinth were “investigating” Paul with sharp eyes to find faults. How often the pastor is under the critic’s spyglass!

Paul puts himself in the place of someone charged with something. The apostle was not admitting he was wrong. He was claiming he was right! The Corinthians could not deny he founded the church (I Cor. 3:6, 10).

B. The Worker’s liberty (I Cor. 9:4-6).

“Have we not power to eat and to drink?” (I Cor. 9:4): Paul was entitled to support by those to whom he ministered, a” is every faithful minister and worker. The church was under obligations to support

him for his spiritual services, as was being granted to his fellow laborers.

“Have we not power to lead about... a wife?” (I Cor. 9:5): It was his privilege, if he so desired, to marry and to bring his wife with him on his apostolic journeys, as was the case with the brothers of Jesus and with Peter. The half brothers of Jesus were married; their names being listed in Matt. 13:55. Cephas, or Peter, was married (Matt. 8:14). Yet Catholics claim he was the first pope. Celibacy was unknown among ministers in Paul’s day. This is a plea for the support of the preacher’s wife and children.

“Or I only... power to forbear working?” (I Cor. 9:6): Paul has in mind the first great mission tour (Acts 13 and 14), Barnabas and Paul received no help from the church in Antioch, but were left to work their way along at their own charges. It was not till the Philippian church took hold that Paul had financial aid (Phil. 4:15).

Paul was a tentmaker by trade (Acts 18:3). Paul had the right to freedom from manual labor to give all his time to Christian service. He had the right to RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE CHURCH, but did not “use this power” (verse 12). He was not establishing a precedent for all Christian workers.

II. The Christian Worker’s Support (I Corinthians 9:7-14)

A. By custom (I Cor. 9:7).

“Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?” (I Cor. 9:7). To give proof of his right to receive pay for preaching, Paul uses the illustrations of the soldier (verse 7), the husbandman (verse 7), the shepherd (verse 7), the ox treading out the grain (verse 8), the ploughman (verse 10), and the priests in the temple (13). These are proof enough in all conscience, and yet not enough for some churches who even today starve their preachers in the name of piety.

A minister will sometimes be criticized for getting too much, but he is rarely championed when he receives too little, or works for nothing as Paul did. Paul defends the worker’s RIGHT TO SUPPORT.

Soldiers were paid while on a campaign, but he and Barnabas were Christian soldiers. The husbandman ate of his vineyard; but they worked in the vineyard of the Lord. The FEEDER OF A FLOCK DRANK OF ITS MILK, but they were feeders of the flock of God.

B. By law (I Cor. 9:8-11).

“...saith not the law the same also?” (I Cor. 9:8): The Law of Moses allowed wages for work. It provides that an ox should not be muzzled when treading out grain (verse 9). The Lord did not intend by the prohibition to make provision merely for oxen, but to teach men the principle that the laborer should have his reward, that one who plows or threshes should share in what his labor has produced (verse 10). Therefore, it was natural that he should receive material support from the Corinthian church. God will not forget His ministers (Matt. 6:26-30)

“If we have sown unto you spiritual thing... reap your carnal things?” (I Cor. 9:11): Paul was the founder of the church at Corinth He had preached the gospel, converted them and brought them up in Christ. The LAW OF EXCHANGE DEMANDS AN EQUIVALENT FOR VALUE RECEIVED.

An old Connecticut minister declined an increase in salary. “First, because you can’t afford to pay me more. Second, because my preaching isn’t worth more than I now receive. Third, because have to collect my salary which, heretofore, has been the hardest part of my labors among you. If I have to collect an additional sum, it will kill me.”

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate (or, share with him) unto him that teacheth in all good things” (Gal. 6:6).

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C. By precedent (I Cor. 9:12).

“If others be partakers... we have not used this power” (I Cor 9:12): The Corinth church was supporting other Christians. While other men burdened the church, Paul had renounced his claim as founder of the church and an apostle. He endured privation and hardship so as to give no one an occasion for criticism or complaint, which might have embarrassed his work. Paul chose NOT TO “USE THIS POWER or right to receive wages.

The moment a church, the local membership of the church, receive a worker’s ministrations, THAT MOMENT THE CHURCH IS RESPONSIBLE TO SUPPORT THE WORKER! Not to do so is dishonest – it is stealing from the worker what rightly belongs to him.

“The deacon prayed for pastor dear, Who’d served his church for many a year.

‘Lord, keep him humble, keep him poor, As were the blessed saints of yore,
Who never had on earth a part. But lived for heaven with single heart.’

The deacon paused, then mild and meek, Went on in words astute and sleek,

‘You keep him humble, for you know. We’ll do the rest and keep him poor.’ “

D. By the priesthood (I Cor. 9:13).

“They which minister about holy things live... of the temple” (I Cor. 9:13): This is reference to God’s provision for the Old Testament priests (Numbers 18:8-13; Deut. 8:1). The Jewish priests were supported by offerings that were brought to the Temple and were allotted portion of the animals sacrificed.

The businessman lives of his business, the farmer lives of his farming, the doctor lives of his doctoring, the preacher or worker must live of his preaching or working. If by PATRIMONY (inheritance) or MATRIMONY (marriage) a minister has income to support himself, he OUGHT NOT TO DEGRADE HIMSELF AND DEFRAUD THE CHURCH and CHEAPEN THE GOSPEL and reflect on the Lord by preaching for nothing (II Cor. 12:13).

E. Defended by the Lord Jesus (I Cor. 9:14).

Even so hath the Lord ordained...” (I Cor. 9:14): Just as God gave orders about the priests in the temple, so did the Lord Jesus give orders for those who “preach the gospel” that they “should live of the gospel.” Paul was evidently familiar with the words of Jesus that “The laborer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7).

III. The Christian Worker’s Motives (I Corinthians 9:15-18)

A. Paul’s high motive (I Cor. 9:15).

“But I have used none of these things...” (I Cor. 9:15): Paul waived his right to support from the Corinthians. Paul would rather have died than have the Corinthians say he was preaching just for money. They had never sustained him, nor did he now write to have them do so. Paul’s real motive was to win MEN, not get their money. His real reward consisted in his sense of independence, in the satisfaction he felt in preaching without receiving a salary, and in being free from the suspicion of mercenary motives.

B. His passion in preaching (I Cor, 9:16).

“For though I preach the gospel...” (I Cor. 9:16): The driving force of Paul’s ministry was a compelling conviction. It was the conviction that he was God-sent. He was under NECESSITY TO GO AND PREACH the gospel, and under a “WOE” if he didn’t. Preaching the gospel was not a profession but a passion with Paul.

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An old minister said to a young man contemplating the ministry, “Don’t enter the ministry if you can help it. This was Paul’s idea of “necessity.”

C. Paul’s greater reward (I Cor. 9:17, 18).

“For if I do this thing willingly...” (I Cor. 9:17): Paul’s call was so clear that he certainly did his work “willingly,” and so had a reward; but the ONLY REWARD THAT HE HAD FOR HIS WILLING WORK WAS TO MAKE THE GOSPEL FREE OF EXPENSE (verse 18).

“A dispensation”: Paul was entrusted with a stewardship and so would go on with his task like any steward even if “unwilling.”

Paul’s greater reward was the compensation of joy. It was the joy of giving a life-giving and life-thrilling message without taking selfish advantage of his own rights.

IV. The Christian Worker’s Adaptability (I Corinthians 9:19-23)

A. The Jew under law (I Cor. 9:19,20),

“For though I be free from all men... servant unto all” (I Cor. 9:19): He shows why he used this self denial. Paul was flexible in manners and customs, but not in morals and principles. In order that he “might gain the more” men, he was willing to become the servant or slave of all, and to deny himself all things. “He refuses payment in money that he may make the greater gain in souls” (Edwards).

“And unto the Jews I became as a Jew...” (I Cor. 9:20): Paul was a Jew and he was not ashamed of it (Acts 18:18; 21:26). The apostle was freed from the law as a means of salvation, yet he knew how to speak to them because of his former beliefs and life with them (Gal. 4:21). He knew how to put the gospel to them without compromise and without offence, even though he observed their distinctions of meats, kept feasts, and circumcised Timothy!

B. The Gentile outside the law (I Cor. 9:21).

“To them that are without law... gain them” (I Cor. 9:21): The heathen, those outside the Law of Moses (Rom. 2:14), not lawless (Luke 22:37; 2:23; I Tim. 1:9). See how Paul bore himself with the pagans (Acts 14:15; 17:23; 24:25), and how he quoted the heathen poets. “Not being an outlaw of God, but an in-law of Christ,” Paul became conventionally correct and respected the way and ideas of the Gentiles to win them to Christ.

C. The Christian with scruples (I Cor. 9:22, 23).

“To the weak I became as weak...” (I Cor. 9:22): This is the chief point, the climax in his plea for the principle of love on the part of the enlightened for the benefit of the unenlightened (I Cor. 8). He thus brings home his conduct about renouncing pay for preaching as an illustration of love (I Cor. 8:13).

“I am made all things to all men.” Paul went out of his way to respect the opinions of others, but he would never yield a moral principle to anyone (I Cor. 10:33; II Tim. 2:10; Acts 21:26; 20:16; 23:6). In matters of principle Paul was strong as steel as about Titus the Greek (Gal, 2:5). In matters of expedience as about the circumcising of Timothy (Acts 16:3), Paul would go half way to win and to hold. This principle was called for in dealing with the problem of eating meat offered to idols (Rom. 14:1; 15:1; I Thess. 5:14).

“And this I do for the gospel’s sake...” (I Cor. 9:23): Paul’s idea was not to SIN in order to save some. No one is won in this way. He did what he did to become co-partner with others in the gospel. All his self-denial had a single object in view – the promotion of the gospel. Would that all members of this church, from the same motive, adapt themselves to ALL CLASSES, IN ORDER TO REACH THEM for Christ!

V. The Christian Worker's Responsibility (I Corinthians 9:24-27)

A. The race (I Cor. 9:24-25).

1. The object (I Cor. 9:24).

“Know ye not that they which run in a race... ONE RECEIVETH the PRIZE” (I Cor. 9:24): Paul was fond of picturing the Christian life under figures drawn from the Greek games. Every two years the Isthmian games were held in the Corinth stadium. He refers here to these contests, in order to emphasize the need of self-control and self-denial even in matters morally indifferent. Only one, the foremost, received the victor's prize! A Christian is to outstrip all others, if possible.

2. The rules (I Cor. 9:25).

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things” (I Cor. 9:25a): There were rules governing the contests. Only a freeborn man could enter the Isthmian games. He must engage in ten months' preparatory training and be able to certify his faithfulness in training. He must keep morally clean, for before each contest the contestants were led about the arena by the herald or master of ceremonies. He asked, in a loud voice, whether any spectator could accuse the contestants of any crime, wickedness, slavery or depravity in life and manners. For thirty days before the contests a rigid period of preparation was observed. Self-indulgence has never won any victory. Leisure is best when it follows labor. Spiritual athletics demand spiritual discipline.

“The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.”

Paul recognizes Christian liberty, but he also recognizes the restrictions of Christian consecration.

That Christian who declares that he can engage in any pleasure he wishes, indulge in any habit he wants and live in any selfish manner he pleases does not have the same spiritual stuff out of which heroic, world-blessing Christians are made.

3. The crown (I Cor. 9:25b).

Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible” (I Cor. 9:25b). In the Greek games, the reward was a “corruptible crown,” a mere withering wreath of olive, or of pine. But as followers of Christ, we are striving for a crown which will never fade, a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of joy, a crown of glory (II Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; I Thess. 2:9).

B. The contest (I Cor. 9:26, 27).

1. The reality (I Cor. 9:26).

“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly...” (I Cor. 9:26): Paul speaks of the reality of the contest. He isn't shadowboxing. In fact the antagonist is Paul, the man. It is Paul's human, carnal nature. If Paul, the Christian, is to win, Paul, the sinner MUST BE DEFEATED. If Paul the spiritual, is to climb to higher spiritual ground, Paul, the carnal, must be put down Here is spiritual realism!

2. The self-control (I Cor. 9:27a).

“But I keep my body and bring it into subjection...” (I Cor. 9:27a): Paul does not, like the Gnostics, consider his “sarx, meaning “flesh” or his “soma,” meaning “body,” sinful and evil. But the body “is like the horses in a chariot race, which must be kept well in hand by whip and rein if the prize is to be secured” (Robertson and Plummer).

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The boxers often used boxing gloves ('cestus,' of ox-hide bands) which gave telling blows, Paul was not willing for his body to be his master. He found good as the outcome of this self-discipline (I Cor. 12:7; Rom. 8:13; Col. 2:23; 3:5).

“Subjection”: It is the metaphor of the victor leading the vanquished as captives and slaves.

3. The peril (I Cor. 9:27b).

“Lest... I myself should be a castaway” (I Cor. 9:27): He keeps his body his servant, not his master, lest after having preached to others, he should be rejected, or refused the prize of the crown. Even Paul worked out his salvation with fear and trembling. Let us “give all diligence to make our calling and election sure” (Phil. 2:12; II Pet. 1:10, 11). He does not claim perfection (Phil. 13:12) and so he presses on!

At the end Paul has serene confidence (II Tim. 4:7) with the race run and won. It is a humbling thought for us all to see this wholesome fear instead of smug complacency in this greatest of all heralds of Christ.

Questions

1. Because Paul had received no pay for his services at Corinth what did he later request them to do (II Cor. 12:13)?
2. Who had come to Corinth after Paul, and what did they expect?
3. What probable question did the Corinthians ask?
4. How did Paul begin his answer (I Cor. 9:1, 3)?
5. What was the two-fold proof of Paul's apostleship (I Cor. 9:1; Act 26: 16-18)?
6. Did Paul have the right to expect wages from the church at Corinth (I Cor. 9:4)?
7. Did he have the liberty to marry, and expect the church to support him and his wife (I Cor. 9:5; Matt 13:55; Matt. 8:14)?
8. Did he have to make tents to support himself (Acts 13 and 14; 18:3)? Why?
9. What illustrations does Paul use to prove his right to receive pay for preaching the gospel (I Cor 9:7, 8, 10, 13)?
10. Did the Law of Moses allow wages for work (I Cor. 9:8, 9)? What does the law of exchange demand (I Cor. 9:10, 11)?
11. What “power” did Paul choose not to use (I Cor. 9:12)? Were his successors being paid?
12. How did God provide for the priests of the Old Testament (I Cor. 9:13; Num. 18:8-13! Deut. 8:1)?
13. Who ordained the support of the Christian ministry (I Cor. 9:14; Luke 10:7)?
14. What was Paul's high motive (I Cor. 9:15), what was his passion in preaching the gospel (verse 16), and what was his greater reward (verses 17, 18)?
15. To what end did Paul make such personal sacrifices (I Cor. 9:19-22; Acts 18:18; 21:26; Gal. 4:21; Acts 14:15; 17:23; 24:25)? Why did he do it (verse 23)?
16. In becoming “all things to all men” would Paul compromise a principle (I Cor, 9:22; I Cor. 10:33; II Tim. 2:10; Acts 21:26; 20:16; 23:6; Gal. 2:5; Acts 16:3)?
17. How many could win the prize in a Greek stadium (I Cor. 9:24)?
18. How many Christians can win an incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:24, 25; II Tim. 4:7, 8)?
19. What was Paul's adversary in this real conflict (I Cor. 9:26, 27)? Is the outcome of discipline good (II Cor. 12:7; Rom. 8:13; Col. 2:23; 3:5)? What real peril faced Paul (I Cor. 9:27b; Phil 2:12; II Pet. 1:10, 11; Phil. 3:12)?
20. Is it possible for you to become a “castaway” today (I Cor. 9:27)? Do you think Christ will tell you “well done” (Matt. 25:21, 23, 26), if you have not been faithful in the church”. Will you be faithful from this day forward in your Christian race?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 44

Page 1

I Corinthians 10,11

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 11:23-25

Memory Verses:

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread. And when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, ‘Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.’ After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, ‘This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.’” (I Corinthians 11:23-25)

THE LORD’S TABLE

A Christian is to “TAKE HEED” (I Cor. 10:1-13)! Paul had just spoken of exerting himself to the utmost, lest he at last should “be a castaway,” “become rejected” (I Cor. 9:27). That reminds him of the same danger to Christians generally. Those who follow God must be faithful. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, all Israel over twenty years of age (Num. 14:29) PERISHED, died, BEFORE THEY REACHED THE PROMISED LAND.

“These Things Were Our Examples”

The temptations that caused Israel to fall were much the same temptations the Corinthians were facing:

“Examples... we should not lust...” (I Cor. 10:6): See Numbers 25:5.

“Neither be ye idolaters...” (I Cor. 10:7): Read Exodus 82:1-11; I John 5:21.

“Neither let us commit fornication...” (I Cor. 10:8): Numbers 25:9 gives the total number of deaths in the plague, I Cor. 10:8 the number of deaths in “one day.”

“Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also TEMPTED... destroyed” (I Cor. 10:9): UNBELIEF caused many of them to die (Num. 21:6).

“Neither murmur ye...” (I Cor. 10:10): The reference seems to be Num. 16:41f after the punishment of Korah.

“God... Will... Make a Way of Escape”

If the Christian today will strive as Paul did (I Cor. 9:25-27), God will surely HELP HIM or HER TO VICTORY (verses 11-13). “GOD IS FAITHFUL” (verse 13)! “GOD... will... make also a way of escape” for us IF WE STRIVE to be FAITHFUL TO HIM! Are YOU on the ROCK? “On Christ, the solid Rock I stand; all other rocks are sham rocks”!

I. The Table of the Lord and the Table of Demons (I Cor. 10:14-33)

A. We should be conservative (I Cor. 10:14-24).

“Wherefore... flee from idolatry” (I Cor. 10:14): The Corinthian Christians were abusing their liberty in Christ by indulging in certain practices that were associated with idolatry, notably the eating of meats

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sacrificed to idols and then sold in the market place. This was not wise or safe. “I speak as to wise men” (verse 15). Paul appealed to their reason and good sense.

“If we go to the VERGE OF WHAT IS ALLOWABLE, we MAKE IT EASY FOR SATAN TO DRAW US OVER THE LINE INTO WHAT IS SINFUL.” Remember that you have the LIBERTY TO GIVE UP YOUR LIBERTY for the sake of the weak brother, for the cause of Christ in the church of which you are a member!

“The cup of blessing...” (I Cor. 10:16): “Not the cup which brings the blessing (though it does that), BUT THE CUP OVER WHICH BLESSING IS SPOKEN, the cup consecrated” by prayer. The Lord’s Supper sets forth the VERY FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY. The communion is literally our participation in the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7; Heb. 9: 22; Matt. 26:26-28). “The bread... communion of the body of Christ” (see John 6:41-58). The mention of the eup here before the bread does not mean that this order was observed; the regular order was FIRST THE LOAF, THEN THE CUP (I Cor. 11:24-27).

“For we being many are ONE BREAD, and ONE BODY...” (I Cor. 10:17): The Lord’s Supper UNITES US WITH EACH OTHER AND THE LORD. “Though there may be more than one loaf at the communion, yet the bread IS ONE IN SUBSTANCE, AND IS ONE EMBLEM”! Christ is the Head of His Body, the Church (Eph. 5:23).

“Behold Israel after the flesh...” (I Cor, 18): The natural Israel, the Jewish people, not the spiritual Israel composed of both Jews and Gentiles, the true children of faith (Rom. 2:28; 9:8; Gal. 3:7).

“Are not they... partakers of the altar?” Part of the Jewish sacrifice WAS EATEN BY THE WORSHIPPER AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP (Deut. 12: 17, 18), and PART WAS BURNED UPON THE ALTAR AS A SACRIFICE TO GOD. “Thus the worshiper had COMMUNION WITH THE ALTAR, or, more accurately speaking, WITH GOD, who OWNED THE ALTAR.” Thus, Paul shows the relationship between the worshiper and the OBJECT WORSHIPPED. Note his application of this principle.

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of the devils...” (I Cor. 10:21): An idol was nothing (verse 19; 8:4), but it REPRESENTED A REALITY – a demon, an evil spirit that controlled the hearts and minds of the heathen. Christians are to be separated from things like that. We cannot have “fellowship with devils” or demons (verse 20). When the pagans at their feasts blessed the provisions and wine they blessed them in the “name of the idol, and thereby consecrated them to him. Part of the festal cup was poured out as a libation to the idol, after which the guests drank of the cup and thus had fellowship with the idol.” Paul says the Christian CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN SUCH THINGS! If you do, you “provoke the Lord to jealousy” (verse 22). God is jealous of His honor and rights (Ex. 20:5). When He saves us through Christ, God EXPECTS US TO SEPARATE FROM ALL IDOLS AND HEATHEN PRACTICES (II Cor. 6: 17)!

“All things are lawful for me, but...” (I Cor. 10:23); “All” meat are especially referred to. Things that are lawful, that is, not sinful in themselves, are often not expedient. Lawful things ARE NOT PERMITTED WHEN THEY ARE EITHER NOT EXPEDIENT OR NOT EDIFYING. The TEST FOR THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT TO BE FOUND II SELF, but in HELPING, not HINDERING, THE GOOD OF OTHERS (I Cor 10:24; 8:13)

B. We should be conscientious (I Cor. 10:25-30).

“Whatsoever is sold in the shambles...” (I Cor. 10:25): Thing sold in the butcher’s stalls may be eaten, no question being asked. Thing set on the table at a Christian feast may also be eaten, without asking, questions. All that is offered for sale is the Lord’s bounty (verse 26). If, however, at any gathering someone

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should challenge a believer b; saying that the meat on the table had been offered in sacrifice to idol must “eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake” (verse 27-30).

C. We should be considerate (I Cor. 10:31-33).

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink...” (I Cor. 10:31): The rule for eating and drinking is now given. Paul condenses all into the form of two governing principles:

1. “Do all to the glory of God” (verse 31): The Glory to God.
2. “Give not offence...” (verse 32): The Good of Man.

II. The Proper Dress of Women (I Cor. 11:1-16).

A. The principle of women and worship (I Cor. 11:1-3).

“Be ye followers of me.” (I Cor. 11:1): As Christians we must not misuse our liberty in Christ (I Cor. 10:33). We ought to follow Paul i. giving up our liberty for the “profit of many, that they may be saved”! The preacher is a leader and is bound to set an example or pattern for others (Titus 2:7). This verse clearly belongs to the preceding chapter and not to chapter 11.

“Keep the ordinances...” (I Cor. 11:2): “Now I praise you” is preparatory to censure for disorderly conduct among them. The “ordinance” or “traditions” he “delivered” to them were wholly good. Paul rebuked the party spirit at Corinth, dealt with three moral issues and then with two questions of moral indifference, namely, marriage and meats offered to idols. Some traditions may be bad (Matt. 15:2f), and contrary to the will of God (Mark 7:8f). “New truth must rest upon old truth and is in harmony with it.”

“The head of every man is Christ...” (I Cor. 11:3): The apostle will now deal with three questions relating to public worship: the veiling of women, the observance of the Lord’s Supper, and the use of spiritual gifts.

The unit of society is the family. The head of the family is the husband. In the Christian version of the family the head of the man is Christ, “and the head of Christ is God.” Here are the checks and balance of justice and equality, Man is to exercise his headship only in love and with Christian sympathy and devotion.

B. The practice of women and worship (I Cor. 11:4-16).

“Every man praying or prophesying...” (I Cor. 11:4): He dishonors his head by covering what God would have exposed. Does he dishonor Christ, or his own head? Heathen priests of Rome covered their heads. So do modern Jews.

“But every woman that prayeth... with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head” (I Cor. 11:5): It was customary in Greek and Eastern cities for women to COVER THEIR HEADS IN PUBLIC, EXCEPT WOMEN OF IMMORAL CHARACTER. Corinth was full of “temple prostitutes.” Some of the Christian women, taking advantage of the NEWFOUND LIBERTY IN CHRIST, were making bold to lay aside their veils in church meetings. This horrified those of more modest type. Paul ad-monishes them not to defy public opinion as to what was considered proper in feminine decorum. Men and women are of equal value in God’s sight. But there are natural distinctions between men and women without which human society could not exist, Christian women living in heathen society SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO BRING REPROACH UPON THE CHURCH BY IMPROPER DRESS. Hence Paul enjoins women exercising gifts of ministry to do so with those outward manifestations of her true relationship to man which are proper and becoming (verses 6-15). Not wearing a covering for the head in Cincinnati has not the significance that it had in Corinth. Long hair is a glory to a woman and a disgrace to the man, the Beatles to the contrary notwithstanding!

The apostle concludes that “if any man seem to be contentious” he does not want to argue the principle any longer (verse 16).

III. The Proper Observance of the Lord’s Supper (I Corinthians 11:17-34)

A. Disorder at the Lord’s table (I Cor. 11:17-22).

“Now in this... I praise you not” (I Cor. 11:17): In contrast to “Now I praise you” (verse 2). Their church assemblies were not orderly. It seems that after the early sharing of goods in the church ceased (Acts 2:44-45), the wealthier members brought food and drink to certain services, for a “love-feast” (Jude 12) in which rich and poor joined. This feast entirely overshadowed the Lord’s Supper. Paul could not praise them for such actions. They divided into cliques (verse 18). “Heresies” (verse 19) or wrong thinking, causing them to imitate the drunken revels of the heathen people in their idol temples. In drunkenness and gluttony they lost sight of the real meaning of the Lord’s Supper (verses 20-22). Such practice is rebuked. Eat such feasts at home, and let each share alike to satisfy the hunger of all.

B. Order at the Lord’s table (I Cor. 11:23-37).

1. “Received... delivered” (I Cor. 11:28).

“For I have received of the Lord...” (I Cor. 11:23): Paul received this ordinance from Christ. This is direct claim to revelation from the Lord Jesus on the origin and order of the Lord’s Supper. Luke’s account (Luke 22:17-20) is almost identical with this one,

The Lord’s Supper is dated. It is not a tradition carried over from a previous dispensation. It is something new and distinct. It dates from the night of Christ’s betrayal. Such a sacred event is utterly inconsistent with strife, revelry and disorder. The Lord’s Supper is the very center of Christian worship. We come to remember, to adore, to worship and magnify Him!

2. “Eat... this do” (I Cor. 11:24).

“This is my body...” (I Cor. 11:24): Is this literal? “I am the true vine” (John 15:1), “These women are the two covenants” (Gal. 4:24) are kindred expressions. The bread and cup were NOT THE REAL BODY AND BLOOD of Jesus. The significance of WHAT THEY ATE WAS WHY THEY ATE. “This do in remembrance of me.” The feast was a memorial. The Lord’s Supper grew out of the Paschal Supper which was the traditional Passover, keeping as a memorial the ancient Passover night of Egypt

The Lord’s Supper originated in the midst of the Paschal supper Matthew says, “As they were eating,” which refers to the Passover, “Jesus took bread,” referring to the new Supper. The so-called Last Supper was not the Last Supper at all. The Passover was the Last Supper and the Lord’s Supper was the first supper. The Passover was the Last Supper of the old dispensation. The Lord’s Supper was the first supper of a new dispensation.

The whole supper was a representation of the physical senses for a spiritual purpose. Whoever partook of the elements was “showing forth the Lord’s death till he come” (verse 26). We do not accomplish His death again but acknowledge His DEATH BEFORE on the cross. We would not reproduce His body again but represent it in the memorials of the elements. The Lord’s Supper does not indicate the physical presence of Christ EITHER IN or WITH THE ELEMENTS, but rather the SPIRITUAL person OF CHRIST. As we partake of WHAT HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS HIS FLESH AND HIS BLOOD, WE DO SO BY FAITH. EATING CHRIST’S FLESH AND DRINKING CHRIST’S BLOOD ARE DONE WITH THE MIND AND HEART AND NOT WITH THE TEETH AND THROAT!

“THANKS”: The Greek word for giving thanks is EUCHARISTO and from it many call the Lord’s Supper the EUCHARIST. “Lord’s Supper,” “Lord’s Table” (I Cor. 10:21), and “Communion.”

3. “This cup... this do” (I Cor. 11:25). The memorial design of the Lord’s Supper is repeated. It is not

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a “sacrifice of the mass,” but a REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST’S SACRIFICE. “This cup is the New Testament in my blood,” is the same as attached to the statement, “this is my body.” The cup is said to be “THE NEW TESTAMENT” in His blood. It does not say that the CUP IS HIS BLOOD, but rather that it is NEW TESTAMENT. His blood is the seal of His new covenant. HIS BLOOD ratifies The NEW COVENANT. Every covenant or testament or will must be ratified by a seal of state. The ratification of the new Christian order of life came through Christ’s death by Christ’s blood.

The NEW COVENANT is NEW in point of TIME, in NATURE, in its PROVISIONS, in SUBSTANCE. Christ brought a new LIFE, a new nature, a new destiny, and a New World for all who will become beneficiaries of the NEW COVENANT.

The BLOOD SEAL of Christ ratified this covenant upon the divine side. It was ratified and realized on the human side by the FAITH-SEAL of the believer. Thus whenever we partake sensibly of the Lord’s Supper, we are partaking spiritually of the provisions of the New Covenant.

4. “For as often... ye do show” (I Cor. 11:26).

“For as often as ye eat... drink... ye do show” (I Cor. 11:26). In the faithful and truthful observance of the Lord’s Supper we bear witness to two things: 1) Christ’s death, and 2) Christ’s return (John 14:1-3; Matt. 26:29).

“Till he come” we shall witness to our Lord’s ministry as Saviour and His ministry as Sovereign. In the face of this it takes RELIGIOUS CHICANERY TO OBSERVE THE Lord’s Supper while DENYING THE CERTAINTY OF THE LORD’S RETURN!

5. “Unworthily... guilty” (I Cor. 11:27-34).

“Whosoever shall eat of this bread... unworthily... guilty” (I Cor. 11:27): This is a solemn warning. Paul means that such shameful conduct as he had described was really PROFANING THE SACRED FEAST AND IGNORING AND INSULTING THE BODY AND BLOODS OF THE LORD, WHICH WERE SYMBOLIZED BY THE FEAST.

Paul is NOT WARNING UNWORTHY PERSONS FROM ATTENDING THE LORD’S SUPPER. We are all UNWORTHY, but we MAY EAT WORTHILY, “in a prayerful, reverent, repentant spirit.” Paul is not discussing the CHARACTER OF THE WORSHIPERS, BUT THEIR CONDUCT IN WORSHIP. The apostle rebuked their gross misbehavior by insisting that the Lord’s table is no place for gluttony and drunkenness! Such are guilty of a crime committed against the body and blood of the Lord by such sacrilege (see Heb. 6:6; 10:29).

As we come to the Lord’s table, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (II Cor. 13:5). We are to KEEP IN MIND WHAT THE SUPPER MEMORIALIZES (vs. 23, 29).

“... not discerning the Lord’s body” (I Cor. 11:29): Not distinguishing, keeping in mind that the bread and cup are memorials, Eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine as symbols of the Lord’s body and blood in death PROBES ONE’S HEART TO THE VERY DEPTHS. “The unworthiness of the participant is one thing; the UNWORTHY MANNER OF PARTICIPATION IS QUITE ANOTHER.” If you know Christ as Savior and Lord, come, discerning Christian, up the first day of the week to the Lord’s Table.

“For this cause .. weak... sickly... many sleep” (I Cor. 11:30): Actual disease and ACTUAL DEATH may result from ABUSING THE LORD’S SUPPER. What was the exact nature of this infliction, Paul does not explain. He does state, however, that it was not merely a divine judgement, but a chastisement designed to lead the Corinthian Christians to repentance and so to ultimate salvation (verses 31-32). Those who partake of the Supper of the Lord should “examine” (verse 28) themselves as to their motives and as to their state of heart. By this self-judgment they would be free from the judgment and chastisement of the Lord

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which were visited on the irreverent and profane (Heb. 12:5-8).

“When ye come together to eat, tarry one for another” (I Cor. 11:33): When the Christians met for the common meal they were to “wait one for another.” That is common courtesy. Wait in turn, If any man was hungry he should “eat at home” before coming to the church assembly They should remember that the Lord’s Table was not to satisfy the physical appetite but to symbolize a spiritual relation to Christ. All who approach the sacred table sincerely sorrowing for sin and earnestly desiring new strength can do so without fear. They can approach it with a confidence that the Lord, in whose real presence they can rejoice, is ready to receive, to pardon, and to impart new life, forgiveness, and strength (I John 1:7)!

Paul’s account of the Lord’s Supper is one of the four in the New Testament. Matthew’s is that of an eyewitness; those of Mark and Luke were received by them from witnesses who were present. That of Paul was “received from the Lord.” Probably it was the oldest account of the event.

QUESTIONS

1. What privileges did Israel enjoy (I Cor. 10:1-4)?
2. Did God punish Israel’s disobedience by physical or spiritual death (I Cor. 10:5-10)? Why were these things written (I Cor. 10:6f; Num. 25:5; Ex. 32:1-11; I John 5:21; Num. 16:41f)?
3. Why did “all these things” happen (I Cor. 10:11)? How will self-reliance end (I Cor. 10:12)?
4. Who is “FAITHFUL” when Christians are tempted (I Cor. 10:13) Who determines the extent of a Christian’s temptation or testing (I Cor. 10:13)? From what should we “flee” (verse 14)? Why (v 15)?
5. What two tables are contrasted (I Cor. 10:16-33)?! Into what two governing principles does Paul condense this section (verses 31, 32) Why is it wrong for a Christian to exercise absolute personal liberty (I Cor. 14:33, 40)?
6. What is the woman’s relationship to the man (I Cor. 11:3, 7-9, 11, 12) What “ordinances” (verse 2) were both men and women to observe?
7. How was this relationship to be shown in the assembly (I Cor. 11:4-6; 13-15)?
8. What difficulties had arisen in the assembly (I Cor. 11:17, 18)? What had the divisions revealed (I Cor. 11:19)?
9. What sins had accompanied the observance of the Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 11:20-22)?
10. From whom did Paul receive his revelation of the Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 11:23; Gal, 1:11, 12)?
11. What is the order for observing the Lord’s Supper as established by Christ Himself (I Cor. 11:23-25; Matt. 26:26,27; Mark 14:22, 23; Luke 22:19, 20)?
12. In whose memory are the bread and fruit of the vine to be eaten (I Cor. 11:24, 25)? What two phases of Christ’s death do the bread and cup represent, respectively?
13. To what blessed future event does the Lord’s Supper point (I Cor. 11:26)?
14. Is there any teaching as to the frequency with which this Supper should be observed (verses 25, 26; Acts 20:7)?
15. Between what two divine events are Christians to continue this memorial (I Cor. 11:23, 26)?
16. Of what is one guilty who observes the Lord’s Supper in an “unworthy” manner (I Cor. 11:27)? What does the one who observes it unworthily fail to discern (I Cor. 11:29)?
17. How had God chastened the guilty Christians at Corinth (I Cor, 11:30)? Who are described as being “asleep” (Acts 7:60; II Pet. 11:30)?
18. How many Christians escape the chastening of the Lord (I Cor. 11:31, 32)?
19. What does the chastening of the Lord prevent (I Cor. 11:32)?
20. What does the chastening of the Lord produce (Hebrews 12:9-11)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 45

Page 1

I Corinthians 12

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 12:31

Memory Verse:

“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way” (I Corinthians 12:31).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THEIR USES

While the New Testament was in the process of making, in certain times and places, God gave SPECIAL MIRACULOUS DEMONSTRATIONS of the Holy Spirit to HELP THE CHURCHES GUIDE THEMSELVES INTO ALL TRUTH (John 16:13).

Why?

The apostles were few, the churches far apart, the means of transportation and communication slow. There were no railroads, telegraphs, or radios; ideas could travel no faster than people could travel. The churches were overrun with false teachers making all kinds of claims about Christ, and the churches had NO WRITTEN RECORDS AS TO THE ACTUAL TRUTH.

Paul now turned from the section of his letter to the CONSTRUCTIVE as he proceeded to deal with

- A. The Christian and Gifts (I Cor. 12).
- B. The Christian and Love (I Cor. 13).
- C. The Christian and Tongues (I Cor. 14).
- D. The Christian and the Resurrection (I Cor. 15).
- E. The Christian and Service (I Cor. 16).

I. The Purpose of Gifts: Unity (I Corinthians 12:14)

“Now concerning spiritual gifts...” (I Cor. 12:1): Such gifts had been promised (Joel 2:28f; Acts 2:17-21; Mark 16:17, 18; Acts 1:18). BE-GINNING AT PENTECOST (Acts 2:1f) the apostles were given miraculous gifts – the ability to speak in tongues, languages they had never learned, Such gifts were for the PURPOSE OF BUILDING UP THE CHURCH. The SPIRIT REVEALED GOD’S WILL which we have now as our New Testament (II Tim. 3:16-17).

The risen Christ “gave gifts unto men” (Eph. 4:8) that they might not be “ignorant” about the “SPIRITUALS” of the church. The church needed to TURN FROM CARNALITY (I Cor. 1:1-11:34) to the SPIRITUAL-- the things of the Spirit, especially to the WAY OF LOVE in Christ!

“Ye were... carried away unto these dumb idols...” (I Cor. 12:2): Idolaters worshipped idols. These false gods had oracles, and priests professed to speak under the influence of the god. The pagans had many gods, all without voice (Psa. 95:5-7). They had the “god of youth,” “the god of fertility” – “gods many, and lords many” (I Cor. 8:5). The oracle of Delphos, between Athens and Corinth, was especially celebrated.

“No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed...” (I Cor. 12:3): Only an evil prophet could call Jesus Christ accursed, or blaspheme Him (Matt. 7:21-23). “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (I John 4:2, 3; 2:2; 5:1).

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The pagan would cry, “Jesus is accursed.” The Christian would reply, “Jesus is Lord.” It was faith’s reply to unbelief, heaven’s challenge to hell. One moved by the Spirit of God would BLESS, NEVER CURSE JESUS.

Blasphemous language against Jesus was mainly by the Jews (Acts 13:45; 18:6). It is even possible that Paul had once tried to make Christians say Anathema Jesus (Acts 26:11)!

II. The Diversity of Gifts (I Corinthians 12:4-31)

A. Gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:4-11).

1. Unity in the source of the gifts (I Cor. 12:4-7).

“Now there are diversities of gifts...” (I Cor. 12:4): There are many gifts, but ONE GIVER. There are various talents but one source. In tracing these gifts to their divine Origin, Paul mentions as ONE and EQUAL, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The church is gifted by the Spirit (verse 4), directed by the Lord (verse 5), and energized by God (verse 6). Read Eph. 4:11, 12; Rom. 12: 6, 7; I Pet. 4:10, 11.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given... to profit withal” (I Cor. 12:7): The Spirit bestowed these sacred gifts for human good. Their object was the good and benefit of all men. The gifts of the Spirit would bless the whole body of the church.

2. Diversity is the use of the gifts (I Cor. 12:8-11).

“For to one is given by the Spirit the WORD OF WISDOM (I Cor. 12:8): In the verses of this section we find three sets of gifts with three gifts in each set. The gifts come from God. They are bestowed on whom God wills. Those who receive them MUST NOT BOAST OF THEM, but USE THEM FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH. There are NINE GIFTS of the Spirit and NINE GRACES of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23)

“The WORD of WISDOM: The ability to reveal divine truth, such as possessed by the apostles, and partially by prophets.

“KNOWLEDGE”: Ability to teach truth thus revealed.

“FAITH...” (I Cor 12:9): More than the faith which comes by hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17). “It is that energy of faith which carries with it divine power.” Not faith of surrender, saving faith, but WONDER-WORKING FAITH (I Cor. 13:2; Matt. 17:20; 21:21). The first three are GIFTS OF THE INTELLECT, All need faith to make wisdom and knowledge practical.

“GIFTS OF HEALING” (verse 9b): Literally making sick people well, as in Acts 4:30 (see James 5:14; Luke 7:21). These gifts belong to the will. They demand boldness.

“WORKING OF MIRACLES...” (verse 10a): Workings of powers. Included acts of judgement as well as mercy (Acts 5:5, 10; 13:8-11). “Prophecy...” (verse 10b): Enabled one to speak the truth without error under the Spirit’s guidance. Not merely foretelling, but a forth telling of truth.

“Discerning of spirits...” (verse 10c): These are gifts that pertain to the realm of the emotions. This is “power to recognize the difference between the utterances of genuine inspiration” and those of a false prophet.

“Tongues”: This was not a senseless jargon, a “spiritual language unknown to man, uttered in ecstasy,” BUT THE ABILITY TO SPEAK FOREIGN LANGUAGES as in Acts 2:4, 6-8, 11.

“Interpretation of tongues”: The ability to INTERPRET WHAT WAS SAID BY ONE WHO SPOKE WITH TONGUES.

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Note that the first three gifts LEAD THE LIST. God bestowed the gifts as He willed through the “selfsame Spirit” (verse 11). Today the Spirit operates THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES. The early church did not have the New Testament. Hence we see the action of the DIRECT BESTOWING OF GIFTS to SPREAD THE GOSPEL. Paul places in the very lowest rank the gifts that the Corinthians coveted most!

B. Gifts in the church (I Cor. 12:12, 13).

“For as the body is one... many members” (I Cor. 12:12): THE BODY, the CHURCH, IS ONE. Gifts were given not to bless the individual who was given the gift, but to bless ALL – THE WHOLE CHURCH. Chr is the Head of the Body the Church (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 5:23, 30). The unity of these diverse gifts is illustrated by the human body, which has many members and organs with different offices, but all parts of one body.

“Baptized into one body...” (I Cor. 12:13): In obeying the gospel given by the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32; 2:38) we are “baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27), God adds us to “the church” (Acts 2:47).

C. The harmony of the body (I Cor. 12:14-26).

1. Members who envy others (I Cor. 12:14-20).

“For the body is not one member, but many” (I Cor. 12:14): This sounds like a truism, but it is THE KEY TO THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF CHURCH LIFE, BOTH LOCAL AND GENERAL. Paul shows how absurd it would be for one member, a foot or a hand, to refuse to function, acting as though it did not belong to the body just because it had a different office from some other member. He uses, for example, an ear and an eye (verses 15-17).

“But now hath God set the members... as it hath pleased Him (I Cor. 12:18): Why challenge God’s will (Rom. 9:20). Dare to fill the place God has given you with dignity and loyalty that befits one who is a child of God! Envy no one his place in Christ’s body.

2. Members who despise others (I Cor. 12:21-26).

“And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee. (I Cor. 12:21): One organ or member of the human body cannot despise the other organs or members of the body. Every organ is a necessary part of the body; upon its proper functioning the health of the body depends. It is foolish for any member of the church to despise any less gifted member and to suppose that his own spiritual life will not suffer if he fails to honor those who appear less brilliant and admirable than himself (verses 22-26).

“Members of the body... more feeble” (verse 22): Paul speaks of those parts of the body that are “more feeble” as being more necessary. Things are not always what they seem. The vital organs (heart, lung, liver, and kidneys) are not visible, but life cannot exist without them. If there is a part of the body that is disfigured or misshapen or marred, we treat it with special consideration. If it is a malformed ear it is hidden by a considerate hair-dress. If it is a mutilated hand, it is kept covered or out of sight. If one eye is reduced in vision, the other eye increases in power (verses 23-26). The whole body feels a hurt finger! Mash your thumb and see. So the whole body may tingle with delight and joy thanks to the wonderful nervous system and to the relation between mind and matter.

D. The body identified (I Cor. 12:27).

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (I Cor. 12:27): Christians, as a whole, are

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“THE BODY OF CHRIST.” Individually they are “members in particular.” Christ is the head of His body the church (Col. 1:18).

E. The responsibilities of the body (I Cor. 12:28-31).

“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles...” (I Cor. 12:28): The various offices of the members are pointed out. Paul named NINE SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Here he names NINE POSITIONS in the church.

“Apostles”: Had full inspiration to reveal the Gospel. This office ceased when the last apostle died. However, the effect continues. We have the New Testament that God, through them, gave us.

“Prophets”: Occasional inspiration. These are speakers for God and Christ.

“Teachers”: Men gifted by the spirit to teach in the church. Paul uses the word of himself along with apostles (I Tim. 2:7).

“Miracles”: Those who had the power to work miracles. The gift of miracles is a lesser gift than teaching but far more spectacular.

“Gifts of healing”: One division of miraculous power granted.

“Helps”: Spiritual aid granted to helpers, such as the deacons. A steel truss in a building supports its roof, yet it is not seen. You can be a hidden helper in the church!

“Governments”: The administrative abilities of the elders.

“Diversities of tongues”: Power to speak and interpret the message given.

This list differs somewhat from that already given in verses 8-10. Here the order is not determined by the essential nature of the gifts as allied to the intellect, or will, or feelings, but by the relative importance of the gifts in the work and edification of the church.

Note that last of all, and least important of all came “diversities of tongues.” All the gifts are of God. The message is that NO MEMBER OF THE CHURCH IS UNNECESSARY TO ITS LIFE, however small his gifts!

“Are all apostles?” (I Cor. 12:29, 30): Paul enumerates the gifts again in the form of questions? How did God bestow these gifts? Did he give all to all? No. For then each member would have BEEN COMPLETE IN ITSELF, and INDEPENDENT OF ALL OTHERS, and the very body would have been destroyed. Thus Paul emphasizes the second truth, NO MEMBER OF THE CHURCH IS SELF-SUFFICIENT, however great his gifts may be!

“But covet earnestly the best gifts... a more excellent way” (I Cor. 12:31): Paul closes his discussion with the exhortation to “desire earnestly” or “covet” the “best gifts,” “the greater gifts.” We are to seek the highest spiritual gifts.

“The more excellent way” is the way of love already laid down in I Cor. 8:1f concerning the question of meats offered to idols (I John 4:7). The Corinthians wanted the LAST and LEAST OF THE GIFTS, “tongues.” LOVE is something all the members may possess! Love is the crowning virtue of life. It is the most compelling force in Christian experience.

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Questions

1. Why did God give special miraculous demonstrations of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13)?
2. If the first eleven chapters are the CORRECTIVE section of Paul's letter to Corinth, what may chapters 12-16 be called?
3. With what is Paul now to deal (I Cor. 12:1) and why?
- 4 To what had the Gentiles been "carried away" (I Cor. 12:2)?
5. Can one speaking by the Spirit of God call "Jesus accursed" (I Cor. 2:3; Matt. 7:21-23; I John 4:2, 3; 2:2; 5:1)?
6. Who is the source of "diversities of gifts" (I Cor. 12:4-6)?
7. For what purpose does the Spirit bestow these "spirituals" or gifts? (I Cor. 12:7)?
8. How many gifts of the Spirit are listed (I Cor. 12:8-10)? How many graces of the Spirit are given in Gal. 5:22, 23? List them.
9. Can you define each gift in one sentence?
10. Where does Paul place the gift which the Corinthians coveted (verse 10)?
11. On what basis did the Spirit divide these gifts "to every man" (I Cor. 12:11)?
12. Do many members make many bodies (I Cor. 12:12)? Who is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18, 24)?
13. When we obey the gospel into what and into whom are we baptized (I Cor. 14:13; Gal. 3:27; Acts 5:32; 2:38)?
14. What fact-- stated in I Cor. 12:14 --is the key to the whole problem of church life both local and general?
15. Is it reasonable for one member of the physical body, or the church, the body of Christ, to envy another member of the body because the function or work is different (I Cor. 12:15-17)? Show the absurdity of such thinking.
16. Who hath "set the members every one of them in the body," and why (I Cor. 12:18, 28-30; Rom. 9:20)?
17. Should members of the body despise other members of the body (I Cor. 12:21-26)?
18. Does God recognize any member of Christ's body as being unnecessary (I Cor. 12:15-25)? Do you?
19. How should God's equal recognition of all the members influence us in our treatment of each other (I Cor. 12:25)?
20. Who is affected by our own personal experiences (I Cor. 12:26)? What should we "covet earnestly," and what would Paul show the Corinthians (I Cor. 12:31)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 46

Page 1

I Corinthians 13

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 13:13

Memory Verse:

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”
(I Corinthians 13:13).

THE PRIORITY OF LOVE

“This chapter has been admired by all ages, but, unfortunately, it has been practiced by none.” Too true to be comfortable!

There is a vital connection between I Cor. 12:31 and 14:1. Paul gives chapter 13 as a parenthesis, by showing the Corinthians directly how to “follow after love” (I Cor. 14:1). He shows them what love really is. It is the “more excellent way.” (I Cor. 12:31). In dealing with love, Paul shows

- I. Its Values (I Cor. 13:1-3)
- II. Its Virtues (I Cor. 13:4-8).
- III. Its Victory (I Cor. 13:9-13).

Henry Drummond is right in his marvelous book when he says LOVE is “THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD.” To live and to love are identical (I John 3:14; 4:8). See

I. The Preference of Love (I Corinthians 13:1-3)

A. Eloquence (I Cor. 13:1).

“Though I speak with tongues of men and angels...” (I Cor. 13:1) This marvelous prose-poem of Paul comes like a sweet bell right between the jangling noise of the “gifts” in I Cor. 12 and 14.

The Corinthians had abused the showy gift of tongues to the point of fanaticism. If LOVE is not guiding my speech, then Paul says I an “all noise,” sounds without soul, or feeling such as comes from pounding! on some brazen gong or basin, or from symbols, which are the lowest most monotonous, least expressive of all musical instruments.

“And have not charity...” This is the crux of the chapter Love is the way par excellence of I Cor. 12:81. “Charity,” Latin caritas is wholly inadequate. “Love” in the New Testament is translated from, number of Greek words. “Philanthropia”: love for mankind. “Phileadelphia” Love for brethren. “Phileo”: Love for a friend. Here as in John 3:16, the word is “agape.” The Revised Version translation of “love” is preferred over the King James “charity,” since this “love” is not charity in the sense of alms, but charity in the sense of the HIGHEST AND DIVINES AFFECTION.

The Greeks had another word for love: “EROS,” love between the sexes, as love for sweethearts, love of husband for wife, and vice versa This word is never used in the New Testament. It was too capable of being misunderstood. Love is a PREFERRED Quality OF LIFE. It head the list of SPIRITUAL FRUIT (Gal. 5:22, 23). We may possess gift, but Paul shows that love has priority over eloquence of “tongues.” Without love the ecstatic gifts are worthless.

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B. Prophecy (I Cor. 13:2).

“And though I have the gift of prophecy...” (I Cor, 13:2): Another high spiritual gift. Without love the teaching gifts of prophecy, knowledge of mysteries, and “all knowledge” are worthless. Paul is not condemning these great gifts. He simply places love above them and essential to them.

“Prophecy” is the gift of skill in knowing what is going to happen in the future. It is not as desirable as love in the present.

“Understand all mysteries”: This gift of knowledge is investigation which plumbs the mysteries or revelations of God in all their bearings upon present and future life, but love gives a clearer and better revelation of God than the keenest knowledge without love. Those who know most about the world sometimes know least about God (Matt. 27:21-23).

“All faith... remove mountains”: Paul is not speaking of obedient faith which leads to salvation, but the “gift of faith” as in I Cor. 12:9. Faith which does not work in love is profitless (James 2:26; Gal. 5:6; Matt. 17:20; 21:21).

C. Charity and martyrdom (I Cor. 13:3).

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed... body to be burned.” (I Cor. 13:3) If we help others to be known for our generosity, or dole away all we have in a grudging spirit, or daily give our bodies in service or even DIE PHYSICALLY WITHOUT LOVE, “it profiteth me nothing!” “Willingness to fight and die for Christianity will NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF LOVING OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST” (Heb. 5:9; John 14:15). Had not Phyllis Rine sealed her faith in and love for Christ and Africa with her blood, her being shot by the rebels in Stanleyville Nov. 24, 1964, would have been a worthless tragedy, not a triumph for Christ and His Church!

In these three verses, SEVEN GREAT THINGS ARE LISTED, but LOVE IS GREATER Without love the possession of them is a PRETENCE and a SHAME. Love must have PRIORITY because of its VALUES. Not to love, in the highest God-like sense, IS NOT TO LIVE!

II. The Properties of Love (I Corinthians 13:4-7)

A. “Love suffereth long...” (I Cor. 13:4): Patience. Love has poise, Its normal state is placid, calm and composed.

If Paul had tried to give us a pen picture of the Lord Jesus Christ he could not have done better than to use the words we have here. SUBSTITUTE the word “JESUS CHRIST” for the word “LOVE” and you get a CHARACTER SKETCH OF JESUS CHRIST! And WE MUST HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS (Gal. 2:20). Love does not be-come impatient when tried, wronged, or misunderstood. Love moves in graciously when people approve or disapprove.

B. “And is kind.” Kindness. Gentle in behavior. An old Scotch minister upon hearing his people censure each other with merciless criticism said: “Remember, if you are not very kind you are not very holy, because kindness and holiness cannot be separated.” See Rom. 12:21.

C. “Love envieth not”: Generosity. This is not the generosity of alms, but generosity of thought. Love is neither jealous nor envious of the gifts, goods or fortune of another not of his spiritual prosperity, as was Cain (Gen. 4:3-8. The true parent does not envy the child or the true Christian his brother in Christ (see John 3:26-30).

D. “Love vaunteth not itself.” Vainglorious. Love never brags, exalts itself or its ability as did Simon (Acts 8:9; Matt. 6:1; 11:29; 12:29, 38; 21:5). “Love does not parade her gifts” (Way).

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E. “Love... is not puffed up”: Humility. “Not inflated with pride for arrogance, because of wealth, knowledge or power (Acts 12:20-23).

F. Love “Doth not behave itself unseemly...” (I Cor. 12:5): Courtesy. Literally, love “is never boorish.” Not indecent. Manners measure the man (see Luke 7:44-47). Christians are courteous (I Pet. 3:8,9). A gentleman is just a gentle man – a man who does things gently with love.

G. Love “seeketh not her own.” Unselfishness. Love does not grasp for its rights to the HURT OF OTHERS. Love is happy to help others. It LIVES and HELPS OTHER TO LIVE – for God (Rom. 12:10; 15:103; Phil. 2:4; Matt. 20:28).

H. Love “is not easily provoked.” Good-natured. “Easily” is not in the text, so the Revised Version omits it. “Easily” has been an excuse for many a man getting into a bad temper. Irritation or sharpness of spirit is curbed by love. Paul was provoked in Athens. He and Barnabas had a paroxysm in Antioch (Acts 15:39). The secret of temper control is CHRIST-CONTROL, not SELF-CONTROL. Christ was provoked with hardened, deliberately sinful men (Mark 3:5; I Pet. 2:23).

I. Love “thinketh no evil.” Charitableness. Love does not keep a ledger in which to enter up wrongs to be dealt with some day later on. Have “no memory for injuries.” Love provides a delightful frame of mind to live in.

J. Love “Rejoiceth not in iniquity...” (I Cor. 13:6): Sincerity. Love does not rejoice in seeing sin committed (Rom. 1:32; John 8:3-11). This kind of love is “never glad when others go wrong.” “There are people as low as that whose real joy is in the triumph of evil.”

K. Love “rejoiceth in the truth.” Goodness. Barnabas came to Antioch, saw “the grace of God, WAS GLAD, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord” (Acts 11:23). Love is on the side of the angels. Paul returns here to the positive side of the picture (verse 4) after the remarkable negatives,

L. Love “Beareth all things...” (I Cor. 13:7): Graciousness. Love covers, protects, and forbears. “Love shall cover the multitude of sins” (I Pet. 4:8). Love bears the faults of others by putting a mantle of love over them. Whenever a fire breaks out in the forest and leaves the black scar of a ruthless burning, nature soon hides its ugliness with a mantle of green. Let the lesson of nature be the lesson of life. Let us put the mantle of love over the scars of another’s life!

M. Love “believeth all things.” Confidence. Love is full of trust. Love is not gullible, but has faith in men. Even when cause for trust may be gone, love remains love. It may tearfully acknowledge defeat but it will cheerfully pursue its course,

N. Love “hopeth all things.” Assurance. Love believes in its cause so deeply that it knows a better day is coming, even as the father hoped and looked for the prodigal’s return (Luke 15:20). A pessimist has been described as a person who blows out the light to see how dark it is! Love is optimistic, hopeful, expectant and FORWARD LOOKING!

O. Love “endureth all things.” Endurance. Love preserves. It carries on like a stouthearted soldier. This is the FIFTEENTH and last property of love.

If one knows Sir Joshua Reynolds’ beautiful painting of the SEVEN VIRTUES (the four cardinal virtues of the Stoics – temperance, prudence fortitude, justice – and the three Christian graces – faith, hope, love), he will find them all exemplified here, as marks of love (the queen of them all)!

III. The Permanence of Love (II Corinthians 13:8-13)

A. That which passes (I Cor. 13:8).

“Love never faileth...” (I Cor. 13:8): Love survives everything. The thought of the word “faileth” is

falling off, like the leaves of a flower. Love never loses its life principle. "Love's flower petals never fall."

"Prophecy": Prophecy will not fail in the sense of a breakdown in its fulfillment. "Fail" here, means, "to make useless." God's written Word, the Bible, makes prophecy useless.

"Tongues": Shall cease. Just as we have had no prophets for many centuries, so "we have NO EVIDENCE THAT THERE ARE MEN TODAY WHO HAVE THE ABILITY TO PREACH INTELLIGENTLY IN LANGUAGES NEVER LEARNED." The need for these tongues was the preaching and rapid spread of the gospel.

"Knowledge, it shall vanish away": This knowledge which vanishes is to be distinguished from knowledge as intelligence. This is knowledge in the sense of illumination. It is knowledge as a gift of discernment, When the written word, the Bible, came into being and form, the NEED FOR THIS SPECIAL ILLUMINATION CEASED.

B. That which is perfect (I Cor. 13:9-12).

1. The contrasts (I Cor. 13:9-10).

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part" (I Cor. 13:9): As opposed to the whole. This is a reason why these gifts should pass away. Our knowledge is now only partial, and the prophecy only gives glimpses. These are all imperfect and fragmentary and hence must give way to something better.

"But when that which is PERFECT IS COME..." (I Cor. 13:10): Then the partial knowledge and prophecy will be done away. The imperfect will give way to the perfect. The perishable will give way to the enduring, the full-grown.

2. The comparisons (I Cor. 13:11-12).

"When I was a child..." (I Cor. 13:11): To make plain his meaning as to the vanishing of temporary gifts, Paul employs two comparisons: a child's knowledge and a mirror's reflection. Normal human things grow, progress and develop. Their resulting change is speech, disposition and mode of thought forms a vivid picture of the passing away of our present imperfect knowledge, of its merging into mature and complete knowledge in that glad day when Christ shall be revealed in glory (John 3:12; II Cor. 5:7; I John 3:2).

"For now we see through a glass, darkly..." (I Cor. 13:12): Ancient mirrors were of polished metal, not glass -- those in Corinth being famous. "Darkly" indicates an enigma. So it was with the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge. They were imperfect reflections. When love came, it would be the perfect mirror because love is the most perfect, the most honest, and the truest of all life's qualities. "To see a friend's face in a cheap mirror would be very different from looking at the friend" (Robertson and Plummer.) Oh, the glories of being FACE TO FACE WITH CHRIST!

C. That which is permanent (I Cor. 13:13).

"And now abideth faith, hope, love... the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13): These three shall survive. All through this chapter we saw vanishing and passing items of character and furnishings of ability.

"Faith": Abides because it is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

"Hope": Abides because it anticipates the fulfillment of what faith expects. As long as there is true faith, there will be real hope.

"Love": Abides because it is the very nature of the new life, It is the last and "GREATEST" of the three things that survive time, death, and disaster. Dr. J. D. Jones in his able book, THE GREATEST OF THESE, holds that LOVE IS GREATEST, because love is an attribute of God. "God is love" (I John 4:8, 16).

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Questions

1. How has I Corinthians 13 been described?
2. What does Henry Drummond say about love?
3. Can you give a simple outline of I Corinthians 13?
4. If a man could “speak with tongues of men and angels,” would no God accept him regardless of his motives (I Cor. 13:1)?
5. To what does Paul liken one who speaks without love (I Cor. 13:1)?
6. Why is the Latin “caritas” or “charity” inadequate? Why is the Revised Version translation of “love” to be preferred?
7. What word for “love” is never used in the New Testament? Why?
8. Can you define “the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries, all knowledge, and faith” (I Cor. 13:2)?
9. What does Paul say about these gifts unless they are accompanied by love?
10. If you gave “all” your “goods to feed the poor” and even died as martyr without love, how much would you be profited (I Cor. 13:3)?
11. How many positive and how many negative properties of love are given in I Cor. 13:4-7)? List them.
12. If you substituted “Jesus Christ” for the word “love” in this chapter, would it make sense?
13. It is necessary for us Christians to have these characteristics (Gal. 2:20; II Pet. 8:18)?
14. Can you define in one sentence what love does and does not do (I Cor. 13:4-8)?
15. What is the meaning of “Love never faileth” (I Cor. 13:8)?
16. What three things shall “fail... cease... vanish away” (I Cor. 13:8)?
17. What contrasts are used by Paul in I Cor. 13:9, 10?
18. What comparisons does he employ in I Cor. 13:11-12?
19. What three things “abide” after the temporary gifts for ministry have fulfilled their purpose (13:13)?
20. Why is “love” “the greatest of these” (I Cor. 13:13)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 47

Page 1

I Corinthians 14

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 14:10

Memory Verse:

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance” (I Corinthians 14:10).

DECENCY AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH

“Love never faileth” (I Cor. 13:13). The apostle now submitted certain gifts to the test of love.

In I Cor. 12:4-6 Paul showed that the “same Spirit... same Lord same God” gifted, directed and energized the church in perfect variety and UNITY. The Spirit gave gifts to men to BUILD UP THE CHURCH, the body of Christ. The apostle exhorted the Corinthian Christians to “covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a MORE EXCELLENT WAY” (I Cor. 12:31). This was the WAY OF LOVE (I Cor 13: 1-13) for the church as a whole!

The Relative Value of Tongues and Prophecyings

I Cor. 14 is devoted to a discussion of “tongues” and “prophesying,” probably because they were the two gifts most prevalent and sought after at Corinth. The gift of tongues is mentioned as a lesser and least desirable gift, and mentioned last in the listing of gifts (I Cor. 12:10, 30) The gift of tongues was abused by the carnal Christians at Corinth. These Corinthians were the first examples of a modern travesty on spirituality. That travesty is the modern abuse of tongues. Carnal, immature Christians did the abusing.

Prophecying, which ordinarily means predicting future events, here seems to mean teaching by special aid of the Spirit. Ordinarily it was far more valuable than speaking in tongues, because everybody understood it. Paul shows that prophecy is superior to tongues, that spiritual gifts are only signs, that EVERYTHING which occurs in the public worship – speaking in prophecy or tongues or prayer – MUST EDIFY, BUILD UP, exhort and console those who are present (I Cor. 14:3).

I. The Priority of the Gifts (I Corinthians 14:1-25)

A. The effect of tongues on believers (I Cor. 14:1-19).

1. Paul’s advice (I Cor. 14:1).

“Follow after charity...” (I Cor. 14:1): Love is superior to all gifts which the Spirit bestows on the church (I Cor. 12:8-11). Love is the nature of God Himself. “God is love” (I John 4:8, 16). Love is eternal (I Cor. 13:13). Paul makes love the Prior Thing! It is the “more excellent way” (I Cor. 12:31). Seek it above all gifts. It is open to all Christians.

“Desire spiritual gifts, but rather... prophecy”: In the priority of gifts, tongues are never first. Let spiritual gifts be sought, but in seeking, desire above all the gift of prophecy. Outside of Acts 2:1-4, 12-21; 10:44-48; 19:1-7 and Corinthians the gift of tongues is mentioned once (Mark 16:17). “Tongues... shall cease” (I Cor. 13:8) declared Paul.

But here prophesying, while it sometimes meant to predict future events, MEANS TO TEACH BY THE SPECIAL AID OF THE SPIRIT. It was and is FAR MORE VALUABLE THAN “speaking in tongues” because everybody understood such teaching, while only a few of foreign nationality could understand “tongues.”

2. Paul’s argument (I Cor. 14:2-6).

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“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh... unto God” (I Cor. 14:2): God’s Spirit gave men the gift of tongues to PRAISE GOD (Acts 10:46). Men abused this gift. “The gift of tongues was NOT A GIFT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF, but of the USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES.” Suppose I had the ability, God-given, without going to school to learn it, to speak Japanese, and suppose I would get up and spout out my love for God in a public service. You would say: “I cannot understand a word you are saying.” I would be quite happy, but you WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND, unless you were Japanese. I would “edify myself” (verse 4) alone This is SELFISH, and Paul condemns it! Tongues might excite wonder and amazement as on Pentecost (Acts 2:12), but PREACHING THE WORD OF GOD MADE CONVERTS (Acts 2:36-42). The carnal Corinthians needed to be more fruitful (verse 3), not more “showy” (verse 5). Prophesying is desirable because it edifies or builds up. “Speaking in tongues strengthened the speaker, but it was of no value to OTHERS “EXCEPT HE INTERPRET, that the church may receive edifying” (verse 5)!

“Now... if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you...” (I Cor. 14:6): Paul had the “gift of tongues” (I Cor. 12:10, 80). As a Jew he spoke to them miraculously in the Greek language. As a visitor among them, Paul names four ways in which he in the Greek tongue or language could “edify” them.

“By revelation”: The unveiling of divine truth to a prophet.

“By knowledge”: The divine illumination of the mind as to the importance and SIGNIFICANCE OF A TRUTH.

“By prophesying”: As here discussed, prophecy means preaching under divine guidance.

“By doctrine”: The impartation to another of the truth thus grasped, These are all matters of sense, and not of sound only.

3. Paul’s illustration (I Cor. 14:7-12).

“And even things without life giving sound...” (I Cor. 14:7): To illustrate the uselessness of tongues which are not interpreted Paul draws two analogies, one to musical instruments and the other to human languages. Unless there is an intelligent use of a musical instrument according to the notes of the musical scale, its playing IS USELESS. Unless the “pipe or harp” “give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?”

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound...” (I Cor. 14:8): Unless the notes were clear and distinct, one would not know whether to charge, retreat, or go to eat!

“So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood...” (I Cor. 14:9): Likewise unless our language is INTELLIGIBLE according to the use of speech, to speak is silly. This applies to “tongues.” Words must be distinct, and clear to be understood by men (verse 10).

“Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him... a barbarian” (I Cor. 14:11): A foreigner, not understanding his language. The Egyptians called all “barbarous” that did not speak their tongue. The Greeks and Romans followed suit for all ignorant of their language and culture.

“Even... as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts...” (I Cor. 14:12) If they were Zealots for spirits, they were to seek rather those gifts that will build up the church, such as prophesying and teaching.

4. Paul’s preference (I Cor. 14:13-19).

“Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray. . interpret” (I Cor. 14:13): Let him pray that he may have the gift of interpretation also (see I Cor. 12:10). Let him pray that he may understand what he utters, so as to explain.

“For if I pray in an unknown tongue...” (I Cor. 14:14): Th “unknown tongue” (verse 13) is a definite language, but one which the Greeks HAD NOT LEARNED. Just as Chinese is an “unknown tongue to us. Note the use of “understanding” in this section. So if he prays in “an unknown tongue,” he does not understand what he utters, and only his spirit prays.

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“Pray with the spirit... with the understanding also” (I Cor. 14:15) Suppose I could pray in Latin, but not understand Latin. My spirit may have been praying, but my understanding was unfruitful. The Protestant Reformation brought people back to USE THE COMMON LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE.

Prayer and singing are intelligent exercises of the mind and must reach the intellect as well as stir the emotions. Sing and pray so people will understand!

“Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit...” (I Cor. 14:16): If an unknown tongue is used, how can one who does NOT UNDERSTAND it say the “AMEN AT THY GIVING OF THANKS” at the proper place? This shows that:

1. Audible responses to the praises and thanksgivings were the custom of the church.
2. The “unlearned” means a private person, the private members of the church, those not possessed of the “spiritual gifts.”

“... I had rather speak five words” (I Cor. 14:19): Worship must be sincere. It must profit others (verse 17). Paul did not underrate the gift of tongues. “I speak with tongues more than ye all” (verse 18). Paul would rather say, “CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS” (I Cor. 15:3) with his gift of prophecy, than to pour out 10,000 words in an “unknown tongue” that no one could understand!

B. The effect of tongues on non-believers (I Cor. 14:20-26a).

“Brethren, be not children in understanding...” (I Cor. 14:20). “Cease becoming children in your intellects,” as some of them evidently were. The folk who want “showy” tongues are like children. However, we should have the sweet, kindly spirit of children toward one another. But GROW UP IN UNDERSTANDING (I Cor 13:11). God has used “other tongues” (verse 21) the Gentile nations and peoples (Isa. 28:11, 12; Deut. 28:49) to preach the gospel to the Jews for nineteen centuries. Long ago when drunken Israelites mocked at the simple message of God through Isaiah, as though it had been fit only for babes, the prophet warned them that the Lord would speak unto them in another fashion! He would give His lesson through the lips of Assyrian invaders and conquerors. Their speech would indicate Judah’s doom. God would address them through this strange foreign tongue in retribution, not to arouse the faith of the Israelites, but to confirm and consummate their unbelief.

“Wherefore tongues are for a sign... to them that believe not” (I Cor. 14: 22): So the gift of tongues served a like melancholy purpose for those who were rejecting the simply gospel of Christ. It did not bring them to repentance. It rather confirmed them and made them feel justified in their unbelief. It evoked expressions of contempt for the church and its messages (verse 23). If an unsaved man was in the Christian assembly and everybody wanted to speak in “tongues,” the man would say: “YE ARE MAD!”

“But if all prophecy...” (I Cor. 14:24): Those who spoke would be understood, and thus speaking under the divine impulse, would CONVICT THE HEARERS (verses 24, 25). When the church meets for fellowship, let each one that has a GIFT USE IT TO EDIFY THE CHURCH (verse 26). If you sing, sing; if you teach, teach; if you pray, pray; if you preach, preach!

II. Proprieties of the Church (I Corinthians 14:26b-40)

A. Tongues and interpretation (I Cor. 14:26-28).

“Let all things be done unto edifying” (I Cor. 14:26b): This is the general principle to govern ALL CHRISTIANS IN ALL THINGS IN THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY. Otherwise, confusion reigns (vs. 27).

“But if there be no interpreter, let him KEEP SILENCE IN THE CHURCH...” (I Cor. 14:28): To illustrate the inferiority of the gift of tongues, Paul imagines an occasion on which the whole church assembled and all its members AT THE SAME TIME talked with tongues. To the unbeliever they would be

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“madmen” (verse 23). They are to speak ONE AT A TIME, and NOT OVER THREE IN ALL. If one who speaks in “tongues” does not have an interpreter, “LET HIM KEEP SILENCE IN THE CHURCH and let him speak to himself, and to God.” This ought to SETTLE THE TONGUE MOVEMENT!

B. Prophecy and revelation (I Cor. 14:29-36).

“Let the prophets speak two or three...” (I Cor. 14:29): Paul limits the speakers in one service to “two or three.” The preacher is to speak, and the people are to listen and then compare what they hear with God’s Word, as did the Bereans (Acts 17:11).

“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (I Cor. 14:32): A prophet can wait his turn in silence. He is not compelled to speak at once, for his spirit is subject to him. He can be silent if he wills it. This will edify or build up the church, not bring confusion (verse 33). God demands peace and order “in all the churches of the saints!” That includes this church!

“Let your women keep silence in the churches...” (I Cor. 14:34): For some reason some of the women were creating disturbance in the public worship by their dress (I Cor. 11:2-16), and now by their speech.

Many excellent people have twisted and contorted verses 34 and 35. The verses do not contradict what the apostle taught in I Cor. 11:5. Paul recognized the right of woman to pray or prophesy and gave instructions how she was to do so in Corinth. Some say Paul was an “old bachelor and did not like women!” He was an INSPIRED SERVANT OF GOD, and wrote as the Holy Spirit directed him (verse 37).

By “CHURCHES” Paul did not mean “buildings.” He is not telling us that no woman could give a testimony or offer prayer in a religious building. When the Christians gather for a regular church service, let the women “keep silence in the churches.”

LOCAL CONDITIONS MADE IT NECESSARY TO GIVE SUCH COMMAND. In Corinth a woman could scarcely be found who could read and write. Slavery and prostitution had debased woman. Christianity lifts her up. BUT, WOMAN IS NOT TO MISUSE HER FREEDOM IN CHRIST. The principle is clear. She is to be subject to her husband. “The law” (verse 34) made woman a pupil, not a TEACHER OF THE ASSEMBLY. The customs of CORINTH BRANDED A WOMAN WHO SPOKE IN PUBLIC IMMODEST AND IMMORAL. Wherever it would be shameful, women ought not to speak!

A woman must not set herself up as an authority in matters, like an apostle, “but to be in silence” (I Tim. 2:12) in the assembly. Nor must she teach in the sense of delivering dogmatic doctrine like Paul (I Tim. 2:7) She would be out of place to be put in a place of authority in the church as an elder (I Tim. 2:12, 13).

She may pray, edify, exhort, and comfort (I Cor. 11:5; 14:3). The four virgin daughters of Philip were prophetesses (Acts 21:9). A woman may evangelize (Rev. 22:17; Acts 8:4). Alexis Carrel in “MAN, THE UNKNOWN” says: “Woman differs profoundly from man, Everyone of the cells of her body bears the mark of her sex.”

Thank God for women who teach in the home, in Bible school, and in every place except the regular assembly of the church. A woman may, indeed MUST, use her gifts for God’s glory.

“What? Came the word of God out from you?” (I Cor. 14:36): A rebuke. The Corinthian church must receive instruction, not give it. I did not send out the word of God. The word of God was sent to it!

C. Decently and order (I Cor. 14:37-40)

“If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual (I Cor. 14:37): The best proof that a man is a prophet or possessed of spiritual gifts will be found in the fact that he recognizes as the command, of Christ all that Paul is writing. The prophet or the one with the gift of tongues or the disturbing woman would be

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quick to resent the sharp words of Paul. He claims inspiration for his position. “The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”

“But if any man be ignorant...” (I Cor. 14:38): If he will be ignorant and stubborn, let him remain so. He must bear the responsibility and consequences of his ignorance.

“Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy...” (I Cor. 14:39): As to the whole matter of the relative importance of tongues and prophecy, this gift of tongues is not to be disused or despised. “Covet to prophesy.” It is the chief gift.

“Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40): The great rule for the church services is to be this: Let all things be done in a becoming and an orderly manner. This is a good rule for all matter, of church life and worship. It applies also to the function of women in church service. “Decently” means with comeliness, with beauty. Thus the church is to carry on all its exercises with the beauty which issue: from the impulse of LOVE, and that orderliness which is the result of law!

Questions

1. After what were the Corinthians to “follow” (I Cor. 14:1)?
2. Who bestows gifts, directs and energizes the church in perfect variety and unity (I Cor. 12:4-6)?
3. What did the inspired apostle command the Corinthians to “covet” and what is the “more excellent way” (I Cor. 12:31; 14:1)?
4. To what is I Cor. 14 devoted? Why?
5. To whom does one speak when he has the gift of “speaking in an unknown tongue” (I Cor. 14:2)?
6. If one desires a gift that “EDIFIETH HIMSELF” only, is this not selfish (I Cor. 14:4) and childish and hence to be condemned?
7. What is the result of prophesying (I Cor. 14:3, 5) in the assembly?
8. In what four ways could Paul edify the church (I Cor. 14:6)? Define them.
9. In what two ways does Paul illustrate the uselessness of tongues that are not interpreted (I Cor. 14:7-11)? What spiritual gift is to be sought and why (I Cor. 14:12)?
10. How do you know the gift of prophecy was not primarily the ability to predict future events (I Cor. 14:34, 12, 19, 22, 24, 31)?
11. How is one commanded to pray (I Cor. 14:15)?
12. Why is it important that one sing, or pray, or preach so people can understand (I Cor. 14:16-17)?
13. How did Paul determine to use the gift of “tongues” (I Cor. 14:18, 19)?
14. In what were the Corinthian Christians to be “children” and “men (I Cor. 14:20)?
15. For whom are “tongues... a sign” (I Cor. 14:22)? What would the misuse of tongues do (verse 23)?
16. What would plain, clear speaking accomplish (I Cor. 14:24, 25)?
17. What principle must always be followed in the assembly (I Cor. 14:26)?
18. If there is “no interpreter” in the church, is any man permitted to speak in an “unknown tongue” (I Cor. 14:27-28)? What is the order when two or three prophets are present, and why (verses 29-33)?
19. In view of special conditions at Corinth, what command did Paul give to the Christian women (I Cor. 14:34, 35)? In view of the following scripture, what is the woman’s place for ministry in the church (Acts 1:14; 5:14; 8:12; 9:36-41; 13:50; 16:13-15; 17:4, 34; 21:8, 5 I Cor. 17:34 11:5-13; Phil. 4:3; I Tim. 2:11-14; 5:2-15; Titus 2:3-5)?
20. With what great rule for the church services does Paul conclude his discussion (I Cor. 14:40)? Define “decently” and “order.”

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 48

Page 1

I Corinthians 15

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 15:22

Memory Verse:

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:22).

THE DEATH OF DEATH

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the **KEYSTONE OF CHRISTIANITY**. This cardinal fact of our faith is the **PROOF OF OUR OWN BODILY RESURRECTION FROM THE GRAVE**.

Three Facts

1. Keep in mind as you study this chapter that Paul is **DISCUSSING THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY** and not the immortality of the soul. The latter fact is always assumed in the Bible, as it is in this chapter. If the resurrection of the body is true, the second needs no proof, and in Paul’s discussion it is taken for granted that the resurrection of the body implies conscious and ever-blessed immortality for the soul.

The Greeks thought of the body as the prison-house of the soul; that death was a release of the soul from its captivity. Unbelieving Greeks regarded the resurrection of the body as a **CALAMITY**, not a blessing. They mocked Paul for preaching the resurrection at Athens (Acts 17:32; II Tim. 2:18).

The resurrection was the theme of the apostles (Acts 2:32, 35; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 9; 3-6; 17:3; 18, 31, 32; 24:15, 25; 26:8, 23). That the soul that is separated from the body at death, is again to be clothed and is to inhabit an immortal body, is an unique doctrine peculiar to Christianity. It is quite distinct from the transmigration of souls taught in other faiths, or from the dim and ghostly vision of the “after life” held by the Greeks.

2. Remember that Paul is here dealing with the resurrection of Christians, and not of unbelievers. There will be a “resurrection of life and a “resurrection of damnation” as Jesus taught (John 5:24-29). Paul declared to Felix “that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15). Whether the two resurrections take place at the same time is not discussed here; Paul is concerned only with the resurrection of those who are Christ’s, “**AT HIS COMING!**”

3. The apostle is describing an event that will take place at the Second Coming, at the personal appearing of Christ. Between death and resurrection, the Scriptures are peculiarly silent. It is difficult to conceive of a disembodied spirit. We are told that to be “**ABSENT FROM THE BODY**” is to be “**AT HOME WITH THE LORD**” (I Cor. 5:8). To depart” is to “**BE WITH CHRIST**” which is “**FAR BETTER,**” Paul affirms (Phil. 1:23). Yet this state “with Christ” is not the final state. “At the return of Christ the soul of the Christian is to be clothed with an immortal body like the glorious body of the risen and ascended Christ. This teaching, therefore, differs from the belief that the soul sleeps from the time of death until the day of resurrection. It also corrects the conception that at death the soul exchanges a mortal for an immortal body. At death the believer does enter a state of blessedness in conscious fellowship with Christ, but the consummation of glory begins at the return of Christ, and with the resurrection of the body.”

The resurrection of Jesus is the one most important and best-established fact in all history.

I. The Place of the Resurrection in the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-11)

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A. The gospel and Christ's death (I Cor. 15:1-3).

1. Its declaration and salvation (I Cor. 15:1, 2).

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel..." (I Cor. 15:1) The "good news" had been heard, weighed, tested and received by the Corinthians. They now stood as a church organized under the gospel. Their hopes of salvation depended upon their holding **FAST TO THE GOSPEL** if their faith was real. One can give mental ascent to the gospel and **NOT BE SAVED AT ALL** (verse 2) Four conditions of life are described by "vain." "Vain" believing (verse 2), grace (verse 10), preaching (verse 14) and faith (verses 14b, 17).

2. Its revelation (I Cor. 15:3)

"For I delivered unto you... Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3) Christ actually died on the cross, not merely swooned (Matt. 27:50). Paul claims direct revelation for the resurrection, as he did for the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:23).

"For our sins": Our Lord's death on the cross was a sacrificial death. "He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." (I John 3:5; Gal. 1:4; II Cor. 5:15).

"According to the scriptures": It was a scriptural death (Isa. 53:5, 10; Psa. 16:10; Zech. 12:10). The Old Testament has many references to the death of Christ for our sins. Our Lord quoted Isa. 53:12 in Luke 22:37.

B. The gospel and the resurrection (I Cor. 15:4-11).

1. The fact of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:4).

"And that he was buried... rose again the third day" (I Cor. 15:4) John 20:27 plainly declares that **THE BODY THAT HUNG ON THE CROSS IS THE BODY THAT WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD**. Thomas answered the challenge of Jesus by saying, "MY LORD AND MY GOD" (John 20:28). Paul gives four items in explaining the gospel; the four items are presented by four verbs: Jesus "died," "he was buried," "he rose again," "he was seen!" Paul quotes Psa. 16:10 as predicting the resurrection in Acts 13:35. Jesus is still risen!

2. The proofs of the resurrection (I Cor 15:5-11).

"And that he was seen of Cephas..." (I Cor. 15:5): Paul now gives the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The apostle does not mean a mere "vision," but actual appearance of our Lord. He assembles a series of historical facts concerning the personal and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ that cannot be disputed! The risen Christ was **SEEN BY MORE THAN 500** witnesses: they were **HONEST** witnesses whose **TESTIMONY AGREED**; they died for their belief in the resurrection! The historian Gibbon admitted that one of the chief reasons for Christianity's conquest of the pagan Roman world was the **FACT OF THE RESURRECTION!**

"Seen of Cephas": Peter was listed first among the Apostles (Matt 10:2). Jesus sent a special message to him after his resurrection (Mark 16:7; Luke 24:34). There are **TEN APPEARANCES** given besides the one to Paul: to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9); other women (Matt. 28:9); two on the way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13f); Peter (Luke 24:34; I Cor. 15:5); ten apostles (Sunday evening, John 20:19-25); eleven apostles (a week after the resurrection, John 20:26-31); the seven (Sea of Galilee, John 21:1-25); the eleven and "above 500" (Mountain in Galilee, Matt. 28:16, 17; I Cor. 15:6); James (Jerusalem, I Cor. 15:7); the twelve (Jerusalem, Acts 1:3-8).

Paul mentions only five of the ten appearances of the risen Lord in the gospels, and one, that to James (I Cor. 15:7) not given elsewhere.

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“And He was seen of me also” (I Cor. 15:8): Paul speaks of himself as a child in the brotherhood of the apostles (Acts 9:5; 22:14; 26:16). Paul never got over his persecution of the church (Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1; I Tim. 1:13; Gal. 1:13). Living witnesses of the resurrected Jesus, many of them known by name, knew the form, face, voice, manner and life of Jesus too well to be deceived. His resurrection is the “best attested fact in history.”

“So we preach, and so ye believed” (I Cor. 15:11): Paul and all the apostles preached the same gospel of a risen Lord. The faith of the Corinthian Christians was built on the resurrection. Some in Corinth, while not doubting the existence of a continuing life, were doubtful regarding the bodily resurrection of the Christian. It is possible some of them had been influenced by the pagan philosophies that denied any kind of resurrection. “To DENY resurrection is, of course, to deny Christ’s resurrection, and to do this is to do away with Christianity” (Morgan).

II. The Plausibility of the Resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:12-14)

A. The denial of the possibility of a resurrection (I Cor. 15:12-19).

1. A denial of Christ’s resurrection (I Cor. 15:12, 13).

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some... no resurrection of the dead?” (I Cor. 15:12) There were some skeptics in Corinth, possibly in the church, who denied the resurrection of dead people just as some today deny that miracles happen or ever did happen. Paul’s answer is that the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS A FACT! It all turns on this fact. To deny the possibility of a bodily resurrection is to deny Christ’s resurrection (verse 13).

Two distinguished Englishmen, Lord Lyttelton and Gilbert West, a lawyer, in the eighteenth century set out to PROVE PAUL’S CONVERSION and the RESURRECTION OF JESUS FALSE. When the two men finally came together after long study, West said his study convinced him Christ had risen from the dead. Lyttelton said Paul truly had seen the Lord. Both men became believers in Christ! Instead of exulting over an exposure of Christianity, they both lamented their previous folly and congratulated each other on their joint conversion. Such is the POWER OF THE RESURRECTION GOSPEL!

2. A denial of faith and truth (I Cor. 15:14-16).

“And if Christ be not risen... preaching vain.” (I Cor. 15:14) To deny the resurrection of Christ would give the lie to the whole apostolic testimony, indeed to the whole system of Christian faith. The consequences of such a denial would make the gospel message, “our preaching,” VAIN. This would be emptied of its content, for the resurrection of Christ was the very substance of the good news. The message would be void, hollow, and therefore “false.”

“Faith... vain”: Without substance, a delusion. Without the resurrection of Christ, faith is undermined and collapses. If the skeptics refuse to believe the fact of Christ’s resurrection, they have nothing to stand on.

“We are found false witnesses of God” (I Cor. 15:15): They would be found to have been giving lying testimony about God, the worst kind of imposture, for Paul had ascribed to God the resurrection of Christ. He repeats the position already taken in verse 13 (verse 16).

3. A denial of salvation (I Cor. 15:17).

“And... your faith is vain... yet in your sins” (I Cor. 15:17) Faith of believers would be “vain,” futile, ineffectual. If Christ’s resurrection is unreal, then Christians are not saved. They “are yet in their sins!”

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4. A denial of hope for the dead (I Cor. 15:18, 19).

“Then they... fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (Cor. 15:18) If Christ be not raised, then the believing dead have perished. They have been annihilated, “perished.” There is hope, in that case, only in this life. There is no hope of the resurrection in Christ, “if Christ be not raised.”

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ... most miserable” (I Cor. 15:19); If our hope is limited to this life, we have denied ourselves what people call pleasures and have no happiness beyond. In that case the Epicureans have the argument on us! Paul makes morality turn on this hope of immortality. Is he not right? Witness the breaking of moral tie today when people take a merely animal view of life!

If Christ BE NOT RAISED, then the SEVEN THINGS ABOVE are the AWFUL RESULT. “IF” is the WORLD’S BLACKEST ASSUMPTION as used by Paul. They “lose life” and gain no eternal life (Matt. 16:25, 26)

B. The pledge of our resurrection in Christ’s resurrection (I Cor. 15:20-28)

1. The historic pledge (I Cor. 15:20).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead... firstfruits” (I Cor. 15:20) This is certain. Paul had seen the Risen Christ! Christ’s resurrection is the SAMPLE, PLEDGE, and GUARANTEE of OUR RESURRECTION from the grave.

“The firstfruits.” Christ is “first-born from the dead” (Col. 1:18) Others raised from the dead died again, but not so Jesus. On the morrow after the first Sabbath of the Passover a sheaf of the “first fruits of the barley harvest” was “waved before the Lord” (Lev, 23:10-16) as a pledge of the harvest to come. So on the morning after the first Sabbath of the Passover, Christ, the “FIRST FRUITS” of the great harvest of soul gathered into eternal life!

2. God’s remedy for death (I Cor. 15:21, 22).

“For since by man came death, by man... resurrection of the dead” (I Cor. 15:21): By man, Adam, came death (Gen. 3:3, 4, 19). “By man came also”: that is Jesus, the God-man, the Second Adam (Rom. 5:12) The hope of the resurrection of the dead rests in Christ (verse 22). All will be resurrected. There is a “resurrection of the just and of the unjust.” (Acts 24:15)

3. The future order (I Cor. 15:23).

“But every man in his own order...” (I Cor. 15:23): In his own rank, or division. The first order of division is Christ. The second division is “they that are Christ’s at his coming,” The time of the third division, the wicked, is not named, but hinted at in verse 24. Jesus says “All that are in the grave shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). This is what Paul teaches here.

4. The final “end” (I Cor. 15:24-28).

“Then cometh the end...” (I Cor. 15:24): The “end” follows soon after the resurrection of the saints. Christ will put down all rule, authority and power. “All enemies,” and “The last enemy... death” (verses 25, 26 shall be destroyed! Read Rev. 20:12-14. The order there of closing events is the resurrection, the judgment, and the casting of Death and Hades (Hades – the grave) into the lake of fire.

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“For he hath put all things under his feet...” (I Cor. 15:27): Paul quotes from Psa, 8:6 a statement that Christ is Lord of all and that God has subjected all to Christ. God “is excepted,” since God gave Christ the power. The Father is not subject to the Son, but the Son is subject unto God “that God may be all in all” (verse 28). Then Christ will give up the seals of office. This is the final goal of all God’s redemptive plans as Paul so well said in Rom 11:36.

C. The new incentives through the resurrection (I Cor. 15:29-34).

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if ..” (I Cor. 15:29): Paul now turns again to the argument for the resurrection. Over thirty interpretations have been given to this passage. McGarvey and Pendleton say: “The dead are a class of whom CHRIST IS THE HEAD AND FIRSTFRUITS UNTO RESURRECTION. By baptism we symbolically UNITE OURSELVES with that class, and so with Christ, and we do this because of the hope that we shall be RAISED WITH THAT CLASS THROUGH THE POWER OF CHRIST (Rom. 6:5).”

Some heretics took it to mean baptized in the PLACE OF UNSAVED DEAD PEOPLE. Mormons still practice this type of baptism. Note that “The practice GREW OUT OF PAUL’S WORDS, instead of his words being called forth by the practice.” Had that custom existed, Paul would have rebuked it.

Is this not the meaning of the passage?

1. All the Corinthians were baptized (Acts 18:8).
2. Their baptism was a “planting” in the likeness of the burial of Christ, and in the “likeness of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:4, 5). They were in, and raised from, a watery tomb.
3. Their baptism in the likeness of the death and resurrection of Christ was in the hope of their own resurrection from the dead through Christ’s resurrection. BUT IF CHRIST HAS NOT RISEN, and the DEAD RISE NOT, this memorial and emblematic burial has no meaning. “Why, then, are they baptized for the dead?” that is, for the sake of their own resurrection from the dead.

“And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?” (I Cor. 15:30): Paul gladly, daily faced the threat of death because he believed in the resurrection. If there is no hope beyond, what motive can we have for daily placing ourselves in peril by preaching the resurrection? Paul was never out of danger from Damascus to the last visit to Rome. There are perils in Ephesus of which we do not know (II Cor. 1:8f), whatever may be true as to an Ephesian imprisonment.

“I protest... I die daily” (I Cor. 15:31): Paul daily was in peril of death (II Cor. 4:11; 11:23; Rom. 8:36).

“I have fought with beasts at Ephesus...” (I Cor. 15:32): These “beasts” were evil men ((II Tim. 4:17; Titus 1:12). The allusion is hardly to be taken literally. Paul could have prevented literally being cast to the lions by claiming his Roman citizenship. “What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?” All his sufferings are to no purpose if the dead rise not.

At Anchiale near Tarsus is a statue of Sardanapulus with the inscription: “Eat, drink, enjoy thyself. The rest is nothing.” This was the motto of the Epicureans. Paul is not giving his own view, but that of people who deny the resurrection.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (I Cor 15:33): Do not be led astray by such a false philosophy of life, Evil company will corrupt good morals, as one rotten apple will destroy whole barrel of good ones.

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not...” (I Cor. 15:34): Wake up as if from drunkenness. “Arouse yourselves from the stupor which this denial (of the resurrection) has produced. Do not yield to evil influences of those by whom the denial is being made. Their boasted knowledge is really ignorance of God.”

Paul would put to shame his doubting readers. He emphasizes again the essential importance of the belief in the resurrection. He warns all followers of Christ that FAITH DETERMINES CONDUCT, and that those who would keep clear their consciousness of God must hold fast to the truths which God has revealed.

III. The Prospect of the Resurrection of the Christian (I Corinthians 15:35-58)

A. The character of the resurrection body (I Cor 15:35-49).

1. The process and the product (I Cor. 15:35-41).

“But some man will say...” (I Cor. 15:35): Paul had established the certainty of the resurrection. He now turns to consider its NATURE or MANNER. First he deals with the CHARACTER OF THE RESURRECTION BODY, and then with the CHANGE TO BE PRODUCED IN THE BODIES OF THE LIVING AND DEAD AT THE COMING OF CHRIST

Some opponent or sincere inquirer asked: “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” The first question implies that the resurrection is impossible; the second, that it is inconceivable.

“Thou fool... sowest... not quickened except it die” (I Cor. 15:36) Paul replies to the questioner by calling him foolish. If he would only use his reason, he would find an answer as he looked out upon the fields of growing grain. Nothing LIVES IN NATURE EXCEPT IT DIE’ (John 12:24). Each seed passed through death and decay to a higher life in the form of a plant. So the body must die and be dissolved.

“And that which thou sowest...” (I Cor. 15:37): We sow, not the plant that comes forth, but only a bare seed. The first body perishes. Will that body be raised? Paul treats this problem at length and by analogy of nature. Read Butler’s famous ANALOGY. Such an analogy does not prove the resurrection, It does answer the difficulty proposed by showing a process by which God does accomplish what appears impossible, and according to his established law makes the same life appear in a more glorious form.

“But God giveth it a body...” (I Cor. 15:38): To the seed planted God gives a new body, the stalk of wheat or corn. This new body bears no outward resemblance to the seed planted.

“All flesh is not the same flesh...” (I Cor. 15:39): All the different animals have bodies unlike. There is great variety in plants, and flesh (human, animal, fish, bird) and stars. Variety exists along with kinship.

“There are also celestial bodies, and terrestrial” (I Cor. 15:40): There is a great difference between the bodies of the inhabitants of heaven, “celestial,” bodies, and those of earth, “terrestrial.” They have forms and glories, unlike, and suited to their condition, just as there are varying degrees of splendor in sun and moon and stars (verse 41).

2. The natural and the spiritual (I Cor. 15:42-44).

“So also is the resurrection of the dead...” (I Cor. 15:42): God is able to provide that form of body that will be adapted to the needs of our immortal soul. Paul applies his illustrations to prove the kind of body we shall have after the resurrection. He does it by a series of marvelous contrasts. The earthly and the risen beings differ in duration, value, and power (Wendt).

“It is sown in corruption... raised in incorruption”: The body is planted in corruption. It goes to decay. “It is raised in incorruption.” The resurrection body has undergone a complete change as compared with the body of flesh like the plant from the seed. It is related to it, but it is a different body of glory.

“It is sown in dishonor... raised in glory” (I Cor. 15:43): The dead body is repulsive, becomes offensive, and we bury it out of sight. “It is raised in glory.” Death can never conquer this new body, fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21).

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“Sown in weakness... raised in power”: All its powers exhausted. “Raised in power.” It now is endowed with heavenly power.

“It is sown a natural body... raised a spiritual body” (I Cor. 15:44): The “natural” body has the characteristics of corruption, dishonor and weakness. The “spiritual” body has the characteristics of incorruption, glory and power. The spiritual body is not a spirit. It is a BODY. It will have bodily characteristics and members. It will be able to engage in bodily activities.

“Man in his higher state on the new earth will not only be master of the elements and forces: he will be himself a center of energy, shining like the sun, flying hither and thither at will, rising superior to weight himself height and force” (Bettex).

An old body is buried and a NEW BODY IS RAISED. The resurrection body will be both identical to and different from the natural body. Our bodies pass through a complete physical change every three and one-half years, we are told. If you have not seen me in three and one-half years, you haven’t seen me before. Yet you have, because the unity of appearance and personality is preserved throughout this change. My body, despite its changes, preserves its identity!

3. The first man and the second man (I Cor. 15:45-49).

“The first man Adam was made a living soul...” (I Cor. 15:45): “It is written” in Gen. 2:7. There are two representative men who stand at the head of two races of men. Adam is “the first man,” and Christ “the second man.” Adam was brought into being by a direct creation and Christ by incarnation in the Virgin Birth. From Adam all members of the human race come by natural birth. From Christ the “new creatures” (II Cor. 5:17) come by a new birth of water and the spirit (John 3:3, 5). Adams was living; Christ is LIFE-GIVING.

“Howbeit that was not first, which is spiritual... natural” (I Cor. 15:46): The first Adam came before the second Adam. The natural body that proceeds from the first Adam is our body first. After this life comes the “spiritual body,” which the second Adam, Christ, gives. This is the inevitable order. As the descendents of Adam, we are made like him, living souls inhabiting mortal bodies, and bearing the image of an earthly parent. AS THE FOLLOWERS of Christ we are yet to be clothed with immortal bodies and to bear the image of our heavenly Lord (verses 47-49).

B. The change that produces the resurrection body (I Cor. 15:50-58).

1. The need of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:50).

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...” (I Cor. 15:50): The human body, the substance of which is flesh and the life giving principle of which is blood, is not adapted to the future state. It is not fitted for the heavenly world. To be ready for future glory, there must be a change of the body by death from the natural body to the spiritual body.

2. The mystery of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:51).

“Behold, I show you a mystery...” (I Cor. 15:51): A mystery in the language of Paul is not something concealed, but something ONCE CONCEALED, and NOW REVEALED. “We shall not all sleep”: Not a Christians are to die. Some will be living when Christ comes. Their bodies shall be transformed. This same idea is given in I Thess. 4:13-18.

3. The manner of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:52).

“In a moment...” (I Cor. 15:52): The change will be as instantaneous as the moving of an eyelid.

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“At the last trump”: For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (I Thess. 4:16). The trumpet is described as God’s trumpet. Will it be a literal trumpet? The character of the trumpet will be such as will produce an announcing sound heralding the most thrilling scene of all time. As radio hurls voice through the air that is picked up only by those tuned to the same wave length, so the trumpet sound will be heard only by those concerned. See Matt. 24:31.

4. The imperative of the resurrection (I Cor, 15:53).

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption...” (I Cor. 15:53) “Must” makes the resurrection imperative. When dead, man has a corrupting body. While living, he has a mortal body. The resurrection will give us incorruptible, immortal bodies.

5. The triumph of the resurrection (I Cor, 15:54-57).

“Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Cor. 15:54): “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces” (Isa. 25:8). This is the final victory, victory over death. It is the “final overthrow of the king of Terrors” (Heb. 2:15).

“O death, where is thy sting?” (I Cor. 15:55): Paul quotes this from Hosea 13:14. Here is the triumphant shout of the apostle as he sees by faith the final victory over death. The serpent of death has lost his poison fangs.

“The sting of death is sin...” (I Cor. 16:56): It is sin that give death his power to sting and destroy (Rom 6:23). “The strength of sin is the law.” The law when broken brings sin to the lawbreaker. The conscience is wounded. When a moral law is broken moral death follows. If there were no law of any kind, there would be no sin, no wounded consciences, and no moral death.

“But thanks be to God... victory” (I Cor. 15:57): A shout of triumph for victory over sin and death through Christ as in Rom. 7:25.

6. The incentive of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:58).

“Therefore... be ye steadfast... your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58): Paul urges his “beloved brethren” to “keep on becoming steadfast, unshaken.” They are to be firm as a rock, devoted to the Christian life, for their “faith is not vain.” “Let the skeptics howl and rage. Paul has given rational grounds for faith and hope in Christ’s argument. Work... The best answer to doubt is work (Robertson).

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Questions

1. What is the keystone of Christianity?
2. What three facts must be kept in mind as you study I Corinthians 15?
3. What has been called the one most important and best-established fact in all history?
4. What bold denial called for this great classic on the resurrection (I Cor. 15:12)?
5. What three facts make up the gospel by which men are saved (I Cor, 15:1-4; Gal. 1:11, 12; Psa, 16:10; Acts 2:25-31; Isa. 53: 9-11; Jonah 1:17; Matt. 12:39, 40)?
6. Who had seen Christ after his resurrection (I Cor. 15:5-8)? Why did Christ's appearance to "above five hundred brethren at once" offer tremendous evidence of His resurrection (I Cor. 15:6)?
7. How was Paul an unimpeachable witness of the resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 15:8-10; Acts 9:1-6, 18-20; 22:3-5, 19, 30; 26:9-23)?
8. What is every Christian's pitiable position "IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN" (I Cor. 15:14-19)?
9. Since Christ HAS RISEN, what is His relationship to all sleeping saints (I Cor. 15: 20, 23; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5)?
10. Why is Adam introduced in the study of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:21, 22; Rom, 5:12-19)?
11. What two companies of people will yet come forth from the grave at different times and for different destinies (I Cor. 15:23; John 5:28, 29; I Thess. 4:14-17; Rev. 20: 4-6)?
12. What is the last enemy that shall be destroyed (I Cor. 15:26)?
13. How do you interpret "baptized for the dead" (I Cor. 15:29)? Why".
14. What is the meaning of "I die daily," and who were the "beasts in Ephesus" (I Cor. 15:31,32)? What warning and appeal does Paul give them (I Cor. 15:33, 34)?
15. What questions had been raised in Corinth (I Cor. 15:35)? How does Paul reply (I Cor. 15:36-37)?
16. Who has determined the various appearances and characteristics of all God's creation (I Cor. 15:88-42)?
17. What are the four superiorities of the resurrection body (I Cor. 15:42-44)?
18. How did the first Adam differ from the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47)? What is the believer's relationship to each of the two Adams (I Cor. 15:48, 49)?
19. What was the mystery revealed through Paul (I Cor. 15:51-53; I Thess. 14:13-17)?
20. When will believers experience victory over death through Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15: 54-57; Phil. 3:20, 21)? What should be the practical effect of this great truth upon believers (I Cor 15:58; Rev. 22:12)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 49

Page 1

I Corinthians 16

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 16:2

Memory Verse:

“Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (I Corinthians 16:2).

CLOSING ADMONITIONS

The church at Jerusalem was poverty-stricken due to the “fraternal communism” of the brethren, political troubles, famines and persecutions (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:36, 37; 5:1-11; 11:28-30; 8:1-4).

As the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul had pledged himself to “remember the poor” (Gal. 2:10). He felt that such a love offering from the Gentile Christians to the Jews would tend to bring about a more cordial feeling between them.

Paul believed in a practical Christianity. He commands the Corinthians and “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (I Cor. 1:2) to take collections to meet needs as they arise. “All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” includes you and me!

The final chapter of this great book does not leave us suspended in some fantastic religious experience that is without point or purpose. It leaves us where all matured and faithful Christian life should be, in the activity of needed service. This closing chapter emphasizes:

I. Stewardship (I Corinthians 16:1-4)

A. The principle (I Cor. 16:1, 2).

“Now concerning the collection...” (I Cor. 16:1): Paul had discussed all the problems raised by the Corinthians. Now he has on his own heart the collection for the saint in Jerusalem. The introduction of “the collection” may seem sudden, but the Corinthians were **BEHIND WITH THEIR PART OF IT**. They may even have asked further about it. Paul feels there is no conflict between discussion of the resurrection and the collection.

“Collection” means the gathering of money. Paul in his defense before Felix said, “Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings” (Acts 24:17).

It was “for the saints.” Every collection should have a purpose. To the Romans Paul wrote, “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem” (Rom. 15:25, 26). It doesn’t say the collection was for the poor, or the indigent, or the less fortunate. It was “the saints.”

The cause was great. The way they went about gathering the collection was great. Imagine Paul attempting to gather a sum of money for the relief of the saints in Jerusalem by conducting a sale or serving a supper!

In all the Greek manuscripts there is not even a comma or a period between chapters fifteen and sixteen. We step from the scenes end incentives of **RESURRECTION** into the scenes and **NECESSITIES** of a “collection!” To do this we must carry the greatness of the resurrection into the necessities of a collection (II Cor. 8:1, 2).

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Some, whose pocketbook was not converted to Christ in baptism, object to Paul's emphasis on giving. A man heard John Wesley preach of stewardship of money loudly said: "AMEN," when Wesley emphasized "MAKE ALL YOU CAN." "Save all you can," brought a loud, "Now he's preaching the gospel from his stingy auditor. "Give all you can," said Wesley, and the man said: "NOW he's spoiled a good sermon!"

"I have given order... churches of Galatia": The directions to the churches of Galatia or the subject have not been preserved. Paul now gives them like commands. As a matter of fact, they had PROMISED A LONG TIME BEFORE THIS (II Cor. 8:10; 9:1-5). Now do what you pledged!

"Upon the first day of the week..." (I Cor. 16:2); This shows that the first day of the week was set apart and regarded by the church. The Holy Spirit led the apostles to set apart the "first day of the week," Sunday, the Lord's day, for public worship (John 20:19-26; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10). TO TAKE A COLLECTION was part of the worship (Acts 2:42). This is PERIODIC GIVING, not "when-you-feel-like-giving!"

"Let every one of you": This is PERSONAL giving. Macknight renders: "On the first day of the week, let each one of you lay somewhat by itself, putting it into the treasury." The family income should be divided so that EVERY ONE in the household has a part in the worship of giving. The husband was not baptized for his wife; he does not receive communion for her. "Every one of you" applies to old and young, rich and poor. The churches of Macedonia gave out of what Paul says was 'deep poverty.' The Lord accepted the mites of the widow. Money is life and labor. It is time am thought. Giving depends upon the giver. Paul says in II Cor. 8:5, "And this they did, not as we hoped, for FIRST GAVE THEIR OWN SELVES TO THE LORD." When one has given himself his money will follow!

"Lay by him in store": The neuter reflexive pronoun "lay by him" is rendered with equal correctness "by itself." This is PLANNED giving. This implies that the money was to be placed in the treasury. Otherwise, it would have to be collected. You should BRING YOUR TITHES and love offering TO THE LORD'S STOREHOUSE. You will, if you LOVE CHRIST and His Church (John 14:15, 21-24). World evangelism depends AS MUCH ON OUR PAYING AS ON OUR PRAYING!

"As God hath prospered him": We can only be honest with God with WHAT HE ENTRUSTS TO US (II Cor. 8:12). Each Christian, rich or poor, was to contribute. This is PROPORTIONATE GIVING.

"That there be no gatherings when I come." This is PREVENTIVE GIVING. Paul wished to spend his time among them with other things that supervising the taking of a collection. He wanted to devote himself to the their instruction. Paul wanted the collections to be made before his arrival (II Cor. 8:12).

B. The application (I Cor. 16:3, 4).

"Whomsoever ye shall approve... bring your liberality unto Jerusalem" (I Cor. 16:3): Benevolent funds must be carefully administered Paul instructed the Corinthians to choose competent workers to safeguard the contributions. "Approve by your letters" would make it formal and regular. Paul would approve their choice of messengers to go with him to Jerusalem (II Cor. 8:20f). Curiously no names from Corinth appear in the list in Acts 20:4. As a matter of fact, the messengers of the churches (II Cor. 8:23) went along with Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4f).

"And if it be meet that I go also..." (I Cor. 16:4): Paul intimates that he may go to Jerusalem with the gifts of the churches, if these gifts are large enough to give dignity to such a journey. He did not know then whether he would go or not. In the outcome he did go (Acts 19:21; 20:3).

II. The Brotherliness (I Corinthians 36:5-12)

A. The visit of Paul (I Cor. 16:5-9).

“Now I will come unto you...” (I Cor. 16:5): Paul outlines his plans. He intended to visit the churches in Macedonia (northern Greece), and then perhaps winter at Corinth. This he did, spending three months (Acts 20:2, 3).

“Ye may bring me on my way” (I Cor. 16:6): They would pay his expenses in his coming to them and share toward the expense of future journeys.

“For I will not see you now by the way...” (I Cor. 16:7): He will not sail directly across the Aegean Sea to Corinth, and go from thence to Macedonia. He would have to hurry away from Corinth too soon, unless he sent to Macedonia first. “If the Lord permit” he would “tarry a while with you.” There is another reason for delay. If he came at once, he might have to deal severely with the members of the Corinthian church. He gives them time to make painful adjustment.

“But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost” (I Cor. 16:8): He writes to the Corinthians in the spring before Pentecost A. D. 57. Apparently the uproar by Demetrius hurried Paul away from Ephesus (Acts 20:1).

“For a great door and effectual is opened... many adversaries” (I Cor. 10:9): “Door” is a metaphor expressing opportunity (Acts 14:27; II Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3; Rev. 3:8; Hosea. 2:15). Paul’s success made “many adversaries” (Acts 19:1-20). Everything in Ephesus centered on the pagan temple of Diana. It was the banking house of the merchants. It was where the confederacy of the Ionian states met in legislative assembly. The Church of God CONTRADICTED EVERYTHING THAT WAS CENTRAL TO THE LIFE OF THE CITY! So, Paul could not leave Ephesus until the Lord indicated he should move, or turn him to some other place of service. Paul almost lost his life in the Ephesian riot (Acts 19:30; I Cor. 15:32). And yet Paul suddenly leaves Ephesus. He hints of much of which we should like to know more (II Cor. 1:8f).

B. The visit of Timothy (I Cor. 16:10, 11).

“Now if Timotheus come... be with you without fear” (I Cor. 16:10): “I have sent unto you Timotheus” (I Cor. 4:17). Paul asks that he be treated kindly. The apostle evidently had reason to fear treatment that Timothy might receive.

“Let no man therefore despise him...” (I Cor. 16:11): He was a young man. See I Tim. 4:12. Apparently later Timothy had to return to Ephesus without much success before Paul left and was sent on to Macedonia with Erastus (Acts 19:22) and Titus sent to Corinth whom Paul then arranged to meet in Troas (II Cor. 2:12).

C. The visit of Apollos (I Cor. 16:12).

“As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you...” (I Cor. 16:12): Apollos was at Ephesus when Paul wrote I Corinthians. Apollos had left Corinth in disgust over the strife there that involved him and Paul (I Cor. 1 and 4). He had had enough of partisan strife over preachers. He did not want to return to Corinth at this time. He would visit them when “he shall have convenient time.”

Paul was not the BISHOP TO ORDER APOLLOS TO VISIT OR SERVE THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. As a brother in service Paul “desired him to come unto you with the brethren” (see Acts 19:22).

III. Manliness (I Corinthians 16:13-14)

“Watch ye...” (I Cor. 16:18): Stay awake. Sentinels at the outposts of duty must KEEP AWAKE (Mark 14:38).

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“Stand fast in the faith”; “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (II Tim. 1:14). “I exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). What he had “received of the Lord” (I Cor. 11:23, 30; 15:33) they were to “stand fast in the faith.”

“Quit you like men”: “Quit” literally means to GROW UP, do not be children or babes (I Cor. 3:1-4). “Quit” is the OPPOSITE OF Quitting, stopping, or resigning the work of the Lord in the local church. It means to “ACT LIKE A MAN!”

“Be strong”: “Be strong in the Lord” (Eph. 6:10). Those who “resign” at the first difficulty, who fuss and quarrel about their own rights who complain that they were “left off this or that,” are letting the baby spirit come out. Those who obey the apostle’s instructions will BE READY WHEN THE CALL COMES and will not be up the miff tree if the responsibility is not given them.

“Let all your things be done with charity” (I Cor. 16:14): This would prevent the divisions which he rebuked in chapters 1-4. Their disputes were to be a thing of the past. Immorality would be turned to incessant activity in things spiritual. Their gifts would be directed by love. Their means were to be dispensed by an intelligent and practical plan of Christian giving. EVERYTHING was to be done in the crowning virtue of Christian character – LOVE.

IV. Service (I Corinthians 16:15-18)

“Ye know the house of Stephanas... addicted themselves” (I Cor. 16:15): Paul had baptized the household of Stephanas (I Cor. 1:16). There were his first converts at Corinth. The noble family of Stephanas had “ordained” or appointed themselves to be ministers or servants to the saints that needed it – the poor and needy. They “addicted” themselves to serving the saints! Such leaders may safely be followed (verse 16). We have heard of dope, liquor and nicotine addicts. Personal work for Christ is still the only way to win the world for Christ, voluntary personal work. Will YOU “addict” yourselves to such a course?

“For they have refreshed my spirit and yours...” (I Cor. 16:18) Paul expresses keen delight and refreshment which he has found in the presence and messages of the delegates from Corinth (verse 17). These three probably brought the letter referred to in I Cor. 7:1, and probably carried back the present letter.

V. Salutations (I Corinthians 16:19-24)

A. The salutation of the churches (I Cor. 16:19-20).

“The churches of Asia salute you” (I Cor. 10:19): Of the Roman province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. Seven of the churches of “Asia” are named in Rev. 2:1-3:22). Paul loved to bind the churches together by these expressions of love.

“Aquila and Priscilla salute you much... with the church that is in their house”: Paul had long ago left the synagogue for the schoolhouse of Tyrannus (Acts 10:9). But Aquila and Priscilla opened their house here for the services. The churches had to meet where they could. Paul had labored and lived with this family in Corinth (Acts 18:2) and now again in Ephesus (Acts 13:19; 20:34). It was their habit wherever they lived (Rom. 16:5).

Most churches start in a home, hall, or school. One church began in Bird’s Hall at Ritte’s Corner, Feb. 1, 1898. Twenty-eight members were won in a three weeks’ evangelistic meeting with P. H. Duncan and George Miller. A handful of faithful Christians can do this anywhere, anytime they will “addict” themselves to carrying out the great commission of our Lord (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:14, 15; Acts 8:4).

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“All the brethren greet you” (I Cor. 16:20): The whole Christian brotherhood in Ephesus is included in this salutation.

“Greet ye one another with an holy kiss”: In the synagogue men kissed men and women kissed women. This was the Christian custom at a later date and apparently so here. See I Thess. 5:26; II Cor. 13:12; I Peter 5:14. It seems never to have been promiscuous between the sexes. Notice the adjective “holy.” The memory of Judas with his kiss of betrayal was known among them. Paul did not command or create a church ordinance of custom. We obey Paul when we shake hands with holiness, or sincerity. If you prefer kissing, keep it holy!

B. The salutation of the apostle (I Cor. 16:21-24).

1. A warning (I Cor. 16:21, 22).

“The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand” (I Cor. 16:21): Paul adds his personal salutation in his own handwriting. All of Paul’s letters save Galatians appear to have been written by an amanuensis or secretary (Gal. 6:11). He dictated, but signed at the end. If we only had that signature on that scrap of paper!

“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ...” (I Cor. 16:22): Here is a solemn warning to casual Christians. It was not given to pagans. Corinth’s colony of Christians had its Judases. It had its false professors. It had its shallow camp followers.

“Anathema” means accursed. Lukewarm members ought to wake up. They must give an accounting to God (Rom. 14:12). If a man love not the Lord, there is no alternative other than His anathema!

“Maranatha”: This Aramaic phrase means “Our Lord (maran) cometh (atha).” It seems to be a sort of watchword (see I Thess 4:14f; James 5:7f; Phil. 4:5; Rev. 1:7; 3:11; 22:30), expressing the lively hope that the Lord will come. It was a curious blunder in the King James Version that connected Maranatha with Anathema.

2. A benediction (I Cor. 16:23).

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (I Cor. 16:23): Paul invokes the all-sufficient, ever-sustaining grace of Christ upon them.

3. An affection (I Cor. 16:24).

“My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen” (I Cor. 16:24): Whatever criticism or warning Paul had given them, all was tempered with love.

Did any letter have a more glorious close than that?

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Questions

1. Why was the church at Jerusalem poverty stricken (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:36, 37; 5:1; 11; 11:28-30; 0:1-4; 24:17; Rom, 15:25, 26)?
2. What had Paul pledged himself to do (Gal. 2:10)?
3. For whom was the “collection” being made (I Cor. 16:1; Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:25, 26)?
4. Is there is fitting relationship between the scenes and incentives of the resurrection and the scenes and necessities of “the collection” (I Cor. 15:54-58; 16:1)? Why?
5. When was “the collection” to be made (I Cor. 16:2)? Is PERIODIC giving a part of New Testament worship (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7)?
6. What is the basis of genuine personal giving (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 8:5)?
7. If the husband and father of the family is not baptized for all the family, should he be expected to give for each member of the family? Of what will the wife and children be robbed?
8. What is the meaning of “lay by him in store” (I Cor. 16:2)? “As God hath prospered him?” “That there be no gatherings when I come?”
9. Who was to “bring” their “liberality unto Jerusalem” (I Cor. 16:3; I Cor. 8:20f)? Did Paul go with them (Acts 19:21; 20:3-5)?
10. By what route did Paul propose to come to Corinth (I Cor. 16:5)? How much time did he spend with them (Acts 20:2, 3)?
11. What is the meaning of “bring me on my way” (I Cor. 16:6)?
12. What “door” opened to Paul? Who were the “many adversaries” (I Cor. 16:9; Acts 19:1-20; I Cor. 15:32; II Cor. 1:5)?
13. Why was such a request made by Paul regarding Timothy to the Corinthians (I Cor. 16:10, 11)?
14. Did Paul command Apollos to go to Corinth (I Cor. 16:12)? Why? What probably caused Apollos to leave Corinth (I Cor. 1-4)?
15. Can you define the four marks of manliness (I Cor. 16:13)?
16. What is the proper motive of doing “all... things” (I Cor. 16:14)? Would this solve all the problems of the Corinthians?
17. To what had the “house of Stephanas” “addicted themselves” (I Cor. 16:15)? What do we know about Stephanas (I Cor. 1:16)?
18. What had Stephanas done for Paul and the Corinthians (I Cor, 16:17, 18)?
19. Who were Aquila and Priscilla (I Cor, 16:19)? What met in their house Acts 18:2, 19; 19:9; 20:34; Rom. 16:5)?
20. With what kind of kiss were the brethren to greet one another (I Cor. 16:20; I Thess. 5:26; II Cor. 13:12; I Pet. 5:14)? Is a sincere handshake just as good a form of greeting?
21. What warning, benediction, and affection did Paul’s personally written salutation contain (I Cor. 16:21-24)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 50

Page 1

II Corinthians 1

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 1:3, 4

Memory Verse:

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (II Corinthians 1:3, 4).

PLAIN TALK FROM A TRUE SHEPHERD

The second letter to the Corinthians was evidently the outcome of the first.

Paul wrote I Corinthians from Corinth in the spring of 57 A. D. from Ephesus. The messengers from Corinth, Stephanas and Fortunatus am Achaicus, and Titus (I Cor. 16:17, 18; II Cor. 8:6) delivered the epistle to the church at Corinth.

Soon after this letter was written, Paul nearly lost his life in the Ephesian riot (Acts 19:23-40). He was anxious to know how the Corinthians had received I Corinthians. He left Ephesus and went to Troas where he expected to meet Titus. When Titus did not come, Paul crossed over into Macedonia (II Cor, 2:13, 14; 7:5-7).

While in Macedonia in the summer and fall of 57 A. D. he visited churches in the reign of Philippi and Thessalonica. These visits were in the midst of many anxieties and sufferings. After long waiting to hear from Corinth, he met Titus returning from Corinth with the word that Paul’s I Corinthian letter had accomplished much good. (See II Cor. 7:6.) However, there were still some of the leaders in the Corinthian Church who were denying that Paul were a genuine apostle of Christ.

Where Written?

II Corinthians was written in the city of Philippi in Macedonia where Paul met Titus who had just returned from the city of Corinth with tidings concerning the church and its reaction to I Corinthians.

So gratified was Paul with this news which Titus brought, that he sent II Corinthians back to Corinth with Titus as its bearer (II Cor. 7:5-7). Its purpose was twofold. First, it was intended to establish its author’s authority as an apostle. Second, it was intended to present the Corinthians a practical biography of his life. The epistle divides itself into three sections:

- I. The Endurance of the Christian (I Cor. 1-7).
- II. The Ministrations of the Christian (II Cor. 8, 9).
- III. The Commendations of the Christian (II Cor. 10-13).

“These three subjects are in no sense inconsistent with each other. The letter is a unity. It is a handbook for the modern minister of inestimable value. One can hear Paul’s heart throb through these chapters” (Robertson).

So Titus is sent back with this Epistle to finish the task while Paul waits awhile for matters to clear up (II Cor. 13:1-10).

I. Grace and Peace (II Corinthians 1:1, 2)

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ...” (I Cor. 1:1). A small minority at Corinth said Paul was not an apostle, that he had no real commission, and that the leaders in Jerusalem had not written him letters of recommendation! They said he was a liar, untrustworthy, and as changeable as the wind.

Jesus PERSONALLY CALLED Paul (Acts 9:3-6; 22:7-10; 26:14-19)! Paul was not a religious imposter. “An apostle” literally is one “sent forth. “Paul was a missionary “by the will of God.” This was all Paul ever claimed to be. He cared little for titles and offices. His passion was Christ and his purpose was to carry the gospel to as many people as he could.

“And Timothy our brother.” He is now with Paul, having been sent ahead into Macedonia from Ephesus by the apostle (Acts 19:22; I Cor. 4:17). He was not co-author of the epistle any more than Sosthenes was in I Cor. 1:1.

“Unto the church... saints... in all Achaia”: The Romans divided Greece into two provinces, Achaia and Macedonia (northern Greece, which included Illyricum, Epirus, and Thessaly). All countries south of Macedonia are “Achaia.” Corinth was the capital where the proconsul resided (Acts 18:12).

“Saints in Corinth?” Yes, “saints “were “IN” Corinth, but Corinth WAS NOT IN THEM (John 17:14-17)! They belonged to the Society of the TWICE BORN.

“Grace be to you and peace...” (II Cor. 1:2) The salutation was concluded by invoking upon these people “grace” and “peace.” Grace is the cause and peace is the effect. Grace is what God gives – unmerited favor. Peace is what we receive. Peace will be in proportion to the grace we appropriate. Little grace, little peace. Much grace, much peace! God is the origin and source of grace and peace. Jesus Christ is the channel of communication.

What a greeting! He is going to complain and scold them in a little while, but not now. This is good psychology – then and now.

II. Mercy and Comfort (II Corinthians 1:3-7)

“Blessed be God...” (II Cor. 1:3): Paul’s basis of gratitude is GOD, not in the Corinthians. This is a remarkable passage beginning at verse 3 and running through verse 7. The theme is “comfort,” comfort granted in terrible trouble. Note that Paul spoke first of the value of the experience only after he had described the effects of that experience.

What are the values of the experience? “Praise be” is the meaning of “Blessed.” It is the expression of worship and adoration.

“Father of mercies... God of all comfort”: Our heavenly Father is characterized by mercy. He is the God of “all comfort,” our Comforter or “one called along-side” Paul and us on every occasion. Comfort is more than condolence and consolation or sympathy. It is the help of God who comes to our side in sorrow and affliction. He gives us inner peace. He bolsters the soul, strengthens the foundations, and rock-ribs the footings of life. He applies the Balm of Gilead to our broken hearts through His Word, love Christ’s presence (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20), Christ’s resurrection and coming again (John 11:25, 26; 14:1-3).

“Who comforteth us... we... comfort them” (II Cor. 1:4). God’s comfort of us is so abundant we have “COMFORT TO SPARE!” Paul was “comforted” by the coming of Titus from Corinth. “For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus. And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, where he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced

the more” (II Cor. 7:5-7).

Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper, and makes more room for the water of consolation.

Are you in the business of calming troubled waters, or stirring them up? Of helping, or hurting? Of looking on the bright side, or always on the dark side? Of criticizing, or consoling?

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us...” (II Cor. 1:5) Christ suffers with his saints when they suffer for him. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4, 5) The church the body of Christ will suffer persecution, as did Christ (Gal. 2:20; Heb. 3:13; I Pet. 4:13; John 16:33).

Neither Paul nor we can reproduce Christ’s suffering FOR ANY ATONING PURPOSE, but since Christ suffered for us we are to BEAR THE SUFFERINGS OF OTHERS. This gives a NEW PATTERN TO LIFE. See II. Cor. 4:10f; Rom. 8:17; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24.

In the book, “Quo Vadis,” it is recorded, and this is only legend, that as Peter FLED FROM BURNING ROME and its multitudes of martyred Christians, Jesus met him on the Appian Way. Peter called out: “Quo Vadis?” – “Lord, whither goest Thou?” Jesus replied, “I go to Rome.” At once Peter knew his place was in Rome with Jesus who was going there to stand beside His dying and suffering disciples!

“And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” (II Cor. 1:6): Paul wanted the brethren at Corinth to know that he had been in great peril. He was the object of satanic hatred. His life was a constant battle against evil forces and circumstances. Through Paul’s suffering to preach the Gospel, the Corinthians had had the privilege of hearing and obeying the Gospel! He was a worthy example for them to follow (verse 7) in suffering and consolation. His example under affliction would help them in affliction to endure, and his deliverance would fill them with hope of a like deliverance.

III. Death and Deliverance (II Corinthians 1:8-11)

A. The danger of Paul (II Cor. 1:8).

“Our trouble... despaired even of life” (II Cor. 1:8): What was Paul’s “trouble” at Ephesus? He “despaired even of life.” The trouble may have been that which culminated in the Ephesian riot (Acts 19:23-41; 20:1, 19, 27, 31; I Cor. 15:32). We do know that the disciples and the Asiarchs would not allow Paul to face the howling mob in the amphitheater gathered by Demetrius (Acts 20:30f). In Rom. 16:4 Paul says that Priscilla and Aquila risked their very lives for him. It may have been a later plot to kill Paul that hastened his departure from Ephesus (Acts 20:1). He had a trial so great that “we were weighed down exceedingly beyond our power.” He frankly admitted his fear. G. Campbell Morgan thinks Paul’s trouble “was a serious illness.”

B. The “sentence of death” (II Cor. 1:9).

“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves... not trust in ourselves, but in God...” (II Cor. 1:9): Paul doubtless felt that the time had come for him to die, and his reprieve from death was, as it were, a resurrection from death by the providence of God. Paul was beyond help from man. “This dreadful trial was sent to him in order to give him a precious spiritual lesson.” II Cor. 12:7-10 (Robertson and Plummer). The “comfort” Paul learned is that BEYOND DEATH THERE IS LIFE. GOD is the God of resurrection. Paul was comforted also that the sentence of death was not carried out.

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Modern martyrs vividly illustrate Paul's "sentence of death" in Ephesus. In LIFE issue of December 4, 1964, under the heading of "CONGO MARTYR," is the story of how Church of Christ missionary, Dr. Paul Carlson, was friend and healer in chaotic Congo. Everywhere Dr. Carlson went, the Congolese called him Monganga Paulo – "My Dr. Paul." "I am a doctor and a missionary, nothing else," he affirmed. He had been condemned to death as "a military spy."

At 6 A. M. Tuesday, November 24, 1964, six U. S. Air Force Hercules transports roared over the city. Even as 383 Belgian paratroopers jumped, Radio Stanleyville went on the air one last time: "Kill them all! Men, women and children, kill them all! Have no scruples! Kill them all!"

In about 20 minutes it was all over. Dr. Carlson and our African Christian Missionary, Phyllis J. Rine, 25, and 36 Europeans lay dead!

C. The deliverance of God (II Cor. 1:10).

"Who delivered us from so great a death..." (II Cor. 1:10): "Delivered" is past tense. The deliverance he referred to was in verses 8 and 9. Paul considered himself as good as dead.

"And doth deliver." Present tense. This takes Christianity out of the realm of memory and makes it a matter of the present. To hear some folk talk, one would think that God could only work out His will in "the good old days." God is still on the JOB and GIVES VICTORY TO THOSE WHO WILL TO RECEIVE IT (I Cor. 15:57).

"He will yet deliver us": This is the future tense and makes deliverance a continuing quality. Christians have something in prospect. Look ahead! The best is not past. It is yet to be.

D. The help of prayer (II Cor. 1:11)

"Ye also helping together by prayer for us." (II Cor 1:11) Paul relied on God and felt the need of the prayer of God's people. He recognized the aid he had received from the prayers of the Corinthian church raised in his behalf. The prayers of "many persons" secured the "GIFT" of his deliverance. Therefore many could give thanks for his escape.

III. Suffering and Sharing (II Corinthians 1:12-14)

A. The testimony of conscience (I Cor. 1:12).

"For our rejoicing is this... conscience... in simplicity and godly sincerity" (II Cor. 1:12): Paul had been charged with insincerity. His enemies wrote unjust accusations about him. Paul wrote, "Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia; for I do pass through Macedonia" (I Cor. 16:5). Paul had not done what he was going to do in the first letter, and he was charged with fickleness, of being a "yea" man and a "nay" man, of saying he was going to do something and then not doing it. Is it a serious charge anyhow? It depends. Paul evidently thought it was a serious charge, because it hinted his unpreparedness to stand by his authority as declared, and this questioned his ministry. Some were saying he was not an apostle; that he had no right to any authority whatever; that he was fickle. Paul took trouble to defend himself. He was trying to show them that apparent inconsistency or fickleness might be consistency on the highest level! Note the tender appeal and the personal claim of a clear conscience that he had ACTED IN HOLINESS AND SINCERITY.

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B. The steadfast confidence (II Cor. 1:13).

“For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge...” (II Cor. 1:13): Paul sought the continuing confidence of his Corinthian friends who were being misled by personal enemies who were trying to turn them away from their early confidence in Paul. Titus tells him the majority of the Corinthians understood him. Paul hopes it will last “even to the end” (see I Cor. 1:8).

C. The interrelated Christian (II Cor. 1:14).

“We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours.” (II Cor. 1:14): How important it is for Christians to have confidence in each other; to be steadfast to each other. Paul could not get along without them. They could not get along without him. All but a faction of the Church at Corinth acknowledged him as an apostle and rejoiced in his labors. And now in his hour of victory he shows that, if he is their ground of glorying, they are his also (see I Thess. 2:19f; Phil. 2:16).

“The day of the Lord Jesus” will expose those who have lent themselves to the petty things of gossip and tale bearing which divided brethren.

Let us be big, noble and Christ-like so that the review of our lives will cause rejoicing instead of regret.

V. Purpose and Postponement (II Corinthians 1:15-24)

A. Paul’s purpose (II Cor. 1:15-19).

“I was minded to come...” (II Cor. 1:15): Paul’s first plan while in Ephesus was to go into Macedonia first, and then to Corinth (I Cor, 16:5-7). Later he planned to go first to Corinth from Ephesus by crossing the Aegean by boat (verses 15, 16). He changed his mind again, and went first to Macedonia (verses 17, 23). It was not a mark of weakness or dishonesty to change his plans and postpone his purpose.

“Did I use lightness?” (I Cor. 1:17): “Did I show fickleness?” His enemies said he was a “yes, yes” and “no, no” man; that is, of light-mindedly saying “yes” and “no” at the same time. Paul declared his purposes to be those of a sincere and honest Christian. He did not say one thing and mean another! The gospel he preached was reliable and positive. So was the preacher of that gospel (verses 18, 19).

B. God’s promises (II Cor. 1:20-24).

“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen...” (II Cor. 1:20): The “promises of God” are sure and positive. Will God’s promises be fulfilled? Christ is the Answer, the incarnate “Yes,” the everlasting “Yea.” So through Him comes, from the believers who have experienced this fulfillment, the glad “Amen.” “It is so.”

“Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ is God” (II Cor. 1:21): Whatever stability of character we possess is attributed to God. God establishes us in a steadfast relation to Christ. God makes us partakers of the very life of his Anointed Christ. In the earlier days PROPHETS and PRIESTS and KINGS were

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“anointed” with oil as a symbol of the influence of God’s Spirit, by which they were to be equipped for their tasks. So, in reality, GOD “ANOINTS” US FOR OUR SERVICE. The gracious influences of His Spirit prepare us for our work and consecrate us to the service of Christ.

“Sealed us... given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Cor. 1:22): The FAITHFUL GOD, the CERTAIN LORD, and the IN-DWELLING SPIRIT are to be noted in this section.

The Spirit “SEALED US”: A seal was a SIGN OF OWNERSHIP, a war-rant of safety, an impress of likeness. The ABIDING PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS A SIGN THAT WE BELONG TO GOD! It is further an assurance of our salvation. The Spirit is even now imprinting upon us some likeness to our God.

“Earnest of the Spirit”; The Spirit dwelling in our hearts is an “earnest” of the glory which awaits us. An “earnest” was not only a pledge; IT WAS A PARTIAL PAYMENT, a down payment. It was a first installment of the thing that had been promised. The Holy Spirit is for Christians an “earnest” of the life eternal, which in all its fullness we are to enjoy. “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30; 1:13),

“Moreover I call God for a record...” (II Cor. 1:23): Paul calls God to witness the truth of his statement. He says that his soul shall answer for anything false he may utter. Paul had changed his plan. This had involved a delay in his proposed visit to Corinth. Instead of using the SHORT DIRECT ROUTE ACROSS THE SEA, he was approaching by way of Troas and Philippi, In the previous paragraph Paul declared that his change of plan was not due to fickleness or “lightness.” He now explains the reason for his altered purpose and his consequent delay. He assures them it was not due to caprice, or cowardice, or personal convenience, but “to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.” His delay was wholly out of consideration for the Corinthian church! His coming without delay would have caused them pain. He must then have exercised severe discipline. Paul wished to give them time to repent.

“Not for that we have dominion over you...” (II Cor. 1:24): “that that we have lordship over your faith.” Paul did not come at once that THEIR FAITH MIGHT HAVE FREEDOM TO ACT! “For by faith ye stand.” Paul had no thought of controlling faith, for in the sphere of faith the Corinthians stood steadfast. Their faith was in Christ. Christ hath dominion – “ALL POWER” (Matt. 28:18-20). Every disciple is accountable to Him. Not even an apostle can come between Christ and the Christian (I Tim. 2:5; John 14:6)! This is “Plain Talk from a True Shepherd.”

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Questions

1. What happened to Paul at Ephesus soon after I Corinthians was written there in the spring of 57 A. D. (Acts 19:23-40)?
2. By whom did Paul send I Corinthians to the church at Corinth (I Cor 16:17, 18; II Cor. 8:6)?
3. From what place was II Corinthians probably written (II Cor. 2:13, 14; 7:5-7)? Why? (I Cor. 7:6)
4. Can you give a simple outline of II Corinthians”.
5. Is this outline inconsistent? Is II Corinthians a unity? For whom is it a handbook?
6. Whose apostle was Paul (II Cor. 1:1)? Who denied this? Meaning of: apostle?
7. Who personally called Paul as His apostle (Acts 9:3-6; 22:7-10; 26:14-19)?
8. Was Timothy co-author of II Corinthians? What special job had Paul given him (I Cor. 4:17; Acts 19:22)?
9. To whom was the epistle addressed (II Cor. 1:1)? Were there really “saints” at Corinth?
10. What two things did Paul invoke on the Corinthians (II Cor. 1:2)? Meaning of grace and peace?
11. How did Paul refer to God (II Cor. 1:3)? Meaning of “Blessed?”
12. What was God’s purpose in comforting Paul and his helpers through their affliction (II Cor. 1:4-7)?
13. What was Paul’s physical and mental condition when he wrote these chapters (II Cor. 1:5, 6, 8; 2:4; 4:8-17)?
14. What was the trouble that caused Paul to “despair even of life” (II Cor. 1:8; Acts 19:23-41; 20:1, 19, 27, 31; I Cor. 15:32)? What does G. Campbell Morgan think his trouble was?
15. How had the Christians at Corinth helped Paul his sorrow (II Cor. 1:11)?
16. Can you describe the three deliverances of II Cor. 1:10?
17. What was the testimony of Paul’s conscience regarding the Corinthian charge of insincerity (II Cor. 1:12; I Cor. 16:5)?
18. How had Paul disappointed the brethren at Corinth (II Cor. 1:15-23; I Cor. 16:5-7)? Was Paul fickle (verse 17)?
19. Are God’s promises sure (II Cor. 1:20-24)? Why (verse 20)? Who establishes us (verse 21)? What is the meaning of “sealed” and “earnest of the Spirit” (verse 22; Eph. 4:30; 1:13)?
20. On whom does Paul call as a witness to the truth of his statement of why he delayed coming to Corinth (II Cor. 1:23)? Who alone is to “have lordship of your faith” (verse 24; Matt. 28:18-20; I Tim. 2:5; John 14:6)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 51

Page 1

Matthew 1, 2

Memory Verses: Matthew 1:21-23

Memory Verses:

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:21-23).

GOD’S GIFT TO THE WORLD

“GOD SO LOVED the world, that He GAVE His only begotten Son.” (John 3:16). The heart of every believer in Christ will say with Paul “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (II Cor. 9:15).

It is a good thing at this season of the year to think about

I. The Genealogy of God’s Gift (Matthew 1:1-17)

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ...” (Matt. 1:1): “The birth roll of Jesus Christ” (Moffatt). “This is the record of the ancestry of Jesus Christ” (Phillips). This is the title of the genealogy of Jesus Christ and it is here given. This “birth roll” is that of a King.

“Jesus Christ”: Jesus, His personal name, which means “Saviour,” Christ, the official title, which means, “Anointed.” Jesus is our Anointed Prophet, Priest and King.

“The son of David”: The descendant. The prophets had declared that the Messiah should be of David’s seed (I Sam. 7:16; John 7:42)

“The son of Abraham”: The Lord had promised Abraham (Gen. 12:3 22:18) that in his seed all the world should be blessed. David and Abraham were the two greatest ancestors of Jesus, and are named because it had been predicted that he would be their descendant.

Verse 1 is the description of the list in verses 2-17. The names are given in three groups:

1. Abraham to David (Matt. 1:2-6). Period of the Patriarchs and Judges.
2. David to Babylon (Matt. 1:6-11). Period of the monarchy.
3. Jechoniah to Jesus (Matt. 1:12-16). Period between the monarchy and Christ.

Then verse 17 makes a summary of the three lists, fourteen in each by counting David twice and omitting several names (in verse 8 between Joram and Uzziah the names of Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah; and in verse 11 Jehoiakim is omitted between Josiah and Jeconiah). Matthew does not say that there were only fourteen in actual genealogy.

“Abraham begat Isaac...” (Matt. 1:2):

Matthew gives Joseph’s line, showing Jesus to be the legal heir to the promises given Abraham and David. Matthew begins with Abraham to trace the line down. He was writing for Jews, and Jewish history begins with Abraham.

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Luke 3:23-38 was writing for Gentiles, and GOES BACK TO ADAM, This gives Mary's line, showing Jesus' blood descent, "the son of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3). Mary's genealogy was in her husband's name. Joseph was the "son of Heli" (Luke 3:23), that is, "SON-IN-LAW" of Heli, who was Mary's father.

"Begat": The word itself does not always mean immediate parentage, but merely direct descent. "Begat" in Matt. 1:16 must mean line of descent (see A. T. Robertson's STUDIES IN THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, chapter XIV).

42 Generations

"So all the generations are..." (Matt, 1:17):

42 Generations cover 2,000 years. Matthew's list is abridged, which does not invalidate the line of descent. The "book" or birth roll is divided into three parts of fourteen (14) generations each: The first group covers 1,000 years; the second, 400 years; the third, 600 years.

This list forms the backbone of the Old Testament annals. Carefully guarded through the centuries, "the generations" contain "a family line through which a promise was transmitted 4,000 years – a fact unexampled in history." This long catalogue is not a useless list. It is a GOSPEL OF HOPE – for the whole world (Rom. 3:22, 23; 12:5; Gal. 3:28).

The birth roll overleaps the boundary of the Hebrew nation, and includes Rahab (Matt. 1:5). It violates the prejudice of Judaism in the introduction of women, all the more remarkable when we remember the character of the home whose names are introduced:

1. Tamar, a notorious sinner (Matt. 1:3; Gen. 38:11-38).
2. Rahab, a foreigner and a sinner (Matt. 1:5; Josh. 2:1).
3. Ruth, a foreigner, although received into the nation (Matt. 1:5), one of the sweetest women of the Bible.
4. Bathsheba, through whose sin with David the shadow of shame forever rests upon the royal line (Matt. 1:6; II Sam. 11:2-5, 27).
5. Mary, the mother of our Lord (Matt. 1:18-25).

II. The Birth of God's Gift (Matthew 1:18-25)

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise..." (Matt. 1:18)." The birth of any child is wonderful (Eccl. 11:5; Psa. 139:13-16). It is plain that the story of the birth of Jesus Christ is to be told briefly as follows, "on this wise." The oldest and best manuscripts have the same word genealogy (genesis) used in Matt. 1:1, not the word for birth (begotten) as in Matt. 1:16 (genesis), "It is in fact the word Genesis. The evangelist is about to describe, not the genesis of the heaven and the earth, but the genesis of Him who made the heaven and the earth, and who will yet make a new heaven and a new earth" (Morison). The begetting and birth of our Lord was miraculous.

"Mary was espoused to Joseph." Not married, but engaged to Joseph. Jews had a ten or twelve months' engagement period so sacred it could only be broken by divorce. To be unfaithful during engagement was punishable by death (Gen. 29:21; Deut. 22:23-28; Lev. 20:10; Ezek. 16:38 John 8:5). Engagement is a serious step; enter into it slowly.

"Found with child of the Holy Ghost": The angel (Luke 1:26) predicted her conception, and when the prediction was verified she probably did he hesitate to reveal it. Her heart was filled with joyous pride instead

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of shame “She was found with child” plainly shows that it was the discovery that shocked Joseph. Matthew and Luke mention the miraculous conception of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. “And the angel answered and said unto her the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). The Holy Spirit “begat” Christ’s PHYSICAL NATURE, and the Christian’s SPIRITUAL NATURE (John 1:13).

Jesus had no human father. God gave Jesus a human mother, but no a human father so that Jesus Christ is both Son of God and Son of Man – the God Man. “There is no miracle with God who has all power and all knowledge. The laws of nature are simply the expression of God’s will, but He has not revealed all His will in the laws that we discover. God is Spirit. He is Person. He holds in His own power all life. John 3:16 is called the Little Gospel because it puts briefly the love of God for men in sending His own Son to live and die for us.” This is God’s Gift to the World!

“Then Joseph... being a just man” (Matt. 1:19): He was a straight a true man. Betrothal, according to the law (Deut. 22:23, 24), made Joseph Mary’s husband before marriage. “As a good Jew he would have shown his zeal if he had branded her with public disgrace” (McNeile). He did not want to stain his family name and record. Joseph’s love for Mary did not allow him to make her a public example of open disgrace. He thought of divorcing her (Deut. 24:1; Gal. 6:1), of putting “her away privily,” without a public trial to avoid all the scandal possible.

“But... the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream... (Matt. 1:20): God guides the thoughtful, but not the unthinking. Gabriel appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26). The name of the angel is not here given. Angels are messengers; an angel of the Lord is the Lord’s messenger.

“Appeared... in a dream”: A mode of communication frequently used of God (Gen. 20:3; 31:11, 24; I Kings 3:5; Dan. 7:1).

“Joseph... fear not”. We are known to angels, and they address us by name (Acts 10:3, 13) and by our Lord (John 10:3; Luke 19:50). He was told not to question Mary’s virtue and purity. Joseph was told that the child was begotten of the Holy Spirit and thus that Mary was innocent of any sin. But who would believe it now if he told it of her? Mary knew the truth but had not told him because she could not expect him to believe it.

“And she shall bring forth a son...” (Matt. 1:21): NOT “bear thee son” as the angel said to Zechariah (Luke 1:13). Joseph was to take the position of legal father to the child and name it. “Jesus” means “salvation of Jehovah” or “Jehovah is the Saviour.” He will be prophet, priest and king, but “SAVIOUR” sums it all up in one word. Jesus does SAVE FROM SIN all who come to Him in obedience (John 6:37; 14:6, I Tim. 1:15).

“Now all this .. fulfilled... the prophet” (Matt. 1:22): This is Isa. 7:14, written about 740 B. C.

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child... Immanuel” (Matt. 1:23): Rather “the virgin, as in the Revision.” Isaiah had in view a particular virgin, the mother of the true Immanuel. Like many other prophecies, it had a double, a typical and a true, fulfillment. The first was in the reign of Ahaz, a sign concerning a temporal deliverance, but the higher reference is to the spiritual Deliverer of the world. The first is the type, the second is the great event that inspired the message.

“Immanuel” means “God with us,” an appropriate title for Jesus among men. See John 14:9. He became like us that we might become like Him (I John 8:2; I Cor. 15:49).

“Then Joseph... did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him” (Matt. 1:24): Joseph took Mary and completed the marriage several months before the birth of Jesus, God’s Gift to the World. He thus was legally recognized as the father of Jesus and rescued Him from the reproach of an illegitimate birth before the world.

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“And knew her not till she had brought forth her FIRSTBORN SON.” (Matt. 1:25): “Knew her not” is a Hebrew form for conjugal intercourse. Joseph “knew her not TILL she had brought forth her FIRSTBORN SON” clearly implies that he did “know her” after Jesus was born, that is, cohabit as man and wife. This destroys the Roman Catholic doctrine of the “perpetual virginity” of Mary. Catholics cannot prove by Scripture that Mary was either divine or sinless.

“Firstborn”: Jesus. See Luke 2:7. Who were the “brothers” and “sisters” of Jesus mentioned in Matthew 13:55, 56 and Mark 6:3? Mary’s own children? Or children of Joseph by a former marriage? The plain, simple, natural meaning of these passages is that they WERE MARY’S OWN CHILDREN!

“And he called his name JESUS”: So Joseph “called his name Jesus” as the angel had directed and the child was born in wedlock.

III. The Wise Men Visit God’s Gift (Matthew 2:1-12)

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem...” (Matt. 2:1): Micah 5:2 names the place of Jesus’ birth. Bethlehem was six miles south by west of Jerusalem. It means, “house of bread.” It was “Bethlehem of Judea” to distinguish it from Bethlehem of Zebulon (Josh. 19:15).

“In the days...” It is impossible to determine the exact date of Jesus’ birth. When Jesus was born time was reckoned in the Roman Empire from the FOUNDING of the CITY of ROME (A.U.C.). When Christianity conquered the Roman Empire, an abbot named Dionysius Exigguus (the Small) made a calendar in 526 A. D. at the request of the Emperor Justinian in which he fixed the birth of Christ in the year 754 of the city of Rome (A. U. C.). It should have been 749 or a year or two earlier as Herod died in the year 750 A.U.C., just before the Passover, shortly after an eclipse of the moon on the night before the twelfth and thirteenth of March. “Jesus was born several months previous to the death of Herod, either toward the end of the year (749 A. U. C.– B. C. 5), or at the beginning of the year 750 A. U. C.– B. C. 4” (McGarvey)

“Herod the king. “Born at Ascalon, B. C. 71, and died at Jericho B. C. 4. His father was an Edomite, and his mother an Ishmaelite. He got control of Judea shortly before Christ. Known as Herod the Great, he got his throne with the consent of Rome and kept it by cunning, cruelty and murder from B. C. 37-3. Cruel and cold-blooded he put his favorite wife, Mariamne, to death in B. C. 29, and her two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus in 7 B. C.

“Wise men from the east...” An order or cast of priests and philosophers. They came from Babylon, or the country beyond, the land where the human race had its origin, the land of the Jewish Captivity, where many Jews still lived. They doubtless knew the Jewish scripture about “A Star out of Jacob” (Num. 24:17).

“Men”: Means there were at least TWO. The idea that they were three in number is due to the mention of three kinds of gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), but that is no proof at all. Legend has added to the story that the names were Caspar, Balthasar and Melchior as in BEN HUR and also that they represent Shem, Ham and Japheth, A casket in the Cologne Cathedral actually is supposed to contain the skulls of these three Magi.

“East”: Means “from the risings” of the sun.

The “star” convinced them that God’s Gift and Prince of Peace had been born. They came to Jerusalem as the Capitol City to seek the King of the Jews. Jesus had been represented when 40 DAYS OLD IN THE TEMPLE (Luke 2:21-24) and RETURNED TO BETHLEHEM. Herod spent the last forty days of his evil life at Jericho. The wise men found him at Jerusalem. So Jesus was at least 80 days old when Herod died!

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“Where is he that is born KING OF THE JEWS?” (Matt. 2:2): They seemed to have expected all Jerusalem knowing and worshiping this newborn King. The Kingdom was not ready for the King, so a reception for Him was not arranged and organized by those who should have been waiting for Him. They were in rebellion (John 1:11).

“The King of the Jews?” Herod was startled. By birth he was neither king, nor Jew. Pilate gave Jesus this title (Luke 23:38).

“His star”: This was a supernatural announcement of a supernatural birth to men who were stargazers. God guided them. The star the Wise Men saw was, doubtless, a distinct Supernatural Light, which by a direct act of God went before them and pointed out the exact spot. It seemed a part of God’s plan that Gentiles as well as Jews should offer homage to the infant King.

“When Herod the king had heard... he was troubled.” (Matt. 2:3) Herod in his rage over his family rivalries and jealousies put to death the two sons of Mariamne (Aristobulus and Alexander), Mariamne herself, and Antipater, another son and once his heir, besides the brother and mother of Mariamne (Aristobulus, Alexandra) and her grandfather John Hyrcanus. He had made will after will and was now in a fatal illness and fury over the question of the Magi. He showed his excitement and the whole city knew too well what he could do when in a rage over the disturbance of his plans.

“The foreigner and usurper feared a rival, and the tyrant feared the rival would be welcome” (Bruce). Herod was a hated Idumean.

“And... he demanded... where Christ should be born” (Matt. 2:4): The “chief priests” and perhaps the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests, are included. See I Chron. 24:1-19. The “scribes” were the successors of Ezra, the official copyists of the Scriptures, who naturally became its expounders. They knew WHERE CHRIST WAS TO BE BORN (verses 5, 6) but did not CARE ENOUGH TO SEEK HIM (Micah 5:2).

“Go... that I may come and worship him also” (Matt. 2:8): Herod hypocritically wanted to “worship” the newborn King. This means he wanted to “kill” the King of Kings (Matt. 2:16).

“The star... went before them” (Matt. 2:9): The supernatural star kept on in front of them to the place where the child was, the inn according to Luke 2:7. Remember a pillar of fire guided Israel! The Wise Men found the young child in the “HOUSE” (Luke 2:11).

“And... they... worshipped him”: They did not worship Mary. Bible Christians do not today. “And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts.” They had brought these all the way from the East as an offering. To bring our gifts is a part of worshipping Jesus.

“Gold”: A usual offering to kings. It was needed for the flight to Egypt.

“Frankincense”: White resin or gum. Fragrant when burned. A costly and fragrant gum distilled from a tree in India and Arabia.

“Myrrh”: An aromatic gum produced from a thorn-bush that grew in Arabia and Ethiopia. “Myrrh” means bitterness. Obtained chiefly from slitting the bark of the tree, the gum was used in embalming bodies, ointment, perfume and sedative in wine.

“And being warned of God in a dream... they departed another way” (Matt. 2:12): God warned the wise men not to “return to Herod,” so they took the road from Bethlehem to Jericho eastward. Here we have hem-age and hatred.

IV. The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23)

A. Slaughter of the children (Matt. 2:16-18).

“Arise... flee into Egypt” (Matt. 2:13): Command for immediate departure. Joseph departed by night. Jesus, God’s Gift, was saved from death by flight (verses 14, 15). Herod slew all babies who might be his rival. He brought sorrow; Jesus brings Song (verses 17, 18).

B. Return from Egypt (Matt. 2:19-21).

“Arise... and he arose... and came into the land of Israel” (Matt. 2:20, 21): Jesus was an exile. He made His exodus from Egypt as God’s greater Son.

C. Return to Nazareth (Matt. 2:22-23).

“And he came and dwelt in... Nazareth” (Matt. 2:23): “Prophets” is plural. No single prophecy exists which says that the Messiah was to be called a Nazarene. It may be that this term of contempt (John 2:46; 7:52) is what is meant, and that several prophecies are to be combined like Psalm 22:6, 8; 79:11; Isa. 53:2-4; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15.

So Jesus returned to Nazareth a “mean” city and brought to it a Majesty the world today has not forgotten!

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Questions

1. Who is God's "unspeakable gift" to the world (II Cor. 9:15; John 3:16)?
2. What is "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ" (Matt. 1:1)?
3. What is the meaning of "Jesus Christ," and what three-fold office does He occupy?
4. Who declared that Jesus Christ was "the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1; II Sam. 7:16; John 7:42; Gen. 12:3; 22:18)?
5. Can you name the three groups of the 42 generations and the duration of each (Matt. 1:2-17)? For whom was Matthew's line written? Luke's?
6. What is the character of the five women in this "birth roll" (Matt. 1:3, 5, 6, 18-25)?
7. What is the meaning of "Mary was espoused to Joseph" (Matt. 1:18; Gen. 29:21; Deut. 22:23-28; Lev. 20:10)?
8. Who "begat" Jesus (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35)? Did Jesus have, then, a human father?
9. What was Joseph's first reaction when he found Mary was pregnant (Matt. 1:19)? What could have been done under the law (Deut, 22:23-24)?
10. Who appeared to Joseph (Matt. 1:20)? By what mode of communicate did he make God's will known to Joseph (verses 20-24)? What did the angel tell Joseph?
11. Did the angel tell Joseph that Mary shall "bear thee a son" (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:13)? How did this Virgin Birth of Jesus "fulfill... the prophet" (Matt. 1:22, 23)? Meaning of "Immanuel"?
12. What is the meaning of "knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7)? Did Mary have other children (Matt. 13:55, 56; Mark 6:3)? What did Joseph call the baby?
13. When was Jesus born in Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:1; Micah 5:2)? Meaning of Bethlehem? What do you know about this Herod?
14. Who came "from the east" to worship Jesus (Matt. 2:1)? How many "men" were there? Why did they come (Num. 24:17)? What was the reaction of Herod to their startling question (Matt. 2:2, 3)?
15. Who was able to tell Herod where King Jesus was born (Matt. 2:4-6; Micah 5:2)? Why did these religious leaders not go to worship God's Son)?
16. What hypocritical suggestion did Herod make to the wise men (Matt. 2:8)? Where did the star lead the wise men (Matt, 2:9-11)? Did they worship Mary, or baby Jesus? What three kingly gifts did they present to Jesus? Of what did God warn them (verse 12)?
17. In what way did God warn Joseph to flee Egypt (Matt. 2:13)? Why was it necessary to do this? How long did the holy family stay in Egypt (verses 15, 21)?
18. What shocking thing did Herod do (Matt. 2:16, 17)? How did this fulfill prophecy (verse 18; Jer. 31:15-17)?
19. What was Joseph instructed to do "in a dream... in Egypt" (Matt. 2:19-21)? Did Joseph obey?
20. To what city did the holy family return (Matt. 2:23)? Why (John 1:46; 7:52; Psa. 22:6, 8; Isa. 11:1; 53:2-4; Jer. 23:5; 33:15-17)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 52
Malachi

Page 1
Memory Verse: Malachi 3:10

Memory Verse:

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

OUR GIFT TO GOD

“GOD’S GIFT TO THE WORLD” was “His only begotten Son” (John 3:16), the one whom Paul called “the unspeakable gift” (II Cor. 9:15). Be-cause God loved us, He gave Christ to die in our behalf. “The GIFT OF GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). “He that SPAR-ED NOT HIS OWN SON, but DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, how shall he not with him also freely GIVE US ALL THINGS” (Rom. 8:32)?

Common gratitude would make us want to GIVE TO GOD because of what He has GIVEN TO US. God has told us how to pay what we owe Him in no uncertain terms.

“My Messenger”

Malachi means “My Messenger.” The writer of the last book in the Old Testament has a vital message for us, even as it did for the people of his day. “For am the Lord, I CHANGE NOT...” (Mal. 3:6; see Heb. 13:8).

God loves His people (Mal. 1:1-5). God’s people and priests were put rid, polluted, and polluting (Mal. 1:6, 8, 12, 13; 2:8, 11-12, 17). They neglected God’s house (Mal. 3:14). God warned them of “THAT DAY” (Mal. 3:17’, of God’s judgment to be ready to meet God, and “discern between the righteous and the wicked” (Mal. 3:17, 18).

Basic Background

God is the owner of all things (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26).

Man is a steward of God, one who manages, supervises and keeps account of what has been entrusted to him. Man must GIVE ACCOUNT of all God entrusts to him (Luke 16:2; 12:47, 48). “Let a man so account of us, as...ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God” (I Cor. 4:1). “So then every one of us shall GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD” (Rom. 14:12).

In all ages God has required the tithe, one-tenth, of that which He has entrusted to His stewards. A good steward knows that:

1. Abraham COMMENCED tithing (Gen. 14:20). Since “FAITH COMES BY HEARING, and hearing by the WORD OF GOD” (Rom. 10:17) we can only conclude that GOD TOLD ABRAHAM HOW MUCH TO GIVE TO MELCHIZEDEK! If God did not tell Abraham to “give him TITHES OF ALL,” who did?

2. Jacob CONTINUED tithing (Gen. 28:21, 22).

3. Moses by revelation CONFIRMED tithing (Lev. 27:30-32).

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4. Malachi **COMMANDED** tithing (Mal. 3:8-10).

5. Jesus **COMMENDED** the practice of tithing (Matt. 23:23).

6. The apostles **CHALLENGE US TO DO MORE THAN TITHE** (I Cor. 16:2; Acts 4:32-35). They challenge us to “sow bountifully” in **GIVING TO GOD**, and to remember that “**GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER**” (II Cor. 9:6, 7). Christ our Melchizedek in heaven “**RECEIVETH THEM**” (our tithes) only when we **BRING THEM TO HIM IN WORSHIP** (Heb. 7:8).

UNTIL you “**FIRST GIVE YOURSELF TO THE LORD**” (II Cor. 8:5), you cannot reach first base in being honest with God. Have you made this surrender to Him. “Thou shalt **LOVE THE LORD THY GOD** with **ALL** thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matt. 23:37; read Matt. 6:33). The Lord who says, “**I CHANGE NOT**” (Mal. 3:6) will come some day to **JUDGE US**, I want to be a faithful steward on that **FINAL EXAMINATION DAY**, don’t you (I Cor. 4:2)?

“Prove Me”

In no other connection does God challenge His people like this. Here God gives a seven-fold challenge and promise (Mal. 3:7-12),

I. “BRING”: This Is An Act Involving High Resolve (Mal. 3:10)

God’s people “**BRING**” their tithe and love offerings to God. This is in perfect accord with Paul’s language that “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (II Cor. 9:7). You are always **DELIGHTED** to **RECEIVE**. Do you **PAY** the tithe and **GIVE** love offerings with the same delight? If not, why not?

“**UPON** the first day of the week...” (I Cor. 16:2): **THAT** is the day God’s people meet for worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Will you resolve today to “**BRING**” God’s **TITHE** regularly to His house of worship if you have not been doing so? God cannot bless you if you know His will and refuse to do it (Luke 12:47, 48; Matt. 7:21)?

II. “BRING YE...”: This Is An Act of Rare Devotion

God demands that His stewards be “True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful, and loyal.” It is an act of devotion in response that “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom, 8:28). We are to bring the **FULLNESS OF THE BEST TO THE LORD** in worshipful adoration and devotion as the wise men who brought “**GIFTS: gold, frankincense, and myrrh**” (Matt. 2:11).

III. “BRING YE ALL THE TITHES”: An Act of Reasonable Proportion

“The tithe” means simply the **TENTH** of one’s income.

This runs parallel with Paul’s command in I Corinthians 16:2 where he gave method of meeting a great need. The principle applies today.

1. Periodic: “Upon the first day of the week.”
2. Personal: “Let every one of you.”
3. Planned or provident: “Lay by him in store.”

4. Proportionate; “As God hath prospered him.”

5. Preventive: “That there be no gatherings when I come.” No time will have to be taken when Paul comes for a special drive to raise funds to help the poor saints at Jerusalem!

God gives us all we have – LIFE, and that which sustains life, food, clothes, water, air, and health. It is but REASONABLE that God expects us to return to HIM the TITHE.

“The TITHE... IS THE LORD’S: it is holy unto the Lord” (Lev. 27:30). This unchanging principle was revealed 500 YEARS BEFORE THE Law of Moses came! God has given us His only begotten Son that we might have the hope of eternal life. Can we, UNDER THE GOSPEL, give less than was given before the law, or less than every Jew was commanded to give under the law? Jesus RAISED EVERY STANDARD OF THE LAW! Do YOU THINK He would lower the STANDARD OF STEWARDSHIP under the gospel of GRACE (read Matt. 5:27, 28, 43, 44; 23:23)?

IV. “BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE: An Act of Spiritual Worship

“Storehouse”: It is God’s house, in that day or this. It means the local treasury of God’s people in this local church. In Old Testament times the synagogue or temple were God’s storehouse,

God said to His people: “AND NONE SHALL APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY” (Exodus 23:13). God repeated this commandment: “AND NONE SHALL APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY” (Exodus 34:20). God repeated it again: “And they shall not appear before the Lord empty. EVERY MAN SHALL GIVE AS HE IS ABLE, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee” (Deut. 16:17). “Empty” means empty-handed. Most sacrifices of prayer in God’s house when unaccompanied by the payment of the TITHE WHICH WE OWE TO GOD (our debt), and offerings of love which accompany the tithe, mean we “appear before” the Lord EMPTY. DO YOU PRAY with “EMPTY” heart and hands in the Lord’s house when you appear before Him?

Susan Anderson, consecrated missionary to Nigeria, Once said: “Many times people say to me, “We are praying for you and your work in Africa. But if you are DOING NOTHING BUT PRAYING, and are NOT PAYING AS YOU ARE ABLE, THEN you need not bother to pray for me, as your prayers get no higher than your head!”

Last Sunday I quoted a missionary from India who said: “I do not know a single missionary who does not tithe his income.” The influence of missionaries is reflected in that fact. Imagine the spiritual power of your church if it could be said: “I do not know a single member of this church who does not tithe his income!”

African Offertory

Our Christian brethren in Africa often shame us by their superior faith and practice. For instance, they are almost all tithers. They have little money, but they give of whatever they possess.

One of our missionaries sends this song which is frequently used as a hymn of dedication for offerings:

You gave us our beans, O heavenly Father, With joy we bring some back to you.
You gave us our corn, O heavenly Father, With joy we bring some back to you.
You gave us our peanuts, heavenly Father, With joy we bring some back to you.
You gave us money, heavenly Father, With joy we bring some back to you.
You gave us everything, heavenly Father, With joy we bring some back to you.

It has the true African rhythm and harmony and the true Christian spirit.

V. “BRING... That There May Be Meat in Mine House”: Tithing Supplies Every Need

“Meat in mine house”: Every need would be made for those who served in the temple, thus releasing them from attention to carnal things. The people of God of the local church must meet every need today. The tithe will supply every need of the work here and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Any church anywhere which has ten wage earners who will tithe their income can have a minister on the field full time, preaching Sunday morning, Sunday night and on Wednesday night, with time to visit the sick, bury the dead, marry the young, and “be instant in season, out of season” (II Tim, 4:2).

VI. “PROVE ME NOW...”: An Act of Sublime Faith

“PROVE E NOW HEREWITH, saith the Lord of hosts...”: Through the bringing to God what they were under obligation to “bring” Him, they are to “PROVE” God, whether in His attitude toward them He is no longer the holy and righteous God (Mal. 2:17; 3:6). This is a FAITH that TRUSTS, that TAKES GOD AT HIS WORD. God wants this not to get us to pay the tithe, but to “PROVE” HIM, prove the sincerity of our faith and love in Him, the Changeless God.

We must be HEARERS of the Word, and DOERS, too (James 1:22) to “PROVE” God.

Jesus said: “He that is FAITHFUL in that which is least faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches.... No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON” (Luke 16:10-13). Read prayerfully Ezek. 33:23, 30-33).

To be willing to “PROVE” God is “TO PROVE THE SINCERITY OF YOUR LOVE” and to GIVE “PROOF of your love...” (II Cor. 8:8, 24).

If I had a handful of diamonds, and you had a handful of dust, I would not have to beg you to swap with me – if you really believed I had the diamonds!

HONOR GOD, and He will HONOR YOU, “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of thine increase” (Prov. 3:9). “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Eccl. 11:1). “Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom” (Luke 6:38). “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly he shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (II Cor. 9:6). “PROVE” God and experience the truth of the law of the harvest, physical and spiritual!

**VII. “I WILL... OPEN YOU THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN,
AND POUR YOU OUT A BLESSING”: Assurance of Divine Blessings**

You will learn when you “PROVE” God, that He causes the promised blessing to flow in the richest abundance to those who keep His commandments. God has promised to “Open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” “Opening the sluices” of heaven is a figure, denoting the most copious supply of blessing, so that it flows down from heaven like a pouring rain (as in II Kings 7:2). This is superabundance. Everything that could injure the fruits of the land God will take away (verse 11). In consequence of God’s blessing “all nations shall call you blessed” (verse 12).

They “PROVED” God

A Widow

A mother was left with five children, a small farm and a heavy mortgage. She was TRUE TO HER TRUST and “PROVED” God. She reared an educated everyone of the five children, has seen them all happily and use fully married, has her farm clear of debt, and recently sent her church, check for \$47.00 for payment of her current tithe! She “proved” that God”, supply is great enough to meet her every need (Phil. 4:19).

A Doctor

A doctor in West Virginia writes: “After years of tithing, I feel I can speak with some authority and say that it is the biggest factor in my Christian growth. There is no question in my mind but that this is the proper way to support God’s work. I believe that this has scriptural support and is not only an evidence of consecration but it recognizes God’s sovereign ownership of all our possessions. Some may say they cannot afford to tithe. I used to say the same thing, but I now know it is the easy way to give. Take out the tithe FIRST, IT BELONGS TO GOD. You’ll discover that you cannot only afford it, but you will experience a joy in giving it.”

Alvin Dark

When manager of the San Francisco Giants baseball team, Alvin Dark was once asked his reason for giving 10 per cent (the tithe) of hi: earnings to the church. Here is his answer.

“The day after the Giants won the World Series in 1954, was a Sun day and I was in Yonkers, New York, to talk to a Sunday school class. I mentioned that I planned to give 10 per cent of my series bonus to my church back home, a practice that is called tithing.

After the class, a man who had been sitting in the back of the room came forward and introduced himself as a reporter. He said, ‘Alvin, do you think your contribution to the Church might have something to do with your success in the World Series?’

“I reminded him that I WAS TITHING IN 1948 when I was with the Boston Braves, and we lost the series to Cleveland, and also in 1951 when the Giants lost to the Yankees. If we had lost to Cleveland this year (1954) I’d still be tithing. There is no connection.

“The first money I earned was \$2.50 a week for delivering papers in my home town of Lake Charles, Louisiana. Every Sunday I put 25 cents in the collection plate. Later, when I graduated from high school and went to work as a roustabout in the oil fields, I continued to give 10 per cent of my earnings to the church.

“I have heard people say that they want to tithe, but that after bill, are paid, there is hardly enough to make ends meet. They’re making the mistake of trying to take the money ‘off the bottom’ instead of ‘off the top.’ It should not be merely what they don’t need that they give to the church If you TITHE FIRST, you’ll MAKE ENDS MEET. My winner’s share of the World Series was \$11,147.00. The \$1,114.70 which I donated to the church may be a lot more than the first quarter I put in the offering plate but to me it is not different.”

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Ted Simonson in “The Goal and The Glory” tells the story of a cigarette company approaching Alvin Dark and offering him \$500.00 to endorse a certain brand of cigarettes. “I explained that as a Christian, I felt

smoking and drinking were very harmful to most people, and I didn’t want to influence anybody to begin these two habits. Some of the boys couldn’t understand how I could pass up \$500.00 so easily.

“But the next day, Leo Durocher called me into his office to tell me I’d been appointed captain of the Giants for the year (1949). With the appointment went a sum of money – exactly \$500.00.

“We are tempted to feel that we are at the mercy of circumstances. But the fact of the matter is that we are MASTERS OF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES when we put our faith in Christ. He has overcome the world and he invites us to share in His victory. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Romans 9:37). He that spared not His own Son but delivered him up for us all how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32).

“Because of these mighty promises, we Christians are freed from the tight-fisted, fearful miserliness of the world around us. We are sons of the One who owns the universe and in every resource of earth and heaven can be released in our assistance if He chooses.

“I’ve been particularly blessed in being brought up in a Christian home where tithing was a regular practice. Giving the FIRST TENTH OF MY INCOME BACK TO GOD WAS JUST AS UNQUESTIONED AS PUTTING ON MY SOCKS BEFORE MY SHOES. And a nickel out of every fifty cents was quite a lot when I got up every day before dawn to pedal around my paper route. But as the years went by and my income increased, I FOUND I COULD NEVER WIN IN THIS GAME OF GIVING TO GOD. HE ALWAYS OUTGAVE ME. He gave to me physically, financially and in a dozen other ways. He led me into a satisfying career in baseball and selected a wonderful girl to be my wife. And He has given me even more – SALVATION IN HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, and PEACE OF HEART, JOY, and the HOPE OF HEAVEN.

“I learned,” concluded the former all-star shortstop Boston Braves, team captain of New York Giants, and currently manager of the San Francisco Giants, “I learned that TITHING IS JUST A SYMBOL OF MY TRUST IN HIM. Actually, if I belong to Him, He owns my income and me, too, all of it. TITHING IS JUST A SIGNPOST THAT INDICATES THE DIRECTION A MAN’S SOUL IS LEANING.

‘For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ (Matt. 6:21).

When Alvin Dark with his San Francisco Giants was in Cincinnati playing against the Cincinnati Reds Lou Smith, feature sports writer of the Cincinnati Enquirer, asked Alvin if he still practices tithing. “I most certainly do,” he quickly replied (Cincinnati Enquirer, April 28, 1964).

When Floyd Pence was minister at the High Street Church, Lexington, he had this item in the High Street Herald:

“A Jew and a Christian were in business together. They agreed to attend services with each other. The Christian went with the Jew to hear the rabbi. The collection plates were passed. The Jew, living his religion gave \$20.00 (a tenth of his week’s earnings). Come Sunday the Jew went with the Christian to his services. The collection plates were passed. Although they had earned the same for the week, the Christian (???) gave \$1.00. The Jew looked at him, and said: “ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN.”

WHEN CHRISTIANS ALL LEARN HOW TO TITHE

(TUNE: "Since Jesus Came Into My Heart")

What a wonderful change in this world will be wrought
When Christians all learn how to tithe,
We will reach then a goal for which we have long sought,
When Christians all learn how to tithe.

By our schools and our hospitals then we will stand,
When Christians all learn how to tithe.
We will build them and make them the best in the land,
When Christians all learn how to tithe.

Not a child will be homeless or wanting a friend,
When Christians all learn how to tithe,
And our old preachers' sorrows will all have an end,
When Christians all learn how to tithe.

We'll have money for missions and dry the world's tears,
When Christians all learn how to tithe
We'll herald the Gospel and banish earth's fears,
When Christians all learn how to tithe.

CHORUS

When Christians all learn how to tithe,
When Christians all learn how to tithe,
Oh, the dollars will roll; bringing joy to each soul –
When Christians all learn how to tithe.

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Questions

1. Who was “God’s Gift to the World” (John 3:16)? What did Paul call this gift (I Cor. 9:15)? What does God give us through Christ (Rom 6:23; Rom. 8:32)?
2. What is the meaning of Malachi? What vital message does he have for us concerning the Lord (Mal. 3:6; see Heb. 13:8)? Did God love his people then (Mal. 1:1-5)? How did people and priest alike treat God (Mal. 1:6, 8, 12, 18; 2:8, 11-12, 17)? Of what did God warn them (Mal. 3:17, 18)?
3. What two principles are basic ground in stewardship (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26; Luke 16:2; 12:47, 48)? What must every steward do (I Cor. 4:1; Rom. 14:12)?
4. What does every good steward know about tithing (Gen. 14:20; 28:21, 22; Lev. 27:30-32; Matt. 3:8-10; Matt. 23:28; I Cor. 16:2; Acts 4:32-35; II Cor. 9:6, 7; Heb. 7:8)?
5. What, is an absolute prerequisite in being honest with God (II Cor. 8:5; Matt. 22:37; Matt. 6:33)?
6. What does “BRING” suggest to you in the stewardship of things material (Matt. 3:10)? With what spirit is one to “BRING” his tithe and love offering to God (I Cor. 9:7)? When are you the “BRING” your tithe and love offering (I Cor. 16:2)? Can God bless you if you refuse to do what you know is right (Luke 12:47, 48; Matt. 7:21; James 4:17)?
7. What does “Bring Ye” suggest in the way of devotion? Who set us a good example to follow in bringing gifts to the Saviour (Matt. 2:11)?
8. What are we to “Bring?” Is this a “reasonable proportion?” What does “tithe” mean?
9. Can you name Paul’s Pod of P’s (I Cor. 16:2)?
10. To whom does the tithe belong according to the Bible (Lev. 27:30)? Has God ever repudiated this ownership?
11. Where are God’s people to “Bring” the Lord’s tithes? What did God specifically command His people NOT TO DO (Exodus 23:14; 34:20; Deut. 16:17)?
12. What does Susan Anderson say about “praying” and “paying?”
13. For what purpose were tithes to be BROUGHT to God’s storehouse? Will the tithes of a local church meet every local and worldwide need if honestly brought?
14. How does God challenge His people? Is it enough to be “hearer of the word” only (James 1:22; Luke 16:10-13; Ezek. 33:23, 30-33)?
15. To be willing to “prove” God is a mark of what today (I Cor 8:8, 24)? If we “honor” God, what has He promised to do for us (Prov. 3:9; Eccl. 11:1; Luke 6:38; II Cor. 9:6)?
16. What has God promised to do for those who “PROVE” Him? Can God literally “open the sluices” of heaven and pour out blessing (I Kings 7:2)?
17. What has God said He would do “for your sakes” (Mal. 8:11)? What attitude would “all nations” have toward a people who would “prove’ God (Mal. 3:12)?
18. Did God meet the need of a poor widow with five children who “proved” God (Phil. 4:19)? Explain.
19. What do you think of the testimony of a doctor in West Virginia? Do you agree with him?
20. To you what is the most striking part of Alvin Dark’s honesty in “PROVING” God? Will YOU start tithing today? Or if you already tithe, will you share your testimony with someone else today, and pass along this lesson we have shared?