



BIBLICAL INSIGHTS COMMENTARY



Boiling Springs, NC
704 966-6845
clv@cranfordville.com
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One Volume Overview FIRST CORINTHIANS



11 εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν ἐν ἑσπέρῃ· οὐ παρέσθη αὐτῷ τις ἐξουσίαν ἡμεῖς ἀποδοῦναι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῦ ὁμοειπεῖν ἡμεῖς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ ἔξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρῶν· ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἔγεννηθησαν.
14 Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. 15 Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκεῖνος λέγων· γούτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐστὼν ἰεροσθέν μου γέγονεν.

by
Lorin L. Cranford

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INTRODUCTION

Just as the early period of writing ministry by Paul was limited to the second missionary journey (ca. 48-51 AD), the middle period of his writing is limited to the third missionary journey. Even more limiting is that two cities, Ephesus and Corinth, are the primary places where this composition of letters took place. First Corinthians was written from Ephesus and Romans was written from Corinth. Second Corinthian, however, was composed at an undermined city in Macedonia toward the end of his stay in that region. This would make Berea/Berea a likely candidate for the place of composition, given that he was headed for Corinth at the time of the composition of Second Corinthians. The time frame for the third missionary journey is approximately 52 to 57 AD with lengthy stays in both Ephesus (3+ years) and Corinth (3+ months). First Corinthians was written in 54-55 (spring time); Second Corinthians sometime in 56 AD, and Romans in 57 AD.

The dominate orientation of this third journey was to develop disciples in the churches that the apostle had established on the second missionary journey. Thus, this trip had a different contour than did the first two missionary trips. The major source of information about this third trip, beyond bits and pieces of information in 1-2 Corinthians and Romans, is Acts 18:23-21:16. Although Luke does not mention it directly in Acts,¹ an equally important objective for the third journey was the collecting of a massive relief offering from the existing Pauline churches in order to relieve the suffering of Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem and Judea. Second Corinthians chapters eight and nine are the primary source of information for this activity.

As Romans chapter fifteen indicates, the apostle was increasingly feeling that his work in the Aegean Sea region was coming to a close and a new opportunity in the western Mediterranean Sea would open up after taking the relief offering back to Jerusalem. But this

¹The reconstruction of [Paul's relationship with the church at Corinth](#) highlights the very summary nature of Luke's account in Acts.

thinking was coming from Paul and God had a different agenda ahead for him. After his release from custody in the first leg of being in Rome at the beginning of 61 AD, his resumption of ministry once more centered on the Aegean Sea region with Corinth, Crete, Ephesus, and Macedonia becoming the main areas where this ministry unfolded for a few short years until his second arrest and transfer back to Rome sometime in 67 AD. The churches in this area continued to struggle with difficulties both from false teachers and from individual circumstances. These demanded his attention. The role of the various assistants who worked with Paul emerged in the second missionary journey with Timothy coming to the forefront of ministry. That work of these assistants and new ones continued to explain during the third missionary journey. And in the resumption of ministry after his first Roman imprisonment their ministry while being supported by Paul became perhaps the highest priority for Paul. First and Second Timothy center on work at Ephesus and Titus on Crete under the leadership of these two assistants. Paul the teacher comes increasingly the primary hat that the apostle wears during these final years.

During the three plus (Acts 19:10, 20, 22) years that Paul spent at Ephesus on the third trip (Acts 19:1-20:1), much growth of the Christian community took place. Luke provides us with only a small number of glimpses into that ministry in chapter nineteen of Acts.² Paul's letters flesh out a lot more details beyond the Acts narrative. It was by far the longest that the apostle stayed in a single city during all three journeys, and from the epistolary materials we also learn that a couple or more trips were made to Corinth from Ephesus during this period as well. Luke's summarizing statement in Acts 19:10 that πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας τὴν Ἀσίαν ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας, *so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord*, very likely includes the Lycus Valley where Colossae was located. And it would likely signal the establishment of the churches in Laodicea, Colossae, and Hierapolis during this period.

10.1 The First Letter to the Corinthians

What we call First Corinthians is actually the [second letter of Paul to the church at Corinth](#), according to 5:9. Although a popular view in the middle of the last century, a fragment of this letter is not contained in 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1. Most contemporary scholars have long since moved away from this contention. The contents of

²Luke's account of Paul's ministry in Ephesus in Acts 19 is made up of six episodic narratives describing specific events (19:1-7, 8-9; 11-19, 21-22, 23-41; 20:1) and is punctuated with summarizing narrative statements covering long periods of time (19:8a, 10, 20, 22b). The episodic narratives cover all together no more than three or four months of the three plus years, if even that much.

this letter are not known beyond Paul's brief reference in 5:9, Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις, *I wrote to you in my letter to not associate with sexually immoral persons*. But in Paul's mentioning of it in 5:9, he attempts to correct a misunderstanding of his statement to the effect that it applies only to those who are professing believers and not to the outside world. Presumably, this letter was written shortly after Paul's arrival in Ephesus, although we can't be certain of this. We know so little about it that almost anything else beyond the above description is pure speculation with no factual foundation in support.

First Corinthians stands as one of the best structured of all of Paul's letters.³ It contains all of the stan-

³The following outline, although somewhat on target in places, reflects unfortunately the abysmal lack of understanding of ancient letters and the importance of interpreting Paul's letters within that framework rather than superimposing a modern outline down on to the scripture text as is largely done here. The natural divisions inside the scripture text are completely ignored in this outline:

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
 - A. Salutation and description of the writer and readers (1:1-3)
 - B. Thanksgiving for the effects of God's grace (1:4-9)
- II. Divisions in the Church (1:10-4:21)
 - A. The reality of division (1:10-17)
 - B. The causes of division (1:18-4:5)
 1. A misunderstanding of the message (1:18-3:4)
 2. A misunderstanding of the ministry (3:5-4:5)
 - C. The cure of division (4:6-21)
- III. Disorders in the Church (chaps. 5-6)
 - A. Failure to discipline a sinner (chap. 5)
 - B. Failure to resolve personal disputes (6:1-11)
 - C. Failure to practice sexual purity (6:12-20)
- IV. Difficulties in the Church (chaps. 7-16:12)
 - A. Counsel concerning marriage (chap. 7)
 1. Marriage and celibacy (7:1-9)
 2. Marriage and divorce (7:10-24)
 3. Marriage and ministry (7:25-38)
 4. Remarriage and widows (7:39-40)
 - B. Counsel concerning Christian liberty (chaps. 8-14)
 1. Christian liberty in relation to pagan worship (8:1-11:1)
 - a. The principle of brotherly love (chap. 8)
 - b. The regulation of privilege (9:1-10:13)
 - c. The application to idolatry (10:14-11:1)
 2. Christian liberty in relation to Christian worship (11:2-14:40)
 - a. The state of women in worship (11:2-16)
 - b. The state of Christians at the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
 - c. The state of spiritual gifts (chaps. 12-14)
 - C. Counsel concerning the Resurrection (chap. 15)
 1. The certainty of bodily resurrection (15:1-34)
 - a. Historical argument (15:1-11)
 - b. Logical argument (15:12-19)
 - c. Theological argument (15:20-28)
 - d. Experiential argument (15:29-34)
 2. Answers to certain questions (15:35-58)
 - a. Answers about the resurrection of the dead (15:35-49)
 - b. Answers about the Rapture of the living (15:50-58)
 - D. Counsel concerning the collection for the poor (16:1-4)
 - E. Counsel concerning future visits (16:5-12)

dard ancient letter basic elements. Additionally a relatively clear shift from the Proem to the letter body occurs in 1:10. The structuring of the contents of the letter body around the report from the household of Chloe (1:11) in 1:10-6:20, and the questions from the delegation from Corinth (7:1; 16:12) in 7:1-16:18 provide a clear structuring of this part of the letter. The Conclusio in 16:19-24 contains more elements than we have seen thus far in Paul's writing. It truly reflects the occasional nature of all of Paul's letters.

10.1.1 Praescriptio

The praescriptio of First Corinthians follows the structural pattern typical of [Paul's letters](#), and yet has some distinctive traits especially in the limited number of expansion elements. These signal foundational themes for the letter body.

1.1 Παῦλος
 κλητὸς ἀπόστολος
 Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ
 διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ
 καὶ
 Σωσθένης
 ὁ ἀδελφὸς

1.2 τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ
 τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ,
 ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
 κλητοῖς ἁγίοις,
 σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα
 | τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, |
 αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν ·

1.3 χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη
 ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

The letter signals that it comes both from Paul and Sosthenes. Paul is identified by title as a κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, [called apostle of Christ Jesus through God's will](#). The title is ἀπόστολος with the standard meaning of on a par with the Twelve as we have seen already in the previous letters. But here in a manner very typical of ancient Greek.⁵ Paul was κλητὸς, [called](#), to be an apostle.⁶ Called by whom? [Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ](#), [Christ Jesus](#), as a modifier of the adjec-

⁵Commentators repeatedly begin their work on a Pauline epistle with the wholly predictable observation that in ancient Greek letters of Paul's era the formula 'Sender to Addressee, greetings ... I give thanks that ...' remained as invariable as 'Dear Sir ...' or 'Dear Mary ... today. Such a comment may tend to generate a sense of frustration not because it is wrong, but because usually it is offered only as a piece of historical or literary information,

10.1.1.1 Superscriptio, 1:1

Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ⁴ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφὸς

- V. Conclusion (16:13–24)
 - A. Exhortation on appropriate conduct and commendation (16:13–18)
 - B. Salutation, imprecation, and benediction (16:19–24)

[David K. Lowery, "1 Corinthians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 506–507.]

⁴Christ Jesus follows the word order of the UBS Greek New Testament, 4th ed., which Metzger defends.⁷ The sequence Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ occurs in the very early P⁴⁶ (about AD 200) as well as in B, D, F, G, and 33. The reverse sequence appears in κ and in A, as well as in many later VSS, but this form usually occurs only in the context of the full title Lord Jesus Christ. (ii) κλητὸς, called, is omitted by A and D'. But this can be readily explained as providing a simplified, more succinct, version of a phrase which some scribes may have regarded as redundantly overloaded (cf. Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15).⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 62.]

with little interest in its significance for today. Paul observes the customary etiquette and convention. He does not consciously project the Christian gospel and lifestyle as a counterculture within the Graeco-Roman world at every opportunity. It assumes counterculture patterns only when theological or ethical values run counter to some prevailing assumption or practice. However, Paul utilizes an accepted structure to insert within its frame distinctive components which bear his own stamp." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 62.]

⁶Cf. Gal. 1:15-17, 15 Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν [ὁ θεὸς] ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς μου καὶ [καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ](#) 16 ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, εὐθέως οὐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι 17 οὐδὲ ἀνήλθον εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα πρὸς τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους, ἀλλ' ἀπῆλθον εἰς Ἀραβίαν καὶ [πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα εἰς Δαμασκόν](#).

15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and [called me through his grace](#), was pleased 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into [Arabia](#), and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

tive κλητὸς. But in what context? διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, [through God's will](#). Christ's divine calling of Paul as an apostle comes within the framework of God's desire. A close link between both God and Christ that we saw emerge in the early letters continues to be stressed here.

The **will of God** will play an important role in Paul's thinking as he writes all of his letters: cf. also Gal. 1:4; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:5; Rom. 1:10; 2:18; 12:2; 15:31; Eph. 1:1, 5, 9, 11; 5:17; 6:6; Col. 1:1, 9; 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:1 for the phrase θέλημα (τοῦ) θεοῦ elsewhere in Paul's letters. Paul's being an apostle is connected to the will of God in the Superscriptio of 1 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; and 2 Tim. 1:1. The extensive use (62x in NT) of θέλημα for divine and human desires and intentions underscores that God's will is not some static plan but rather what He desires His people to be and to do. It can relate just to a moment in time or reference traits and qualities extending over a life time. It references God's desires far beyond just a vocational plan. Of Paul's seven uses of the adjective κλητὸς, -ή, -όν, called, only two of them (1 Cor. 1:1; Rom. 1:1) is applied to his apostleship. The other five are salvation references applied to those who have become Christians (Rom. 1:6, 7; 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:2, 24). At the heart of the idea is God issuing an invitation to come to Him and to do something for Him.

Paul's use of the idea of him being a κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, a called apostle, alludes to the divine nature of his apostleship, which evidently wasn't all that widely accepted at Corinth. This becomes especially prominent in Second Corinthians 10-13. For the Christians especially with a Jewish heritage, the role of the apostles in Jerusalem as acknowledged leaders of the Christian movement was very significant. We are, at the point of the writing of First Corinthians in 54 AD, only a very few years into the transition of Christianity from an exclusively Jewish religious movement to a Jewish and non-Jewish movement where one's Jewish heritage played less and less a role religiously. This had caused major disruption both in Antioch and Jerusalem, as the council meeting in Acts 15 reflects. The questions about this had spread already by the late 40s into the churches of Galatia where Paul had to address it in Galatians. Perhaps on the second missionary when the church at Corinth was established in the early 50s Paul was especially sensitive to this because a Jewish only Christianity deeply contradicted his sense of divine calling from God. Clearly the Jewish synagogue community did not agree with much of Paul's Gospel message according to Acts 18:4-11. Clearly the later vicious opposition to Paul in the Corinthian church claimed superiority to Paul in part through its Jewishness (2 Cor. 11:22).

The letter also comes from Σωσθένης, [Sosthenes](#),

who is called ὁ ἀδελφός, [the brother](#). This name appears only in Acts 18:17 and 1 Cor. 1:1 in the entire NT. In Acts 18:17, Σωσθένης is the leader of the Jewish synagogue who opposed Christianity before the Roman governor Gallio at Corinth.⁷ This was about 51 AD. Now some three years later the name Σωσθένης shows up in First Corinthians referencing a Christian brother in Ephesus who played a significant role in this letter to the church at Corinth. Is he the same person as in the Acts narrative? We can say with certainty, but it seems likely that he was. If so, some kind of amazing story stands behind these texts. This would mean that at least two synagogue leaders in Corinth would have converted to Christianity, Sosthenes and Crispus (Acts. 18:8). Since often the title ἀρχισυνάγωγος, [synagogue leader](#), also meant the Jewish patron who provided a meeting place for the synagogue to meet, the Jewish community suffered substantial loss to Christianity during the short years.

Paul addresses Σωσθένης as ὁ ἀδελφός, [brother](#). The common use of the definite article ὁ for the possessive pronoun in ancient Greek can justify the translation either of 'my brother' or of 'our brother.' All through First Corinthians (37x), the term ἀδελφός is used in [designation of a fellow Christian](#).⁸ Spiritual kinship is signaled

⁷Acts 18:12-17. 12 Γαλλίωνος δὲ ἀνθυπάτου ὄντος τῆς Ἀχαΐας κατεπέστησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα 13 λέγοντες ὅτι παρὰ τὸν νόμον ἀναπειθεῖ οὗτος τοὺς ἀνθρώπους σέβεσθαι τὸν θεόν. 14 μέλλοντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου ἀνοίγειν τὸ στόμα εἶπεν ὁ Γαλλίων πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· εἰ μὲν ἦν ἀδίκημά τι ἢ ῥαδιούργημα πονηρόν, ὧ Ἰουδαῖοι, κατὰ λόγον ἂν ἀνεσχόμεν ὑμῶν, 15 εἰ δὲ ζητήματα ἐστὶν περὶ λόγου καὶ ὀνομάτων καὶ νόμου τοῦ καθ' ὑμᾶς, ὄψεσθε αὐτοί· κριτῆς ἐγὼ τούτων οὐ βούλομαι εἶναι. 16 καὶ ἀπήλασεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος. 17 ἐπιλαβόμενοι δὲ πάντες [Σωσθένην τὸν ἀρχισυνάγωγον](#) ἔτυπον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος· καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων τῷ Γαλλίῳ ἐμελεν.

12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. 13 They said, "This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law." 14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; 15 but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters." 16 And he dismissed them from the tribunal. 17 Then all of them seized [Sosthenes, the official of the synagogue](#), and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things.

⁸"Sosthenes is identified as a 'brother' (adelphos; cf. 2 Cor 1:1; Phlm 1; Col 1:1). At a time when the adjective 'Christian' (Christianos) had not yet come into common use (cf. Acts 11:26), 'brother' had the connotation of fellow Christian. Sosthenes and Apollos (16:12) are the only 'brothers' identified by name in 1 Corinthians. Paul, however, commonly uses the term in the vocative plural when addressing the community (1:10, 11, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 7:24, 29; 10:1; 11:33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 31, 50, 58; 16:15, 20). He often uses the term in the singular to identify a Christian in some of his case studies (5:11; 6:5, 6; 7:12, 14,



by the term which re-enforced the idea of church family given that the groups met in private homes as their gathering place.

10.1.1.2 Adscriptio, 1.2

τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῆ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν·

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

The core expression τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῆ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, **to the church of God that is in Corinth**, sets up the expansion elements which follow. The non-sentence formula structure pretty much follows the primary expression of Paul in sending a letter to a church or churches (cf. Gal. 1:2b; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1b). Two things are always contained: some designation of the Christian community and a geographical location reference. In five of the nine letters addressed to Christian groups, Paul labels them τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ (singular) or ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις (plural). The phrase τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, **to the church of God**, in both First and Second Corinthians is a variation of τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, **to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**, in First and Second Thessalonians. It differs slightly from the very brief ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, **to the churches of Galatia**, in the Galatian's letter. Later on, the Adscriptio reference in Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians will shift to a more individualized designation.

The designation τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ in First and Second Corinthians has the more Jewish flavor behind it Israel being referenced as the assembly of the Lord.⁹

15; 8:11, 13 [twice]); cf. 7:15; 9:5 [feminine singular]; 6:8; 8:12; 15:6 [masculine plural]). Members of the Jewish synagogue were similarly called brothers by their confreres. Paul's use of kinship language highlights the bonds with which Christians were united to one another. The absence of the qualifying pronoun 'my' (μου; cf. 2 Cor 1:1; Phlm 1) implies that Sosthenes is bound by kinship ties not only to Paul but also to the Corinthians, all of whom are members of a single family unit. The sociological implications of Paul's use of kinship language should not be overlooked. Christians gathered in the home of one of their number (see 16:19). In this setting kinship language was very much "at home." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 51.]

⁹"Paul describes the assembly at Corinth as 'the church of God' (see 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13; cf. the 'churches of God' in 11:16; 1 Thess 2:14). His expression evokes the biblical description of Israel as the assembly (qāhāl/ekklesia; see Deut 4:10; Judg 20:2; 1 Kings 8:14; Ezra 2:64; etc.). 'Qēhal-yhwh/Hē ekklesia tou Kyriou' is an epithet that evokes the memory of the nation gathered together in the wilderness during the time of the

In the background here is the opposition of the synagogue community to the existence of the Christian group in the city calling itself the people of God. When one discovers all of the problems plaguing the church at Corinth, it is somewhat amazing that Paul uses the designation τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. The frequent modern image of church as the gathering of perfect or near perfect saints of God has no application to this group in ancient Corinth.

The geographical reference, although a standard item in all of his letters to churches, is framed somewhat differently here and in Second Corinthians: τῆ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, **which exists in Corinth**. Only in these two Adscriptia does Paul include the present participle τῆ οὔσῃ, **which exists**, with τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. But in the latter plural, individualized references it is more common. Note that Romans is somewhat similar with τοῖς οὔσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ, **to those in Rome** (1:7). Also, Ephesians (τοῖς οὔσιν [ἐν Ἐφέσῳ]) and Philippians (τοῖς οὔσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις). Usually the geographical designation is either a personal geographical name (Θεσσαλονικέων, of the Thessalonians; 1-2 Thess) or the spatial geographical listing in the genitive case (τῆς Γαλατίας, of Galatia, Gal). The preposition phrase with the spatial noun (ἐν + noun) is used in 1-2 Corinthians; Romans; Colossians; Ephesians; Philippians. The insertion of the participle stresses the existence of the Christian group in the city. Thus Paul here especially asserts that indeed a gathering of God's people does indeed exist in Corinth, but it is not the synagogue community. Such an understanding would have taken the Jewish members some time to get accustomed to, while the non-Jewish members could have readily and easily embraced the idea.¹⁰

Exodus, Israel's preeminent experience of redemption and salvation (Deut 23:1-8; Judg 20:2, etc.). Deuteronomy 32 in particular recalls the holiness of the assembly.

"Deuteronomy speaks of the 'day of the assembly' hē hēmēra tēs ekklēsiās (LXX, Deut 4:10; 9:10; 18:16). The assembly is an event that takes place in time and space. The salutations of Paul's letters identify the political space, the city or region in which the Christian gathering takes place, but not the architectural space, that is, the specific venue of the gathering. Early Christian gatherings were held in the homes of the most prominent Christians in the community (see 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:23; Phlm 2). Since Christians gathered not in palaces but in the homes of ordinary citizens, an early Christian 'church' could not have consisted of a very large number of people. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor suggests that a reasonable figure would probably be between thirty and forty (St. Paul's Corinth 156)."

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 51-52.]

¹⁰I can easily imagine the conversations that occurred when Christians met Jews in the city and used this terminology with them. Such conversations would not have been mild or very pleas-

The two part expansion of this core expression shifts over from the singular to the plural forms and thus individualizes the ideas being expressed.

ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, to those set apart in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. This first expansion of the core Adscriptio puts on the table what will become a foundational issue for the letter body. Christianity means being dedicated by God and to God. This in short means a calling to be holy ones. The accumulation of problems in the church at Corinth that is addressed in the two sections of the letter body indicate anything but holy living by the Corinthians.

In the subsequent use of ἀγιάζω in 6:11, Paul makes it clear what he means by this verb. καὶ ταῦτά τινες ἦτε· ἀλλ' ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλ' ἡγιασθητε, ἀλλ' ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, **And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.** In defining the previous lifestyle of many of the Corinthian believers in vv. 9b-10, Paul sets their present life as believers in stark contrast as who have been set apart in dedication to God and as those who have thus been made right with God through Jesus Christ. This subunit begins with a warning that living as a pagan will keep one from entering God's kingdom: "Ἡ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; μὴ πλανᾶσθε· **Or, do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't be led astray:** An ἄδικος, **wrongdoer**, is precluded from God's Kingdom both now and for eternity. Among the lifestyle practices this includes is then defined by Paul as οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλολάτραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενικοῖται οὔτε κλέπται οὔτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοιδοροὶ, οὐχ ἄρπαγες, **neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes nor thieves nor the greedy, nor drunkards nor abusive people, nor robbers.** To be ἅγιοις, **holy ones**, means a lifestyle opposite that of the ἄδικος, **wrongdoer**. When an individual comes to Christ in conversion he must most from being an ἄδικος to an ἅγιος in the way he lives. This because the essence of conversion is ἡγιασμένοις, **being set apart to God**. First Corinthians will address precisely what this means since it was not clearly understood at the church nor was it being widely practiced.

σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντί τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν· **together with all those calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours.** In this second expansion element to the core Adscriptio Paul reminds the Corinthians that not only is Christianity an individual matter of one's relationship with God, but ant. According to Acts 18:7, one of the first Christian gathering places was the home of Titius Justus, whose home was next door to one of the synagogues in the city.

even more importantly it is a group matter of belonging to the people of God. The Christian community stands hugely accountable to God for its behavior to the rest of the world.

It has made the claim of being God's people in this world, in contradiction to the identical claim by the Jewish synagogue. The synagogue did enjoy generally the image of being a highly ethical people who lived by the rigid ethical demands of the Torah and who showed unusual compassion for everyone inside the synagogue community. But they were a tight knit community who did not show positive attitudes toward outsiders. This generated huge negative reaction from non-Jews all across the empire.

When Christianity arose in Corinth, it made the competing claim of being God's people who professed to live by high moral standards and who claimed to care deeply about all people. The Corinthians in their actions reflected in the letter body of First Corinthians were not living up to that claim. More details will emerge in the expansion elements in the Proem below. But here at the beginning Paul's serves notice that this letter will call them to task for failure to contribute a positive Christian witness to the surrounding pagan world. Here he reminds them that they are a part of a larger community of believers and failures by the Corinthians reflect badly upon that larger community called the people of God.

Thus from these expansion elements in the Adscriptio the readers / listeners to this letter received signals of the importance of person piety in the context of corporate unity as the people of God in this world. As the letter body unfolds, just how foundational this is to the Christian life becomes increasingly clear.

10.1.1.3 *Salutatio*, 1.3

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's opening greeting to the church is **very standard** for the Pauline letters.¹¹ It closely matches two of the three preceding letters:

Gal. 1:3, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

1 Thess. 1:1, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη

2 Thess. 1:1, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς

¹¹For very helpful study on the letter structure, see:

Aune, D. E., "Opening Formulas," in *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Cambridge: Clarke 1987), 184–86.

———, (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genre*, SBL Sources for Biblical Studies 21 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), esp. J. L. White, "Ancient Greek Letters."

[ἡμῶν] καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

1 Cor. 1:3, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Paul is quickly moving to a set formula in the *Salutatio*¹² of his letters to the various churches. His combining of the standard Greek and Hebrew greetings addressed both the Jewish and non-Jewish segments in the Corinthian congregation. His linking of God and Christ as the twin sources of these spiritual blessings underscored the distinctively Christian nature of the greeting. Plus the additional reference to θεός as πατήρ simply added to the Christian orientation of God, since in the Jewish synagogue God as Father would not be commonly heard in their prayers. Outside of the *Salutatio* Paul only addresses God as Father in 8:6 and 15:24. The other three references to πατήρ in 1 Corin-

¹²The Latin *salūtātiō* comes from the verb *salūtō*, to greet and via common root is linked to *salvēō*, to be well or in good health and also to *salūs*, health.

The Vulgate especially shows a linkage of the *Salutatio* to the opening line of the *Proem* quite clearly in its translation:

1 ^{1.4} **Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου**

πάντοτε
περὶ ὑμῶν
ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ
τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν
ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

^{1.5} ὅτι... ἐπλουτίσθητε
ἐν αὐτῷ,
ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ
καὶ

^{1.6} πάσῃ γνώσει,
καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη
ἐν ὑμῖν,

^{1.7} ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι
ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι
ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·

^{1.8} ὅς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς
ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους
ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ
τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ].

2 ^{1.9} **πιστὸς ὁ θεός,**

δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε
εἰς κοινωνίαν
τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

3 *gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro et Domino Iesu Christo*
4 *gratias ago Deo meo semper pro vobis in gratia Dei quae data est vobis in Christo Iesu*

In the ancient Greek and Latin letter form, these two elements were often closely linked together as a health wish greeting to the letter recipients linked to a prayer to the patron deity of the recipients. When Paul's letter here is translated over into Latin, one can clearly notice this standardized connection.

thians are to human fathers: 4:15; 5:1; 10:1.

The prominent use of the combination of θεοῦ πατὴρ ἡμῶν, *God our Father*, in the *Salutatio* reflects both the developing *Salutatio* formula for Paul, as well as the highlighting of this relationship of believers to God as Father. Additionally the phrase κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Lord Jesus Christ, reflects strongly a Christian perspective. The titular use of κύριος linked here to Christ comes out of the LXX consistent use of κύριος in reference to God.¹³ Also Χριστός is inherently a title also with the equivalent meaning of Μεσσίας, *Messiah*. By place the personal name Ἰησοῦς in front of it, Jesus is identified as the Messiah. Plus this combination reflects a pattern in first century Christianity where, by the middle of the century, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός had functionally become [His name](#).

10.1.2 Proem, 1:4-9

4 Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
5 ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ

¹³Of the 8,198 uses of κύριος in the LXX, 4688 of them translate the Hebrew יהוה, *Yahweh*, the unpronounceable name of God, which the Hebrews substituted with יהוה, אדני, or ארמ, 'ādōn, 'ādōnāy, 'ādōnī, in order to avoid pronouncing יהוה. Also κύριος additionally was used to translate the alternate Hebrew terms in the OT, e.g., some 450 times for just 'ādōnāy.

καὶ πάση γνώσει, 6 καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν, 7 ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· 8 ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ]. 9 πιστὸς ὁ θεός, δι’ οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving segment of the Proem is a single sentence contained in vv. 4-8. Verse 9 is a formula affirmation of God’s faithfulness to do His part in correcting the problems in the church.

The block diagram above illustrates the periodic nature of most of Paul’s sentences in which a **core idea** is set forth and the expansions are simply added without limit to different parts of the core idea. In the Prayer of Thanksgiving, vv. 4-8, all of the main additions are adverbial in nature and qualify the core verb Εὐχαριστῶ, **I give thanks**. An examination of each segment will help unroll what Paul says here.

Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου, I give thanks to my God. This core expression is very typical of the opening line of the [Proema of Paul’s letters](#) to the various churches. In the three preceding letters, only First and Second Thessalonians contains a Proem: Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ (1 Thess 1:2) and Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ (2 Thess 1:3). Although very similar some distinctives in 1 Cor. 1:4 should be noted.¹⁴ In spite of all three letters containing a plurality of senders, Paul shifts to the first person singular Εὐχαριστῶ rather than the first person

¹⁴“(1) κ*, B, and some other MSS omit μου, reading to God rather than to my God. This omission is followed by RSV, NJB, NIV, Barrett, and Fee, while Conzelmann places it in brackets. But Weymouth, NRSV, and UBS Greek New Testament, 4th ed., retain it, following κ*, A, C, D, G, 33, Vulgate and Syriac and Coptic VSS. Metzger argues convincingly for its retention.¹⁷ (2) The plural ἡμῶν occurs in some MSS, but it is probably a scribal error. Many commentators, including Edwards, Meyer, Moffatt, and Allo, retain the singular pronoun. The pronoun may well underline the intimacy and genuineness of the thanksgiving, which might otherwise seem to go through the motions of the conventional letter form. Allo retains it on this basis.¹⁸” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 89.]

plural form used with the two Thessalonian letters. No signal as to why Paul does this is given. Sosthenes (1:1) fades into the background after the Superscriptio, unlike Timothy and Silas in the Thessalonian letters. Does this imply that Sosthenes’ role here was only in the composition of the letter? Perhaps so, but we can’t be certain. To be sure, he is not mentioned again in the letter. Perhaps Paul did not want to involve Sosthenes so directly in much of the stinging criticism of the Corinthian church that he knew was coming in the letter.

Here Paul speaks of θεῷ μου, **my God**, while in the Salutatio he had spoken of θεοῦ πατρός ἡμῶν, **God our Father**. One of the implications of these two references back-to-back is that of personal relationship and corporate relationship with God. No one has a monopoly on God! And yet each believer can enjoy a deep personal relationship with Him. Interestingly, the individual emphasis evidently bothered some ancient manuscript copyists who left off the possessive μου.¹⁵ But the weight of evidence favors including it. Yet, the evidence is not overwhelming and results in a pattern of modern translations both including or omitting it.

πάντοτε, always.¹⁶ This adverb of manner depicts a pattern of consistent action as defined by the verb being modified. Paul uses it [some 32 times](#) in his letters in reference to different verbal actions. His giving thanks for the Corinthians was not spasmodic or random. Rather it was consistent as Paul prayed to God. This follows the identical pattern of using πάντοτε after the verb in both First and Second Thessalonians.

περὶ ὑμῶν, for you. This prepositional phrase focuses the verb action of giving thanks to God in reference to the Corinthian believers. The phrase is similar but not as emphatic as περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, **for all of you** (1

¹⁵ κ* B

| txt κ1 A C D F G L P Ψ 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881. 2464 M latt sy co

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 518.]

¹⁶“In the report on his prayer of thanksgiving Paul employs the temporal adverb ‘always’ (*pantote*). Characteristic of Paul’s thanksgiving periods (Rom 1:10; Phil 1:4; 1 Thess 1:2; Phlm 4), ‘always’ is not usually found in the expressions of thanksgiving to the gods found in Hellenistic letters (see, however, White, Letters 102). A half a century or so after Paul wrote to the Corinthians a pair of early second century letters addressed to Tiberianus, a military veteran, one from his son Terentianus, the other from Papirius Apollinarius, an acquaintance of his son, mention, nonetheless, that ‘daily’ (*kath’ hekastēn hēmeran*) obeisance is being offered to Serapis on behalf of Tiberianus (White, Letters, 109–110). As the writers to Tiberianus would do, Paul explicitly mentions that he offered thanks on behalf of the Corinthians (*peri hymōn*; cf. Rom 1:8; Phil 1:4; 1 Thess 1:2).” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 56.]

Thess. 1:2) or περί ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, *for you, brothers* (2 Thess, 1:3). Of course, the tone and subsequent contents of these two earlier letters is significant different than this one to the Corinthians. He cares deeply for the Corinthians, but this is the first of numerous patterns throughout the letter in which Paul will take a measured distance from his readers due to their manner of living.

ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, *in regard to the grace of God which has been given to you in Christ Jesus.* The exact meaning of the preposition ἐπὶ is sometimes debated.¹⁷ But with the dative case noun τῇ χάριτι as its object, the sense is that Paul's giving thanks to God for the Corinthians rests on the basis of the grace of God given to them. This is an important distinction. Unlike the Thessalonians, Paul's thanksgiving to God for the Corinthians does not come out of the actions and commitments of these believers to God. Instead, it is derived from knowing that God's grace has been invested in them. And this grace as a powerful spiritual force in the community creates the possibility of solving the many problems the Corinthians are caught up in at the writing of this letter. Thus his thanksgiving for the Corinthians has a completely different tone than it did for the Thessalonians. He is therefore not being hypocritical or superficial in his thanksgiving directed to the Corinthians.¹⁸

The adjective modifier of the participle phrase τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ links back to τῇ χάριτι via case, gender, number agreement as seen in the double use of the article τῇ. The aorist participle form specifies conversion granting of divine grace by God through Christ Jesus.

ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει, *because in every way you were made complete in Him, in every word and in every piece of knowledge.* As illustrated in the [above block diagram](#), this adverbial causal dependent clause launches a series of amplifications successively tied to something in the preceding expression. The core dependent clause ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, *because in every way you*

¹⁷In the 19 uses of ἐπὶ inside First Corinthians, the NRSV translates it with before, on in, at, to, together, as, because (only here), toward, really, bow, conceived, and come. A preposition by definition is supposed to define a more specific relation between its object and what the phrase modifies. But because prepositions tend to assume many diverse meanings themselves, this clarifying intention sometimes gets lost in the process.

The range of possible meanings for ἐπὶ is defined by its use with three of the Greek cases: genitive, dative, and accusative. Here the dative cause is use in τῇ χάριτι. Normally ἐπὶ with the dative case defines contiguity in the sense of on, in, or above. Thus here, Paul's giving thanks rests on the foundation of God's grace given to the Corinthians.

¹⁸Of course, one must remember that no Proem was contained in Galatians. And thus no thanksgiving was expressed to God regarding these Christian communities in the province of Galatia.

were made complete in Him, stresses that in their conversion the Corinthians received complete access to the divine resources to enable them to live in holiness in their commitment to Christ. They needed no 'second blessing' or subsequent experience of some sort in order to have all they needed to serve God faithfully. Some of this phony thinking was making inroads into their community as for example discussions in chapter fourteen illustrate. In fact the defining of ἐν παντὶ, in every manner, by ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει, *in every speech and all knowledge*, may very well point to Proto-Gnostic inroads in the discussion on tongue-speaking in chapter fourteen. This parallel phrase alludes to both the wise use of speaking and the divine insight to know how to speak wisely. All this they gained access to in their conversion. Because Paul's understands all that they were given in conversion he can give thanks to God regarding them. You see this has to do with the coming of the grace of God into their lives at that conversion. Paul now must convince the Corinthians of this full working of God in Christ in their conversion. Then these false diversions into spiritually destructive paths can be avoided.

καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν, *just as the witness of Christ has been strengthened among you.* As the [block diagram above](#) illustrates, this adverbial comparative dependent clause sets a standard for just how much completeness, ἐπλουτίσθητε, was accomplished in the Corinthians conversion. The comparative conjunction καθὼς is used 19 times in First Corinthians with 18 of them setting a measured standard against which the main clause verb action can be compared.

What Paul sees as the defining limits of ἐπλουτίσθητε is τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *the witness of Christ*. Thus, the Corinthians being made complete ἐν αὐτῷ, in Him, is defined as the witness to Christ having been firmly established among them at Corinth. Although the phrase τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ can mean the witness given by Christ, the more typical Pauline meaning is the witness to Christ.¹⁹ The very clear background meaning of the verb βεβαιῶ is to establish and develop a community.²⁰ But the aorist passive verb ἐβεβαιώθη

¹⁹In Greek, this is the difference for τοῦ Χριστοῦ between the subjective genitive case and the objective genitive case, with the latter being more typical in Paul's writings.

²⁰The meaning of βεβαιῶ, I confirm, I verify, is clear.⁴⁷ But in what sense is the witness to Christ confirmed? Conzelmann rightly notes that in hellenistic texts the Greek word can relate to the founding and subsequent development of communities.⁴⁸ Presumably in this context confirming would mean stabilizing the corporate identity and structure of a community. If this is correct, ἐν ὑμῖν certainly means among you corporately, not within you individually as an experience. In Mark, however, βεβαιῶ is applied to preaching (τὸν λόγον) in the context of divine agency confirming its truth, reality,



means that τὸ μαρτύριον is established corporately ἐν ὑμῖν among the Corinthians. Thus understanding what Paul means by τὸ μαρτύριον here is key to knowing what he is saying. This is the only instance of τὸ μαρτύριον in First Corinthians but by basic definition the word is a broad label for numerous other ways of Paul referencing the Gospel in this letter. For example in 2:1 Paul speaks of the Gospel as τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, *the mystery of God*, which a few copyists took to mean τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ θεοῦ, *the witness to God*.²¹

The sense of the dependent clause becomes this. The work of the Holy Spirit in bearing witness to Christ through Paul's preaching of the Gospel materialized into a community of believers at Corinth. The existence of this community in Corinth both confirms and defines the completeness of what the Corinthians received in Christ at their conversion. The existence of the community where God was clearly at work in its establishment confirms that the Corinthians were made spiritually complete in conversion. For this reason the apostle gives thanks to God for them.

ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι, so that you lack nothing in any spiritual gift. What was the result of this witness to Christ by the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel at their conversion? The dependent adverbial result conjunction ὥστε defines the consequence of the ἐβεβαιώθη action of the witness. It introduces the infinitive phrase of result ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι.²² With the double negative of μὴ and μηδενὶ Paul underscores the absolute completion of every spiritual gift, χαρίσματι, that the church could possibly need. They received all of these at the conversion of the members of the church.

This granting of every needed spiritual gift to the church in Corinth is the result of the witness to Christ being confirmed which in turn reflects the complete

and operative effects. (Mark 16:20).⁴⁹ It also refers to confirming or ratifying promises, i.e., proving them to be reliable (Rom. 15:8). This coheres very well with what Paul would wish to note here. It includes the confirmation of Paul's work thereby.^{50b} [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 94.]

²¹**2,1** * μαρτυριον κ² B D F G L P Ψ 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1506. 1739. 1881. 2464 *M* b vg sy^h sa | txt P4^{6vid} κ^{*} A C ar r sy^p bo; Hipp BasA Ambst

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 520.]

²²This kind of syntactical grammar construction does not exist in the English language or other modern western languages, and thus has to be translated with other grammar forms in all modern western languages. Most of the time a conjunctory dependent clause can get at the idea of this kind of infinitive phrase in Greek: . de modo que ... (Spanish); so dass ... (German); de sorte que ... (French); affinché ... (Italian); de modo que ... (Portuguese); so that... (English).

work of God in Christ. The aorist verbs here refer to the conversion experience of the members of the Corinthian church. In you have any advanced knowledge of the contents of First Corinthians you know that the extended ὅτι clause in vv. 5-8 is anticipating Περί δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, *And concerning spiritual gifts*, in 12:1a which occupies chapters twelve through fourteen. In reality this ὅτι clause in vv. 5-8 gives you a good summation of Paul's stance in the longer discussion in chaps. 12-14.

ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, while looking forward to the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. As illustrated in the [above block diagram](#), this adverbial functioning participle via the accusative plural ending -ους links back to the infinitival 'subject' ὑμᾶς via the present tense infinitive μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι. The sense of this grammar construction becomes *as you are not having any deficiency while you are looking forward to*. Both infinitive and participle are appropriately in present tense form denoting ongoing conditions coming out of aorist confirming moment of conversion. What we notice here is some anticipation of chapter fifteen as well as continued affirmation of foundation principles for chapters twelve through fourteen. Proper eschatological anticipation of Christ's return plays an important role in our sense of adequacy to serve Christ from the moment of conversion until His return. It is no accident that Paul makes something of an ironic play with the three uses of ἀποκάλυψις, *revelation*, in 1:7; 14:6, 26. His interest centers in the τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ* (1:7). But the Corinthians were preoccupied with some personal τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν, *revelation*, that would gain them attention inside the church (14:6, 26). How eschatological expectation 'fleshes' itself out in positive ways is then defined in the relative clause that follows in v. 8 as the end of the long ὅτι clause in vv. 5-8.

ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ], who will also establish you to the end so that you may be blameless on the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This relative clause is linked to Χριστοῦ as the antecedent of the pronoun ὃς. In an intentional play on words, Paul asserted that at conversion τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ *ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν, the witness to Christ was confirmed among you* (v. 6). Now in the relative clause Christ pledges Himself to βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους, *confirm you to the end*. Here the inadequacy of English translation leaves the reader wondering just what it is that both has been done and is being done to the end. Remember the rich meaning of βεβαιώω as establishing and developing a community. It was in Christ to begin with that the Corinthian community of believers was established and confirmed as

the true people of God in the city. And it is Christ who continues to develop and establish this community as His people. This He will do to the day of His return.

His objective in all of this is stated plainly as ἀνεγκλήτους ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ], *as blameless on the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ*. What Christ is committed to is the developing of a believing community that can stand before Him in final judgment without any criticism leveled against it. In other words, it is another way of saying κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, *called to be holy ones* (v. 2). To be sure, with all their behavior problems the Corinthians have a lot of changes to make in order to meet this objective of Christ. Paul in no way implies that they are close to reaching this objective. But he puts strong emphasis upon the ability of Christ to turn them around if they will but submit to Him.

πιστὸς ὁ θεός, δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, Faithful is God through²³ Whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Often at this point the apostle shifts over into a Prayer of Intercession. But in First Corinthians he opts instead for a theological axiom to close out the Proem and to set the stage for the letter body. Some possibility exists that the formula nature of this axiom may very well reflect a Jewish prayer form used in synagogue life, at least later on in Judaism.²⁴ If this is accurate, then the prayer tone of πιστὸς ὁ θεός... is very appropriate here at the end of the Proem.

The core elliptical clause πιστὸς ὁ θεός, *faithful is God*, asserts the trustworthiness of God to do what He promises. It is used both here and in 10:13 to introduce another theological axiom. Paul has already used it:

1 Thess. 5:24, πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει, *faithful is the one calling you who will also do it*.

2 Thess. 3:3, Πιστὸς δέ ἐστιν ὁ κύριος, ὃς στηρίζει ὑμᾶς καὶ φυλάξει ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ, *And faithful is the Lord, who will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one*.

The modifying relative clause fundamentally as-

²³The very unusual expression of intermediate agency with θεός via the pronoun οὗ prompted some copyists to switch over to the more normal direct agency expression ὑφ' οὗ. (D* F G). But the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of δι' οὗ. The content of the relative clause may well have dictated this unusual introduction to it. Our κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, *koinonia with His Son* certainly does flow through God exclusively.

²⁴Jack T. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," JBL 81 (1962): 348–362, esp. 358f., sees in the phrase a rendering of the Jewish berakah (elsewhere εὐλογητός, 2 Cor 1:3*). Willem C. van Unnik, "Reisepläne und Amen-Sagen, Zusammenhang und Gedankenfolge in 2. Korinther 1:15–24," in Studia Paulina in honorem Johannis de Zwaan septuagenarii (Haarlem: Bohn, 1953), 215–234, esp. 221, points to the benediction, הַנְּאֻמַן הָאֵלֶּם וְעוֹשֶׂה הָאֵל, "O faithful God, who say and do." Cf. 1 Thess 5:24*." [Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).]

serts a divine calling upon believers εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, *into koinonia with His Son*. The Greek word κοινωνία is usually translated as fellowship. But the implications of this word in a religious context have virtually nothing to do with the Greek word κοινωμία. The root idea is that of a joint participation in something together with someone else. Paul's only other use of κοινωνία in 10:16 makes this point clear. The cup and the bread of the Lord's supper is indeed κοινωμία in the body and blood of Christ. Thus for believers as a community to be called into κοινωνίαν with Christ signals that our conversion experience moved us into a profound relationship with Christ in which Christ as Lord and Son of God supplies us with absolutely everything possibly needed to live in holiness and blamelessly before God.

The connection to this amazing supply of spiritual resources was set up in conversion. Our challenge now is to participate. That is, to live and work in obedience to Christ's leadership as Lord so that together a beautiful life and living can be created that will bring praise to God on judgment day. Paul's point with the main clause is simply πιστὸς ὁ θεός. God is totally trustworthy to bring about this marvelous divine / human koinonia through His Son!

What a Proem! Although the core elements are typical of Paul's letters, the expansion elements open up a beautiful insight into the heart of being a Christian. In them the apostle puts foundational spiritual truths on the table that will underpin his treatment of the long list of problems in the letter body plaguing the church at the time of the writing of the letter. In a few instances some of these elements like the long ὅτι clause in vv. 5-8 directly anticipate a few of the specific issues such as spiritual gifts, tongue speaking, the resurrection etc. But Paul here is primarily concerned to lay down the basics of being truly Christian in a spiritually healthy manner. Then on this foundation the problems will be tackled one by one beginning in 1:10.

10.1.3 Letter Body, 1:10-16:18

The much longer length of First Corinthians means that quite a large number of papyrus pages would have been needed in order to put it together in a scroll. Finding these would not have been too difficult nor too terribly expensive, since papyrus sheets were normally on sale in the larger market places of cities such as Ephesus where all this took place with First Corinthians. The compositional process necessitated many more wax tablets for the draft copies than was needed for either First or Second Thessalonians, or even for Galatians. The time of composition then was considerably longer as well. Assuming that this task belonged primarily to



Sosthenes, the reason for him being included in the Superscriptio, the process was indeed complex and probably necessitated a closer working relationship between Paul and Sosthenes in order to put this letter together. Paul's statement in 16:21, Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου, **This greeting with my own hand**, clearly signals a lot of time and effort by Sosthenes in putting this letter together so that Paul could 'sign' it at the very end.



The starting point of arranging what Paul wanted to say in the letter body was provided for him from the two primary sources of information connected to Corinth. The first section in 1:10 through 6:20 is derived from information from Chloe's household referenced in 1:11, ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν, **For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by the household of Chloe that there are divisions among you**. But in 7:1 the referencing changes to Περί δέ ὧν ἐγράψατε, **Now concerning the things that you wrote**. The prepositional phrase using Περί as the first element in a sentence is repeated several times through chapter sixteen. In the secular literature of the time such a construction was a standard way of introducing a new topic for discussion. The members of the Corinthian church who brought the letter to Paul with the questions is most likely identified in 16:17-18, 17 χαίρω δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ καὶ Φορτουνάτου καὶ Ἀχαικοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν· 18 ἀνέπαυσαν γὰρ τὸ ἐμόν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν. ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιούτους, **17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. So give recognition to such persons**. Thus a natural two part division of the contents of the letter body is built into the text itself: 1-6; 7-16.

Report from Chloe's people, 1:10-6:20.

This first section of material comes out of information about the situation in the Corinthian church brought to Ephesus ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης, **by those of Chloe** (1:11).²⁵ What is not clear from Paul's brief reference is whether those in the household of Chloe, most likely slaves, conducting business for their master Chloe, were based in Ephesus or in Corinth.²⁶ That is, were they in Ephesus on a business trip to Corinth, or had they just returned home to Ephesus from Corinth on a business trip. If the former is the case, then the slaves as Christians shared this information with Paul. But if the latter is the case, probably Chloe as a Christian shared the information that her slaves had reported to her. Thus the spiritual status of both Χλόη and her slaves is not made clear. One or the other, or perhaps **both, were Christians**.²⁷

²⁵“Χλόη, *Chloe*, a woman, probably with business connexions either in Corinth or in Ephesus or in both.” [Alexander Souter, *A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), 283.]

²⁶Merchants across the Roman empire who were moderately successful in their business operations quite often established multiple locations for their business operations. Also it is important to remember that the vast majority of business operations were ‘home based.’ That is, the ‘store’ were located in a private home, usually on the ground floor while living quarters, at least the sleeping areas, were on the second floor. The owner himself would usually travel from one of these homes to the other in order to monitor the business operation. But trained slaves managed all of these places and homes. With thievery as a big problem with slaves in the first century, the οἰκονόμος, slave manager, in charge of each home and business operation reported directly to his master. One of the counter measures usually employed against thievery was for this slave manager to share in the profits of the business operation he had responsibility for. In some of the larger business operations, the owner had an οἰκονόμος who was responsible for the entire business operation. This slave along with others trained in accounting slaves, etc. would then regularly visit all of the locations to check on things.

²⁷“That the phrase ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης means Chloe's people is rightly the most widely accepted view (NRSV, NJB, Moffatt, and Collins), although NIV returns to ‘Chloe's household.’ Theissen reminds us that members of a family would normally be identified through the name of the father (not the mother), even if he was deceased.⁷² An exception could be made if Chloe was well known at Corinth, but it remains more likely that Chloe's people are business associates, business agents, or slaves acting on her behalf. Perhaps they represented the business interests of this wealthy Asian woman, traveling between Ephesus and Corinth for her.⁷³ Whether or not Chloe had church connections, probably her agents belonged to the church at Ephesus and had regular links with the church at Corinth. On their last return to Ephesus, as Fee vividly expresses it, they gave Paul an ‘earful’ about the state of the church at Corinth. ‘The mention of Chloe's people gives credence to the report received by Paul. The report was not hearsay.’⁷⁴” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 121.]



Interestingly, Χλόη is a woman's name with an fascinating background. The name has a background in Greek mythology.²⁸ But, of course, this doesn't say any-

²⁸“CHLOE (Χλόη), the blooming, a surname of Demeter the protectress of the green fields, who had a sanctuary at Athens conjointly with Ge Curotrophos. (Paus. i. 22. § 3; Eustath. ad Hom. p. 772.) This surname is probably alluded to when Sophocles (Oed. Col. 1600) calls her Δημήτηρ εὔχλοος. (Comp. Aristoph. Lysist. 815.) Respecting the festival Chloeia, see Dict. of Ant. s.v.” [Leonhard Schmitz, “CHLOE (Χλόη),” ed. William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1870). 695. 1

thing necessarily about the spiritual orientation of this person.

ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, for it was reported to me about you, my brothers. The verb used here ἐδηλώθη implies far more than hearsay or biased criticism. Instead, it carries with it some implication of proof or evidence offered as a part of the oral report. Thus Paul is responding to reliable information regarding the situation in Corinth.

1) Disunity, 1:10-17.

1.10 δὲ
3 Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς,
ἀδελφοί,
διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος
τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες
καὶ
μὴ ᾗ ἓν ὑμῖν σχίσματα,
δὲ
ἦτε κατηρτισμένοι
ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῷ
καὶ
ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ.

1.11 γάρ
4 ἐδηλώθη μοι
περὶ ὑμῶν,
ἀδελφοί μου,
ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης
ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν.

1.12 δὲ
5 λέγω τοῦτο
ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει·
ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου,
δὲ
ἐγὼ Ἀπολλῶ,
δὲ
ἐγὼ Κηφᾶ,
δὲ
ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ.

1.13 μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός;
6 μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη
ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν,
ἢ
εἰς τὸ ὄνομα
7 Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε;
8 εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ]
9 ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα
εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον,
1.15 ἵνα μὴ τις εἴπη
| εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα
ὅτι...ἐβαπτίσθητε.

1.16 δὲ
10 ἐβάπτισα καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον,
 λοιπὸν
11 οὐκ οἶδα
 εἶ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα.

1.17 γὰρ
12 οὐ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς
 βαπτίζειν
 ἀλλ'
 εὐαγγελίζεσθαι,
 οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου,
 ἵνα μὴ κενωθῆ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα **τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες** καὶ **μὴ ᾗ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα**, ἦτε δὲ **κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ**. Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

Here Paul lays down the foundational principle of Christian unity upon which he explanation and admonitions to the Corinthians in vv. 13-17 rest. In something of a 'sandwich' pattern the apostle deals with the positive aspects in

10 Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ᾗ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ. 11 ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν. 12 λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. 13 μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; 14 εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ] ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον, 15 ἵνα μὴ τις εὔπη ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ἐβαπτίσθητε. 16 ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἶ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα. 17 οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλ' εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῆ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

10 Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. 12 What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." 13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

The first item in this report centered on ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν, that quarrels exist among you. Verse twelve then goes on to define what Paul meant by ἔριδες: λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ, What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."

What is contained in vv. 11-12 flows out of the topic sentence introducing this first section in v. 10: Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου

admonitions one and three with the negative admonition as number two. In this ABA' sequence the emphasis falls upon point B which speaks directly to the problem at Corinth.

What was the nature of this problem at Corinth? The depiction of principle in v. 10 begins the description of the problem. The political orientation of the terms that Paul uses here, σχίσματα and ἔριδες, suggests the problem at Corinth was a power and control issue rather than an ideological issue.²⁹ His explanation of these terms in v. 12 strongly points in this direction also. Clearly in modern church life this tends to be the most common divisive issue in churches.

Paul's answer to this problem is interesting. His foundational principle is that the church should be τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, all saying the same thing, and ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ, but that you be being knit together in the same mind and in the same understanding. His instructions for achieving this goal in vv. 13-17 is to diminish the importance of his role as the founder of the church originally. The quest for control centered in claiming to represent a prominent Christian leader such as himself, Peter, or Apollos. Not being able to speak for either of these others, he uses himself to underscore the point that no Christian leader plays any dominating role that should control the

²⁹Paul alludes in v. 10b to 'a power struggle, not a theological controversy.'³⁹ A widespread current view arising from sociopolitical research suggests that Paul uses terminology drawn from the political vocabulary of the Roman or Graeco-Roman polis. In the Synoptic tradition the conjunction of σχίσματα, rents, tears or splits, with κατηρτισμένοι, being mended, being repaired, or being knitted together again, may recall the passage about James and John mending their nets (Mark 1:19; par. Matt 4:21). In 2 Cor 13:11 Paul instructs the local church to put things back in order (καταρτίξεσθε), 'keeping the peace' (εἰρηνεῦετε, being in harmony). Welborn notes that 'A σχίσμα is a rift, a tear, as in a garment: it is used metaphorically of a cleft in political consciousness.'⁴⁰ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 115.]

life of the church. None of these three leaders have encouraged such thinking. All of them are centered around the proclamation of the Gospel, as is his case (v. 17), so that the church is centered on Christ alone. For the church to correct this problem it must get into a process of being knit back together around Christ, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι (v. 10).

2) Wisdom, 1:18-2:5.

18 Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν. 19 γέγραπται γάρ· ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω. 20 ποῦ σοφός; ποῦ γραμματεὺς; ποῦ συζητητῆς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου; οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου; 21 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν θεόν, εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας. 22 ἐπειδὴ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν καὶ Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν, 23 ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον, Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον, ἔθνεσιν δὲ μωρίαν, 24 αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς, Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν, Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν· 25 ὅτι τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σοφώτερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστίν καὶ τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ θεοῦ ἰσχυρότερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

26 Βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς. 27 ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τὰ ἰσχυρά. 28 καὶ τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ, 29 ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 30 ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῶ Ἰησοῦ, ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἁγιασμός καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις, 31 ἵνα καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω.

2.1 Κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον. 3 κἀγὼ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῶ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν

πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις] ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾗ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29 so that no one

1.18 γὰρ
 τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις
 13 Ὁ λόγος . . . μωρία ἐστίν,
 ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ
 δὲ
 τοῖς σωζομένοις ἡμῖν
 14 (Ὁ λόγος) δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν.
 1.19 γὰρ
 γέγραπται
 ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν
 καὶ
 τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω.
 1.20 ποῦ σοφός;
 ποῦ γραμματεὺς;
 ποῦ συζητητῆς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου;
 οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου;
 1.21 γὰρ
 ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ
 ἐπειδὴ...οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν θεόν,
 εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός
 διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος
 σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας·

1.22 ἐπειδὴ καὶ Τουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν
καὶ Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν,

1.23 δὲ

21 **ἡμεῖς κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον,**
Τουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον,
δὲ
ἔθνεσιν μωρίαν,
1.24 δὲ
αὐτοῖς τοῖς κλητοῖς,
Τουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν,
Χριστὸν
θεοῦ δύναμιν
καὶ
θεοῦ σοφίαν·
1.25 ὅτι τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σοφώτερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶν
καὶ
τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ θεοῦ ἰσχυρότερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

1.26 γὰρ

22 **Βλέπετε τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν,**
ἀδελφοί,
ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ
κατὰ σάρκα,
οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί,
οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς·
1.27 ἀλλὰ

23 **τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός,**
ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς,
καὶ

24 **τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός,**
ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τὰ ἰσχυρά,
1.28 καὶ

25 **τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου**
καὶ
τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός,
τὰ μὴ ὄντα,
ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ,
1.29 ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ
ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

1.30 δὲ

26 **ὑμεῖς ἐστε** _
ἐξ αὐτοῦ
ἐν| Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
| | ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν
| | ἀπὸ θεοῦ,
| | τε
| **δικαιοσύνη**
| | καὶ
| **ἁγιασμός**
| | καὶ
| **ἀπολύτρωσις,**
1.31 ἵνα -----
καθὼς γέγραπται·
ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω.

might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

31 in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."



2.1 Κἀγὼ
 ἔλθων πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
 ἀδελφοί,
 27 ἤλθον
 οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας
 καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ.

2.2 γὰρ
 28 οὐ ἔκρινά
 τι εἰδέναι
 ἐν ὑμῖν
 εἰ μὴ Τησοῦν Χριστὸν
 καὶ
 τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον.

2.3 κἀγὼ
 ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ
 καὶ
 ἐν φόβῳ
 καὶ
 ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ
 29 ἐγενόμην
 πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
 καὶ
 30 ὁ λόγος μου
 καὶ
 τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ (ἦσαν)
 ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις]
 ἀλλ'
 31 (ἦσαν)
 ἐν ἀποδείξει
 | πνεύματος
 | καὶ
 | δυνάμεως,
 2.5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾗ
 ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων
 ἀλλ'
 ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

second problem in 1:18-2:5.

What does ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, the cross of Christ, mean when void of σοφία λόγου, eloquent wisdom? His discussion of the lack of understanding by the Corinthians of the answer to this question is what he presents in 1:18-2:5. Strongly implied in the power quest of the first problem by the Corinthians is linkage to a leader who best presented the Gospel.

The foundational principle here comes in v. 18: Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. In a city steeped in Greek rhetoric, the orientation would be focused on how sensible and persuasive the presentation of the Gospel would be. But the cross of Christ defies all logical and sensible thinking of the day! And yet ironically to those having experienced it in their personal life the cross of Christ is nothing less than the very power of Almighty God brought to bear on their lives.

In vv. 19-2:5, Paul amplifies this point in several ways. First in vv. 19-21, with an appeal to Isa. 29:14 and Psa. 33:10, Paul asserts the utter superiority of God's wisdom to that of humans. God in His wisdom decided that man in his wisdom could never know God.

2.1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

The second problem defined in 1:18-2:5 grows out of the first problem and in many ways the disunity is the concretizing of the second problem.³⁰ Paul's mentioning of his calling in v. 17 to εὐαγγελίξασθαι, proclaim the Gospel, not only closes out his treatment of the first problem but opens the door to his discussion of the

For humanity to come to know God it must completely abandon its supposed wisdom in order to accept the foolishness of the cross.

Then the evidence (vv. 22-25) of the superiority of God's wisdom is seen in the Jewish demand for signs (proofs) and the Greek quest for humanly attained wisdom. But the apostolic preaching of the Gospel stands as an obstacle to both Jews and Greeks, since it will not bow to either of their demands. But this message presents Christ as the utterly exclusive way to God. The bottom line is that God's wisdom is so far superior to that of humans that they cannot be compared.

Third, in vv. 26-31, Paul reminds the Corinthians of who they were prior to Christ. His point of reference is the low social status of the majority of the Corinthian Christians. But just like in the selection of the Twelve, God chose these 'low lifes' in Corinthian society to be-

³⁰In this first section especially, the treating of distinct problems is interlaced and often without clearly defined distinctions. Thus any 'outlining' of them is only minimally accurate, and can be misleading if taken to imply distinct differences among the problems.

come His people in the city. Why? The radical moral and religious transformation of their lives by the power of His Gospel would prove the superiority of His way of doing things. These new lives would be evidence of the presence of God to the outside world. Therefore, the only legitimate boasting possible is in Christ, the source of their transformation (v. 31).

Fourth, in 2:1-5 Paul turns to his own example of the preaching of Christ in the establishing of the church in Corinth originally; cf. [Acts 18:1-18](#) for details. In the background of this depiction stands the Greek Sophist stress on rhetoric as the heart of any message. The modern version of this ancient Sophist principle is that of Marshall McLuhan, "[the medium is the message.](#)" That is, it is not so much what one says as it is how he says it which is the basic principle. Paul utterly rejects the legitimacy of such thinking in regard to presenting the Gospel of Christ. How Paul presented the Gospel at Corinth, as described by Luke in Acts 18:1-18, was not out of ignorance or intentional stupidity. Paul presented some very persuasive arguments for Christ from the OT scriptures while being allowed to speak in the synagogue there. In fact they were too persuasive and led to his being banned from speaking in the synagogue.

But what Paul means here in 2:1-5 is clear. He did not use or look to *ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας*, *lofty words or wisdom* to convince the Corinthians to trust Christ with their life. This *τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ*, *foolishness of God*, in the Gospel is nothing less than *τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ*, *the mystery of God*. How to present this understandably? Only by presenting Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον, *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. Lofty words and wisdom (v. 1) are not going to persuade either Jew or Greek to commit themselves to Christ. Only the Spirit of God can do that (v. 4). Consequently those who then come to Christ will have a faith in Christ based upon God's powerful working in their lives, and not on human wisdom (v. 5).

3) *True vs. false wisdom*, 2:6-3:4.

6 Σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, σοφίαν δὲ οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων· 7 ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην, ἣν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν, 8 ἣν οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἔγνωκεν· εἰ γὰρ ἔγνωσαν, οὐκ ἂν τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης ἐσταύρωσαν. 9 ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται· ἃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσεν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, ἃ ἠτοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν. 10 ἡμῖν δὲ ἀπεκάλυψεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος· τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐραυνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ. 11 τίς γὰρ οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ; οὕτως καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ. 12 ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ τὸ

πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου ἐλάβομεν ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν· 13 ἃ καὶ λαλοῦμεν οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος, πνευματικοῖς συγκρίνοντας. 14 ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ· μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ δύναται γνῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται. 15 ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει [τὰ] πάντα, αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται. 16 τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν; ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν.

3.1 Κἀγὼ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ' ὡς σαρκίνους, ὡς νηπίους ἐν Χριστῷ. 2 γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρῶμα· οὐπω γὰρ ἐδύνασθε. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἔτι νῦν δύνασθε, 3 ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε. ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε; 4 ὅταν γὰρ λέγη τις· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἕτερος δὲ· ἐγὼ Ἀπολλῶ, οὐκ ἀνθρωποὶ ἐστε;

6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. 7 But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"— 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. 13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. 14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

3.1 And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? 4 For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

Paul's deemphasis upon wisdom might lead to the

conclusion that he placed no value on wisdom of any kind. But such would not be correct. In the opening declaration in vv. 6-7 the apostle speaks of true wisdom: 6 Σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, σοφίαν δὲ οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων· 7 ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην, ἣν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν, 6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. 7 But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

This opening declaration puts in summary expression Paul's understanding of the one legitimate wisdom that Christians should focus on. The Corinthians, sadly, were woefully deficit of this kind of wisdom and had confused the worldly Greek definition of wisdom with this genuine kind.

What then is authentic wisdom in Paul's depiction here?

It is Σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, wisdom we are speaking among the mature. Here is our first clue that this wisdom is spiritual in nature. Superficial Christians won't understand how God is working, which is what this wisdom seeks to explain. Then it is σοφίαν δὲ οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων, no wisdom coming from either this age nor from the rulers of this age who are doomed. Paul's wisdom has no human origin.³¹ Instead, this wisdom

2.6 δὲ
Σοφίαν λαλοῦμεν
ἐν τοῖς τελείοις,
δὲ
σοφίαν οὐ (λαλοῦμεν)
τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου
οὐδὲ
τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου
τῶν καταργουμένων·
2.7 ἀλλὰ
λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν
ἐν μυστηρίῳ |
τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην,
ἣν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς
| πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων
| εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν,
2.8 ἣν οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου
ἔγνωκεν·
γὰρ
εἰ ἔγνωσαν,
οὐκ ἂν τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης ἐσταύρωσαν.
2.9 ἀλλὰ
(ἐστὶν)
καθὼς γέγραπται·
ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν
καὶ
οὐκ ἤκουσεν
καὶ
ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη,
ὁ ἠτοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν
αὐτόν.
2.10 δὲ
ἡμῖν ἀπεκάλυψεν ὁ θεὸς
διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος·
γὰρ
τὸ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐραυνᾷ,
καὶ
----- τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ.
2.11 γὰρ
τίς οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ;
οὕτως
καὶ
τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν
εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ.
2.12 δὲ
ἡμεῖς οὐ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου ἐλάβομεν
ἀλλὰ
----- τὸ πνεῦμα
τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ,
ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν·
2.13 **ἃ καὶ λαλοῦμεν οὐκ (ἐστὶν)**
ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας
ἐν διδακτοῖς...λόγοις

³¹In the background here stands the Greek and Roman tradition especially that their political leaders should be wise men who put their extraordinary wisdom in writing

is ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν
 45 μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην, **but**
we speak God’s wisdom in mystery
which stands covered. This wisdom
 comes from God and has a qual-
 ity of mystery about it in part be-
 46 cause it is covered from sight by
 people. But it is not new since ἦν
 47 προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων
 εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν, **which God decreed**
before the ages for our glory. It has
 been around since before creation
 but in God’s plan it would bring His
 glorious presence to us, His peo-
 49 ple. This is the spiritual wisdom of
 God embedded in the Gospel mes-
 50 sage of the cross. Paul’s teaching
 ministry in the churches (Σοφίαν
 51 δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις) cen-
 ters on uncovering this wisdom to
 those spiritually mature enough
 to grasp it and properly apply it to
 52 their lives.

From this stems the clear impli-
 cation that the Corinthians had not
 53 grasped the meaning of wisdom.
 They were still culturally blinded
 by their Greek definition and were
 missing fully the authentic wisdom
 of God that is contained in the
 Gospel.

This wisdom in v. 8 is complete-
 55 ly hidden from these supposed
 wise rulers: ἦν οὐδεις τῶν ἀρχόντων
 56 τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἔγνωκεν, **which**
no one of the rulers of this age un-
57 derstood. If they had understood
 it, they would not have crucified
 58 Christ, Paul goes on to say.

The content of this divine
 wisdom is available only to God’s
 59 people through the presence of
 the Spirit of God (vv. 9-13). The
 central role of the Holy Spirit in dis-
 60 closing this wisdom to believers is
 Paul’s point here. Paul ends with
 the claim in v. 13: ἃ καὶ λαλοῦμεν
 οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης
 σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ’ ἐν διδακτοῖς
 πνεύματος, πνευματικῶς πνευματικῶς
 συγκρίνοντες, **which also we are**
61 speaking not in the teaching words of

ἀλλ’
 - - - - - (ἐστὶν)
 ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος,
 πνευματικῶς πνευματικῶς συγκρίνοντες.

2.14 δὲ
 ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ·
 γὰρ
 μωρία αὐτῷ ἐστὶν
 καὶ
 οὐ δύναται γινῶναι,
 ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται.

2.15 δὲ
 ὁ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει [τὰ] πάντα,
 δὲ
 ὑπ’ οὐδενὸς
 αὐτὸς... ἀνακρίνεται.

2.16 γὰρ
 τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου,
 ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν;
 δὲ
 ἡμεῖς νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν.

3.1 Κἀγώ,
 ἀδελφοί,
 οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν
 ὡς πνευματικοῖς
 ἀλλ’
 ὡς σαρκίνοις,
 ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ.

3.2 γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα,
 οὐ (ἐπότισα) βρῶμα·
 γὰρ
 οὐπω ἐδύνασθε.
 ἀλλ’
 οὐδὲ ἔτι νῦν δύνασθε,

3.3 γὰρ
 ἔτι σαρκικοί ἐστε.

γὰρ
 ὅπου ἐν ὑμῖν ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις,
 οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε
 καὶ
 κατὰ ἄνθρωπον
 περιπατεῖτε;

3.4 γὰρ
 ὅταν λέγη τις·
 | ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου,
 | δέ
 ---- ---- ἕτερος
 | ἐγὼ Ἀπολλῶ,
 οὐκ ἄνθρωποί ἐστε;

for the people to read and study. Modern versions of this tradition
 are seen in Adolf Hitler’s [Mein Kampf](#) and [Mao Zedong](#)’s poetry
 or sayings.

human wisdom but in the instruction from the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.³²

In vv. 14-16, Paul picks up on πνευματικοῖς in v. 13 in order to deal with the negative side of those who are ψυχικός rather than πνευματικοῖς. Unfortunately now he is addressing directly the problem of the Corinthians.

Who is a ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος, unspiritual person?

In this subunit Paul contrasts such a person with a πνευματικός, spiritual person. Note the comparisons:

a) οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ, **does not receive the things of God's Spirit**. A ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος is not open to what the Spirit of God would teach him.

b) μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι, **for to him they are foolishness and he is unable to know them**. He can't receive them because they come across as foolishness. He is still enslaved to Greek thinking, ἔθνεσιν δὲ μωρίαν, **to the gentiles foolishness** (1:23). This enslavement makes it impossible for him to grasp the things being taught by the Spirit of God. With this targeting Corinthians church members, it has strong tones of accusation toward many of them.

c) ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται, **because they are grasped spiritually**. The reason for the ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος being unable to grasp what the Spirit is teaching is that they have to be understood through the working of the Spirit in the one being taught (= πνευματικῶς). Thus the work of the Spirit is on both sides of the comprehending dynamic. He guides the teacher teaching them and He open up the mind of the listener to grasp them. And it is His teachings, not the teachers, that the teacher is teaching.

d) ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει [τὰ] πάντα, αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται, **But the spiritual one grasps all things and is himself grasped by no one**. The verb ἀνακρίνω is not far from the English expression to **size up** in the sense of comprehending something or someone. What Paul asserts here is relatively easy to grasp once a proper understanding of ἀνακρίνω is obtained. The one being guided by the Spirit is fully able to 'seize up' everything in life from God's point of view. But that means that most all people won't be able to 'size him up' correctly because they can't see God's perspective on things, as he does.

e) Who has been this believer's human teacher supplying him with such insight? τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν; ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν. **For who has known the mind of the Lord who will teach him? Now we possess the mind of Christ**. The human teacher

³²One important point made by Paul here is how a Christian teacher should function. Through the leadership of the Spirit in his/her life, the teacher should "pull together understandably" (= συγκρίνοντες) spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit (πνευματικοῖς). The idea of 'spiritual' has unfortunately lost the exclusive meaning of πνευματικοῖς as Spirit captured people.

must teach the things of the Spirit. But where do these things originate. Paul's contention is that they originate in νοῦν Χριστοῦ, **the mind of Christ**. This is his interpretation of Isa. 40:13 LXX quote of νοῦν κυρίου, **mind of the Lord**. Paul is the one with access into Christ's thinking, rather than some of the teachers at Corinth with some of their strange ideas.

At this point, the apostle deals directly with the lack of spiritual understanding by the Corinthians in 3:1-4. First he asserts his inability to give them solid teaching as mature believers: Κἀγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ' ὡς σαρκίνους, ὡς νηπίους ἐν Χριστῷ. **And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ**. Paul states that he is not able to communicate with the Corinthians as πνευματικοῖς people. Instead, he must treat them as ὡς σαρκίνους, ὡς νηπίους ἐν Χριστῷ, **as carnal, as infants in Christ**. He reflects here a third option between πνευματικοῖς, **spiritual**, and τελείοις, **mature**, (2:6) on the one side and on the other extreme ψυχικός, **unspiritual** to whom the Gospel is μωρία, **foolishness**.³³ Between these two stands a σαρκίνους, **fleshly**, person who also is a νηπίους ἐν Χριστῷ, **infant in Christ**. Obviously the individual is a believer, but he stands on the opposite end of the spectrum from being either πνευματικοῖς, **the spiritual**, or τοῖς τελείοις, **the mature**.

Now what is a σαρκίνους, **carnal**, believer who is a νηπίους ἐν Χριστῷ, **infant in Christ**? Many, if not most, of the Corinthians fall into this category, which limits what Paul can teach them. Early on at the beginning of their Christian life in the founding of the church, Paul explains his necessity of γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρῶμα, **I fed you milk not solid food**. The figurative picture is clear, but what does it mean in application here to the teaching of the Gospel? Solid food can't be fed to an infant is the point of the picture. In Christian teaching what is the difference between γάλα, **milk**, and βρῶμα, **solid food**? Is it the difference between very simple and complex spiritual truths?

The context seems to imply in this statement the teaching of new believers the simple basics of being a Christian soon after conversion. But it is more than just the nature of the information about Christianity. Not surprisingly they would still be inclined to think in worldly ways since they have just come out of that lifestyle into Christianity. Thus ὡς σαρκίνους, **as fleshly**, (3:1) and σαρκικοί ἐστε, **you are fleshly**, (3:3) are easily understandable in such a setting. Their value system has not yet changed over to being Christian. But their

³³2:15 clearly labels the opposite of the ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος (2:14) as ὁ πνευματικὸς and describes his spiritual capabilities in terms of τοῖς τελείοις, the mature, in 2:6.

Christian commitment fundamentally means a radically new lifestyle based upon an utterly different way of thinking and a completely new set of values. Although it may take time, this new way of thinking must become foundational to their life.

The divisiveness at Corinth signals to Paul that the Corinthians have not made this transition from a worldly way of thinking to a Christian way of thinking. And thus in sharp critical tones he declares ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε, **for you are still fleshly**. It has been over four years since the church was founded under his preaching ministry. This transition to Christian thinking and understanding is long overdue!³⁴

What signals this σαρκικοί condition after four years? vv. 3b-4 answers this question: ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζήλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε; 4 ὅταν γὰρ λέγῃ τις· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἕτερος δέ· ἐγὼ Ἀπολλῶ, οὐκ ἄνθρωποι 62 ἐστε; For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? 4 For when one says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, “I belong to Apollos,” 64 are you not merely human? The horrible power quest going on at Corinth brought down Paul’s anger upon them. 65

4) The true role of leaders, 3:5-4:21. In repeating the divisiveness of the Corinthians again (3:5) from 1:10-17, Paul uses it for another objective in seeking to lead the Corinthians from worldly wisdom to spiritual wisdom. The point now is the function of religious leaders within the framework of spiritual wisdom in contrast to worldly wisdom. The Corinthians were still thinking in worldly ways with their divisiveness over Paul, Peter, and Apollos. But in God’s way of thinking rather than man’s way, these leaders functioned utterly differently. 72

Verses six and seven lay down the basic principle of leadership from within divine wisdom: 6 ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα, Ἀπολλῶς ἐπότισεν, ἀλλ’ ὁ θεὸς ἤρξανεν· 7 ὥστε οὔτε ὁ φυτεύων ἐστίν τι οὔτε ὁ ποτίζων ἀλλ’ ὁ αὐξάνων θεός. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 76

5 Τί οὖν ἐστὶν Ἀπολλῶς; τί δέ ἐστὶν Παῦλος; διάκονοι δι’ ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε, καὶ ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν. 6 ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα, Ἀπολλῶς ἐπότισεν, ἀλλ’ ὁ θεὸς ἤρξανεν· 7 ὥστε οὔτε ὁ φυτεύων ἐστίν τι οὔτε ὁ ποτίζων ἀλλ’ ὁ αὐξάνων θεός. 8 ὁ φυτεύων δὲ καὶ ὁ ποτίζων ἐν εἰσιν, ἕκαστος δὲ τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν λήμψεται κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον· 9 θεοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν συνεργοί, θεοῦ γεώργιον, θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴ ἐστε.

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. 9 For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.

3.5 οὖν
τί ἐστὶν Ἀπολλῶς;
 δέ
τί ἐστὶν Παῦλος;
 (εἰσὶν) **διάκονοι**
 δι’ ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε,
 καὶ
ἐκάστῳ (διακονος ἐστίν)
 ὡς ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν.
 3.6 ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα,
Ἀπολλῶς ἐπότισεν,
 ἀλλ’
ὁ θεὸς ἤρξανεν·
 3.7 ὥστε
 οὔτε
ὁ φυτεύων ἐστίν τι
 οὔτε
ὁ ποτίζων (ἐστίν τι)
 ἀλλ’
ὁ αὐξάνων θεός (ἐστίν τι).
 3.8 δὲ
ὁ φυτεύων καὶ ὁ ποτίζων ἐν εἰσιν,
 δὲ
ἕκαστος τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν λήμψεται
 κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον
 3.9 γάρ
θεοῦ ἐσμεν συνεργοί,
θεοῦ (ἐσμεν) γεώργιον,
θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴ ἐστε.

Farming metaphor, 3:5-9.

³⁴Most all of us have been in churches that have been around for decades and still have made little transition from worldly to Christian ways of thinking. I could not tell you how often professing believers have expressed to me their pride in still being focused on the basics years after coming to Christ. They are prideful about being an νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, **infant in Christ**. What a tragic situation. Even worse is a church full of decades old spiritual babies!

He turns to a simple [farming metaphor](#) in order to express the principle. He and Apollos are nothing more than estate slaves who work the fields for the master. Each has an assigned role: Paul to plant and Apollos to water what has been planted. But it is God alone who produces growth from what has been planted and watered. Both laborers -- Paul and Apollos -- are noth-

ing but slaves doing their job. They have no status on the farm; they're just working the fields.

Verses 7-9 amplify the principle set forth in vv. 5-6 still using the farming metaphor. The only one on the farm who matters is the one who produces the growth, and that is God: ὥστε οὔτε ὁ φυτεύων ἐστίν τι οὔτε ὁ ποτίζων ἀλλ' ὁ αὐξάνων θεός, **so that neither the one planting nor the one watering is anything; instead the one growing it who is God.** Thus for the Corinthians to elevate their 'favorite' preacher to preeminence is very wrong. And especially when such action is designed to give the group leverage over the rest of the congregation.

What one suspects that is behind this, is competition among house church groups for dominance over the larger Christian community in Corinth. Perhaps with the goal of having their spiritual leader acknowledged as the senior leader over the other house church leaders in the city.

In verse 8 the divine acknowledgement of each of the slaves working in the field is set forth: ὁ φυτεύων δὲ καὶ ὁ ποτίζων ἓν εἰσιν, ἕκαστος δὲ τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν λήμψεται κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον; **The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each.** Both slaves are contributing to the common goal of harvest day. Thus both will have their labor acknowledged appropriately on that day. God is a just farmer.

The application of the metaphor explicitly to the Corinthians is made in verse 9: θεοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν συνεργοί, θεοῦ γεώργιον, θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴ ἐστε. **For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.** The Corinthians are symbolized by the field in the metaphor and he and Apollos are merely the laborers working together in this field. The Corinthians must remember that the field belongs to God, not to either them or their particular 'worker.'

What a powerful metaphor to use in making this powerful spiritual point. Now this is true wisdom rather than man-made wisdom which the Corinthians had been using. They desperately needed to shift over to God's way of thinking here.

Building metaphor, 3:10-17.³⁵

10 Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα, ἄλλος δὲ ἐποικοδομεῖ. ἕκαστος δὲ βλέπῃ πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ. 11 θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὅς ἐστιν

³⁵“This pericope could be entitled “God’s construction” (3:9). It is readily divided into two parts, vv. 10–15, which describe the construction, and vv. 16–17, which identify the construction as God’s temple. To a large extent Paul’s exposition of the construction metaphor parallels his exploitation of the agricultural metaphor (vv. 5–9b).” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 148.]

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. 12 εἰ δὲ τις ἐποικοδομεῖ ἐπὶ τὸν θεμέλιον χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, λίθους τιμίους, ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην, 13 ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον φανερόν γενήσεται, ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει, ὅτι ἐν πυρὶ ἀποκαλύπτεται· καὶ ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ [αὐτὸ] δοκιμάσει. 14 εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον μενεῖ ὁ ἐποικοδόμησεν, μισθὸν λήμψεται· 15 εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον κατακαήσεται, ζημιωθήσεται, αὐτὸς δὲ σωθήσεται, οὕτως δὲ ὡς διὰ πυρός. 16 Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν; 17 εἴ τις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει, φθερεῖ τοῦτον ὁ θεός· ὁ γὰρ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιός ἐστιν, οἵτινες ἐστε ὑμεῖς.

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — 13 the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. 14 If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.

But if the agricultural metaphor didn't get the point across adequately to these Corinthian urbanites, in vv. 10-15, Paul moves to the [building construction](#) metaphor he implied in the final reference in v. 9: θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴ ἐστε, **you are God's building.**³⁶ This metaphor would communicate especially to those living either in *insulae*, [apartment buildings](#), or a *domus*, a private home, in the city.³⁷ Although only a small part of the large cities in comparison to the *insulae*, the *domūs* were usually very elaborate and skillfully designed and built. And depending upon the wealth of the owner, they

³⁶This pattern of ‘hooking’ units together with connecting reference at the end of one unit and the beginning of the next unit is very scribal Jewish in ancient usage.

³⁷“Ancient Rome is known to have had elaborated, massive and beautiful houses and buildings. These houses and buildings belonged to those in higher social status. The average house of a commoner or Plebe did not contain many luxuries. There were members of the upper class that tended to flash their wealth into their design and architecture of their house. Many Romans perceived this morally wrong and considered to be *luxuria* or vice to makes people squander their money (wealth). They showed more regard towards convenience than expense. Domus, or single-family residences, were rare, with most having a layout of the closed unit, consisting of one or two rooms. Between 312 to 315 A.D. Rome had from 1781 *domus* and 44,850 of *insulae*.^[42]” [“Ancient Roman architecture,” [wikipedia.org](#)]



could be enormous in size. For example, either the atrium or the piscina (see diagram on the right) could hold a thousand or more people comfortably.

One important point in the concluding reference in v. 9 that is carried through in the building metaphor also is simply: θεοῦ γεώργιον, θεοῦ οἰκοδομή, God's farm; God's building. Ownership of this building is God, not the Corinthians or any leaders in the church. This was a very important point in the [house church](#) nature of the congregation at Corinth. Sometimes the [patron](#) who opened up his home for a group to meet in took control over the group as though it belonged to him since it met in his house. For the members on the very low income side of society especially, who attended the meetings of the group, resisting such a 'take over' of the group would be very difficult.

The structuring of the building metaphor and its application moves a new direction from the previous farming metaphor. Paul focuses on himself as an example of a builder: Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα, ἄλλος δὲ ἐποικοδομεῖ. [By God's grace given to me as a wise builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.](#)³⁸ To be sure, Apollo

³⁸Paul's word for builder here is ἀρχιτέκτων, from which the English word architect comes. It is part of a word group connected to construction that come off a common root:

τέκτων G5454 (tektōn), builder; ἀρχιτέκτων G802 (architektōn), masterbuilder; τεχνίτης G5493 (technitēs), craftsman; τέχνη G5492 (technē), art, skill, trade.

CL In secular Gk. tektōn means a craftsman or builder in wood, stone or metal; architektōn means a head builder, masterbuilder, contractor, or director of works; technitēs means a craftsman, artisan or designer; and technē means an art, craft, trade, or professional skill.

OT In the LXX all these words appear in their classical

3.10 Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ
τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι
ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων
77 θεμέλιον ἔθηκα,
δὲ
78 ἄλλος ἐποικοδομεῖ.
δὲ
79 ἕκαστος βλεπέτω
πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ.
3.11 γὰρ
80 θεμέλιον ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι
| παρὰ τὸν κείμενον,
ὅς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.
3.12 δέ
εἰ τις ἐποικοδομεῖ
| ἐπὶ τὸν θεμέλιον
| χρυσόν,
| ἄργυρον,
| λίθους τιμίους,
| ξύλα,
| χόρτον,
| καλάμην,
81 3.13 ἕκαστου τὸ ἔργον φανερὸν γενήσεται,
γὰρ
82 ἢ ἡμέρα δηλώσει,
ἐν πυρὶ
ὅτι...ἀποκαλύπτεται·
καὶ
ἐκαστου τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστὶν
τὸ πῦρ [αὐτὸ] δοκιμάσει.
3.14 εἰ τις τὸ ἔργον μενεῖ
ὁ ἐποικοδόμησεν,
83 μισθὸν λήμψεται·
3.15 εἰ τις τὸ ἔργον κατακαήσεται,
84 ζημιωθήσεται,
δὲ
85 αὐτὸς σωθήσεται,
δὲ
86 οὕτως (ἔσται)
ὡς διὰ πυρός.
3.16 Οὐκ οἴδατε
ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε
καὶ
τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ
ἐν ὑμῖν;
3.17 εἰ τις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει,
88 φθερεῖ τοῦτον ὁ θεός·
γὰρ
89 ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιός ἐστιν,
90 οἵτινές ἐστε ὑμεῖς.

meaning. tektōn usually renders *hārāš*. It is noteworthy that, unlike the more intellectual and aristocratic societies



ers are still in the background: ἕκαστος δὲ βλέπῃ πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ. *But let each one take care on how he builds.* And both the foundation and the structure built on it remain prominent in the metaphor in vv. 11-15. Paul's use of the term ἀρχιτέκτων should not be read to imply his superiority to Apollos or others as a τέκτων, *builder*. The farming metaphor has made the point of equality dramatically.

The ἀρχιτέκτων had greater responsibility in laying out the design of the foundation because he had to envision the finished structure to be built on the foundation.³⁹ This is his point in v. 11: θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον

of Greece and Rome, the Jews had a high regard for manual work and a deep respect for those who did it well, whose ability was sometimes at any rate seen as a gift of God's spirit (Exod. 35:30ff.).

In the NT, usage is as follows:

(a) *tektōn* appears only in the identification of Jesus by the people of Nazareth as "the carpenter" (Mk. 6:3), "the carpenter's son" (Matt. 13:55). Though "carpenter" is the common rendering here, *tektōn* could equally mean "mason" or "smith" (as indeed some of the Fathers took it); or it could mean that Joseph and Jesus were builders, so that both carpentry and masonry would have been among their skills.

(b) *architektōn* appears once, in Paul's description of himself as a "wise masterbuilder" (the phrase is lifted from the LXX text of Isa. 3:3) who laid the foundation of the Corinthian church. Paul identifies this foundation with Christ—Christ, that is, as set forth in the doctrine Paul had preached, the doctrine of the givenness of reconciliation through the cross and the new community created thereby. This was the doctrine that had produced the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 3:10ff.).

(c) *technitēs* bears its ordinary secular sense in Acts 19:24, 38; Rev. 18:22. In Heb. 11:10, however, the word is applied to God, as the craftsman who has built the heavenly city for which his people hope.

(d) *technē* has its ordinary secular sense in Acts 17:29, 18:3 (where Paul and Aquila are identified as "tent-makers" or "leather-workers" by trade), and Rev. 18:22.

[J. I. Packer, "Carpenter, Builder, Workman, Craftsman, Trade," ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther, and Hans Bietenhard, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 279.]

³⁹"Shanor's study sheds light, first, on the term σοφός ἀρχιτέκτων, skilled master-builder. Contracts were made with individual workers, but because of his professional skill one person usually assumed a particular coordinating role, maintaining an overview of the work, but not as paymaster. Even in the case of large buildings, Shanor argues, the number of participants in the actual building process who were contracted was small. Hence the image of a small team coordinated by the ἀρχιτέκτων whose skill was recognized by the others rings true to the application of the analogy to ministry at Corinth. We have already discussed the importance of 'co-workers' for Paul (above, 1:1, and on Holmberg, Clarke, and others). In lexicographical terms, ἀρχιτέκτων brings together τέκτων, a worker in wood or stone, i.e., carpenter or mason, with ἀρχι-, chief, or leader, here perhaps as first among equals, more probably leading in experience and skill rather than in managerial status." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New Interna-

οὐδείς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὃς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, *for no other foundation can be laid beyond that already laid, which is Jesus Christ.* This is the reason for the preceding admonition in v. 10b: ἕκαστος δὲ βλέπῃ πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ. *And let each one take care on how he builds.* That is, the foundation envisions a very specific kind of structure. Another kind of building cannot be successfully constructed on the foundation once it is in place.

This was exactly what the Corinthians were trying to do. With their divisiveness and worldly wisdom, they were seeking to build a different kind of church than the one envisioned when Paul laid the foundation in his initial evangelizing ministry there on the second missionary journey.⁴⁰ Instead of Christ and His ways as the basis for the church, they wanted a dominating preacher as the foundation who would then build the structure according to worldly wisdom instead of by God's wisdom. And this in spite of the claim that these worldly builders were πνευματικοί, *spiritual*, something that Paul knew better of, even just from the report of Chloe's people.

What happens when the structure of a church is built differently from what was envisioned with Christ and His ways as its foundation and structure?⁴¹ Verses 12-15 present this scenario against the backdrop of the Day of Judgment.⁴² The builders using inferior materi-

tional Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 308.]

⁴⁰This says much about preachers and others who come into a church and change it into a very different church than was envisioned by the original founders.

⁴¹We should exercise caution with the listing of building materials listed by Paul: χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, λίθους τιμίους, ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην, *gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw*. The tendency is to use the metaphor of fire to group the first three into positive materials and the second set of three as inferior materials because they are subject to burning in fire. Paul does not move this direction in his subsequent statements in vv. 13-14. He only indicates that God's testing will bring to the surface whether the work is based on His wisdom or worldly wisdom: τινος τὸ ἔργον μενεῖ: *the work of each one remains*. A serious argument can be -- and often is -- made that the six materials simply represent the contributions of different gifts as developed in chapter twelve later on.

⁴²An Arcadian epigraph from the fourth century B.C.E. sheds significant light on Paul's construction metaphor (see C. D. Buck, *Greek Dialects* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955] 201–203). This inscription describes the building and repair of the temple of Athena. Several individuals, roughly comparable to modern-day subcontractors, were involved in various phases of construction. Each had a specific task to perform. The inscription repeatedly mentions their 'work' (ergon), using the same vocabulary as does Paul in vv. 13, 14, and 15. The epigraph refers to the penalties meted out to contractors for various infractions, such as delaying the construction by failing to finish their work on time, harming workers, and damaging property. The vocabulary is similar to that of Paul, who contrasts the wages (*misthon lēmpsetai*) paid to those whose work is satisfactory (v. 14) with the penalty



als to build the church will see their work⁴³ destroyed in the fire of God's judgment (vv. 12-13).⁴⁴ But the builders erecting the church on the foundation of Christ will receive the blessing of God in the Day of judgment⁴⁵ when the structure of the church holds up under God's fire (v. 14).⁴⁶ The builders using worldly wisdom, instead of God's wisdom, to build will not lose their salvation but will suffer the humiliating embarrassment of seeing a life long effort in church building go up in smoke before God and His saints (v. 15).⁴⁷

(*zēmiōthēsetai*) incurred by those whose work does not pass inspection (v. 15).” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 149.]

⁴³“The various materials are figures for the contributions each member of the community makes to the up building of the community as the church of God (1:2). The list is far from exhaustive. It does, however, enable Paul to make two points. First of all, the variety of building materials suggests that the various members of the community have distinctive contributions to make, a point on which Paul does not expatiate in this exposition but to which he will return and to which he will devote considerable attention in ch. 12. Paul's second point is that the contribution which each one has to make must be evaluated in the light of the coming eschaton.” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 151.]

⁴⁴What is God's 'testing standard' in final judgment of the work of the builders? ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον ὅποιόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ [αὐτὸ] δοκιμάσει. and each one's work as to its quality will be examined by fire. In the larger context of Paul's discussion from 1:10 to here God's standard is clear. Whether the church has been built upon the principles of God's wisdom, or whether it has been built on the principles of worldly wisdom -- this is God's measuring standard.

⁴⁵“To make the point that everyone's work must be evaluated in the light of the eschaton Paul appeals to traditional apocalyptic motifs, specifically the notion of a testing by fire. In effect the metaphorical motif of the building inspection is interpreted by means of apocalyptic motifs. In his epistolary thanksgiving Paul had written about the gifted circumstances of the Corinthians that, however, he had placed under an eschatological reservation. ‘You are not lacking in any gift,’ he wrote, ‘you who are eagerly awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will maintain you blameless until the end, on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1:7–8). As he began to develop the construction metaphor Paul spoke of his own gift, cited as an example for the Corinthians (3:10). When he calls upon them to scrutinize their own work in the light of the eschaton he returns (see v. 13) to the motifs of revelation (cf. 2:10) and the day, which he had introduced in the opening thanksgiving. Revelation and ‘the Day’ are classic apocalyptic motifs as are some other elements in 3:10–17 that serve the paraenetic thrust of Paul's argument.” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 151.]

⁴⁶Remember Paul's beginning references to the nature of God's people as ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις,, *dedicated in Christ Jesus, called to be holy* (1:2). The implications of that now become clear in the building metaphor.

⁴⁷Modern western cultures have difficulty understanding the extreme punishment of a public humiliation. In Paul's world, this was about the worst possible thing that could happen to an individ-

Verses 16 and 17 make a direct application of Paul's construction metaphor to the Corinthian congregation: 16 Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν; 17 εἴ τις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει, φθερεῖ τοῦτον ὁ θεός· ὁ γὰρ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιός ἐστιν, οἷτινές ἐστε ὑμεῖς. 16 *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?* 17 *If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

The language of Paul has hinted at the nature of this building all through the metaphor. But now he states it explicitly. The corporate congregation in Corinth constitutes God's temple in the city! To be sure it was scattered over the city in the small house church groups. But as they gathered together in worship and study they formed the temple of God in the city, i.e., the place where God was present in the city. The habitation of God comes through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Paul's warning here is serious. If any builder puts inferior material into that builder he faces the severe wrath of God! This suggests the spiritual foundation for the physical death of some of the Corinthians who abused the Lord's Supper in chapter eleven.

True wisdom as foolishness, 3:18-23.

18 Μηδεὶς ἐαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω· εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, μωρὸς γενέσθω, ἵνα γένηται σοφός. 19 ἡ γὰρ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου τούτου μωρία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ ἐστιν. γέγραπται γάρ· ὁ δρασσόμενος τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτῶν· 20 καὶ πάλιν· κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν σοφῶν ὅτι εἰσὶν μάταιοι. 21 ὥστε μηδεὶς καυχάσθω ἐν ἀνθρώποις· πάντα γὰρ ὑμῶν ἐστιν, 22 εἴτε Παῦλος εἴτε Ἀπολλῶς εἴτε Κηφᾶς, εἴτε κόσμος εἴτε ζωὴ εἴτε θάνατος, εἴτε ἐνεστῶτα εἴτε μέλλοντα· πάντα ὑμῶν, 23 ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δὲ θεοῦ.

18 *Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” 20 and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” 21 So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.*

Here Paul picks up again the issue of wisdom in 1:18-2:5 as what the builders of the church in Corinth desperately needed. He addresses the false assumption of these folks that they possessed what they needed to build the church differently than how it had been

ual. Modern Asian culture is closer to Paul's world here and thus makes it much easier for Christians in that world to understand texts like this one.

91 ^{3.18} Μηδεὶς ἑαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω·
 εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι
 | ἐν ὑμῖν
 | ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ,
 92 μωρὸς γενέσθω,
 ἵνα γένηται σοφός.
^{3.19} γὰρ
 93 ἡ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου τούτου μωρία... ἐστίν.
 γὰρ
 94 γέγραπται·
 ὁ δρασσόμενος τοὺς σοφοὺς
 ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτῶν·
^{3.20} καὶ
 πάλιν
 95 (γέγραπται)·
 κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν σοφῶν
 ὅτι εἰσὶν μάταιοι.
^{3.21} ὥστε
 96 μηδεὶς καυχάσθω
 ἐν ἀνθρώποις·
 γὰρ
 97 πάντα ὑμῶν ἐστίν,
^{3.22} εἴτε Παῦλος
 εἴτε Ἀπολλῶς
 εἴτε Κηφᾶς,
 εἴτε κόσμος
 εἴτε ζῶη
 εἴτε θάνατος,
 εἴτε ἐνεστώτα
 εἴτε μέλλοντα·
 98 πάντα ὑμῶν (ἐστίν),
^{3.23} δὲ
 99 ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ (ἐστε)
 δὲ
 100 Χριστὸς θεοῦ (ἐστι).

ἵνα γένηται σοφός. Stop kidding yourselves; if someone assumes that he is wise among you in this age, let him become a moron. The verb used here ἐξαπατάω is part of a group of terms (31.12 ἀπατάω; ἐξαπατάω; φρεναπατάω; ἀπάτη, ης) with the idea of deception centered on adopting false ideas that shape behavior rather than just thinking wrongly or being ignorant of what is correct.⁴⁸ By this term, which is not widely used in the NT, Paul injects a tone of failure to adopt God's wisdom as reflecting their enslavement to worldly wisdom which has produced the divisiveness in the community.

In the earlier discussion Paul centered on the world's considering God's wisdom as foolishness. Now he reverses the perspective to assert that God considers these worldly wise people to have adopted μωρία, *stupidity*, rather than wisdom. He backs up this claim with first a citation from Job 5:13 (v. 19b) and then from Psalm 94:11 (LXX 93:11) in v. 20.

Next Paul applies this emphasis on God's wisdom to the situation of divisiveness in vv. 21-23. By using worldly wisdom rather than God's wisdom regarding leaders in the Christian community, the Corinthians

envisioned in the beginning by Paul and his team of missionaries. In 2:6-16 the apostle had his access to the true wisdom of God that the surrounding world had no awareness of in its unspiritual condition. Rather they sought to replace God's wisdom with their own as pagans (2:14-16). The problem in the church at Corinth was the tendency of the members to prefer this pagan wisdom over God's wisdom (3:1-5). In thus trying to build the church in the city using this false wisdom they created a mess with divisiveness and a quest for dominance over the larger community. In 3:18-23 Paul calls them back to God's wisdom that the world considered foolishness.

Turning loose of their pride and deceptive sense of being wise was critical in discovering this true wisdom (3:16): Μηδεὶς ἑαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω· εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, μωρὸς γενέσθω,

have cheated themselves out of valuable insights that each of the leaders -- Paul, Apollos, Peter -- could give to the community. To be sure, none of these leaders have promoted the worldly wisdom being used by the Corinthians, but the Corinthians have used pagan ways of thinking toward these leaders. This is what stands

⁴⁸“This series of meanings containing the stem ἀπατ- overlaps considerably in meaning with the previous series containing the stem πλαν- (31.8–31.11). Both sets of terms involve deception and erroneous views. It is difficult to determine the precise implications of differences in meaning, but it may be that terms with the stem πλαν- are somewhat more related to general deceptive behavior rather than primarily to misconceptions.” [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996). S.V. topic 13:12.]



behind the divisiveness.⁴⁹

This application unit in vv. 21-23 introduced by ὥστε not only serves to close out the emphasis on worldly wisdom among the Corinthians by making an application, but it additionally serves to introduce the next unit on the nature of true leadership in 4:1-21. In following this pattern Paul links one section to the next in the pattern we have observed consistently as he moves through the items of the report from Chloe's people. Also by 'cross referencing' he ties the sub-units closely together. For example, how he presents the topic of wisdom several times in 101 these chapters of First Corinthians linked in different ways to other themes.⁵⁰

God measured leadership, 4:1-7.

4.1 Οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιζέσθω ἄνθρωπος ὡς ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ. 2 ὥδε λοιπὸν ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις, ἵνα πιστός τις εὑρεθῇ. 3 ἐμοὶ δὲ εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐστιν, ἵνα ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἀνακριθῶ ἢ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἀνακρίνω. 4 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ σύνοιδα, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ δεδικαίωμαι, ὁ δὲ ἀνακρίνων με κύριός ἐστιν. 103 5 ὥστε μὴ πρὸ καιροῦ τι κρίνετε ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος, ὃς καὶ φωτίσει τὰ κρυπτὰ τοῦ σκότους καὶ φανερώσει τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν· καὶ τότε ὁ ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἐκάστω ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.

6 Ταῦτα δέ, ἀδελφοί, μετεσχημάτισα εἰς ἑμαυτὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐνός φυσιοῦσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἐτέρου. 7 τίς γάρ 104 σε διακρίνει; τί δὲ ἔχεις ὃ οὐκ ἔλαβες; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔλαβες, τί καυχᾶσαι ὡς μὴ λαβῶν;

4.1 Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. 4 I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purpos-

⁴⁹The sad reality in modern versions of this kind of divisiveness more often than not the leaders themselves are enslaved to pagan thinking and thus promote the divisiveness plaguing the Corinthians.

⁵⁰This way of presenting ideas by Paul dramatically reduces the helpfulness of a traditional western cultural based outlining of these six chapters. Any such outline can only reference a small part of what Paul is saying, and is completely unable to display clearly the inner connectedness of the various sub themes in these six chapters. Paul's ancient thought pattern is somewhat represented by a modern [spinning helix ring image](#), used often in physics to illustrate molecular action.

es of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

6 I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, a so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, "Nothing beyond what is written," so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another. 7 For who sees anything different in you? b What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

4.1	Οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιζέσθω ἄνθρωπος ὡς ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ.
4.2	ὥδε λοιπὸν ζητεῖται _____ ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις, ἵνα πιστός τις εὑρεθῇ.
4.3	δὲ εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐμοὶ... ἐστιν, ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἵνα... ἀνακριθῶ ἢ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἀνακρίνω.
4.4	γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐμαυτῷ σύνοιδα, ἀλλ' ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ... δεδικαίωμαι, δὲ ὁ ἀνακρίνων με κύριός ἐστιν.

In order to communicate God's wisdom regarding leaders in contrast to the worldly way being used by the Corinthians, Paul begins in 4:1-5 with a couple of images easily understandable in the middle of first century Corinth: ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ, servants of Christ and slave administrators of God's mysteries. Both images represent slaves in distinctive roles inside the family.

The ὑπηρέτης functioned as an assistant to the master of the house. A lot of the secular usage sees this term for priests in the temples of pagan deities. These individuals are both dedicated to the deity and function to assist the deity by doing their priestly functions. Paul sees a Christian leader as a ὑπηρέτης Χριστοῦ, whose life long mission is to carry out the duties assigned him/

her by Christ.

But a Christian leader is also a *οικονόμος, manager*. This term, and the synonym *οίκοδεσπότης*, typically specified the slave who managed the estate of the master of the family. He could also be an accountant who had control over the finances of the estate. In God's earthly household, the church, the *οικονόμος* was manager of *μυστηρίων θεοῦ, God's mysteries*. What are these? These are "God's secrets" that appear as foolishness to a pagan world but to enlightened believers they represent the wisdom of God proclaimed through the Gospel.

In developing these images Paul turns to himself as the focus in vv. 2-5. The core principle stressed here is *πιστός τις εὑρεθῆ, one must be found faithful*. Being a *οικονόμος* is not a matter of intelligence or training. It is instead an issue of being *πιστός, faithful*. And who determines *πιστός*? The *οικονόμος* does not evaluate himself! Thus Paul stresses that he spends no time or effort in self evaluation (vv. 3-4a).⁵¹ If the Corinthians in their divisiveness have set in judgment on Paul as to his faithfulness, this has no value or importance. It is a phony judgment not based on God's wisdom, but instead on worldly wisdom. Only one evaluation matters: *ὁ δὲ ἀνακρίνων με κύριός ἐστιν, but the One judging me is the Lord* (v. 4b). The consequence of this (ὥστε)? No one should judge Paul as a leader until the Lord comes

⁵¹For those who have read the article "[The Western Introspective Conscience: A Biblical Perspective on Decision Making](#)" at [cranfordville.com](#), the statements of Paul here are very consistent with his none introspective conscience as often falsely taught in modern Christian circles. Paul spent no time in introspection hunting down sins and failures that needed to be confessed to God. His understanding clearly was that, if he failed in some area, the Lord through the Holy Spirit would show this to him so that he could immediately confess this failure to God.

4.5 ὥστε
πρὸ καιροῦ
108 μὴ...τι κρίνετε
ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος,
ὃς καὶ φωτίσει τὰ κρυπτὰ τοῦ σκοτίους
καὶ φανερώσει τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν.
καὶ
τότε
109 ὁ ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἐκάστῳ
ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.
4.6 δέ,
110 Ταῦτα. . . μετεσχημάτισα
ἀδελφοί, εἰς ἑμαυτὸν
καὶ
Ἀπολλῶν
δι' ὑμᾶς,
ἐν ἡμῖν
ἵνα...μάθητε τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται,
ἵνα μὴ εἶς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐνὸς φυσιοῦσθε
κατὰ τοῦ ἐτέρου.
4.7 γάρ
111 τίς σε διακρίνει;
δὲ
112 τί ἔχεις
ὃ οὐκ ἔλαβες;
δὲ
εἰ καὶ ἔλαβες,
113 τί καυχᾶσαι
ὡς μὴ λαβών;

and renders His evaluation (v. 5). That will be the evaluation that matters since *ὁ ἔπαινος*, the appropriate *commendation*, *ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, from God*, will be given by God Himself (v. 5). For the Corinthians to evaluate each of these leaders and choose their favorite one reflects pagan wisdom, not God's wisdom.

This perspective Paul indicates in vv. 6-7 that he has applied to Apollos and himself for the benefit of the Corinthians. Somehow the Corinthians in the divisiveness felt they elevated the status of their favorite leader by preferring him over the others in the community. Paul dismisses this as nonsense! (vv. 6b-7). Everything they possessed came as a gift from God through one of these leaders. But their worldly wisdom saw this as something they themselves earned by the superior teaching of their favorite leader.

God supplied leadership, 4:8-13.

8 ἡδη κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ, ἡδη ἐπλουτήσατε, χωρὶς ἡμῶν ἐβασιλεύσατε· καὶ ὄφελόν γε ἐβασιλεύσατε, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν συμβασιλεύσωμεν. 9 δοκῶ γάρ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν ὡς ἐπιθανατίους, ὅτι θεάτρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ

4.8 ἄνθρωποι. 10 ἡμεῖς ^{4.8} ἤδη
 μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς ¹¹⁴ **κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ,**
 δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ· ¹¹⁵ ἤδη
 ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ¹¹⁶ **ἐπλουτήσατε,**
 ἰσχυροί· ὑμεῖς ἔνδοξοι, ¹¹⁷ **χωρὶς ἡμῶν**
 ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτιμοι. 11 ¹¹⁶ **ἐβασιλεύσατε·**
 ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ ¹¹⁷ **καὶ**
 πεινῶμεν καὶ διψῶμεν ¹¹⁷ **ὄφελόν γε**
 καὶ γυμνιτεύομεν καὶ ¹¹⁷ **ἐβασιλεύσατε,**
 κολαφιζόμεθα καὶ ¹¹⁷ **ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν συμβασιλεύσωμεν.**
 ἀστατοῦμεν 12 καὶ ^{4.9} γάρ
¹¹⁸ **δοκῶ,**
 ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν· ¹¹⁸ **δοκῶ,**
 λ ο ι δ ο ρ ο ὑ μ ε ν ο ι ¹¹⁸ **| ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν**
 εὐλογοῦμεν, διωκόμενοι ¹¹⁸ **| ὡς ἐπιθανατίους,**
 ἀνεχόμεθα, 13 ¹¹⁸ **ὅτι θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ**
 δ υ σ φ η μ ο ὑ μ ε ν ο ι ¹¹⁸ **καὶ**
 παρακαλοῦμεν· ὡς ¹¹⁸ **ἀγγέλοις**
 περικαθάρματα τοῦ ¹¹⁸ **καὶ**
 κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν, ¹¹⁹ ^{4.10} **ἡμεῖς μωροὶ (ἐγενήθημεν)**
 πάντων περίφημα ἕως ¹¹⁹ **διὰ Χριστόν,**
 ἄρτι. ¹¹⁹ **δὲ**
 8 Already you have ¹²⁰ **ὑμεῖς φρόνιμοι (ἐστε)**
 all you want! Already you ¹²⁰ **ἐν Χριστῷ·**
 have become rich! Quite ¹²¹ **ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς (ἐσμεν),**
 apart from us you have ¹²¹ **δὲ**
 become kings! Indeed, I ¹²² **ὑμεῖς ἰσχυροὶ (ἐστε)·**
 wish that you had become ¹²³ **ὑμεῖς ἔνδοξοι (ἐστε),**
 kings, so that we might ¹²³ **δὲ**
 be kings with you! 9 For ¹²⁴ **ἡμεῖς ἄτιμοι (ἐσμεν)·**
 I think that God has exhib- ¹²⁴ **ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας**
 ited us apostles as last of ¹²⁵ **καὶ**
 all, as though sentenced ¹²⁵ **πεινῶμεν**
 to death, because we have ¹²⁶ **καὶ**
 become a spectacle to the ¹²⁶ **διψῶμεν**
 world, to angels and to ¹²⁷ **καὶ**
 mortals. 10 We are fools ¹²⁷ **γυμνιτεύομεν**
 for the sake of Christ, but ¹²⁸ **καὶ**
 you are wise in Christ. ¹²⁸ **κολαφιζόμεθα**
 We are weak, but you are ¹²⁹ **καὶ**
 strong. You are held in hon- ¹²⁹ **ἀστατοῦμεν**
 or, but we in disrepute. 11 ¹³⁰ ^{4.12} **καὶ**
 To the present hour we are ¹³⁰ **κοπιῶμεν**
 hungry and thirsty, we are ¹³⁰ **ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν·**
 poorly clothed and beat- ¹³¹ **λοιδορούμενοι**
 en and homeless, 12 and ¹³¹ **εὐλογοῦμεν,**
 we grow weary from the ¹³² **διωκόμενοι**
 work of our own hands. ¹³² **ἀνεχόμεθα,**
 When reviled, we bless; ¹³³ ^{4.13} **δυσφημούμενοι**
 when persecuted, we en- ¹³³ **παρακαλοῦμεν·**
 dure; 13 when slandered, ¹³⁴ **ὡς περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου**
 we speak kindly. We have ¹³⁴ **ἐγενήθημεν,**
 become like the rubbish of ¹³⁴ **πάντων περίφημα ἕως ἄρτι.**
 the world, the dregs of all

things, to this very day.

(vv. 9-13).

Paul mocks them in vv. 8-13 for this kind of thinking. God gave them everything they needed through the different ministries of these leaders. It is these leaders who are deficient. Their servant ministries (cf. 4:1)

God's leadership through Paul, 4:14-21.

14 Οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς γράφω ταῦτα ἀλλ' ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶ[ν]. 15 ἐὰν γὰρ μυρίουσ παιδαγωγοὺς ἔχητε ἐν Χριστῷ ἀλλ' οὐ πολλοὺς πατέρας· ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ

4.14	ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς		
135	Οὐκ...γράφω ταῦτα		
	ἀλλ'		
136	(γράφω ταῦτα)		
	ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶ[ν].		
4.15	γὰρ		
	ἐὰν μυρίουσ παιδαγωγοὺς ἔχητε		
	ἐν Χριστῷ		
137	ἀλλ' οὐ (ἔχετε) πολλοὺς πατέρας·		
	γὰρ		
	ἐν Χριστῷ Τησοῦ		
	διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου		
138	ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα.		
4.16	οὔν		
139	Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς,		
	μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.		
4.17	Διὰ τοῦτο		
140	ἔπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον,		
	ὃς ἐστίν μου τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν		
	καὶ		
	πιστὸν		
	ἐν κυρίῳ,		
	ὃς ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδοὺς μου		
	τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ [Τησοῦ],		
	καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω.		
4.18	δέ		
	Ὡς μὴ ἐρχομένου μου		
	πρὸς ὑμᾶς		
141	ἐφυσιώθησάν τινες·		
4.19	δέ		
142	ἐλεύσομαι		
	ταχέως		
	πρὸς ὑμᾶς		
	ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ,		
	καὶ		
143	γνώσομαι οὐ τὸν λόγον τῶν πεφυσιωμένων		
	ἀλλὰ		
144	(γνώσομαι) τὴν δύναμιν·		
4.20	γὰρ		
145	οὐ (ἔστι) ἐν λόγῳ ἢ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ	148	ἔλθω
	ἀλλ'		πρὸς ὑμᾶς
			ἢ
146	ἐν δυνάμει (ἔστι).	149	(ἔλθω)
			ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματι
			τ ε
147	4.21 τί θέλετε;		πραῦτητος;

mean they pay a huge price in order to deliver to God's people the insights into God's mysteries as divine gifts

Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα. 16 Παρακαλῶ



οὐν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε. 17 Διὰ τοῦτο ἔπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον, ὃς ἐστίν μου τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν καὶ πιστὸν ἐν κυρίῳ, ὃς ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ [Ἰησοῦ], καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω. 18 Ὡς μὴ ἐρχομένου δέ μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐφυσιώθησάν τινες· 19 ἐλεύσομαι δὲ ταχέως πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐάν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ, καὶ γνώσομαι οὐ τὸν λόγον τῶν πεφυσιωμένων ἀλλὰ τὴν δύναμιν· 20 οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει. 21 τί θέλετε; ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματι τε πραύτητος;

14 I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. 17 For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 18 But some of you, thinking that I am not coming to you, have become arrogant. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power. 21 What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Paul speaks all of this rather bluntly but in the tone of a fatherly admonition to people he genuinely cares for (vv. 14-21). Timothy is being to them in order to help them understand this in person (v. 17). Paul promises to come to Corinth, but wants to know how he should come. With a stick for discipline? Or with fatherly compassion? (v. 21).

5) The Sexual Immorality at Corinth reflects their pagan wisdom also, 5:1-13.

5.1 Ὅλως ἀκούεται ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία, καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὥστε γυναῖκά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν. 2 καὶ ὑμεῖς πεφυσιωμένοι ἐστέ καὶ οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐπενθήσατε, ἵνα ἀρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας; 3 ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρῶν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρῶν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον· 4 ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, 5 παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου. 6 Οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν. οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ; 7 ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην, ἵνα ἦτε νέον φύραμα, καθὼς ἐστε ἄζυμοι· καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός. 8 ὥστε ἐορτάζωμεν μὴ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ μηδὲ ἐν ζύμῃ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας ἀλλ' ἐν ἀζύμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας. 9 Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις, 10 οὐ πάντως τοῖς πόρνοις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἢ τοῖς πλεονέκταις καὶ ἄρπαξιν ἢ εἰδωλολάτραις, ἐπεὶ ὠφείλετε ἄρα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου

ἐξελεθεῖν. 11 νῦν δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι ἐάν τις ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος ἢ πόρνος ἢ πλεονέκτης ἢ εἰδωλολάτρης ἢ λοιδόρος ἢ μέθυσος ἢ ἄρπαξ, τῷ τοιοῦτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν. 12 τί γάρ μοι τοὺς ἔξω κρίνεις; οὐχὶ τοὺς ἔσω ὑμεῖς κρίνετε; 13 τοὺς δὲ ἔξω ὁ θεὸς κρίνει. ἐξάρατε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν.

5.1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has done this would have been removed from among you? 3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have already pronounced judgment 4 in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. 6 Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons — 10 not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? 13 God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

The shift of topic seems abrupt at first, but careful observation reflects that it is closely connected to the previous discussion. ⁵²Their failure to follow Christian

⁵²“Although Paul is dealing with a new issue in 5:1–8 his *heurēsis* is such that he introduces motifs that link his appeal on the new topic to what he has previously written. Reference to the conceit and importunate boasting of some of the Corinthians links Paul's treatment of incest with some of the basic attitudes that led to the lack of unity with the community: conceit, 5:2 (cf. 4:6, 18, 19) and boasting, 5:6 (cf. 1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7). Reference to the name, day, and power of the Lord Jesus link his demonstration on sexual immorality not only to the first rhetorical proof, which considered the divisions within the community, but also with the epistolary thanksgiving, which served as a rhetorical rehearsal of facts: the name, 5:4 (cf. 1:2, 10); the power, 5:4 (cf. 1:24); and the day, 5:5 (cf. 3:13). The somewhat abrupt fashion in which Paul introduces his new topic brings the reader back to the beginning of the letter when Paul told the Corinthians about the visit that prompted him to write a letter to them (1:11).” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series

standards of sexual behavior reflects their worldly wisdom preference over God's wisdom.

Two distinct issues of deviant sexual behavior are present in the Christian community at Corinth. The first one in 5:1-8 represents the most disgusting misbehavior. The second, broader issue in 5:9-13 deals with proper associations with people caught up in deviant sexual behavior. In another discussion Paul will deal with a third sexual misbehavior inside the church in 6:12-20. Interestingly, worldly wisdom seems to really mess up Christian behavior in the area of human sexuality!

In 5:1-8 Paul describes quite briefly a

situation existing in the church at Corinth that defies understanding: a man was living in sexual immorality with his birth mother (γυναϊκά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν) and members of the church boasted that it represented a superior spirituality (ὕμεῖς πεφουσιωμένοι ἐστέ). The problem at Corinth was one of incest, which came under the general label of πορνεία, *immorality*.⁵³ Such rela-

(Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 206.]

⁵³“The case Paul wanted the community to adjudicate is one of incest. In every culture incest is considered a particularly egregious

150	5.1	Ὅλως ἀκούεται... πορνεία, ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία (ἐστὶν) ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὥστε γυναϊκά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν.
152	5.2	καὶ ὕμεῖς πεφουσιωμένοι ἐστέ καὶ οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐπενοθήσατε, ἵνα ἀρθῇ . . . ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας; ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν
154	5.3	γάρ ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι δὲ παρὸν τῷ πνεύματι, ἐγὼ μὲν . . . ἤδη κέκρικα . . . τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον . ὡς παρὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, 5.4 παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ 5.5 εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.
155	5.6	Οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν.
156		οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ;
157	5.7	ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην, ἵνα ᾗτε νέον φύραμα, καθὼς ἐστε ἄζυμοι . γάρ καὶ τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός.
159	5.8	ὥστε ἐορτάζωμεν μὴ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ μηδὲ ἐν ζύμῃ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας ἀλλ' ἐν ἄζυμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας.

form of sexual misconduct, even if various cultures differ from one another in the determination of the specific relationships within which sexual intercourse would be a major violation of the social ethos. Within Judaism as within the Hellenistic world in general a man's sexual intercourse with his father's wife, concubine, or paramour was considered intolerable. The conceited Corinthians tolerated such misconduct.” [[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 206–207.]

tionships were severely condemned universally across the Greco-Roman world, as Paul acknowledges in v. 1, **such immorality which does not even exist among Gentiles.**

How the Corinthians could have concluded that a detestable immorality could be a symbol of superior spirituality is not easy to conclude. Their penchant toward glossolalia described in chapter 14 suggests corrupting influence from the nearby pagan mystery religion of the [Eleusinian Mysteries](#) may point to an answer. This cultic practice had influence inside the Corinthian church. In the common pattern of these various 'mystery cults' tongues speaking preceded

cultic orgies as a part of worship. Add to that the cult of [Aphrodite](#) in Corinth where temple prostitution for the worshippers was the norm.⁵⁴ With these influences

⁵⁴“Round the year 2 B.C. Strabo (VIII,6,20) in his geographic/historical description of the town of Corinth wrote some remarks concerning female temple servants in the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth, which perhaps should be dated somewhere in the period 700-400 B.C.:^[13]

“The temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it employed more than a thousand hetairas,^[14] whom both men and women had given to the goddess. Many people visited the town on account of them, and thus these hetairas contributed to the riches of the town: for the ship captains frivolously spent their money there, hence the saying: ‘The voyage to Corinth is not for every man’. (The story goes of a hetaira being reproached by a woman for not loving her job and not touching wool,^[15] and answering her: ‘However you may behold me, yet in this short time I have already taken down three pieces.’^[16])”

“The text in more than one way hints at the sexual business of those ladies. Remarks elsewhere of Strabo (XII,3,36: ‘women earning money with their bodies’) as well as Athenaeus (XIII,574: ‘in the lovely beds picking the fruits of the mildest bloom’) concerning this temple describe this character even more graphically.”

5.9 Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν
 ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ
 μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις,
 5.10 οὐ πάντως τοῖς πόρνοις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου
 ἢ
 τοῖς πλεονέκταις
 καὶ
 ἄρπαξιν
 ἢ
 εἰδωλολάτραις,
 ἐπεὶ ὠφείλετε ἄρα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελεθεῖν.

5.11 δὲ
 161 νῦν ἔγραψα ὑμῖν
 μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι
 ἂν τις ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος ἢ πόρνος
 | ἢ
 | πλεονέκτης
 | ἢ
 | εἰδωλολάτρης
 | ἢ
 | λοίδορος
 | ἢ
 | μέθυσος
 | ἢ
 | ἄρπαξ,
 τῷ τοιοῦτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν.
 5.12 γάρ
 162 τί μοι τοὺς ἔξω κρίνεις;
 163 οὐχὶ τοὺς ἔσω ὑμεῖς κρίνετε;
 5.13 δὲ
 164 τοὺς ἔξω ὁ θεὸς κρίνει.
 165 ἐξάρατε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν.

mixed with what developed at least in later Proto-Gnosticism was that one’s conversion experience perfected the soul and insulated it from contamination by actions of the physical body. One of the branches of Gnosticism that emerges from this took the stance that the ‘Christian’ sinning in the physical body was proof of his perfected soul and superior spirituality. Perhaps an early version of this was taking shape in Corinth with the ‘superior’ wisdom of the Corinthians.

Paul’s solution begins with the community’s stance: **καὶ οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐπενθήσατε, ἵνα ἀρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας; and should you not have mourned so the one having done this deed would have been removed from your midst?** This signals clearly what he thinks the church should have done. Then in vv. 3-5 he details the procedure they should follow in order to carry out this removal of the offender.

Then he addresses the attitude and reasoning be-

[“Prostitution in ancient Greece.” wikipedia.org]



hind their tolerating such a person in their midst in vv. 6-8. What was labeled πεφυσωμένοι, *being puffed up*, in v. 2 is now called boasting and is condemned: Οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν, *Not good your boasting*. He uses the image of yeast in a batter of flour dough to make his point (vv. 7-8). The appropriateness of this with the Jewish background of yeast having to be cleaned out of the home at the Feast of Unleavened Bread in connection to Passover makes the point dramatically to his readers.

In 5:9-13, Paul addresses a possible misunderstanding from a previous letter sent to them about associating with immoral persons: "Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις, *I wrote to you in the letter to not associate with immoral persons*. It is connected somewhat to the previous discussion at the point of distinguishing between professing Christians and non-believers.⁵⁵ In the first issue the church needed to take decisive action against an offending member. Paul's point in vv. 9-13 is to reinforce that point, which evidently was his basic point in the previous letter written to them prior to First Corinthians.⁵⁶

⁵⁵For a long time many commentators speculated that a piece of that prior letter was contained in 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1. But now not many would try to make such a connection. The obstacles to overcome are too substantial in order to make a convincing case for this.

2 Cor. 6:14-7:1. 14 Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις· τίς γὰρ μετοχή δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀνομία, ἢ τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος; 15 τίς δὲ συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ, ἢ τίς μερίς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου; 16 τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων; ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεὸς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός. 17 διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε· κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς 18 καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. 7.1 Ταῦτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί, καθαρῶς ἐλευθερώμενοι ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.

14 *Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? 15 What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."* 7.1 *Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.*

⁵⁶For a reconstruction of Paul's relationship with the church at Corinth that includes his three visits and four letters written to the church, see "Paul's Relation to the Corinthian Believers: A Recon-

struction," cranfordville.com. Interestingly, Paul used a verb in that letter now repeated, συναναμίγνυσθαι, *to associate with*, that he never uses again in any of his letters outside of vv. 9, 11 here and 2 Thess. 3:14. It has a somewhat broad meaning of 'mingling with, or 'associating with.' When he used it earlier in 2 Thess. 3:14 it referenced no associating with believers at Thessalonica who refused to heed Paul's instructions in his letter. In Paul's prior letter to the Corinthians this is the meaning he intended regarding not associating with πόρνοις, *immoral persons*.

Verse 10 defines a list of 'non associables' mentioned in that prior letter, but only inside the church: οὐ πάντως τοῖς πόρνοις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἢ τοῖς πλεονέκταις καὶ ἄρπαξιν ἢ εἰδωλολάτραις, *not at all meaning the immoral of this world or the greedy and robbers or idolaters*. To avoid contact with such people outside the church is not possible ἐπεὶ ὠφείλετε ἄρα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελεθεῖν, *since you would then have to depart out of the world*.

Either the church ignored that letter or else did not understand it properly -- probably the former. Now Paul emphasizes again that the community of believers must not ever tolerate immoral actions by members of the church. Their elitist *arrogance*, πεφυσωμένοι (v. 2), from their worldly wisdom told them Paul didn't know what he was talking about.

In vv. 11-13 Paul stresses that immorality must not be tolerated inside the church. And that the church has a God mandated duty to take action against offenders. God is take care of immoral people pagans outside the church, but He insists that the church keep itself free of such pollution inwardly. He closes with the 'scripture proof' from Deut. 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21; 24:7, ἐξάρατε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν. *Drive out the wicked person from among you*.

6) *Failure to resolve problems with one another, 6:1-11.*

6.1 Τοῦ μὲν τις ὑμῶν πρᾶγμα ἔχων πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον κρίνεσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων καὶ οὐχὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγίων; 2 ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἅγιοι τὸν κόσμον κρινοῦσιν; καὶ εἰ ἐν ὑμῖν κρίνεται ὁ κόσμος, ἀνάξιοί ἐστε κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων; 3 οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἀγγέλους κρινοῦμεν, μήτι γε βιωτικά; 4 βιωτικά μὲν οὖν κριτήρια ἐὰν ἔχητε, τοὺς ἐξουθενημένους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, τούτους καθίζετε; 5 πρὸς ἐντροπήν ὑμῖν λέγω. οὕτως οὐκ ἔστι ἐν ὑμῖν οὐδὲς σοφός, ὃς δυνήσεται διακρίναι ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ; 6 ἀλλ' ἀδελφός μετὰ ἀδελφοῦ κρίνεται καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἀπίστων;

7 Ἦδη μὲν [οὖν] ὅλως ἡττημα ὑμῖν ἐστὶν ὅτι κρίματα ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν. διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθε; διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀποστερεῖσθε; 8 ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς ἀδικεῖτε καὶ ἀποστερεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ἀδελφούς.

struction," cranfordville.com.

9 Ἡ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι
 ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν
 οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; μὴ
 πλανᾶσθε· οὔτε πόρνοι
 οὔτε εἰδωλόατραι οὔτε
 μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε
 ἀρσενοκοῖται 10 οὔτε
 κλέπται οὔτε πλεονέκται,
 οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοῖδοροι,
 οὐχ ἄρπαγες βασιλείαν
 θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν.
 11 καὶ ταῦτά τινες ἦτε·
 ἀλλ' ἀπελούσασθε,
 ἀλλ' ἡγιάσθητε, ἀλλ'
 ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ
 ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου
 Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ
 πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν.

6.1 When any of you
 has a grievance against
 another, do you dare to
 take it to court before the
 unrighteous, instead of
 taking it before the saints?
 2 Do you not know that
 the saints will judge the
 world? And if the world is
 to be judged by you, are
 you incompetent to try
 trivial cases? 3 Do you not
 know that we are to judge
 angels—to say nothing of
 ordinary matters? 4 If you
 have ordinary cases, then,
 do you appoint as judges
 those who have no stand-
 ing in the church? 5 I say
 this to your shame. Can
 it be that there is no one
 among you wise enough
 to decide between one
 believer and another, 6
 but a believer goes to
 court against a believer—
 and before unbelievers at
 that?

7 In fact, to have law-
 suits at all with one anothe-
 r is already a defeat for
 you. Why not rather be
 wronged? Why not rather
 be defrauded? 8 But you
 yourselves wrong and de-
 fraud—and believersd at

166 ^{6.1} **Τολμᾷ τις ὑμῶν . . . κρίνεσθαι**
 πράγμα ἔχων ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων
 πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον καὶ
 οὐχὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίων;

^{6.2} ἢ
 167 **οὐκ οἶδατε**
 ὅτι οἱ ἅγιοι τὸν κόσμον κρινούσιν;

καὶ
 εἰ ἐν ὑμῖν κρίνεται ὁ κόσμος,
 168 **ἀνάξιοί ἐστε κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων;**

169 ^{6.3} **οὐκ οἶδατε**
 ὅτι ἀγγέλους κρινούμεν,
 μήτι γε βιωτικά;

^{6.4} οὖν
 βιωτικά μὲν κριτήρια
 εἰν ἔχητε,
 τοὺς ἐξουθενημένους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ,
 170 **τούτους καθίζετε;**

^{6.5} πρὸς ἐντροπὴν
 171 **ὑμῖν λέγω.**

οὕτως
 172 **οὐκ ἐνὶ ἐν ὑμῖν οὐδεὶς σοφός,**
 ὃς δυνήσεται διακρίναι
 ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ;

^{6.6} ἀλλ'
 173 **ἀδελφὸς μετὰ ἀδελφοῦ κρίνεται**
 καὶ
 174 **τοῦτο (ἐστὶν)**
 ἐπὶ ἀπίστων;

^{6.7} [οὖν]
 ἤδη μὲν
 ὁλως
 175 **ἡτισημα ὑμῖν ἐστὶν**
 ὅτι κρίματα ἔχετε
 μεθ' ἑαυτῶν.

διὰ τί
 176 **οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθε;**

διὰ τί
 177 **οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀποστερεῖσθε;**

^{6.8} ἀλλ'
 178 **ὑμεῖς ἀδικεῖτε**
 καὶ
 179 **ἀποστερεῖτε,**
 καὶ
 180 **τοῦτο (ποιεῖτε) ἀδελφούς.**

that.

9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The issue addressed here has substantial cultural parameters. What then is the issue? First, the descriptive terms used to reference the problem. V. 1, *πρᾶγμα ἔχων πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον*, having a matter against the other. The term *πρᾶγμα* is very broad in meaning and thus could reference a wide range of ‘grievances’ that could be presented in a legal setting.

Then *κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων*, trivial cases, in v. 2 defines either a court to handle small claims or the small claims themselves.⁵⁷ Thus the issue is limited to the local magistrate’s courts and not to the Roman criminal courts.⁵⁸ In most instances, native local or regional

⁵⁷“Three issues, among others, achieve prominence in this passage. First, does the theme of ‘church order’ as identified by G. Harris’s article “The Beginnings of Church Discipline: 1 Cor 5,” undergo further development in this chapter? Paul states that what in English law today are called ‘small claims,’ if they arise between fellow Christians at Corinth, should invite some kind of arbitration procedure within the church itself, not on the part of ‘outsiders.’ Thereby both internal issues of institutional order and external questions about community boundaries continue a theme begun in 5:1–13.

“Second, the local situation at Corinth was without doubt a major factor in this Pauline reading. For whereas the criminal courts of the Roman government to some reasonable extent could be respected as sources of relative justice (cf. Rom 13:1–7), the local civil magistrate’s courts allowed too much room for patronage and vested interest in the stance of local judges or the appointment of juries to reflect anything like even a near degree of integrity in comparison with major criminal courts. The wealthy, ‘influential,’ and ‘clever’ could manipulate social networks outside the church to their advantage and thereby, in effect, take advantage of the poor or ‘weak’ within the congregation.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 419.]

⁵⁸“In summary, the provincial governor had absolute authority over all the inhabitants of a particular province. He followed prec-

6.9	181	Ἡ οὐκ οἶδατε	ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν;
182	182	μὴ πλανᾶσθε· οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλολάτραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται	
6.10	183	οὔτε κλέπται οὔτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοῖδοροι, οὐχ ἄρπαγες	βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν.
6.11	184	καὶ ταῦτά τινες ἦτε· ἀλλ’	
185	185	ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλ’	
186	186	ἠγιάσθητε, ἀλλ’	
187	187	ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν.	

legal systems were permitted to handle none capital offense charges, although they were under the supervision of the Roman governor.⁵⁹ Consequently these courts were especially vulnerable to bribes etc. from individuals appearing before the magistrate.⁶⁰ People edents of Roman law, especially in that he, the chief magistrate, rather than a jury, adjudicated the law. He could and often did delegate authority to lesser magistrates, and often in lesser matters of law the municipalities were allowed to retain authority over their subjects at the discretion of the governor. The governor’s authority was limited only by laws under which he could be charged with extortion or extreme cruelty. He had absolute authority over Roman citizens in the province he governed, except in capital cases. There was, however, precedent but no binding law that a Roman citizen who resided in a province would be returned to the governor of that province for trial rather than be tried by the local governor.” [Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 547.]

⁵⁹The enormous unevenness of the [court systems](#) across the empire, outside of Italy, necessitates knowledge of localized patterns at specific periods of time in order to have some certainty of what a reference to the legal system implied at the local level.

“Relatively little, however, is known about the actual administration of civil justice in Corinth at the time when Paul was writing to the Corinthians.” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 226.]

⁶⁰“In the Roman world a powerful patronage system was not without its influence — sometimes an undue influence — on the administration of justice. The social status of petitioner or plain-

with lower economic status seldom ever went to court over some issue, especially against an individual of higher class status. This in part stands behind Paul's reference ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων, *to the unjust ones*, in v. 1. Only Roman citizens had recourse that could overcome the corruption of the local courts, and the vast majority of the Corinthian church did not possess such.

Also important to note is the tendency of various associations or organized groups of individuals in that world to set up their own local courts for settling disputes, quarrels, and crimes of their members.⁶¹ These required official Roman recognition but such was not difficult to obtain when the association possessed legal

tiff was a major factor in the administration of 'justice.' In civil cases lawsuits were usually initiated by people of equal and upper social status. The poor generally did not have the wherewithal to pay a lawyer to plead their case. In practice the system was thus unfavorable to people of the lower social classes. The elder Seneca, an older contemporary of Paul, tells the story of a rich man taunting a poor man, 'Why don't you accuse me, why don't you take me to court?' To this the poor man replied, 'Am I, a poor man, to accuse a rich man?' Seneca's commentary was to the effect that the rich man was powerful and influential. Even as a defendant he had nothing to fear from the court (see Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Controversiae* 10.1.2). In a similar vein Petronius told the story of a man named Ascylos who was afraid to go to court because he was without influence. He would, moreover, have had no money with which to bribe the magistrate. Bribery (cf. P. Oxyrhynchus 2745, 7–8) and powerful cliques were only two of the sources of corruption in the administration of justice in Paul's day. When Paul describes the secular judiciary as unjust he is simply reflecting the general opinion of people in his times." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 226–227.]

⁶¹"In the Greco-Roman world various associations had their own jurisdictions with courts to judge the disputes, quarrels, and crimes of their members. In some cities Jews enjoyed the privilege of settling some legal matters that arose among themselves. In cities such as Alexandria and Sardis Jewish communities were granted the status of a 'civil corporation' (politeuma). Jews living in these cities had their own courts in which they could settle their civil disputes (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.235), but these courts were not competent to adjudicate capital offenses. Sipre Deut. 17:8–9 prescribes that in difficult civil disputes the case is to be brought before the court at Yavneh. That court is legitimate even though it includes neither priests nor Levites. In the circumstances envisioned by the Sipre there is no court that is recognized as authoritative other than the one at Yavneh. With a reference to Qoh 7:10 the Sipre indicates that one ought not to pine for the judicial structures of previous eras.

"There is no evidence that the Jewish community in Corinth had been recognized as a civil corporation and had its own court. On the other hand, archaeological evidence from Corinth does indicate that two men, the duoviri, were the highest magistrates in the metropolis. Chosen from among the leading citizens of the town, they served for a one-year term. Civil cases normally began in the courts of these magistrates."

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 227.]

recognition. What Paul proposes to the Corinthians is the establishment of an informal internal court to handle disputes among the members of the church. Everyone would have to accept the authority of such since there would not be a legally binding structure from the local government authority, as in the typical internal court with legal recognition.⁶²

In v. 3 the term βιωτικά, *ordinary issues*, and βιωτικά κριτήρια, *ordinary cases*, in v. 4 further define the issue as limited to non serious civil or criminal issues. The adjective βιωτικός, -ή, -όν limits the reference to issues arising out of daily physical living.⁶³

Thus the issue Paul treats here focuses on disputes among believers over what he considers trivial matters (κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων) that arise out of daily living and relationships (βιωτικά). The courts being used were the local magistrates that handled what in modern US terms would be labeled the 'small claims court.' These are issues that should never arise among Christians to begin with, but they did at Corinth as an outgrowth of their 'superior' worldly wisdom that the apostle has repeatedly condemned since chapter one.

Paul has two responses to this problem in the church at Corinth. First, the church must set up its own legal structure to handle such issues (vv. 2-6). He shames the church with sarcastic references to there surely being individuals with integrity and good judgment who could render a just decision in such disputes.

Second, in vv. 7-8 he bluntly criticizes the Corinthians for raising such issues in the first place. If they

⁶²One should recognize that the data strongly suggests that no established laws governing most of these issues existed. The legal authorities would simply decide the case based upon their own sense of what seemed to be appropriate. Of course, bribes played a huge role in such determinations.

The structure of the Roman system of laws was exceedingly simple. The earliest written legal code was the [12 Tables](#), known officially as *Leges Duodecim Tabularum* or *Duodecim Tabulae*, put into effect around 449 B.C.E. These served as the foundation of the Roman legal system until 529 AD when the [Corpus Juris Civilis](#) replaced it under emperor Justinian I. Thus this later code is best known as the Justinian Code. The Roman legal system turned mostly to the presiding magistrate to render what he considered to be the most appropriate decision. The written code was in the background but could be ignored if the magistrate felt like doing so.

⁶³"The adjective occurs Luke 21:34, but is not found in LXX, nor earlier than Aristotle. Following the well-known difference in N.T. between βίος and ζωή (see on Luke 8:43), βιωτικά means questions relating to our life on earth on its merely human side, or to the resources of life, such as food, clothing, property, etc. Philo (*Vit. Mos.* iii.18), πρὸς ταῖς βιωτικὰς χρείας ὑπηρετεῖν. See Trench, *Syn.* § xxvii.; Cremer, *Lex.* p. 272; Lightfoot on *Ign. Rom.* 7:3." [Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (New York: T&T Clark, 1911), 113.]



were practicing the holiness that God called them to, no such issues would explode inside the church. Thus the mere presence of such issues represents a spiritual defeat for them and a victory for Satan.

This call to holiness is a serious mandate from God as Paul explains in vv. 9-11. They are acting like the pagans they were before conversion in raising these issues. But conversion to Christ means a dramatic transformation of life and living (v. 11), which means such petty disputes have no legitimate place now in their lives.

But this pettiness reflects the other posture of fussing over spiritual leaders which Paul saw as the most obvious signal of them still being trapped by worldly wisdom rather than having adopted God's wisdom in their lives and church.

7) *Violating the dwelling place of Christ, 6:12-20.*

12 Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπὸ τινος. 13 τὰ βρώματα τῆ κοιλίας καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει. τὸ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῆ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι· 14 ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ τὸν κύριον ἤγειρεν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξεγερεῖ διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ. 15 οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐσίν; ἄρα οὖν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσω πόρνης μέλη; μὴ γένοιτο. 16 [ἦ] οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ὁ κολλώμενος τῆ πόρνη ἐν σῶμά ἐστιν; ἔσονται γάρ, φησίν, οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. 17 ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνευμᾷ ἐστιν. 18 Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν. πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ὃ ἐάν ποιήσῃ ἄνθρωπος ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν· ὁ δὲ πορνεύων εἰς τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα ἁμαρτάνει. 19 ἦ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματός ἐστιν οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἑαυτῶν; 20 ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς· δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν.

12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." 17 But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify

God in your body.

In this final issue reported by Chloe's people to Paul the issue of sexual immorality comes back up. But this time a different sexual issue comes to the surface with huge cultural backgrounds. It seems that by adopting the worldly wisdom of the culture around them the Corinthians opened themselves up to a Pandora's box of evil centered in personal power and domination of others. This surfaced in their quest to dominate the entire community by claiming to represent the 'best' leader of the Christian movement. This superior wisdom they claimed to have had no comprehension of the cross of Christ and how God worked through it rather than through brute force to change the world. Thus it did not appeal to a 'worldly' mind, and thus not to the Corinthian Christians choosing instead the false wisdom of the world around them. This worldly wisdom opened the door to sexual misbehavior not even tolerated by pagans and the inability to deal properly with people outside and also those inside the community of believers. Its inclination to fussiness not only upset the unity of the church in leadership but produced silly, ungodly disputes between one another inside the community.

Now Paul in this final section from the report of Chloe's people turns to another misbehavior arising from the pagan world around them at Corinth. How he structures this discussion has occasioned some debate among interpreters. The uncertainty centers over the perspective reflected in vv. 12-13. The use of quotation marks by the NRSV reflects one side of this discussion, in which the statements in quotes reflect the Corinthian 'superior wisdom' and the immediately following statement is Paul's response to it.

<i>"All things are lawful for me,"</i>	Corinthians
but not all things are beneficial.	Paul
<i>"All things are lawful for me,"</i>	Corinthians
but I will not be dominated by anything.	Paul
<i>"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," ---</i>	
and God will destroy both one and the other. ---	

The alternative view is that all of the statements belong to Paul and he presents a responsible Christian liberty perspective with these contrastive statements. In the first perspective the Corinthians' superior wisdom is advocating an irresponsible Christian liberty view which Paul then rebuffs with a responsible view. Although ultimately one comes out at pretty close to the same point which ever view is adopted, the first view seems more likely the case in the context of chapters one through six.⁶⁴ Add to that Paul's use of the same contrastive

⁶⁴ "I am free to do anything" must have been a favorite slogan of the Corinthians. (This is the translation of NEB, which nicely catches the force of the saying; the emphasis lies not on what is legally allowable but on the sovereign authority of the individual over all external constraints.) Paul quotes this saying back at them

188 ^{6.12} Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν
 ἄλλ'

189 οὐ πάντα συμφέρει·

190 πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν
 ἄλλ'

191 οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι
 ὑπὸ τινος.

192 ^{6.13} τὰ βρώματα τῇ κοιλίᾳ
 καὶ

193 ἢ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν,
 δὲ

194 ὁ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει.

δὲ

195 τὸ σῶμα οὐ (ἐστὶν) τῇ πορνείᾳ
 ἀλλὰ

196 (τὸ σῶμα ἐστὶν) τῷ κυρίῳ,
 καὶ

197 ὁ κύριος (ἐστὶν) τῷ σώματι·

^{6.14} δὲ

198 ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸν κύριον ἡγειρεν
 καὶ

199 ἡμᾶς ἐξεγερεῖ
 διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.

200 ^{6.15} οὐκ οἶδατε
 ὅτι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστίν;

οὖν

ἄρας τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ

201 ποιήσω πόρνης μέλη;

202 μὴ γένοιτο.

^{6.16} [ἦ]

203 οὐκ οἶδατε
 ὅτι ὁ κολλώμενος τῇ πόρνῃ ἐν σῶμά ἐστιν;

γάρ,

204 φησὶν,
 ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

^{6.17} δὲ

205 ὁ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνεύμα ἐστίν.

206 ^{6.18} Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν.

207 πᾶν ἁμάρτημα . . . ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν·
 ὁ ἐὰν ποιήσῃ ἄνθρωπος
 δὲ
 εἰς τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα

208 ὁ πορνεύων . . . ἁμαρτάνει.

^{6.19} ἦ

209 οὐκ οἶδατε
 ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς . . . ἐστίν
 τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος
 οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ,

	καὶ	
210	οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐαυτῶν;	
	6.20	γὰρ
211	ἡγοράσθητε τιμῆς·	
212	δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν	
	ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν.	

language in 10:23 concerning the idol-meat controversy at Corinth as well.

In the assumption of the first perspective being the most accurate understanding of these opening verses, Paul challenges the ‘wisdom’ of the Corinthians that they are free to do anything they please as believers in Christ. In the first stanza he contends that the bottom line is not doing what one chooses but responsible Christian commitment to service to others: οὐ πάντα συμφέρει, *not all things are beneficial*. Here is a reminder of the servant role of Christian leaders from 3:5, δῖακονοὶ δι’ ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε, Paul and Apollos are *slave servants through whom you came to faith*. They were to the Corinthians ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ, *servants of Christ and slave managers of God’s mysteries* (4:1). But the divisiveness and fussiness of the Corinthians reflected a thinking that said I can do what I want and I intend to no matter who is hurt in the process. Such is not God’s way of thinking!

Second, the worldly thinking insisted on complete freedom but without realizing that such worldly wisdom was enslaving them to their own passions and appetites. Thus their quest for power and their unbridled sexual appetites were leading them back in the pagan ways prior to their conversion. Paul’s retort is οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπὸ τινος, *I will not be controlled by anything*. On the Damascus road, Christ became his Lord who took complete control over Paul’s life. Nothing else will be allowed to rob Christ of total control over Paul’s life. The Corinthians were seeking to do what Jesus expressly forbids in Mt. 6:24,

Οὐδεὶς δύναται δυοῖς κυρίοις δουλεύειν· ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἓνα μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει, ἢ ἐνὸς ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει. οὐ δύνασθε θεῶ

in both cases, in order to qualify it substantially. In light of the evidence we have already seen of Stoic-Cynic tendencies in the thinking of the Corinthian sophoi, we should understand that this slogan declares a philosophically-informed autonomy: The enlightened wise person is free to do anything he or she chooses. This is consistent with the idea that the sophos is a “king” to whom all things belong (see the discussion of 3:21–23 and 4:8, above). The precise slogan ‘I am free to do anything’ is not found in contemporary philosophical writings, but in Epictetus there are numerous passages that discuss the freedom of the philosopher, using exactly the same verb that Paul cites here. It is likely that the Corinthians have drawn upon this philosophical tradition to create a slogan expressing their radical understanding of freedom in Christ.” [Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 101.]

δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾶ.

“No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Third, the superior wisdom of the Corinthians indulged in its physical passions without restraint. The modern version of τὰ βρώματα τῆ κοιλίας καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν is “If it feels good, do it!” Paul reminded the Corinthians ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει. *but God will destroy both this (body) and these (foods)*. The physical side of our existence is doomed to this world and thus must never be allowed to such corrupting influences over us.

Could the Corinthians have picked up the idea of complete freedom from something Paul might have said while present with them? Later in this letter he makes a statement that could have been twisted this way assuming he said it to them face to face earlier: Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; *Am I not free?* (9:1a); Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, *For although I am free of all things, I have enslaved myself to all* (9:19a). Later on from Corinth Paul would make this statement to the Romans, οὐδὲν κοινὸν δι’ ἑαυτοῦ, *nothing is unclean in itself* (Rom. 14:14b). But the clear problem with assuming they twisted his words is that the written expression of these comes long after they shifted over to the worldly wisdom, and thus the assumption requires an understanding that Paul verbally expressed these ideas while he was in Corinth on one of the two visits that preceded the writing of First Corinthians. That’s highly unlikely. The easier conclusion is that they never really turned loose of their pagan Greek ways of thinking and found certain aspects of it susceptible to adaptation to religious ideas which gave legitimacy to their sinful patterns of behavior.

After this lengthy rebuttal of the thinking of the Corinthians in vv. 12-13a, Paul then applies this rebuttal to the issue at hand: the sexual misbehavior of the men in the Corinthian church, τὸ δὲ σῶμα⁶⁵ οὐ τῆ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ

⁶⁵One should note that Paul’s use of σῶμα not figuratively as later on in the letter but more literally is not limited to just the physical body, although it references the physical body as the foundation for physical life. In English language expression it is closer to what we would label ‘physical life’ and thus is close to βίος in meaning.

The term sōma is often understood in a holistic sense, meaning the whole human being or self under a certain aspect, especially when the person is the subject to which something happens or the object of one’s own actions (so J. Weiss; Bultmann, TNT, 1:194–96; J. A. T. Robinson). That interpretation of sōma in these verses is controverted, and a number of other commentators take the term to mean the physical living body itself in the full Greek sense, as one of the components of the human complex along with psychē, “soul”



τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι, **and the body is not for immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is (committed) to the body.**

In the background stood the deeply embedded Greek tradition of extensive male sexual activity with both women and men and boys outside of and in addition to one's wife. In all likelihood the Corinthian men in the church were not continuing to go to the pagan temples in the city and engaging prostitutes there. Given the massive existence of both male and female prostitutes for male clients through [ancient Greece](#), including slaves in one's household, these men would have had no trouble in finding individuals in Corinth without going to the temples. In the surrounding cultural values, utilizing such services was considered entirely normal and natural even though the male was married.

Paul severely condemns such practice and thinking in this passage. One's σῶμα belongs now to the Lord and the Lord is committed to the σῶμα (v. 13b) in the sense of it being the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit on earth: τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστὶν οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in you whom you have from God** (v. 19). Evidence of God's commitment to the σῶμα is seen in the resurrection of Jesus and then of the believer's resurrection: ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ τὸν κύριον ἤγειρεν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξεγερεῖ διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, **But God also raised up the Lord and you He will raise through His power** (v. 14). The irrationality of a Christian man having sex outside marriage is the irrationality of taking something united to Christ (v. 15) and joining it to a prostitute (vv. 16-17)!

Verses 18-20 shift over to demands made by Paul on the Corinthians generally but especially the men in the church. The basic demand is **Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν, flee immorality!** (v. 18a). The concluding demand (v. 20) is then **ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς· δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν. for you were bought with a price; glorify indeed God in your bodies!**

In summarizing Paul's response to the report from Chloe's people in the first six chapters this needs to be

(Gundry, *Sōma*; Murphy-O'Connor). That is the meaning of *sōma* in the LXX in the vast majority of its occurrences: physical human body (sometimes even the dead body). In only seven instances it seems to have a broader connotation, meaning person as a whole (Gen 47:12; 1 Chron 28:1; 1 Esdr 3:4; Tob 11:15; 13:7; Sir 51:2; Job 33:11; see Ziesler, "Sōma". This physical sense is pressed still further by Käsemann (Essays, 129) and Byrne ("Sinning"), who stress that the physical body also provides the possibility of "personal self-communication," by which human beings are related to others and subject to the world in which they live; fornication or harlotry perverts the human faculty intended to be the instrument of intimate communication with another person.

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 32, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 262.]

said. How we think dictates how we behave ourselves! What our thinking values determines our lifestyle.

The central problem with the Corinthians in this report that Paul responds to focused on the false 'superior' wisdom of at least some in the Corinthian congregation. The Corinthians came to believe that it represented a way of understanding God's will better than what they had heard Paul talk about. But Paul saw through this phony philosophy immediately. In truth their 'superior' wisdom was nothing more than pagan thinking dictated to them from the non-Christian world around them in Corinth. It wasn't superior in any sense of the word.

Why? Look at what it produced. Most importantly it created **ἐριδες ἐν ὑμῖν, divisions among you** (1:11). That is, power pockets in the community sought control over the entire community and attempted to legitimize their claims by falsely seeking to represent the teachings of one of the well known Christian leaders, including Paul himself. This was unquestionable evidence of their complete ignorance of God's way of thinking which could best be seen in His working through the cross of Christ (1:18-25). God made His wisdom available to the Corinthians through Christ (1:26-31) but they were too blinded by their phony wisdom to see it (2:1-16), even though it was made clear in Paul's ministry to them. Consequently Paul had to deal with the Corinthians as carnal believers who were still spiritual infants years after coming to Christ (3:1-15). Although they considered themselves more spiritual than Paul, in reality they were still spiritually deformed infants long after being supposed to progress to spiritual maturity. This was the product of their 'superior' wisdom.

Another disastrous product of this phony wisdom was to create a craving for something different from the simple Gospel preached and taught them by Paul, Apollos and other apostolic based leaders (4:1-21). These men called and commissioned to preach the truths of God established in the apostolic Gospel didn't know enough. This most likely because it didn't give them room to claim Christianity and still live like pagans.

This comes to the surface in their sexual perversions (5:1-8; 9-13; 6:12-20). It also surfaced in their pettiness with disputes over utterly unimportant issues that they took to the courts (6:1-11). This is what their 'superior' wisdom got them. Paul throughout seeks to expose the wrongness of their thinking by what it produced among them. These perversions of behavior represented what dominated the pagan culture around them. Thus their 'superior' wisdom became a huge obstacle to genuine Christian transformation of life and the development of authentic Christian maturity. Non believers in Corinth could look at this mess and cor-

rectly conclude that Christianity made no meaningful difference in the life of an individual. Why bother with it then?

Before condemning the entire Christian community at Corinth, we should hear Paul's commendation of the household of Stephanas (16:15-16) who remained true to Paul's understanding of the Gospel. They are recommended by Paul as spiritually mature people whom the rest of the church at Corinth should pay close attention to. Likely also were the three members of the delegation that brought the questions from Corinth to Ephesus that Paul also commends in 16:17-18, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. There were solid believers in the church at Corinth whose leadership the house church groups should be following.

Answering questions from the Corinthian delegation, 7:1-16:18.

The above report from Chloe's people is enough to depress every Christian. But then sometime soon after the members of Chloe's household met with Paul to share what they had observed in the Corinthian church, there arrived in Ephesus a delegation from the church with a series of questions. The time gap between these two reports is unknown, although logic suggests from the sequence in the letter of Paul's response first to Chloe's report and then to the delegation that this may be the sequence of Paul's receiving these two reports.

The signals of this series of questions begins with the opening statement in 7:1, *Περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε*, **Now concerning the things that you wrote about**. The abbreviated form at the beginning of a sentence occurs in 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1; 16:12 and most likely signals a question raised by the Corinthians that Paul responds to. In the surrounding Greek literature this device is a common way to introduce a new topic with the prepositional phrase defining the topic and thus listed at the first of a sentence. When *Περὶ δὲ...* surfaces in the predict side of the sentence it looses this distinct function.

Additionally there is absolutely no systematic manner in which Paul answers their questions. He begins here with the question *καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι*, "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." In 7:25 the topic is virgins. In 8:1 it is food offered to idols. In 12:1 it is spiritual gifts; and in 16:1 the collection for the saints. The last topic in 16:12 concerns Apollos. But additional topics may very well come from the Corinthians that Paul addresses using other signaling devices.

From Paul's statement in 16:17-18, it seems likely that this delegation from Corinth was made up of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus:

17 χαίρω δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ καὶ Φορτουνάτου καὶ Ἀχαϊκοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν· 18 ἀνέπαυσαν γὰρ τὸ ἐμὸν

πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν. ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιούτους.

17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. So give recognition to such persons.

Understanding is difficult of just how the dynamic worked of questions being formulated by the various house church groups or else the circle of leaders of those groups and then individuals being chosen to take these questions to Paul in Ephesus. But in some way this was done and in the second part of the letter body of First Corinthians Paul responds to these questions.

In five instances, a clear signal is given that Paul is responding to their questions, wherever the *Περὶ δὲ...*, **Now concerning...** prepositional phrase comes at the beginning of a sentence. But other topics are also inserted, e.g., #s 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 below. It is not clear whether these were formal questions from the Corinthians, or whether these topics came up in discussion with the members of the delegation as being issues with uncertain answers in the church. Probably the latter is the case. Also to be noted is that most of the topics are broadly framed by Paul in introducing them, This opens the door for a discussion of several sub topics under each category that spin off the broad topic. Most of the time these are set off in paragraphs and/or section headings in most modern translations.

1) Concerning marriage, 7:1-24. The first topic is framed very broadly: *Περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε, καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι*, **Now concerning the things which you wrote** "it is good for a man not to touch a woman."

a) Marital Relationships, vv. 1-7.

7 *Περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε, καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι*. 2 *διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχετω καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχετω*. 3 *τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρὶ*. 4 *ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλ' ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλ' ἡ γυνή*. 5 *μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, εἰ μὴτι ἂν ἐκ συμφώνου πρὸς καιρὸν, ἵνα σχολάσητε τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε, ἵνα μὴ πειράζη ὑμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν*. 6 *τοῦτο δὲ λέγω κατὰ συγγνώμην οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν*. 7 *θέλω δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἑμαυτόν· ἀλλ' ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως*.

7 **Now concerning the matters about which you wrote:** "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." 2 But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the

7.1	δὲ	
213	καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι·	Περὶ ὧν ἐγράψατε,
7.2	δὲ	διὰ τὰς πορνείας
214	ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχέτω	
	καὶ	
215	ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχέτω.	
216	7.3 τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω,	
	δὲ	ὁμοίως
		καὶ
217	ἡ γυνὴ (τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω) τῷ ἀνδρί.	
218	7.4 ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει	
	ἄλλ'	
219	ὁ ἀνὴρ,	
	δὲ	ὁμοίως
		καὶ
220	ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει	
	ἄλλ'	
221	ἡ γυνή.	
222	7.5 μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους,	
	εἰ μήτι ἂν ἐκ συμφώνου	
	πρὸς καιρὸν,	
	ἵνα σχολάσητε τῇ προσευχῇ	
	καὶ	πάλιν
	ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε,	
	ἵνα μὴ πειράζῃ ὑμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς	
	διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν.	
7.6	δὲ	
223	τοῦτο λέγω	
	κατὰ συγγνώμην	
224	οὐ (τοῦτο λέγω)	
	κατ' ἐπιταγήν.	
	δὲ	
225	7.7 θέλω πάντα ἀνθρώπους εἶναι	ὡς καὶ ἑμαυτόν·
	ἄλλ'	
226	ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα	
	ἐκ θεοῦ,	
	ὁ μὲν οὕτως,	
	ὁ δὲ οὕτως.	

wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 This I say by way of concession, not of command. 7 I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one hav-

ing one kind and another a different kind.

First, the identification of the source of the quote is important for interpretation. Since the church father Origen it has generally been understood as a statement from the Corinthians.⁶⁶ Not many seek to argue that it is Paul's statement to the Corinthians.⁶⁷

⁶⁶“Whether the clause καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι constitutes a Pauline statement which he will modify, a question form, or a quotation from Corinth is a notorious crux. An increasing consensus inclines towards this last view, and the arguments for it carry convincing weight. Writers who view it as a quotation from Corinth include Schrage, Collins, and Lange (“ein Schlagwort der Korinthischen Schwärmer”).⁷⁹ Several specialist monographs also regard 7:1 as a quotation from Corinth.⁸⁰ This explanation of 7:1b goes back to Origen, who ascribes to a group at Corinth the stance, Ἐγὼ δύνamai ἐγκατεύεσθαι καὶ ζῆν καθαρώτερον ... τοιοῦτον τι γέγονεν ἐν κορίνθῳ ... ἔγραψαν οὖν περὶ τούτου ἐπιστολὴν οἱ ἐν κορίνθῳ τῷ ἀποστόλῳ ... (Fragment 33 [121]:8–14).⁸¹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 498.]

⁶⁷“Against this impressive array of arguments, we can find only one of modest weight, one which is relatively speculative, and one which merely modifies the force of 7:1b to attempt to interpret it as compatible with Paul's outlook.

“(a) Conzelmann argues that the use of καλὸν with the dative at 7:1, 7:8, and 7:26 establishes this as ‘Pauline style.’⁸⁷ But the phrase is too short and too readily taken up from widespread discussions in the Graeco-Roman world to be considered a specific or exclusive indicator of Paul's style. Deming carefully cuts the ground from under this argument, and examples in non-Pauline literature can be cited.

“(b) Mitchell's argument that Paul uses it as a rhetorical strategy of appearing to begin ‘on their side’ does admittedly cohere with Paul's practice of using his readers' terminology, only to redefine it or to ‘switch codes.’ But the stance changes too abruptly to perceive this as a subtle strategy at this point. She is obliged to describe his rhetoric in this case as ‘an oscillating argument,’ which in spite of Blomberg's ‘Yes, but ...’ argument, which Paul uses elsewhere, places her approach too near to Delling's in contrast to Deming's to sustain conviction.⁸⁸

“(c) Most writers who reject the view that 7:1b is a quotation follow Calvin in defining or expounding καλὸν in such a way that it virtually dies the death of a thousand qualifications as a serious statement of moral stance. Calvin believed that Paul ‘teaches first that it would be ‘good’ if every man kept away from a woman, provided that he has the power to do so. In the second place he modifies this....’⁸⁹ But how does this meet the problem that at best makes either (i) marriage or (ii) intimacy within marriage a kind of ‘second-best,’ which is at odds with Gen 2:18, which implies ‘not good’? To be sure, Calvin hastily distances himself from Jerome,





Temple of Apollo with Acrocorinth in the background

Second, what does μή ἄπτεσθαι mean? The verb ἄπτω in the active voice has the sense of lighting or starting a fire. But in the middle voice as here with ἄπτεσθαι it has the sense of taking hold of someone or something. It was widely used in Paul's time as a euphemism for sexual intercourse.⁶⁸

Thus some in Corinth seemed to feel that celibacy was the best way to prevent sinning before God in relationships with women.⁶⁹ It may very well be that the

who was 'swept off his feet by excessive zeal' and defines 'good' wholly in pragmatic terms relating to 'annoyances and responsibilities.'⁹⁰ Calvin acknowledges that in Gen 2:18 it is 'good' for a man to have the 'help' of a companion, but in these more evil days it has become 'good but only to a degree.' In other words, faced with an insoluble problem, Calvin ends up with a contrast not between 'good' and 'disadvantageous,' but between 'good' and 'good only to a degree.' But in 7:1–7 it appears that marriage or intimacy, not celibacy, is what is 'good, only to a degree.'⁹¹

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 499–500.]

⁶⁸"In the middle voice ἄπτεσθαι with the genitive means to touch or to take hold of, but it occurs widely in Greek literature as a euphemism for to have sexual intercourse with, or to have physical intimacy with (here followed by γυναικός).⁹³ In order to leave open the vexed question of whether the point at issue concerns the beginnings of such a relationship, i.e., marriage (Grosheide), or a relationship of physical intimacy within an existing marriage (Hurd), or any intimacy without specification, we translate γυναικός as with a woman (with REB, NRSV, NJB, and most English VSS), but in theory the Greek could mean with his wife. On the focus on the conduct of a man (ἄνθρωπος in contrast here to γυναικός, although often meaning a person) Conzelmann suggests that the lack of gender symmetry arises from how the question was formulated at Corinth.⁹⁴ Wolff suggests that ἄνθρωπος is used in place of ἀνὴρ to include the unmarried as well as the married.⁹⁵ Chrysostom concludes that although marriage may be 'safe and helpful to your own weakness,' in principle 'the superior course' is 'not to have any connection whatever with a woman.'⁹⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 500.]

⁶⁹One would want to note the views of Jerome and other church fathers who took this as Paul's statement and thus his advocacy of celibacy over marriage for Christians, and in particular for the Christian priesthood.

tendency of many of the men in the Corinthian church to continue frequenting the brothels after Christian conversion (chap. 6) led to this backlash among others in the church who were disgusted at the practice of these men in the church. Given the extremely perverted views of human sexuality that dominated the surrounding culture in Corinth, that confusion among Christians over what is proper and what is not should not be surprising.

Another possible dynamic was the practices of a few of the pagan religions, e.g., the worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis at her temple in Corinth, of sexual abstinence.⁷⁰ Thus religious movements coming into the city from outside a Greek cultural mentality tended to move this way. It would not then be surprising for Corinthians to raise this question about sexual abstinence regarding Christianity which also originated from the eastern part of the empire.

Paul's response directly to this basic question is found in vv. 2-7, and must be understood within the framework of the atmosphere of immorality in Corinth as he says in v. 2a, διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας, **Now because of immorality**. The extremes of immorality in ancient Corinth were notorious even across the Roman empire which itself was given over to great immorality. But recent studies have pointed out that the excessive reputation of Corinth is largely based on the rather snobbish remarks of Strabo in his *Geography*, and may reflect his bias against the city more than an honest evaluation of the moral atmosphere there.⁷¹ But the temple

⁷⁰"It may well be that sexual asceticism was 'in the air' in first-century Corinth. Literary and artifact evidence suggests that the cult of Isis, the Egyptian goddess, was celebrated in metropolitan Corinth during the imperial era. The cult of Isis was certainly practiced in the Corinthian port of Cenchreae (cf. Rom 16:1–2). The Latin poets Ovid and Propertius tell us that worship of the deity implied sexual abstinence. The satirist Juvenal writes about women who must seek forgiveness from Isis because they had engaged in sexual intercourse with their husbands (Satires 6.535–537). In regard to women who abstained from sexual intercourse Ovid writes, 'let the goddess Isis give you a pretext for denying your sexual favors' (Amores 1.8.74). Propertius suggests 'that you pretend that the days of Isis have come and require abstinence' (Elegies 4.5.28–34). Worshipers of Isis and other Egyptian deities had no monopoly on sexual abstinence for religious motives, but archaeological evidence attests to the presence of these Egyptian cults in mid-first-century Corinth. Some of them were well known for their promotion of sexual abstinence." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 253.]

⁷¹"Many commentators on the NT describe the Corinth of Paul's time as a city of unbridled sexual orgies, basing their view on certain remarks of ancient, mostly Athenian, writers and on a passage of Strabo's *Geography* referring to a thousand temple prostitutes of Aphrodite on the Acrocorinth. More recent scholarship has pointed out, however, both that the Athenian references were snobbish disparagements of the pre-146 B.C. city and that sacred prostitution was a Middle Eastern custom, not a Greek one

of Aphrodite with over a thousand female prostitutes as priestesses at its height as but one of many such worship centers in the city would not promote an atmosphere of chastity.

Paul's response begins with a general axiom (v. 2): *διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχέτω καὶ ἕκαστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχέτω.* *But because of immorality let each one have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband.* In a very unusual manner for the first century world in general, the apostle lays out a set of principles advocating marriage for both men and women.⁷² Quite interesting from the secular literature of the middle first century is that marriage was a 'hot topic' among the philosophers,⁷³ especially the Stoic philos-

at all. Corinth was probably no more or less virtuous than any other cosmopolitan port city of the Mediterranean in the first century A.D." [[Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 183. S.v., "Corinth."]

⁷²Some of the Jewish writings take a somewhat similar stance to Paul as Collins notes in his commentary:

Within the Jewish tradition it was expected that men and women should marry (cf. Gen 1:28). The testamentary literature, especially The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, suggests that one of the reasons why men and women should marry is so that they might avoid succumbing to the temptation of sexual immorality (see T. Levi 9:9–10). Paul says something similar in v. 2. The Jewish tradition had a healthy attitude toward human sexuality. This is reflected in what Paul writes. Despite its patriarchalism one aspect of the Jewish tradition that manifested relative equality between men and women was its attitude toward sexual relationships within marriage. Divorce was generally the prerogative of the male but the rabbis allowed a woman to initiate divorce proceedings if her husband refused to have sexual intercourse with her. The tradition admitted of abstinence from sexual intercourse during the menstrual period for reasons of cultic purity but it was otherwise loath to tolerate the absence of sexual relationships within marriage except for a limited time and for purposes of prayer (see T. Naph. 8:8). In his treatment of the role of sexuality within marriage Paul does not make explicit use of biblical warrants nor does he invoke rabbinic authority. That his views on human sexuality derive from a biblical anthropology is, however, indicated by his contextual use of Gen 2:24 in 6:12–20. That passage articulates a holistic anthropology on the basis of which Paul is able to respond as he does in ch. 7. The pericope began with a consideration of claims to freedom (6:12).

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 254–255.]

⁷³"In the Hellenistic world, particularly among the Stoics and Cynics, sexuality and marriage formed a classic topos. A typical thesis used as an exercise in the rhetorical schools was whether to marry (*ei gamēteon*; cf. Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata* 11; [Dionysius of Halicarnassus], *Ars rhetorica* 2.1–2). The exposition of the topos frequently focused on the use of freedom. Some urged that marriage be avoided so as to provide time for the pursuit of philosophy: thus Epictetus, who in his presentation of the ideal philosopher, a Cynic, wrote 'Look at me ... I am without a home

ophers.⁷⁴ Yet one must remember that these debates would not be going on outside of the limited circles of the educated elite to any appreciable degree. So how much they would have impacted the church in Corinth with very few members from this segment of aristocratic society is limited. But these philosophical discussions do resonate with Paul's expressed ideas here.⁷⁵

The structuring of the core principle in v. 2 is clear:

... I have neither wife nor children ... Yet, what do I lack? Am I not free?" (Discourses 3.22.47–48). On the other hand there were those who considered not only that marriage for the sake of the common wealth of the city-state was incumbent upon the good citizen but also that a wife and children lighten a man's burdens and make his life more pleasant. This is the position espoused by Antipater and Hierocles in their respective treatises "On Marriage" (Hierocles, frag. 52.26–27; 53.3, 11; Antipater, SVF 3.256.32–33)." [[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 255.]

⁷⁴"First Corinthians contains frequent hints that Paul was generally familiar with some forms of philosophic discourse. Among the issues at Corinth was the pursuit of wisdom, to the neglect of the message of the cross. A classic philosophic topos was the discussion on marriage. Paul's fellow Tarsan, the Stoic philosopher Antipater (ca. mid-second-century B.C.E.) wrote a treatise "On Marriage" (SVF 3.255.5–6) in which he taught that marriage was 'among the primary and most necessary of those things which are fitting.' Closer in time to Paul's visit to Corinth was an ongoing discussion between Stoic philosophers and the more radical Cynics on the nature and purpose of marriage. While urging the avoidance of sexual promiscuity the Stoics generally considered marriage to be of benefit to the polis and in that way to have a cosmic purpose. The Cynics, on the other hand, were more inclined to urge sexual abstinence so that greater attention could be paid to the pursuit of philosophy. The 'debates' between the Stoics and the Cynics in this regard were frequently linked to a discussion of freedom. Paul's consideration of the issues of sexual abstinence (7:1–16) and marriage (7:25–40) is likewise embedded in a lengthy section of his letter in which he treats various issues pertaining to freedom. (See 6:12 and 10:23, the encompassing 'bookends' of a literary unit, and 7:21–24, an emphatic statement on freedom in the B unit of his chiasmically structured ch. 7.)" [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 253–254.]

⁷⁵"What Paul writes about marriage and sexuality in 7:1–7 resonates with the moralists' discussion of sexuality. Some of his linguistic usage, particularly the expressions 'good for a man' (*kalon anthrōpō*) and 'similarly' (*homoios de kai*), echoes the language of the Stoics and Cynics. Marital responsibility and mutuality within the relationship are two of the motifs frequently raised in the philosophic discourse. Duty and responsibility are very important for the Stoics, but so too is mutuality in marriage. Hierocles praises the matrimonial partnership in which husband and wife hold all things in common, even one another's body and soul (frag. 54.14–27). According to Antipater spouses "not only share a partnership of property, and children ... and the soul, but these alone also share their bodies (*alla kai tōn sōmatōn houtoi monoi koinounousi*; SVF 3.255.12–18)." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 255.]



ἐκάστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἐχέτω
 let each one have his own wife
 καὶ
 and
 ἐκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἐχέτω.
 let each one have her own husband.

διὰ τὰς πορνείας
 because of immorality

The parallel imperative verb ἐχέτω is in the present tense which stresses ongoing relationship. The causal basis for both admonitions, διὰ τὰς πορνείας, applies equally to husband and wife. The influence of the mystery religions most likely stands in the background here. Public society provided intense temptation to the husband, the mystery religions with their sexual orgies provided equal temptation for wives to be unfaithful to their husbands 'legitimately' in the eyes of the general public. This should not be understood in the sense of marriage as a curb on sexual infidelity. Rather it contextually moves along as sexual fidelity in marriage is the right choice over against the destructiveness of immorality as exemplified in the general culture of Corinth.

This is Paul's response to the Corinthian view καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι, *it is well for the man not to touch a woman*. Their 'superior wisdom' was gravitating toward some of the pagan religion's view of the inherent wrongness of sexual intimacy between male and female in every situation. But Paul strongly rejects this Corinthian view in favor of the biblical view beginning in Gen. one and two of the importance of marriage between a man and a woman.⁷⁶

Verses 3-7 then amplify this basic principle in verse two. The central theme is mutuality in the relationship between a husband and a wife.

Verse 3 first applies the principle to 'conjugal rights.' τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρὶ. *The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.*⁷⁷ Clear-

⁷⁶“Against this background Paul advocates ‘a full conjugal life’ (Rosner) against the background of Gen 2:18 and the Decalogue.¹⁰⁰ Deming rightly declares, ‘The Judaeo-Christian component of his argument appears most prominently in verse 2.’¹⁰¹” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 501.]

⁷⁷As one might expect, some copyists were uncomfortable with Paul's rather blunt language here τὴν ὀφειλὴν and changed it to ὀφειλομένην εὐνοίαν to mean the husband should give back obligated favors to his wife.

The accusative ὀφειλὴν, obligation, duty, what is one's due (figuratively from debt), is without doubt the valid reading (supported by P¹¹, apparent P⁴⁶, α, A, B, C, D, F, 33, Coptic, Tertullian, Clement, Origen, Cyprian. A later reading found in K, L, many minuscules, and Syriac VSS changes the Greek to due kindness (ὀφειλομένην εὐνοίαν), thereby 'spiritualizing'

ly τὴν ὀφειλὴν includes sexual intimacy in marriage, but this meaning alone would unduly limit the range of meaning referenced by this word in such a context. Against the background of the OT principle of marriage adopted by Paul the idea stresses the sense of 'oneness,' σάρκα μίαν, (cf. Mt. 19:5) in which the couple share completely their lives with one another.

This insight is further expanded in v. 4: ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλ' ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλ' ἡ γυνή. *For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.* The precise meaning of Paul's statement here is somewhat difficult to grasp with certainty.⁷⁸ The sense of it in light of the preceding statement that this subsequent one seeks to amplify is that τὴν ὀφειλὴν, *what is owed*, to one's spouse is sharing control over each other's σώματος, *body* as the basis of physical life. While in many of the cultures

the verse in precisely the way Paul rejects. This gloss may be a misguided attempt at good taste; but it is more likely to reflect a thoroughly un-Pauline attitude to the body and to sex.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 503.]

⁷⁸“The translation of v. 4 is difficult. ἐξουσιάζω means to have a right or a power over something or someone. ὁ ἐξουσιάζων means the person in authority (Eccl 10:4–5; Luke 22:25).¹¹⁵ But we have already demonstrated that in 6:12 Paul uses a deliberate wordplay between the Corinthian slogan πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν and his reply, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπὸ τινος. To make this point we translated ‘*Liberty to do anything*’—but I will not let anything take liberties with me. The second clause, which embodies the future passive of ἐξουσιάζω, was variously translated in English VSS as *dominated by* (NRSV, NJB), *let anything make free with* (REB), or *mastered by* (NIV), while ἔξεστι, *are lawful* (NRSV), *permissible* (NJB), becomes an issue of having rights in Wire. In 7:4, therefore, NRSV translates *the wife does not have authority over her body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body but the wife does.* The REB comes nearer to our proposal with *the wife cannot claim her body as her own; it is her husband's. Equally, the husband ...*, and still nearer the NIV, *The wife's body does not belong to her alone, but also to her husband. In the same way. ...* The major issue, therefore, is whether we are justified in including NIV's *alone and also*, which corresponds with *our exclusive*. The traditional interpretation that ‘each is the other's possession’ (Edwards) is important in that the traditional concept in the ancient world that a father gives his daughter to the bridegroom as his is now qualified by the reciprocity of *mutual giving of the self: the self* (σῶμα), i.e., everything is given to the other in marriage. The husband cannot abuse the wife, for his body is no longer his own to use as he wills without her consent; the wife cannot opt out of intimacy permanently, for her body, similarly, is not (exclusively?) *hers*.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 504–505.]

of that day, such a statement regarding the necessity of the wife sharing her σώματος would have been accepted in the harshest of meaning, Paul's equal reciprocity principle here presents a genuinely Christian view of marriage as a partnership of mutual sharing of one's another's life. Neither partner possesses exclusive control over their life in exclusion to their spouse.

Verse 5-6 offer advice exclusively from Paul: *μη ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, εἰ μήτι ἂν ἐκ συμφώνου πρὸς καιρόν, ἵνα σχολάσητε τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε, ἵνα μη πειράζη ὑμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν. 6 τοῦτο δὲ λέγω κατὰ συγγνώμην οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγήν. 5 Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 This I say by way of concession, not of command.* The principle of v. 4 in no way means that one spouse owns the life of the other. This because there are times when each spouse needs control over his or her life. These personal times⁷⁹ should come out of mutual agreement and perhaps (εἰ μήτι ἂν⁸⁰) prayer (ἵνα σχολάσητε τῇ προσευχῇ⁸¹) is a major one of those occasions.⁸²

⁷⁹The verb σχολάσητε in the rare usage in a marriage context is found in the context of Cynic philosophers who express concern that marriage obligations may not leave enough time to study philosophy which should be the number one priority of every individual.

⁸⁰“The important hesitance of the construction εἰ μήτι ἂν is compromised by the omission of ἂν in P⁴⁶ and B. No allusion to this question seems to occur either in UBS4 or in Metzger's Textual Commentary (2d ed.) although Westcott-Hort place ἂν in brackets. Even more surprisingly, this (presumably) pro-ascetic omission appears to lie behind an absence of hesitancy in the NIV and REB, which adds to Fee's criticisms of NIV renderings of verses in this chapter.¹²² NRSV's *except perhaps* by is preferable to NIV, NJB, *except by*, or REB, *except when*. κ, C, D, E, and most early MSS include ἂν, and it seems more likely to have been omitted by patristic copyists than inserted by them, given attitudes found in post-Pauline traditions on this subject.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 506.]

⁸¹“To the dative τῇ προσευχῇ κ², K, L, 88, some later Syriac readings, and Chrysostom add τῇ νηστείᾳ, *fasting*. The parallel is understandable but entirely secondary. The evidence for prayer alone is overwhelming (apparent P¹¹, P⁴⁶, κ*, A, B, C, D, Ignatius, and Origen among others.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 506.]

⁸²“Given that the Stoic-Cynic context entails marital responsibilities, Deming interprets 7:5 as denoting ‘mutual consent in order ‘to have leisure’ for prayer.’¹³⁴ But we may doubt whether Paul refers solely to chronological duration. The use of time is coupled with centers of attention, or what nowadays some call ‘quality time.’ Paul perhaps says that if one has excluded certain things both from one's timetable and from one's mind (for a season) one may find unhurried time (aorist subjunctive σχολάσητε)

The couple are cautioned here against ‘robbing one another’ (μη ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους) by refusing to share themselves. This seems particularly directed against some in the Corinthian church being influenced by the no physical contact teachings of the surrounding culture.⁸³ The apostle is convinced that failure to follow this guideline can lead to spiritual harm: ἵνα μη πειράζη ὑμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν, *lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-restraint*. At first it seems that Paul is saying inability to mutually agree on individual times by husband and wife may give an opening for Satan to tempt a couple by appealing to their physical desire for one another. It seems doubtful that Paul's point is that such individual times should not extend themselves too long chronologically as some interpreters understand.⁸⁴ But in reality it is the inability to reach mutual agreement for individual times that opens the door for Satan.

In v. 6, Paul makes one of the more puzzling statements found in his writings: τοῦτο δὲ λέγω κατὰ συγγνώμην οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγήν, *now this I say from permission not from command*. An amazing variety of interpretations of this statement exist.⁸⁵ Important here is the intended

in the sense of quality and duration for prayer. This would place the issue on an entirely different footing from David Balch's appeal to Philo's *Life of Moses* for the view that ascetic abstinence promotes the capacity for revelations and visions.¹³⁵ A better parallel is the notion of abstinence for prayer ‘at the proper time’ (καιρός) in *Testament of Naphtali* 2:9–10. Many writers draw attention to the importance of this parallel.¹³⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 508–509.]

⁸³“A significant number at Corinth were already claiming that spiritual priorities took precedence over physical intimacy, whether or not we accept Wire's particular version of this hypothesis as that of the status, freedom, and ‘rights’ of Corinthian women prophets.¹²⁷” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 507.]

⁸⁴This view is based upon taking the second ἵνα clause to play off the verb σχολάσητε in the first ἵνα clause. But grammatically both ἵνα clauses modify ἀποστερεῖτε in the main clause. Satan's open door to tempt comes when the couple cannot agree on individual times from each other.

⁸⁵“This verse may appear to be too short and innocent to require more than the briefest of comments. But considerable energy has been exhausted on debating the scope of the application of τοῦτο in the first part of the verse, τοῦτο δὲ λέγω κατὰ συγγνώμην. NRSV, REB, NIV, and NJB render συγγνώμην concession, and we cannot improve on this. The etymological history of the word illustrates the image of knowing (γνώμη) with (συν- or συγ-), i.e., by mutual consent. This actually looks back, we shall argue, to the mutual agreement in v. 5b. But five views of τοῦτο have been advocated: (i) that it refers to the whole of vv. 2–5; (ii) that it alludes to v. 2; (iii) that it concerns the intimacy of v. 5a or the whole of v. 5; (iv) that it directly applies to the clause of hesitancy which ends

reference in the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο, *this*. The most natural reference grammatically and contextually is the principle expressed in v. 5 on coming to mutual agreement on individual time inside a marriage. Their inability to come to agreement on this opens the door for Satan. But Paul sees here a practical advice which he has no direct word from the Lord either through apostolic tradition or direct revelation from Christ Himself. That is, Christ never addressed this specific issue in any of His teachings, So what Paul offers is advice coming out of the wisdom of observing life and how it works inside a marriage.⁸⁶ Interesting is the unusual word for command used by Paul here, ἐπιταγήν. It is a broad, generalized word as opposed to the more intense ταγή, *a decree*, and the verbal root τάσσω, *appoint*, rather than τάγμα. All this suggests that Paul realizes he is stepping into grayish territory in husband wife relations and doesn't have an absolute direction to follow in giving directions for helping a husband and wife develop the deeper relationship that God desires for them. But it is convinced that celibacy inside a marriage is clearly against the will of God as reflected in the Law of Moses. And also that Christian marriage is a true partnership of both husband and wife sharing themselves with each other. In the pagan society of Corinth with its extremes of unbridled immorality on one side and total celibacy inside marriage on the other, the Christian way is the far superior approach to a healthy marriage spiritually, emotionally, and every other way. For the Corinthian church to follow this path would open many doors of positive witness to the pagan world around them.

Paul's preference is expressed in v. 7a and his acknowledgement of life in 7b: θέλω δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἐμαυτόν· ἀλλ' ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως. *I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind.* First his preference. His desire for every Christian is to be as he is. And what was that? Most likely it is alluded to in v. 8a τοῖς ἀγάμοις, *to the unmarried*. At minimum at the time of the writing of this letter Paul was not married. And it is highly doubtful that he had ever been married, despite a long standing, now debunked view that all Pharisees had to be married as a requirement. Also very unlikely is that Paul was a widower even though his speaking to τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις, *the unmarried and the widows*, has been taken to imply this (v. 8). His later comments in vv.

v. 5, from εἰ μήτι ἄν only; and (v) that τοῦτο points forward to what follows. Winter advocates this fifth view forcefully." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 510.]

⁸⁶Since from all indication Paul was not marriage, and most likely never married, he observed this in the lives of Christian couples rather than had personal experience for a basis of his advice.

32-35 most likely reflect his own personal circumstance on the positive side.⁸⁷

b) To the unmarried and the widows, vv. 8-9.

8 Λέγω δὲ τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις, καλὸν αὐτοῖς ἐὰν μείνωσιν ὡς καγώ· 9 εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμησάτωσαν, κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι.

8 *To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am.* 9 *But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.*

	7.8	δὲ
227		λέγω τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις,
228		καλὸν (ἐστὶν) αὐτοῖς
		ἐὰν μείνωσιν ὡς καγώ·
	7.9	δὲ
		εἰ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται,
229		γαμησάτωσαν,
		γάρ
230		κρεῖττον ἐστὶν γαμῆσαι
		ἢ
		πυροῦσθαι .

In verse 8, Paul sets up a distinctive topic signaler: λέγω δὲ τοῖς, *Now I speak to....* As another signal of a new direction in v. 10, the essence of this new topic signal is repeated as τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω, *Now to the married I encourage....* The third parallel signal comes in v. 12, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς λέγω, *Now to the rest I say....* In vv. 17-24m the structuring of this indicates a summarizing of the discussion from v. 1 to v. 16. V. 17 presents this as an introductory topic statement, εἰ μὴ ἐκάστω ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος, ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, οὕτως περιπατεῖτω. *However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you.* Then Paul depicts it as his teaching in the churches, καὶ οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι. *And thusly I stress among all the churches.* Then the major topic shift signal surfaces in v. 25 with Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων, *And concerning virgins....*

What emerges here is how Paul often structures his discussion of specific topics. The broad topic of καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι, *It is good for a man to not touch a woman* (v. 1), is what the Corinthians raised in their letter to Paul, Περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε, *Now concerning what you wrote.* The common grammatical pattern throughout signaling sub topic shifts is what is placed in the sentence pre-field. That is, what comes at the very beginning of the sentence. It is either a main topic definer with the preposition Περὶ followed by a descrip-

⁸⁷The later tendency among some church fathers (but not all) to see Paul advocating a celebrate priesthood here have no basis in the Corinthian text and reflect the search for a proof text to justify an already existing viewpoint by these church fathers.

tive genitive case noun.⁸⁸ Or it is the indirect object in the prefield of the verb having to do with Paul speaking that is followed by a statement of principle, as in vv. 8, 10, 12. These structures form a secondary listing of topics underneath the major topic indicator. In modern western outlining patterns you have is a I. followed by subdivisions A., B., C. etc.

But one must avoid the western mind-set of assuming that the broad topic (= I., II., et al) is simply subdivided into multiple subparts (=A., B., C., etc). That is, each subunit is a small chunk of the main unit. The total of the sub units should then equal the main topic. This is how we Westerners were taught to properly outline speeches, papers etc. in middle school. But the ancient world did not think in this way.⁸⁹ The broad topic merely served as a launch pad for the sub units to project their own individualized directions. Sometimes the logical connection of a sub topic to the main topic is very minimal. The reasoning here usually was to attack the main topos from a variety of angles either to validate it or to expose it as incorrect. This is exactly how Paul goes here in vv. 1-24. But other options for development of ideas also existed in Paul's world as well. How one developed a topic depended upon the purpose behind the discussion of it and the creative skills of the speaker/writer.

Here he begins with the Corinthian's question over celibacy and talks about marital obligations to one's spouse (vv. 1-7). Next he addresses the unmarried and widows (vv. 8-9). This is followed by speaking to the married (vv. 10-11) Then "to the rest" (vv. 12-16). Then his discussion is concluded with summarizing statements in vv. 17-24. As is obvious the beginning issue of celibacy is nothing but a launch pad for Paul to speak to what he perceives as related topics important for the Corinthians.

The core principle to the unmarried and widows is set forth at the outset (v. 8): λέγω δὲ τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις, καλὸν αὐτοῖς ἔάν μείνωσιν ὡς ἐγώ, **Now I say to the unmarried and to the widows: it is good for them if they remain as I am.**

To the unmarried and widows Paul expresses the preference that they continue on in 'unmarriedness.' This is the assumption from the way Paul frames the statement, and then expands on it in what follows. Some commentators have wrongly understood the masculine τοῖς ἀγάμοις and the feminine ταῖς χήραις, as referring to unmarried men and widowed women. A

⁸⁸The case of the nominal used with the preposition is important because multiple cases can be used with Περὶ, each with distinctive meanings. The genitive case noun in the descriptive function is the exclusive signal of a coming topic of discussion.

⁸⁹The manuals of rhetoric from Aristotle in the 4th century BCE to Quintilian in the 1st century AD discuss a wide variety of options at this point, usually under to subject of topos.

variety of highly questionable views have emerged.⁹⁰ The two references should be taken as broad and inclusive of both genders who either have never been married or have lost their spouse through death. The common point between them is that they now are without a marital spouse, as is Paul, no matter what the reason may be.

In the Greco-Roman society of Corinth substantial pressure was put upon widows to remarry quickly after losing their spouse.⁹¹ Most likely the expression τοῖς

⁹⁰"Since unmarried women constitute a particular category for advice in v. 25, some have suggested that the masculine plural dative τοῖς ἀγάμοις means unmarried men, rather than those who are not married of both sexes, and that this is complemented by the feminine category ταῖς χήραις. But it is more likely that either (a) the masculine is gender-inclusive here, and that Paul states a generalizing principle which is subject to qualifications and to case situations to which he will return, or (b) that the term denotes widowers, in spite of the claim that the term is 'not to be rendered 'widowers' as though corresponding to ταῖς χήραις.'¹⁶¹ Deming applies the verse to "those who have been previously married and are now single."¹⁶² Both he and Schrage cite the use of ἀγάμος for someone formerly married but now separated in 7:11 (less clearly, also 7:34). Fee concedes: 'What Paul intended is not clear... One cannot be sure either to whom this is addressed or what is the exact nature of the exception in v. 9.'¹⁶³ In the end, however, Fee favors the view advocated by Deming, Collins, and Schrage on the ground that Greek seldom used the rare word for widower, and that throughout the chapter Paul discusses gender situations 'in mutuality' some dozen times: 'on balance, 'widower' seems to be the best understanding of the word here.'¹⁶⁴ Probably the balance of writers, however, adopt the other view.¹⁶⁵ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 515.]

⁹¹"An important volume, *A History of Women in the West* (1992), includes a very useful essay, "Body Politics in Ancient Rome," by Aline Rousselle.¹⁶⁶ Citing numerous ancient sources, she argues that in higher (and probably other) ranks in Roman society 'a widow was expected to remarry within a year' (my italics), 'a divorcee within six months.'¹⁶⁷ Pressures on both men and women to remarry were imposed by four considerations: issues about acquiring property; the procreation of not less than three children; the use of marriage (or remarriage) to enhance status; and the low life-expectancy of women ('twenty to thirty years'), especially connected with instances of death in childbirth.¹⁶⁸ These factors mean that the issue of 'whether to marry' or 'whether to have physical intimacy' was a much larger and more widespread issue for widowers and widows than we can easily comprehend today if we merely project our modern situation back into the Graeco-Roman world.¹⁶⁹ Further, the attitude toward remarriage and children changed during the early years of the Empire under Augustus and Tiberius, when concern was expressed about a decline in birth-rate of the higher ranks of Roman society. At Corinth it may have been bound up with social as well as ascetic factors to determine what policy the church might or might not adopt." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 515-516.]

ἀγάμοις is broad and inclusive of all unmarried, men or women. Perhaps implying never having been married. But the feminine ταῖς χήραις may focus attention on the widowed women but not exclude widowed men as well. Because of such drastically different social dynamics on these groups of people in first century Corinth from modern western societies it is difficult to know precisely whom Paul had in mind with these two terms.⁹²

In the initial amplifying statement in v. 9, Paul qualifies his core principle: εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμησάτωσαν, **But if they do not practice self control, let them get married.** To this group of ‘unmarrieds’ Paul signals an alternative to remaining unmarried: εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμησάτωσαν, **But is they do not keep self control, let them marry.** He then provides a motivation (γάρ) for this alternative: κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι, **for it is better to marry than to be burned.**

Marriage is clearly a legitimate option for these individuals. But the scenario out of which it becomes the best choice has occasioned all kinds of interpretive viewpoints.⁹³ Proper understanding of the verbs ἐγκρατεύονται and πυροῦσθαι are key to grasping what Paul has in mind. In the other use of ἐγκρατεύομαι⁹⁴ out of the two NT uses in 1 Cor. 9:25, Paul uses it in a figure of speech in regard to an athlete, πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄφθαρτον. **Athletes**

⁹²“Unfortunately, what Paul himself intended is not clear.” [Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 287.]

⁹³“Traditional translations of this verse [9] have given rise to a phrase which K. C. Russell uses as a title for a short research article on it: ‘That Embarrassing Verse in First Corinthians.’¹⁷³ The two difficulties which contribute to embarrassment are (i) the translation of οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται as *if they cannot control themselves* (NIV), or *if they cannot exercise self-control* (RSV, NJB) and (ii) the translation of πυροῦσθαι as *to be aflame with passion* (NRSV); *burn with passion* (NIV); or *burn* (AV/KJV). In popular thought these suggest that Paul ranks marriage as little more than a remedy for a strong sex drive which cannot be controlled. A crude transplant into the world of our own day might perceive it as a recipe for a two-tier system in which those who cannot control themselves forestall a series of extramarital affairs by remarriage, while a stalwart band of disciplined believers doggedly pursues celibacy.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 516–517.]

⁹⁴This is part of a word group in the NT: ἐγκράτεια (ἀκρασία), ἐγκρατής (ἀκρατής), ἐγκρατεύομαι.

The word group ἐγκρατ- takes its sense from the stem κρατ-, which denotes power or lordship, and which expresses the power or lordship which one has either over oneself or over something

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:339.]

exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. The standard Greek meaning is behind these two instances. In the chapter seven use the idea is self-control over one’s life. But does the second verbal πυροῦσθαι, **to burn**, shift the meaning more narrowly to burning with sexual desire? But is this Paul’s meaning here?⁹⁵ Given the larger con-

⁹⁵“These explanations have not found general favour. Blomberg describes NIV’s burn with passion as ‘probably correct (cf. Paul’s burning with indignation in 2 Cor. 11:9).’ Then he adds: ‘But it could just possibly mean ‘burn in hell’ and be parallel to 1 Cor. 6:9–10.’¹⁷⁶ Both interpretations could appeal to Jewish traditions. Burning in judgment, Fee notes, resonates with 1 Cor 3:15 and perhaps m. Aboth 1:5; but burning with passion runs parallel to 2 Cor. 11:29 and also Sir. 23:17 (LXX). To be consumed with passion ‘seems more likely’ here.¹⁷⁷ Barrett and Conzelmann write before the appearance of the two articles and do not consider the possibility. Orr and Walther reject Barré as ‘not convincing.’¹⁷⁸ Lange and Schrage consider a possible link with 3:13, but only to reject the notion.¹⁷⁹ Perhaps only G. F. Snyder fully and firmly endorses than to burn in the endtime.¹⁸⁰

“In fact, πυροῦσθαι as the fires of penalty was considered by Tertullian (c. AD 208). It harmonizes better with Paul’s thought, Tertullian believes, ‘to take forethought for the fires of penalty.’¹⁸¹ But Tertullian holds the very view that is described as ‘embarrassing.’ He believes that marriage obstructs prayer and the study of Scripture, and dissipates energies in the responsibilities of a home and children. The ideal is the companionship (or useful help) of ‘an aged pious widow’ who will not rouse any passion to forsake celibacy.¹⁸² The interpretation of Barré and Russell leaves the difficulty as before, unless it is treated as mere rhetorical shock tactic.

“We may move forward more constructively in two ways. First, in our introduction to this chapter we noted the positive views of R. B. Ward, Colin Brown, and others (in effect following Origen) about sexual intimacy in marriage as God-given (see details above). Second, it is helpful to explore the meaning of ἐγκρατεύονται. Although very frequently, and especially in Gal 5:23, ἐγκράτεια means self-control, as many writers observe the verb in this verse is a straightforward present indicative and hardly justifies if they cannot control themselves (NIV) or cannot exercise self-control (NJB).¹⁸³ ἐγκράτεια has a long history in Greek, hellenistic, and Roman philosophy from Plato to the first-century Cynic and Stoic traditions. It appears to have been introduced by Socrates (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.5.4), and Plato uses it to mean judicious moderation in contrast to over-indulgence or unrestrained self-gratification in matters of food or sex (*Republic* 3.390).¹⁸⁴ But to negate the verb ἐγκρατεύονται does not imply that self-control has collapsed. It denotes the absence of the power to rank one’s feelings in relation to strict goal, for which Paul transparently uses the image of ἐγκράτεια in 1 Cor 9:25. Pfitzner discusses its significance at length. It ‘provides an illustration of the Apostle’s principal [sic]: everything for the sake of the Gospel—including the right use of his liberty in the renunciation of his rights.’¹⁸⁵

“In 7:9 Paul envisages a couple for whom mutual love has become so powerful a force that it distracts them from ‘everything for the sake of the gospel’ when they are dominated by unfulfilled longing. Deming astutely points to a parallel in Epictetus where the norm for the Cynic philosopher of ‘everything for the sake of philosophy’ simply cannot work in the case of a particular individual because ‘out of passionate love’ (ἐξ ἔρωτος) he is distracted



text of vv. 1-24 the likelihood is somewhat broader than just sexual intimacy is intended by the apostle here. The general axiom of v. 17 sets something of a context here: ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, **let each one live as God has called them**. Whether living in marriage or celibacy, each believer must find God's will and follow it. If the physical and emotional needs of marriage are strong, then the individual should get married.

c) To the married, vv. 10-11.

10 Τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλ' ὁ κύριος, γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ χωρισθῆναι, 11 — ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῆ, μενέτω ἄγαμος ἢ τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγήτω, — καὶ ἄνδρα γυναῖκα μὴ ἀφιέναι.

10 To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

7.10	δὲ		
231	Τοῖς γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω,		
232	οὐκ ἐγὼ		
	ἀλλ'		
233	ὁ κύριος,		
			γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ χωρισθῆναι,
7.11	δὲ		
	ἐὰν καὶ χωρισθῆ,		
234	μενέτω ἄγαμος		
	ἢ		
235	τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγήτω,		καὶ
			ἄνδρα γυναῖκα μὴ ἀφιέναι.

The core principle here in γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ χωρισθῆναι,⁹⁶ **a wife not to be divorced from her husband** whether he marries or not; indeed, he will have to adopt the former course if any philosophy is to be done.¹⁸⁶ The traditional notion of persons who cannot control themselves (NIV) conveys the wrong idea. We suggest if they do not have power over their passions, i.e., to devote themselves to more fundamental priorities. Power also resonates with the word history of κρατέω, to take into custody, to take hold of and grasp, with ἐν, of the person's inner attitude or mind-set. κράτος simply means power. κρεῖττον has now become self-explanatory: it invites the act of getting married denoted by the third plural aorist imperative γαμησάτωσαν (an ingressive or incipient aorist)."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 517–519.]

⁹⁶“In place of the majority reading χωρισθῆναι (aorist passive infinitive) A, D, F, and G read χωρίζεσθαι (present infinitive). Some argue that the aorist is ‘more usual after verbs of commanding,’ whereas Fee speaks of ‘the more difficult aorist passive’ read by P¹¹ (apparent), κ, B, and C.¹⁸⁷ To compound the issue, P⁴⁶ reads χωρίζεσθε (present imperative), which transposes the charge from indirect speech to direct speech. Either the aorist intelligibly calls attention to initiating a separation or the present understandably stresses the state of being separated. Since the aorist passive prob-

ably carries a middle-voice sense here, we cannot employ the well-known *difficilior lectio probabilior dictum*. The present imperative would require a different translation, into direct speech, but this is the less probable reading.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 519.]

band, is couched not as Paul's advice as with vv. 8-9, παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ, **I encourage, not I**, but instead as the Lord's words ἀλλ' ὁ κύριος. Where did Paul hear these words from the Lord? The teachings of Christ on marriage found in Mark 10:1-12, and Matthew 19:12, as well as in Mt. 5:31-32 // Lk. 16:18, did not come into written expression until fifteen to twenty-five years after the writing of First Corinthians. This teaching of Paul comes either from his interpretation of the oral traditions about Jesus in circulation prior to the written gospels, or else from direct revelation from Christ. Paul doesn't specify which simply because how he received it is unimportant to him.

Critical background understandings are important here. In Jewish tradition, only a husband could divorce his wife as the texts in Matthew reflect also in the teachings of Jesus to Jewish Christian audiences in the first gospel. In the Greco-Roman societies a woman could divorce her husband but it was much more

complex for her than for the husband to divorce his wife, as is reflected in both Mark especially and Luke slightly which were targeting non-Jewish Christian audiences outside Palestine. Also in the Jewish setting, divorce consisted only of the husband writing out a formal '**bill of divorce-ment**' and handing it to the wife as she was ejected

out of the home with only the dowry she had brought into the marriage. But in Greco-Roman traditions, usually a minimal legal process through a magistrate was required in order to formally settle issues of dowry.⁹⁷

ably carries a middle-voice sense here, we cannot employ the well-known *difficilior lectio probabilior dictum*. The present imperative would require a different translation, into direct speech, but this is the less probable reading.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 519.]

⁹⁷“In the Roman world of the first century divorce was undertaken both frequently and often for selfish, trivial reasons. (See the introduction to ch. 7 above and the earlier “Note.”) Thus Seneca scornfully parodies women ‘who mark the years not by changing Censors but by the acquisition of a new husband.’³¹⁹ The Stoic ideal expressed by Musonius is that nature has implanted a desire for union between male and female ‘to devise a way of life in common,’ in which marriage and the household is like a boundary wall or defense wall around a city.³²⁰ Nevertheless, in practice, as Yarbrough observes, ‘Divorce ... was exceedingly frequent.’³²¹ Expectations were often beyond reality and led to frustration. Thus Callicratidas advises men to choose a younger wife who ‘can be easily moulded and ... docile,’ while Plutarch replies to the man who has a pref-



This unless both sides agreed on the settlement themselves. Unfaithfulness in marriage by the wife was relatively common in the Greco-Roman patterns and created all kinds of responses.⁹⁸ Marriage, divorce, and remarriage often were stepping stones to high social status and this defined one's value in society. Women of power especially used this process in the non-Jewish world of Corinth.

Given the nature of 'divorce' in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman societies, no distinction existed between the modern western ideas of 'separation' and 'divorce,'

reference for homosexual love, complaining that a wealthy woman is determined "to command and to dominate him," that even "a decent woman can be disagreeable and a poor woman can subject a man to her."³²² The idealized portrayals of a wife whose qualities included 'loyalty, obedience, affability, reasonableness, industry in working wool, religion without superstition, sobriety of attire, modesty of appearance' must have raised expectations which could only be a source of mutual strain.³²³ In funeral inscriptions the phrase 'she never caused anyone grief' became so conventional that 'sine ulla querella' could be understood simply by abbreviation as 's. u. q.'

"Failure to give and to receive such theoretical ideals might therefore be construed as implying a 'failed' or 'abnormal' marriage, which could supposedly invite divorce. It is against such a background that we must understand Paul's deeper understanding of marriage as a bond which is not to be dissolved at will. Thus a believer who is already married to an unbelieving spouse does not have grounds thereby to seek or to initiate separation or divorce (1 Cor 7:10–14). Nevertheless, if the unbelieving spouse perceives this as grounds for divorce, it is no use denying this (7:15), although this remains a last resort (7:16). Realism accepts what cannot be changed without damage (cf. vv. 17–24, on which see exegesis below)."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 540–541.]

⁹⁸"More fundamental than these speculations, however, is the contrast between the seriousness of marriage for Jesus and for Paul, and the ease with which divorce and remarriage could occur in the Roman world. Admittedly, exceptions can readily be found in the Roman world, but these tend to be exceptions that prove the rule. Thus Seneca speaks tenderly of his wife Paulina of long years and describes unchastity as 'the greatest evil of our time.'²⁰⁴ But the absence of this vice in his wife makes her almost unique, and is regarded as old-fashioned by her contemporaries.²⁰⁵ Few women seem 'to blush at divorce,' and many 'reckon their years not by the number of consuls but by the number of their husbands. They leave home in order to marry, and marry in order to divorce.'²⁰⁶ Similarly, Paul's other near-contemporary Stoic thinker Musonius Rufus praises a wife's stable marriage.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, we see from Tacitus that divorce in the Julio-Claudian period and the time of Nero was widespread and readily enacted for a wide range of reasons including social aspiration and personal taste.²⁰⁸ Witherington and Cantarella remind us, again, that the performative utterance *tuas res tibi habeto* amounted to a legally recognized act of divorce.²⁰⁹ (See fuller "Extended Note" with further details after 7:16, below.)" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 522.]

In fact the term often translated divorce such as here χωρίζω (cf. vv. 10, 11, 15) strictly means 'to separate.' But without any significant legal process in place, when a spouse left (either voluntarily or by coercion) the home to live elsewhere, this constituted a 'divorce' which was formalized only with either the Jewish 'bill of divorcement' given by the husband, or the settling up of dowry issues that were first brought into the marriage by the guardians of both parties.

The modern varying definitions of divorce reflect in westernized Christian tradition the impact of the Roman Catholic sacrament of marriage requiring the action of the priest to formalize a marriage, and/or the presence of the existing government in regulation of marriage in the name of stability for society. Thus terminating the marriage now requires formal action through government authority.

None of these structures existed in the first century world, either in Judaism nor in Greco-Roman culture. Marriage was seen as a family affair and the termination of it also was a family issue focused mainly at the point of the settlement of the dowry first put up. These terms were within the framework of what ever guidelines were agreed upon in the marriage contract. No set or standardized guidelines for this existed in the ancient world, as a careful study of the still existing marriage contracts from that world illustrate. It was purely a matter of the negotiating skills of both fathers who first set up the contract between themselves for their children.

Additionally to be noted is the core verb παραγγέλλω, **I encourage**. This principle is not set forth as a rigid code, since vv. 12-17 will deal with an exception to the principle stated here.⁹⁹ Paul reflects the principle behind the ancient Jewish bill of divorcement in [Deut. 24:1-3](#) (cf. also [Isa. 50:1](#)), where human frailty in living up to the expectation of the marriage commitments was ac-

⁹⁹Many commentators ignore the clear meaning of παραγγέλλω of giving encouragement and read instead into it the sense of ἐντέλλομαι / ἐντολή. Typically their discussion here shifts from admonitions to live by certain objectives, to adherence to rigid codes. Even casuistic language is sometimes injected into Paul's discussion. Interestingly when Paul goes 'against his code' (vv. 10-11) in vv. 12-16, the apostle is seen as contradicting himself. Or else, contradicting the 'Lord's command.'

It is quite clear that such commentators have no understanding of the human experience of divorce from either a Christian or non-Christian view. Some honest study of the ethical nature of commands and rules both in the ancient, as well as the modern, world would do wonders in clarifying what goes on both in Paul and Jesus inside the NT. Religious legalism did not exist either in Judaism or early Christianity, but clearly does in contemporary Christianity.

Paul's other use of the verb in 1 Cor. 11:17 carries the sense of instructions: Τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινώ..., **Now concerning this instruction I do not praise you.**



knowledged.

The stated principle γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ χωρισθῆναι, *wife not be separated from husband*, assumed the wife’s perspective, although mutuality of responsibility is clearly stated in the expansion of verse 11. Paul in the context of vv. 1-24 urges the Corinthians to stay put in established relationships. This is unquestionably the goal.

The expansion of the principle in v. 11 urges those who have separated from their spouse to seek to keep the door open for reconciliation: ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῆ, μενέτω ἄγαμος ἢ τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγῆτω, *and should she even be separated let her remain unmarried or let her be reconciled to her husband*. The Jewish background here is clear that asserted, if a divorced woman remarried or entered into sexual intimacy with another man, she could never be reconciled to her first husband. He doesn’t go this far, but the Jewish background of some within the Corinthian church would be in mind. Assuming contextually here from what follows in vv. 12-17, that both spouses are professing Christians, his goal is to preserve the stability of the marriage of two Christians, if at all possible.

d) To the rest, vv. 12-16.

12 Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος· εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον καὶ αὕτη συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ’ αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἀφιέτω αὐτήν· 13 καὶ γυνὴ εἴ τις ἔχει ἄνδρα ἄπιστον καὶ οὗτος συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ’ αὐτῆς, μὴ ἀφιέτω τὸν ἄνδρα. 14 ἡγίασται γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ ἡγίασται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ· ἐπεὶ ἄρα τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀκάθαρτά ἐστιν, νῦν δὲ ἅγια ἐστίν. 15 εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται, χωριζέσθω· οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφὴ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις· ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός. 16 τί γὰρ οἶδας, γυναί, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις; ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις;

12 To the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all

you know, you might save your wife.

7.12 δὲ
Τοῖς λοιποῖς λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος·
 εἰ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον καὶ αὕτη συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ’ αὐτοῦ,
μὴ ἀφιέτω αὐτήν·
 7.13 καὶ
γυνὴ
 εἰ τις ἔχει ἄνδρα ἄπιστον καὶ οὗτος συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ’ αὐτῆς,
μὴ ἀφιέτω τὸν ἄνδρα.
 7.14 γὰρ
ἡγίασται ὁ ἀνὴρ
 ὁ ἄπιστος
 ἐν τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ
ἡγίασται ἡ γυνὴ
 ἡ ἄπιστος
 ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ·
 ἐπεὶ ἄρα τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀκάθαρτά ἐστιν,
 δὲ
 νῦν ἅγια ἐστίν.
 7.15 δὲ
 εἰ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται,
χωριζέσθω·
οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφὴ (οὐ δεδούλωται)
 ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις·
 δὲ
 ἐν εἰρήνῃ
κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός.
 7.16 γὰρ
τί οἶδας,
 γυναί,
 εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις;
 ἢ
τί οἶδας,
 ἄνερ,
 εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις;

In this section Paul deals with one scenario in which maintaining the marriage becomes unforeseeable. Not to be forgotten is the core issue of total celibacy advocated by some at Corinth (v. 1). This scenario here grows out of that situation and teaching. The structure of his expression is relatively easy to identify. In verse 12a he introduces the subjects and indicates that this advice comes from him rather than directly from the Lord: Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος, *Now to the*

rest I say, not the Lord.... In the oral tradition of Jesus' teachings on marriage, this particular scenario was not treated and so Paul offers his practical advice. In vv. 12b-13, he depicts the scenario under consideration. Then with γὰρ he expands on the scenario in vv. 14-16.

The advice, vv. 12b-13 εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον καὶ αὕτη συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἀφιέτω αὐτήν· καὶ γυνὴ εἴ τις ἔχει ἄνδρα ἄπιστον καὶ οὗτος συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτῆς, μὴ ἀφιέτω τὸν ἄνδρα. *If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is pleased to live with him, let him not leave her; and the wife if any has an unbelieving husband and this one is pleased to live with her, let her not leave her husband.* This more literal translation captures more correctly the sense of Paul's statement. Note first the mutuality of the dual expression that balances out both sides of a marriage. Obviously here Paul has in mind the non-Jewish setting of most of the members of the Corinthian church, since leaving one's husband would not have been a Jewish wife's option. Whether the so-called 'mixed marriage' was more of an issue among the Gentile members than among the Jewish members is not clear. But among the believers evidently some were very uncertain about continuing their marriage¹⁰⁰ after becoming a believer when their spouse did not follow them in commitment to Christ.¹⁰¹ In connection to the thinking in terms of total celibacy for all Christians as being advocated inside the Corinthian church (v. 1), one can more clearly understand the dilemma here for the Christian inside the 'mixed marriage.'

One should note the use of the first class conditional protasis εἴ τις... which assumes instances of this scenario occurring at Corinth. This stands in contrast to the ἐὰν καὶ... concessive protasis in verse 11 which presents a hypothetical scenario, rather than an assumed one. Thus Paul is not sure whether Christian wives have separated from their husbands (v. 11). But the mixed marriage of Gentile believers feeling pressure from the celibacy teaching in the church to separate from their unbelieving spouse is assumed to be present at Corinth as Paul responds to it.

What Paul sets forth here is a continued rebuke of

¹⁰⁰Note the literal meanings of two key terms here: χωρίζω (vv. 10-11), *to separate* and ἀφήμι (vv. 11-13) *to leave*. The aorist passive infinitive μὴ χωρισθῆναι is usually ignored by translators. But the sense here is of a completed action of separation caused by someone or something beyond the individual. But the aorist infinitive μὴ ἀφιέναι, *not to leave*, taken by the individual as a specific action and the present imperative μὴ ἀφιέτω, *let him/her not leave*, specifics an continuing departure.

¹⁰¹Although some believers could have possibly married unbelievers after making their confession of faith, given the circumstances of arranged marriages etc. in first century Corinth, the scenario envisioned by Paul centers on one spouse becoming a Christian after being married and then questioning whether the marriage to an unbeliever should be continued or not.

the celibacy teaching in the instance of mixed marriages. The believer, whether wife or husband, in such marriages should not feel any compulsion to terminate the marriage because of their Christian commitment. The option of termination of the marriage in this situation depends solely upon the unbeliever side συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ / αὐτῆς, *if he/she is pleased to continue living with him/her*. And this statement comes as the second part of the first class conditional protasis, εἴ τις..., and thus assumes the willingness of the unbeliever to continue the marriage. Most likely this will have been the case in the vast majority of such instances. It is very doubtful that any unbeliever would have terminated the marriage to a believer, unless the believer bought into the false teaching on celibacy going on in parts of the church at Corinth. But in the protasis Paul assumes the believer has rejected this false teaching, and thus no reason exists for terminating the marriage.

The rationale, vv. 14-16. 14 ἡγιασται γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικί καὶ ἡγιασται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ.¹⁰² ἐπεὶ ἄρα τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀκάθαρτά ἐστιν, νῦν δὲ ἁγία ἐστιν. 15 εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται, χωριζέσθω· οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφή ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις· ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός. 16 τί γὰρ οἶδας, γυναίκα, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις; ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις; *14 For the unbelieving husband can become dedicated to the Lord by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the brother. Consequently your children would be unclean but now could be holy. 15 But if the unbelieving husband separates himself, let him be separated; not bound is the brother or sister in such instances; and God has called us to be in peace. 16 For what do you know, wives, whether you might deliver your husband? Or what do you know, husbands, whether you might deliver your wife?*

This is likely the most misunderstood and misinterpreted passage in all of First Corinthians. The most common interpretation of it pits Paul's interpretation of

^{102*}For symmetry, ἐν τῇ γυναικί would expect not ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ but ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ. Hence it is not surprising that \aleph^2 , D^2 , and some Syriac readings make this expected change. But ἀδελφῷ is the original reading, and is well supported by P⁴⁶, \aleph^* , A, B, C, D*, 33 et al. (b) The Western D, F, and G and the Vulgate add the gloss τῇ πιστῇ to γυναικί for the same kind of reason. It explicates the meaning, but was absent from most early MSS.

"Among the English translations REB and Barrett render through his Christian wife, as the gloss in D, F, and G seems to require. This is Paul's meaning, since it mirrors τῷ ἀδελφῷ, her Christian husband. The dividing line between translation and interpretation is fine and never clear-cut, but since the best Greek MSS have only τῇ γυναικί we have resorted (probably for the only time), to inserting Christian in square brackets to signify a combination of absence and implicit presence."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 527–528.]

salvation here against virtually everything said elsewhere in all of his letters. Something that should have signaled clearly a false interpretation. But the tendency is to mistake definitional understandings of words here like ἡγίασται, ἀκάθαρτά, and ἁγιά. When later falsely supposed meanings are read into verse 14 all kinds of **weird, senseless** interpretations emerge.¹⁰³

¹⁰³“The history of interpretation has thrown up some idiosyncratic explanations of holy. Of the examples listed below, some tend to reflect too closely the agenda of their own concerns. The last two bring us closer to Paul.

“1. Irenaeus. Irenaeus compares the dynamic of 7:14 with that of God’s command to the prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute (Hos 1:2–3).²⁵⁷ The context of argument is that God may be known in many ways, not simply through the predictable and ecclesially reputable. Rahab, e.g., received and protected the Israelite spies, with the result that her house was protected as if she were one of God’s own people: ‘Rahab the prostitute was preserved ... through faith of the scarlet sign.’²⁵⁸ Significantly in the case of Hosea, his son’s initial name, ‘Not-a-People,’ was reversed: ‘They shall be called the children of the living God’ (Hos 1:6–9; cf. Rom 9:25–26). This principle, Irenaeus observes, explains the dynamic of 1 Cor 7:14: “For this reason Paul declares that ‘the unbelieving wife is made holy by the believing husband,’” and on this basis the significance of the children finds a parallel between the promises of God in Hosea and in 1 Cor 7:14. The further parallel of the grafting of the wild olive into the true, cultivated olive (Rom 11:17–19) similarly expounds the parallel of “if the loaf is holy, so is the whole batch; if the root is holy, so are the branches” (Rom 11:16). Irenaeus notes that Paul’s treatise on the mystery and generosity of God’s unstoppable electing grace focuses on the derivative holiness of Gentiles from Israel’s elected, privileged status as the people of God. Similarly, the ‘union’ with the holy makes an inclusive extension of the holy. Irenaeus thereby treats 1 Cor 7:14 in the context of (i) the OT (Abraham, Moses, Rahab, Hosea, the call of ‘a people who are not’); (ii) the electing, generous grace of God; (iii) cross references with Paul’s thought in Romans 9–11; and (iv) the efficacy of ‘union’ instantiated most fundamentally in union with Christ.²⁵⁹

“2. Clement of Alexandria. Clement advocates and encourages marriage and permits second marriage.²⁶⁰ In this context he compares Paul’s citation of Christ’s ordinance concerning marriage with his modifying clause, adding further, ‘Now are they holy’ (1 Cor 7:14).²⁶¹ Clement points out that holiness may spread either through the agency of a Christian husband or through that of a Christian wife, since the two are ‘one flesh.’²⁶² However, reference to the children seems to remain implicit rather than explicit. Clement leaves it to the reader to understand a solidarity of holiness through the union, proximity, and intimacy implicit in the relationships, in which the emphasis falls upon the positive and potentially salvific effects of marriage.

“3. Tertullian devotes a full chapter to 7:12–14, where his main burden is that v. 14 gives no license for Christians to marry unbelievers.²⁶³ If a Christian is already married to an unbeliever, the situation is different. Here the encouragement is offered that the unbeliever cannot diminish the sanctity of the spouse or of their children, positively through association or solidarity and ‘through the discipline of the institution’ (*ex institutionis disciplina*) of Christian upbringing and education.²⁶⁴ Baptism and eschatological destiny play a role: the children are on their way to a holiness to which God has called them. ‘They are in some sense destined for holiness and salvation.’²⁶⁵ This gives no encouragement, Tertullian insists, to initiate a mixed marriage. ‘The grace of God sanctifies

Clearly when taken in context both historically and

what it finds [i.e., already].²⁶⁶ Otherwise it remains ‘impure’ and is ‘not able to be sanctified.’²⁶⁷ Tertullian makes similar points in passing in his firm rejections of second marriages.²⁶⁸

“4. Origen. Surprisingly, Origen seems to miss the very point underlined by his Alexandrian predecessor, Clement, that God’s grace of sanctification operates in both directions, from husband to wife and from wife to husband (see above). Origen compares the union of a mixed marriage to the mixing of wine with water: one sanctifies or gives flavor, while the other corrupts or dilutes.²⁶⁹ This appears to run contrary to what Paul is saying, but he is staying with Paul’s point that no Christian should initiate marriage with an unbeliever (cf. Tertullian on 7:39).²⁷⁰ This is not strictly an exegesis of 7:14.

“5. Later Fathers (except Theodoret, see below). With the exception of Augustine and Chrysostom, in many cases this period offers less exegetical or pastoral insight than earlier or later works. Jerome simply repeats and quotes the ‘weaker’ strand in Tertullian (On Monogamy, 11:8 and To His Wife, 2:2) that children of believers are, ‘as it were, candidates for the faith.’²⁷¹ This may allude to Tertullian’s constructive emphasis on Christian education, but misses the Pauline context of mixed marriages, which Tertullian addressed. Severian of Gabala (c. 400) has a fragment on 1 Cor 7:14 which Staab has preserved. He writes, ‘When the children are clean and holy, uncorrupted by unbelief, the faith of the parent has won.’²⁷² At the turn of the third and fourth centuries, holy seems to have been understood of children primarily in a proleptic or anticipatory sense in this verse. Chrysostom explains ‘holy’ in 7:14 in two ways. Primarily it serves in a pragmatic way ‘to deliver the woman from fear as completely as possible.’²⁷³ The proof is that her child is ‘not unclean.’ Second, the effect of bodily union has already been stated in 6:15–17.²⁷⁴ Augustine refers to 7:14 in a number of treatises. In On the Good of Marriage he refers back to Paul’s teaching on the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). He infers: ‘Therefore the bodies of the married are also holy.... Even an unbelieving partner does not stand in the way of this sanctity’; the sanctity of the one ‘profits’ the other.²⁷⁵ Elsewhere Augustine seems to suggest that Paul refers to actual events of families coming to faith, led by one parent.²⁷⁶

“6. Cajetan (d. 1534) and Melancthon (d. 1560) press ἅγια into meaning legitimate in the eyes of state law (*de sanctitate civili*). Several medieval commentators (e.g., Walafrid Strabo, c. AD 808–849) explore this notion on the assumption that if the Christian spouse separates, this will probably result in their children having adulterous parental figures in a new marriage (*adulteri estis, et filii vestri spurii ... nunc, sancti quia de licitis conjugis nati*).²⁷⁷

“7. Bullinger (1566) and Matthew Poole (1685) understand holy in 7:14 as *sanctitas federalis*, i.e., status within the covenant (not unlike Collins, above), but part of the agenda here is that children within the covenant have the right to the covenant sign, namely, baptism.²⁷⁸

“8. Beza holds the minority view that holy, of the children, denotes or presupposes regeneration on the basis of election: (4) Bengel combines the earlier interpretation legitimate with a ‘somewhat closer’ relation to the church: *non sint spurii ... sit legitima, non adulterina ... sed propinquiem aliquam cum ecclesia*.²⁷⁹

“9. Theodoret (c. 458) interprets holy in relation to the unbelieving wife in terms of hope of salvation, and for the children what seems to be a promised futurity: the wife ἔχει σωτηρίας ἐλπίδα (Latin text, *habet spem salutis*); children suggest the notion of σπέρμα ... τῆς σωτηρίας (*semen illius erit salutis particeps*).²⁸⁰



literarily, the meaning becomes rather clear. The believing spouse should seek to maintain the marriage, and especially the wife. Why? If the marriage is terminated, she loses not only her husband but also her children. Children were always the property of the husband and in divorce always stayed with him. Thus in the wife leaving, she loses every opportunity to influence her husband to come to Christ. As 1 Peter 3:1-6 makes very clear, the Christian wife through her inner spiritual radiance has the best opportunity to win over her husband. Additionally, she loses opportunity to influence her children toward God by her dedication to Him (= ἁγιά). If the Christian husband leaves he will take the children with him but in the process he will lose the opportunity to demonstrate holy living to them that in turn can influence them toward God. Similarly he loses his witness to his wife. Paul is clearly promoting Christian families and believes that the Christian spouse has obligation to influence the other partner as well as the children toward faith in Christ. Again, it is critically important to remember that in Paul's scenario here of mixed marriages, it is the false teaching of celibacy for all Christians being circulated in the Corinthian church that stands behind this potential breakup of families.

In vv. 15-16 Paul adds further appeals to the Christian spouse to work toward continuing the mixed marriage. In v. 15, he deals with the opposite scenario of where the unbelieving spouse decides to terminate the marriage with his/her Christian partner: εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται, χωριζέσθω· οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφὴ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις· ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός. **But is the unbeliever decides to separate himself/herself, let them separate themselves. Not bound is the Christian brother or sisten in such instances.** Here Paul clearly rejects the Jewish traditions about divorce and remarriage. He acknowledges the reality of the termination

However, Theodoret also considers this ὑπερβολικώτερον (*haec autem cum hyperbole*) in order to be persuasive about staying together and maintaining the family.²⁸¹ Holy is almost used emotively to mean 'there is nothing to worry about.' Luther grounds this theologically under the rubric 'to the pure all things are pure.' The faith of the believing partner, Luther urges, can promote a positive stance toward all things, even to adult children who do not share the faith.²⁸²

"10. Calvin. Commonsense exegesis comes from Calvin: "The godliness of the one does more to 'sanctify' the marriage than the ungodliness of the other to make it unclean. Accordingly a believer can live with an unbeliever ['not in the contracting of marriages but in maintaining those already entered into'] with a clear conscience."²⁸³ But for Calvin the question about the children invites more speculative considerations about covenant, for which he refers his readers to Rom 11:16."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 531–533.]

of marriages in the first century world. No legal framework existed to discourage divorce. The surrounding Greco-Roman society not only expected it but often encouraged it. The deterrents to divorcing came from within the individual and whatever moral or religious values guided him or her. Thus if the non-Christian partner in the marriage decided on terminating the marriage, the Christian spouse had no option but to accept it. This Paul acknowledges here.

And he continues to make the assertion that divorce in such instances completely frees the Christian spouse from any obligation to that marriage. οὐ δεδούλωται, is not bound, is an intense expression denoting the severing of all ties to the marriage at a certain point that then set the individual completely free.

What does this imply? Freedom to remarry? Perhaps so, but Paul's final statement in v. 15 is key: ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός. **But God has called us to live in peace.** The point here is the divine calling of God whereby believers should seek the fuller, deeper life of free commitment to God. εἰρήνη is the Hebrew *shalom*, which is much more than the absence of conflict. The believer is thus freed to seek God's calling either to celibacy or marriage as Paul laid out in v. 7, ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως, **Each one has his own giftedness from God, one one way and another a different way.**

The final appeal to those in mixed marriages comes in v. 16, τί γὰρ οἶδας, γυναῖκα, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις; ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις; **For what do you know, wives, whether you can deliver your husband? Or what do you know, husbands, whether you can deliver your wife?** This comes as the final reason for the encouragement in vv. 12b-13 for Christian spouses to work toward preserving their marriage with an unbeliever. Continuing the marriage preserves the opportunity for Christian witness that may very well lead to the conversion of their spouse.

Summarizing principles, vv. 17-24.

17 Εἰ μὴ ἐκάστω ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος, ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, οὕτως περιπατεῖτω. καὶ οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι. 18 περιτετμημένος τις ἐκλήθη, μὴ ἐπισπάσθω· ἐν ἀκροβυστία κέκληται τις, μὴ περιτεμνέσθω. 19 ἡ περιτομὴ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστὶν, ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ. 20 ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἧ ἐκλήθη, ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω. 21 δοῦλος ἐκλήθη, μὴ σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι. 22 ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν, ὁμοίως ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἐστὶν Χριστοῦ. 23 τιμῆς ἡγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων. 24 ἕκαστος ἐν ᾧ ἐκλήθη, ἀδελφοί, ἐν τούτῳ μενέτω παρὰ θεῶ.



7.17 Εἰ μὴ ἐκάστῳ -----
ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος,
ἕκαστον -----
ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός,
οὕτως
248 **περιπατεῖτω.**

καὶ
οὕτως
ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις
249 **διατάσσομαι.**

7.18 περιτετμημένος
τις ἐκλήθη,
250 **μὴ ἐπισπάσθω·**
ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ
κέκληταί τις,
251 **μὴ περιτεμνέσθω.**

7.19 ἡ περιτομὴ οὐδὲν ἐστίν
καὶ
253 **ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστίν,**
ἀλλὰ
254 **τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ.**

7.20 ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει
ἧ ἐκλήθη,
ἐν ταύτῃ
255 **μενέτω.**

7.21 δοῦλος ἐκλήθης,
255 **μὴ σοι μελέτω·**
ἀλλ’
εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι,
256 **μᾶλλον χρῆσαι.**

7.22 γὰρ
257 **ὁ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος**
ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου
ἐστίν,

ὁμοίως
|
258 **ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς**
δοῦλός ἐστιν Χριστοῦ.

7.23 τιμῆς ἡγοράσθητε·
259
260 **μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων.**

7.24 ἕκαστος ἐν ᾧ ἐκλήθη,
ἀδελφοί,
ἐν τούτῳ
261 **μενέτω**
παρὰ θεῶ.

call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. 20 Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called. 21 Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. 22 For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters. 24 In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.

Paul has navigated through an amazingly complex issue of the false teaching that required celibacy for all Christians. For the Corinthians, this demand, being circulated inside the church, was opening a Pandora's box of evils threatening the stability of marriage inside the church. This in turn would wrongly communicate to the outside world that Christianity was anti-marriage, something just the opposite of its values. Its much higher standard of morals constituted a major appeal to a pagan world seeking relief from the moral cesspool of their world. The demand for celibacy moved Christianity into that cesspool rather than distinguished it from the moral morass of that day.

In vv. 17-24 the apostle seeks to pull all of this discussion together with a set of broader appeals that had some affinity with philosophical tenants in circulation at that time, but also that were distinctly Christian as well. The false teaching about mandated celibacy most likely had Greek philosophical roots and Paul's closing takes this philosophical language to advocate a genuinely Christian view of life.

The preoccupation with 'status quo' that dominated first century Greco-Roman society was indeed still a real dynamic that believers in Corinth had to cope with. The issues of status quo in terms of human gender relationships having to do with sexual intimacy loomed in the foreground and occupied the discussion in vv. 1-16. Paul addressed this in terms of a Christian distinctive in which stable family life functioned as the proper framework for sexual

relationships. And yet inside Christianity room enough existed for those who chose to not engage in intimate sexual relations with the opposite gender.

17 However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you. This is my rule in all the churches. 18 Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his

relationships. And yet inside Christianity room enough existed for those who chose to not engage in intimate sexual relations with the opposite gender.



Was this an isolated feature of Christianity? By no means! To the contrary this view of human sexual relations was a part of a larger picture of diverse human relations that were to function within the framework of God's calling upon each believer. This is the foundational principle set forth in verse 17, Εἰ μὴ ἕκαστῳ ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος, ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, οὕτως περιπατεῖτω. καὶ οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι. **Except to each person as God has measured out, each one as God has called, thus let him/her live out their lives. And thusly in all the congregations I insist upon.**

Here Paul repeats the axiom of v. 7b, ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως, **each one has his own giftedness from God, one this way but another that way.** He also picks up again the language of God's calling from v. 15, ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός, **but in peace God has called you.**

The verbs ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος, **the Lord has measured out,** and κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, **God has called,** stand in stark contrast to the foundation of Greco-Roman society as set forth some centuries before in Plato's *Republic*. Everyone has a στάσις in life given to him/her at birth by fate and circumstance. Whether slave or aristocrat, one should be content with this στάσις and make the best of it through life. Not so at all says the apostle. In life God makes the fundamental assignments for our lives, and our aspirations must be centered on understanding that divine assignment and then living out our lives in it.

Paul touches on two important illustrations of this divine calling in vv. 18-24: circumcision (vv. 18-19) and slavery (vv. 20-24). In them he shows both the stability of God's calling and also the flexibility of God's calling. Together these amplify the alternatives of marriage and celibacy. There is both rigidity and flexibility here as well.

Circumcision (vv. 18-20) illustrates the rigidity of God's calling. 18 περιτετημένους τις ἐκλήθη, μὴ ἐπισπάσθω· ἐν ἀκροβυστία κέκληται τις, μὴ περιτεμένεσθω. 19 ἡ περιτομὴ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστὶν, ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ. **When one has been called as a circumcised person, he should seek to remove this circumcision. Circumcision means nothing and uncircumcision means nothing. Instead keeping God's commands is what means something.** Paul illustrates the rigidity factor by pointing to the Jews and Gentiles in the church. Whether or not one had undergone physical circumcision was of no significance, just like whether one engaged in sexual activity or not. Neither physical status -- circumcision/marriage or uncircumcision/celibacy -- has anything to do with one's status before God. What counts is doing God's will, which either person can fully do. One's physical status is determined by things beyond the individual's control, and it ultimately is in God's hands. But

neither status physically gives any advantage in serving God. God expects obedience from each of us, no matter our status. Thus the concluding admonition in v. 20 is highly appropriate: ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἣ ἐκλήθη, ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω, **Each one in the calling in which he/she was called, in this let him/her remain.** If you were born a Jew, then be content as a Jew and serve God. If you were born a Gentile, be content and serve God as a Gentile. Then underscores his larger discussion: If you are born needing to be married, then be content with this as God's calling and serve Him as a married person. And if you were born oriented toward celibacy, be content and serve God in your celibacy. In this illustration Paul stoutly rebukes the false teaching in the Corinthian church that every Christian must become celibate. It makes no more sense than a Jew wanting to become a Gentile in order to serve God.

The flexibility of God's calling is illustrated by slavery in vv. 21-23, 21 δοῦλος ἐκλήθη, μὴ σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι. 22 ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν, ὁμοίως ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἐστὶν Χριστοῦ. 23 τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων. 21 **Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. 22 For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters.**

In Paul's discussion of the various situations inside marriage different experiences were happening among the Corinthians whether both were Christians, just one was a Christian, or that one had lost a spouse through death. Thus on the 'marriage' side of the equation in the contrast between celibacy and marriage differing experiences were present. But all within the framework of 'marriage' and God's calling. The false teaching in the church about celibacy sought to enforce a rigid uniform standard of celibacy for all. This was clearly a violation of God's calling in Paul's view. No single rule could be applied to a situation where flexibility inside God's calling was the reality.

The best, first hand illustration of divine flexibility clearly present and obvious inside the church were the slaves who were members of the church. Paul begins with those still in slavery inside the church: δοῦλος ἐκλήθη, μὴ σοι μελέτω, **a slave when called, don't let it bother you.** Many slaves who functioned in the upper levels of slaves in the first century world sought to use their superior education and skill training to gain their freedom. Sometimes this desire led to cheating their masters and even violent actions. Paul's view is much

more pragmatic. The Christian slave should concentrate first on serving God and thus exhibiting Christian values of honesty, hard work etc. to his earthly master, as made clear by Paul later in Col. 3:22-25, Eph. 5:5-8 etc. His first priority as a Christian is his witness to his owner, especially if that owner is not a Christian.

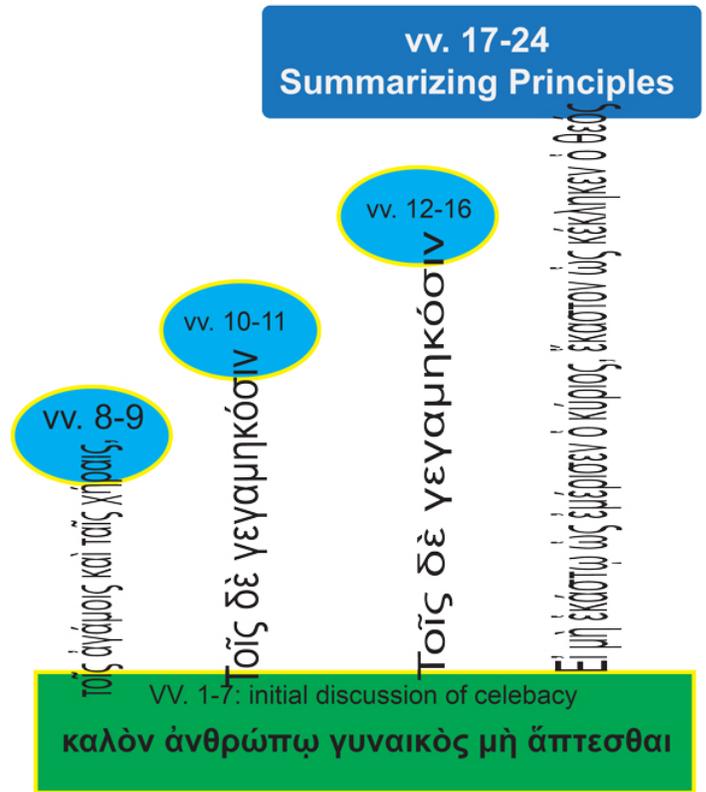
A second scenario in the illustration of slaves occurs if the opportunity to gain one's freedom arises: ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι, but even if you are able to become free, make use of the opportunity. The first class concessive protasis εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι assumes occasional opportunities for some of the slaves to gain their freedom legitimately. For certain, such an opportunity in Paul's non-Jewish world was very real, particularly for the upper levels of well educated and highly skilled slaves. For those slaves without education and who did the hard physical labor the opportunities to gain one's freedom were less. In this scenario, the apostle most likely is alluding to the first group of slaves. Paul encourages such slaves to take advantage of their chance for freedom. Again, the assumption here would be the gaining of freedom through legitimate means, so that the Christian slave would preserve his Christian witness of honesty and integrity. This would mean an enormous change of status for the slave that would bring many new responsibilities for making a living etc. for himself. Most of those who did gain their freedom in ancient Rome -- a reasonably high percent of the slaves -- were well educated as doctors, lawyers, accountants etc. The chances of success in gaining freedom for those slaves without education were not very good, and the likelihood of such slaves living in dire poverty were rather great. Physically he was better off as a slave than as a freedman.

In a similar manner to the other subtopics Paul follows up his axiomatic expressions with a rationale (γὰρ) providing a basis for the axiom in vv. 22-23. Whether slave or freedman physically the Christian slave already enjoys spiritual freedom as a slave of Christ: ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν, ὁμοίως ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἐστὶν Χριστοῦ (v. 22). This is the most valued freedom that is possible to enjoy for all whether slaves or freedmen. It indeed is very costly and thus to be prized above all: τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε, you were purchased with a price. Paul ends with a caution to his readers to avoid being trapped into slavery: μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων. Debtor slavery was rather common and many who did not manage their lives well were trapped into slavery in order to pay off debts accumulated from their mismanagement. Don't do that, Paul urged his readers.

In very creative ways Paul answers the first question in the letter to him from Corinth in vv. 1-24. Some inside the church were seeing the universal mandate

Paul's Strategy in 1 Cor. 7:1-24

In vv. 1-24 Paul responds to the question about celibacy from the Corinthians. In vv. 1b-7 he responds directly to this issue at Corinth. Then he expands his stance on celibacy to three related groups in the Corinthian church: the unmarried & widows (vv. 8-9); the married (vv. 10-11); and the rest (vv. 12-16). He then summarizes his discussion in vv. 17-24 under the topic of God's calling.



of celibacy in some of the pagan religions of Corinth as the best answer to the rampant immorality sexually that dominated the atmosphere of the city. And others in the church wanted Paul's views on this before adopting it.

The apostle responds clearly and strongly by using patterns of argumentation common in Greek writing and thus easily understandable by his Corinthian readers. The above chart visually presents this approach by Paul.

The question posed by the Corinthians related to a principle being advocacy in their church: καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. That is, the teaching was promoting required mandatory celibacy for all Christians. Some at least in the church were not sure this was proper and so they posed the issue to Paul. Paul's general response is found in vv. 2-7 where he advocates marriage and sexual intimacy inside marriage as a shared duty of each spouse to the other. He closes with the correct axiom in v. 7b that each person has a distinctive 'giftedness,' χάρισμα, from God. Some are gifted for marriage, but others for celibacy.

In vv. 8-16, he then turns to three groups of people inside the church to discuss alternative directions of 'giftedness.' First to the unmarried and widows. Unless otherwise gifted celibacy is the preferred lifestyle. Then to the married he urges strong commitment to marriage as a stabilizing experience. Third, to those in a 'mixed marriage' where only one partner is Christian, he similarly urges a Christian commitment to a stable marriage as a major avenue of winning over the unchristian to faith in Christ.

At the end in vv. 17-24 he chooses two very real comparisons -- Jew/Gentile and slavery/freedom -- in the Corinthian church to the issue of celibacy in order to indicate both the rigidity and the flexibility in God's calling to different lifestyles in the matter of celibacy. The presence of both Jews and Gentiles along with slaves and freedmen in the church was easy to understand. Neither set of alternatives privileged one before God over the other. Central is obedience to the divine calling.

The influence of some of the pagan religions with mandatory universal celibacy demands was finding inroads into the Christian community at Corinth. It stood as an extreme reaction to the dominate immorality sexually in the atmosphere of the city with widespread religious based prostitution. Paul very creatively and wisely reminds the Corinthian believers that such is not the way of Christianity. It does not deny celibacy outright, nor marriage either. Instead, the proper path for each believer is linked completely to God's calling upon their life. Finding and following that divine calling is the key to proper Christianity.

2) Concerning virgins, 7:25-40.

25 Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἡλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι. 26 Νομίζω οὖν τοῦτο καλὸν ὑπάρχειν διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην, ὅτι καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ οὕτως εἶναι. 27 δέδεσαι γυναικί, μὴ ζῆται λύσιν· λέλυσαι ἀπὸ γυναικός, μὴ ζῆται γυναῖκα. 28 ἂν δὲ καὶ γαμήσης, οὐχ ἡμαρτες, καὶ ἂν γήμη ἢ παρθένος, οὐχ ἡμαρτεν· 29 θλιψὶν δὲ τῆ σαρκὶ ἔξουσιν οἱ τοιοῦτοι, ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῶν φείδομαι. 29 Τοῦτο δὲ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν· τὸ λοιπὸν, ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες γυναῖκας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες ὦσιν 30 καὶ οἱ κλαίοντες ὡς μὴ κλαίοντες καὶ οἱ χαίροντες ὡς μὴ χαίροντες καὶ οἱ ἀγοράζοντες ὡς μὴ κατέχοντες, 31 καὶ οἱ χρώμενοι τὸν κόσμον

ὡς μὴ καταχρώμενοι· παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τοῦτου.

32 Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους εἶναι. ὁ ἄγαμος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ κυρίῳ· 33 ὁ δὲ γαμήσας μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῇ γυναικί, 34 καὶ μεμέρισται. καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἢ ἄγαμος καὶ ἢ παρθένος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου, ἵνα ἦ ἅγια καὶ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῷ πνεύματι· ἢ δὲ γαμήσασα μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ ἀνδρί. 35 τοῦτο δὲ πρὸς τὸ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν σύμφορον λέγω, οὐχ ἵνα βρόχον ὑμῖν ἐπιβάλω ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ εὐσημον καὶ εὐπάρεδρον τῷ κυρίῳ ἀπερισπάστως.

36 Εἰ δὲ τις ἀσχημονεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ νομίζει, ἐὰν ἦ ὑπέρακμος καὶ οὕτως ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι, ὃ θέλει ποιεῖτω, οὐχ ἀμαρτάνει, γαμείτωσαν. 37 ὃς δὲ ἔστηκεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἐδραῖος μὴ ἔχων ἀνάγκην, ἐξουσίαν δὲ ἔχει περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου θελήματος καὶ τοῦτο κέκρικεν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ καρδίᾳ, τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον, καλῶς ποιήσει. 38 ὥστε καὶ ὁ γαμίζων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον καλῶς ποιεῖ καὶ ὁ μὴ γαμίζων κρεῖσσον ποιήσει.

39 Γυνὴ δέδεταί ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς· ἐὰν δὲ κοιμηθῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν ὃ θέλει γαμηθῆναι, μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ. 40 μακαριωτέρα δὲ ἐστίν ἐὰν οὕτως μείνη, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην· δοκῶ δὲ κάγω πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν.

25 Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that. 29 I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, 30 and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, 31 and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried

Περὶ τῶν παρθένων

7.25 δὲ

262 ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω,

δὲ

263 γνώμην δίδωμι ὡς ἡλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι.

7.26 οὖν

264 Νομίζω τοῦτο καλὸν ὑπάρχειν διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην, ὅτι καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ οὕτως εἶναι.

265 7.27 δέδεσαι γυναικί,

266 μὴ ζήτηι λύσιν·

267 λέλυσαι
ἀπὸ γυναικός,

268 μὴ ζήτηι γυναῖκα.

7.28 δὲ
ἐὰν καὶ γαμήσης,

269 οὐχ ἥμαρτες,
καὶ
ἐὰν γήμη ἢ παρθένος,

270 οὐχ ἥμαρτεν·
δὲ

271 θλίψιν τῆ σαρκὶ ἔξουσιν οἱ τοιοῦτοι,
δὲ

272 ἐγὼ ὑμῶν φείδομαι.

7.29 δέ

273 Τοῦτο φημι,
ἀδελφοί,
ὁ καιρὸς | συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν·
| τὸ λοιπόν,
ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες γυναῖκας (ἔστωσαν)
ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες ὧσιν

7.30 καὶ
οἱ κλαίοντες (ἔστωσαν)
ὡς μὴ κλαίοντες
καὶ
οἱ χαίροντες (ἔστωσαν)
ὡς μὴ χαίροντες
καὶ
οἱ ἀγοράζοντες (ἔστωσαν)
ὡς μὴ κατέχοντες,

7.31 καὶ
οἱ χρώμενοι τὸν κόσμον (ἔστωσαν)
ὡς μὴ καταχρώμενοι·

γὰρ

274 παράγει τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

7.32 δὲ

275 θελω ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμους εἶναι.

276 ὁ ἀγαμος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου,

277 πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ κυρίῳ·
7.33 δὲ

278 ὁ γαμήσας μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου,

279 πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῆ γυναικί,
7.34 καὶ

280 μεμέρισται.

man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; 33 but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.

36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his fiancée, if his passions are strong, and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry. 37 But if someone stands firm in his resolve, being under no necessity but having his own desire under control, and has determined in his own mind to keep her as his fiancée, he will do well. 38 So then, he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

39 A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. 40 But in my judgment she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

In this discussion, Paul focuses in on

281 καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἢ ἄγαμος
καὶ ἡ παρθένος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου,
ἵνα ἢ ἁγία
καὶ τῷ σώματι
καὶ τῷ πνεύματι.

282 δὲ ἡ γαμήσασα μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου,
283 πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ ἀνδρί.

7.35 δὲ
284 τοῦτο...λέγω,
πρὸς τὸ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν σύμφορον
οὐχ ἵνα βρόχον ὑμῖν ἐπιβάλω
ἀλλὰ
πρὸς τὸ εὐσχημον
καὶ
εὐπάρεδρον
τῷ κυρίῳ
ἀπερισπάστως.

7.36 δέ
Εἰ τις ἀσχημονεῖν...νομίζει,
ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ
ἐὰν ἢ ὑπέρακμος
καὶ
οὕτως
285 ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι,
286 ὃ θέλει ποιεῖτω,
287 οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει,
288 γαμείτωσαν.

7.37 δὲ
ὃς ἔστηκεν
ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ
ἐδραῖος
μὴ ἔχων ἀνάγκην,
δὲ
ἐξουσίαν ἔχει
περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου θελήματος
καὶ
τοῦτο κέκρικεν
ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ καρδίᾳ,
τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον,
289 καλῶς ποιήσει.

7.38 ὥστε
290 ὃ γαμίζων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον
καλῶς ποιεῖ
καὶ
291 ὃ μὴ γαμίζων
κρεῖσσον ποιήσει.

the advantages of being unmarried. He, however, remains consistent with the earlier stance in v. 7a, θέλω δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἑμαυτόν, **Now I wish all men to be as I myself am.** The topic is no longer celibacy per se as defined by the false teaching at Corinth. Instead it is Paul's pastoral concern for the Corinthians to enjoy the best possible life in serving Christ. Having thoroughly rebuked the mandatory celibacy teaching at Corinth (vv. 1-24), he is now free to reflect on his personal experience of being unmarried. Thus this new topic is addressed directly to **Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων, Now concerning the virgins.** After formally specifying his topic, he begins in a manner somewhat similar to verse 12, where he distinguishes between his personal view and the orally transmitted teaching of the Lord (v. 25). He then presents his viewpoint in summary fashion in v. 26. This is then followed by a combination of rhetorical questions, theological statements about end time nearness, pastoral concerns for the welfare of the Corinthians etc. All of these 'flesh out' his basic view presented in v. 26. In these expansions we gain deeper insight into his viewpoint on the advantages of being unmarried.

Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἠλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι. **Now concerning the virgins no command from the Lord do I have, but my understanding I give as one who is faithful having become the object of mercy by the Lord.** v. 25. In verse 12, the instructions given **Τοῖς δὲ λουιτοῖς, i.e., to those in a mixed marriage,** a very brief distinction is given: λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος, **I say not the Lord.** In verse 10, the reverse perspective is presented: **Τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλ' ὁ κύριος, Now to the married I encourage, not I but the Lord.** The most natural meaning is simply that where Paul was aware of an orally transmitted teaching of Christ on a topic, he identified this teaching as coming from what Christ had said during His earthly ministry. But in instances where no such teaching was available to Paul, he shared his perspective. In not all cases did Paul make such a clear distinction at the beginning of a topic. In verse 6 at the end of his response to the mandatory celibacy teaching at Corinth, he makes this statement: **τοῦτο δὲ λέγω κατὰ συγγνώμην οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν. Now this I say by concession, not by command.**

What is the significance of these distinctions? Is this an issue between authoritative requirement (from Christ) and human opinion (from Paul)? This is often the way this matter is framed, but such

292 ^{7.39} Ἰυνὴ δέδεται
 ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς·
 δὲ
 ἐὰν κοιμηθῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ,
 293 ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν
 ᾧ θέλει γαμηθῆναι,
 μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ.
 7.40 δέ
 294 μακαριωτέρα ἐστὶν
 ἐὰν οὕτως μείνη,
 κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην·
 δὲ
 295 δοκῶ κάγῳ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν.

is wrong and misses the simple point rather obvious in the text itself. No issue of inspiration stands behind these statements as though what came from the Lord has higher divine inspiration than what comes from Paul. Such is nonsense and misses the point that Paul seeks to make.

What Paul simply says in this distinction is that in the orally transmitted teaching of Christ -- most of which was later recorded in the four gospels -- that Christ did not touch on the particular topics at hand. Thus no direct statement from Christ existed to draw upon. So Paul in covering these topics that existed in the church at Corinth simply set forth his insight and wisdom. That Christ didn't cover everything highlights the cultural situations so dramatically different from first century Jewish Palestine and the Greco-Roman culture outside Palestine. Many issues were unique to each of these cultures and would not exist in the other, at least in the same manner.

Who were τῶν παρθένων, [the virgins](#)? How are they distinct from τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις, [the unmarried and the widows](#), addressed in v. 8? To be sure a surface similarity seems to be present here, but some real distinctions existed in the first century world of Paul. The generic use of the masculine gender τοῖς ἀγάμοις targets both men and women who were not in a relationship of marriage, and the feminine ταῖς χήραις speaks to women whose husband had died. The first category also could and did include those divorced as well. Although the full gamut of adulthood could be covered by these two terms, mostly they would have targeted individuals in their twenties and thirties in that culture. On the other hand, τῶν παρθένων, [the virgins](#), in v. 25 as a feminine plural noun would primarily target teenage girls after reaching puberty. This is the most natural meaning of the term, despite commentators speculating all over the place.¹⁰⁴ Most young girls entered into

^{104c} A new category is now to be placed alongside married couples (7:2–7), those separated or widowed (7:8–9), people contemplating separation (7:10–11), people married already to those who have not come to faith (7:12–16), those seeking ‘improvement’ in

marriage in their early to middle teen years in Paul's

situation or status (7:17–24), and now *περὶ τῶν παρθένων*. But who are these? At least four possibilities must be explored, and Fee concludes that no major proposal is without difficulty.⁴⁴³ Initially (1), are the unmarried women of marriageable age (in vv. 36–38, those already betrothed but under pressure not to take the step of marriage) in the same category as those in v. 24 (hence Moffatt, unmarried women)? Or are the women of vv. 36–38 a subcategory of the group addressed here (as seems more likely)? In lexicographical terms *παρθένος* includes ‘men who have had no intercourse with women’ (BAGD). This invites a masculine noun, but the genitive plural form with the definite article τῶν παρθένων offers no indication of gender.⁴⁴⁴ It may be second declension feminine or a masculine form used gender-inclusively. Although many allow the meaning of the word in vv. 36–38 to override the lexicography, this simply pre-judges the conclusion. Fitzmyer, e.g., asserts: ‘A distinction must be made between the use of *παρθένος* in vv. 25–34 and the use of it in vv. 36–38. Vv. 25, 28 and 34 speak generally of *παρθένοι*.’⁴⁴⁵ Our own view that vv. 36–38 represent a specific subcategory within the broader group of vv. 25–34 gives us hesitation about assuming that Paul's addressees are exclusively women (cf. his *ἀνθρώπων*, not a marked gender term in v. 26), and to indicate category and subcategory we entitled this section ‘Issues for Those Not Yet Married, Especially Unmarried Women, 7:25–38.’⁴⁴⁶

“(i) J. K. Elliott proposes that the whole of 7:25–38 concerns engaged couples, but that the term *παρθένος* means betrothed women in this context.⁴⁴⁷ In v. 27 Paul advises the man, ‘Are you engaged to a woman? Do not seek release, i.e., from the engagement. Are you single? Do not seek to marry.’ But the complexities of the case studies can hardly be simplified, as Elliott in effect proposes, to divorce (vv. 1–24), engagement (vv. 25–38), and remarriage (vv. 39–40).

“(ii) J. F. Bound offers a similar exegesis of vv. 26–29, but, following Matthew Black, holds that *παρθένος* in vv. 25–28 means virgin man or single, celibate male.⁴⁴⁸ This leaves the problem of the feminine ἡ *παρθένος* in v. 28. Bound resorts to the expedient of proposing that the feminine definite article ἡ is a corrupt MS reading for ὁ. But it would be perfectly arguable that up to v. 28a *παρθένος* is male, but Paul then follows his established practice of mutuality of address by speaking next to the unmarried celibate woman. A number of writers from Weiss to Schrage reject the feminine meaning.⁴⁴⁹

“(iii) Hurd is among those who advocate the relevance of ‘spiritual marriages’ already discussed above (on 7:2). He considers the ‘engaged couples’ hypothesis too complex, as involving the three steps of (a) becoming engaged; (b) becoming converted to an ascetic viewpoint; and (c), instead of dissolving the relationship, establishing it in an ascetic nonintimate basis.⁴⁵⁰ But anyone who has close familiarity with pastoral situations in church life will find this less complex than the vicissitudes of younger men and women in relatively small communities, especially where ‘elders’ may also exercise pressures. Nevertheless, Hurd considers the ‘spiritual marriages’ reconstruction plausible. A couple, on this hypothesis, intended to lead an ascetic lifestyle from the first.⁴⁵¹ This remains equally plausible in circles of so-called ‘eschatological perfectionism’ or ‘enthusiasm,’ in which realism sometimes becomes a casualty.

“In our comments on 7:2 we cited examples of such notions from The Shepherd of Hermas (Similitudes, 9:10:6–11:8, c. AD 160), from Tertullian (Chastity, 12), Cyprian (Epistles, 61:2), and



Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, 7:30:12). As Fee observes, there is a lack of hard evidence that these notions can be read back onto first-century Corinth, but the examples suggest that the notion cannot be excluded.⁴⁵² On the other hand, the formalized relationships discussed by H. Achelis seem to belong to a later era. At a less institutional level than that discussed by Eusebius concerning Paul of Samosata, M. E. Thrall sees in vv. 36–38 ‘the situation ... of a man and a woman who have decided to live with each other without marrying and having sexual intercourse.’⁴⁵³ However, to assume that this situation accounts for the whole of vv. 25–38 is to make yet another unproven assumption. Indeed, even Fee tends to lump together the ‘spiritual marriages’ view with the distinct conclusion that *παρθένος* includes both celibate man and celibate women.⁴⁵⁴ But it does not necessarily follow that the men and women who are *παρθένοι* already live together in vv. 25–35.

“(iv) Lightfoot succinctly states a view which comes from a well-established tradition of interpretation. He first argues that the application of *παρθένος* to celibate men is largely post-Pauline in currency, and that such a use in Rev 14:4 is atypical and needs to be explained there (against Allo but defended by Kümmel). He then argues, by contrast, that Paul addresses the case of celibate men in vv. 26–33. But all this arises, he proposes, because “the Corinthians consulted him about the special case of giving virgin daughters in marriage.”⁴⁵⁵ This led Paul to offer some generalizations about *παρθένοι*, but the introduction (v. 25) and main conclusion (vv. 36–38) concern the unmarried daughters of the group who raised the query. However, this depends on an exegesis of v. 36 in terms of fathers and daughters which is problematic and no longer widely accepted. For such a convoluted theory, firmer evidence would be needed, in spite of its long and respected tradition.

“(v) Many major writers understand the Greek to refer to unmarried men and women who may well have become engaged. Schrage and Wimbush are advocates of this view applying *παρθένοι* to engaged parties.⁴⁵⁶ Collins shares this view, regarding vv. 25 and 35 as forming a rhetorical inclusio.⁴⁵⁷ The application to male and female distinguishes this view from Elliott’s. Wimbush and Deming both interpret Paul as following a Stoic pattern of argument about present circumstances (see below). Wimbush insists that Paul again emphasizes ‘the relative unimportance of the celibate life as far as status with God is concerned: one who has been single but desires to marry does not sin (v. 28).’⁴⁵⁸ Deming cites H. Chadwick’s view that ‘Paul’s demand for continence as set within the eschatological framework of Christian thought, fused with Stoic-Cynic ideas about the soul’s detachment and *ἀταραξία*.’⁴⁵⁹

“Fee places more emphasis on the betrothed woman’s situation, but equally on the betrothed man as the main addressee. These women, along with their fiancés, ‘were being pressured by the pneumatics, and were now themselves wondering whether to go through with the marriage.’⁴⁶⁰ It is entirely convincing to follow Schrage in insisting that *παρθένος* applies to the celibate of either or both sexes from verse to verse. The situation reconstructed by Fee and Wimbush is plausible as the general background, but flexibility should be retained to allow room (against Fee) for the possibility that this group may well have included a second subcategory of those whose so-called ‘spiritual marriages’ (in whatever form) were beginning to take on an unpredicted attraction. If Fee’s allusion to pressure from ‘pneumatics’ is plausible (which it is), this scenario would scarcely be less probable.

“(vi) J. M. Ford attempts to argue that *παρθένοι* refers to young widows and widowers who have been married not more than once.⁴⁶¹ But neither issues about Levirate marriage in OT traditions nor the adjective *παρθενική* of young Roman women

day. Here is where the social pressure for marriage would have been felt the greatest. The unquestioned use of *ἡ παρθένος* for a unmarried and a betrothed girl in vv. 27, 37 clearly points this direction.

In v. 25b, Paul qualifies his advice to the virgins as *ὡς ἡλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι*, as upon having received mercy by the Lord one who is trustworthy. He considers his advice to be sound and in line with basic Christian principle. He goes a bit further in v. 40b with *δοκῶ δὲ κἀγὼ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν*, and I think that I have the Spirit of God. Thus the guidance offered here is not frivolous or flippant. It comes from prayerful leadership of God’s Spirit over Paul.

How should these young girls in the church be treated and how should they behave themselves? The surrounding society put substantial pressure on them to be married off by their father quickly after reaching puberty. Another possible sub scenario is virgins who are betrothed to marriage but not yet married. The celibacy advocates -- sometimes labeled the pneumatics -- in v. 1 would have raised objections to such marriages.¹⁰⁵ Indeed Paul’s personal preference is celibacy but he adamantly insists that it is not the only option, unlike the pneumatics. The burden then rests upon these

who may have been married can make this proposal convincing. It must be rejected, together with any attempt to restrict *παρθένος* in these verses to either sex alone, as well as with the older ‘virgin-daughter’ interpretation. In general terms, (v) is correct, with the proviso that variations of individual cases within each category would come within Paul’s pastoral concern. He avoids stereotyped ‘answers’ in 7:1–11:1, which fail to address special circumstances.

“We turn to the translation. NJB’s people *remaining virgin* (JB’s *remaining celibate*) accurately renders *παρθένων*. But while *virgins* may not jar in 1611 or 1881 (AV/KJV and RV) the word today belongs usually to medical discourse or to sexual discourse with prior value-judgments. Yet REB’s *the unmarried* does not (as it needs to do) exclude widowed and separated partners, whom Paul addresses elsewhere in this chapter. We dissent from Moffatt’s overnarrow *unmarried women*. Either those who have not married or those who have not yet married seems best for modern English and public reading. The former matches the Greek more closely, but the latter reflects the Greek-in-context more clearly. The English then readily runs parallel to the other categories listed: married couples (7:2–7), the widowed or separated (7:8–9); those contemplating separation (7:10, 11); and so on.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 568–571.]

¹⁰⁵Sometimes commentators import the concept of ‘spiritual marriage’ from some isolated second century and later Christian writings, such as the Shepherd of Hermas. But no signal of such exists in Paul’s discussion and thus speculating that this existed in the middle of the first century is wrong and without any foundation. A ‘spiritual marriage’ is where a couple are officially married but refrain from sexual intimacy in the marriage. It is sometimes labeled an ‘eschatological marriage.’

young girls and their fathers regarding the matter of marriage.

Paul's preference to remain unmarried is expressed in v. 26 but then is quickly qualified in vv. 27-28a. Paul's preference for remaining unmarried is developed in vv. 28b-38. These points center on several factors as he perceived them in his world.

a) *The impending crises raises doubts about getting married, vv. 26-28a.* The διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην, because of the standing crisis, seems to point to a perception of hostility toward Christians and the Gospel, that evidently Paul felt was going to get worse as time passed. Thus remaining in one's present status of either being single or married was the best option at the time. Neither situation involved sin before God. This evidently was much different from what was being advocated at Corinth by some teachers (cf. 7:1).

b) *Marriage brings anxieties, vv. 28b-35.* Building off of his first statement the apostle makes the very legitimate point that marriage and the responsibilities to one's spouse and children put very heavy burdens on the individual especially when facing religious persecution. Verses 29-35 elaborate in detail this basic point that Paul makes in 28b. Coupled also with growing hostility against Christians is Paul's conviction that the return of Christ would not be very far into the future. Thus everyone -- married or not -- needed to focus on their spiritual life above all in order to be ready to meet Christ in His return.

c) *Don't marry only if you have your desires under control, vv. 36-38.* One needs to carefully evaluate his needs for marital companionship. The apostle is very aware that people differ greatly at this point. Many have great needs for the companionship of a spouse, while others are quite content to be single. If one then, especially while under betrothal to a potential wife, strongly needs this companionship he should marry. But any single person with no compelling reason to marry does even better to remain single, given the existing circumstance as Paul understood it to be at that time.

In vv. 39-40, he summarizes somewhat by picking up the issue of a married woman. Especially if she loses her husband then she should contemplate remaining single but not if she needs to remarry. While the previous discussion has largely focused on the male, now Paul switches to the issue of a married woman who has become a widow. She is free to remarry another Christian but in his view is better off to remain single.

One must always remember that these guidelines which Paul puts before the Corinthians are conditioned on issues of persecution current and expected to get worse for the Corinthians and also on the expectation of the soon return of Christ. The modern application

of his guidelines here remain conditioned on the same two assumptions that Paul gives to the Corinthians. In some parts of the modern world the issue of growing persecution now is just as real as in the mid-first century Corinth. But in other parts of our world this is clearly not the case. Thus different possible applications would be the only legitimate way to go.

3) Concerning food sacrificed to idols, 8:1-13.

8.1 Περί δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, οἶδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχομεν. ἢ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ, ἢ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ· 2 εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὐπω ἔγνω καθὼς δεῖ γινῶναι· 3 εἰ δὲ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

4 Περί τῆς βρώσεως οὖν τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἶς. 5 καὶ γὰρ εἶπερ εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς, ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί, 6 ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἶς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἶς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ.

7 Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνῶσις· τινὲς δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὖσα μολύνεται. 8 βρῶμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ· οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα, οὔτε ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν. 9 βλέπετε δὲ μὴ πως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν. 10 ἐὰν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὸν ἔχοντα γνῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθута ἐσθίειν; 11 ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῆι γνώσει, ὁ ἀδελφὸς δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν. 12 οὕτως δὲ ἀμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν εἰς Χριστὸν ἀμαρτάνετε. 13 διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίω.

8.1 Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but

8.1	δὲ
	Περί τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων,
296	οἶδαμεν
	ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχομεν.
297	ἢ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ,
	δὲ
298	ἢ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ·
8.2	εἴ τις δοκεῖ
	ἐγνωκέναι τι,
299	οὐπω ἔγνω
	καθὼς δεῖ γινῶναι·
8.3	δὲ
	εἴ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν,
300	οὗτος ἔγνωσται
	ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

8.4 οὕν
Περὶ τῆς βρώσεως
τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων,
301 οἶδαμεν
ὅτι οὐδὲν εἰδωλον (ἐστὶν)
ἐν κόσμῳ
καὶ
ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς (ἐστὶν)
εἰ μὴ εἷς.

8.5 γὰρ
καὶ εἴπερ εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ
εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ
εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς,
ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί,

8.6 ἀλλ'
302 ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ (ἐστὶν)
ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα
καὶ
ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν,
καὶ
303 ---- εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς (ἐστὶν)
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα
καὶ
ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ.

8.7 Ἄλλ'
304 οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνῶσις·
δὲ
τῇ συνηθείᾳ
| ἕως ἄρτι
| τοῦ εἰδῶλου
ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον,
305 τινὲς... ἐσθίουσιν
καὶ
ἀσθενῆς οὔσα
306 ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν... μολύνεται.

8.8 δὲ
307 βρῶμα ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ·
οὔτε
ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν
308 ὑστερούμεθα,
οὔτε
ἐὰν φάγωμεν
309 περισσεύομεν.

8.9 δὲ
310 βλέπετε
μή πως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν.

love builds up. 2 Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; 3 but anyone who loves God is known by him.

4 Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” 5 Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as in fact there

are many gods and many lords — 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

7 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge.



8.10	γάρ	<p>ἐὰν τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὸν ἔχοντα γνῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος</p>
311	οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ...οἰκοδομηθήσεται	<p>εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν;</p>
8.11	γάρ	<p>ἀπόλλυται ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῆι γνώσει, ὁ ἀδελφὸς δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν.</p>
8.12	δὲ	<p>οὕτως ἁμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν</p>
313	ἁμαρτάνετε .	<p>εἰς Χριστὸν</p>
8.13	διόπερ	<p>εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου,</p>
314	οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα	<p>εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω.</p>

Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 “Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? 11 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. 12 But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

The next issue raised by the Corinthians was a tough question for a believer living in the first century Greco-Roman world. The Jewish Christian in Palestine would never have faced this issue, but outside Palestine it was a different world completely. To see a Jewish Christian relevance in Judea for what Paul says here would have seem wildly strange and misplaced.

Paul continues his standard pattern of introducing a new topic with *Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων*, *And concerning the things offered to idols* (v. 1a). The adjective *εἰδωλόθυτος*, -on used here as a noun alludes to sacrifices made to idols in the pagan temples in the em-

pire outside Palestine. The custom inside the various pagan religions was relatively similar to the practice in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Animals were slaughtered in designated locations inside the temple. A small portion of the meat from the animal was burned on an altar in dedication to the deity. Another portion was given to the priests and served as a primary source of food for them. In the non Jewish practice the worshipper, or usually the group of worshippers who met in the temple, would then be given the rest of the meat. What they did not eat in their common meal in the temple, would then be put up for sale the next morning in the city market place for public purchase and consumption at home. Thus the vast majority of the available meat in the public market came from the various temples in the city.

This created a dilemma for Christians. Such meat was forbidden to Jews for consumption since it was considered religiously unclean meat. The church in Jerusalem by the mid first century was deeply concerned that believers elsewhere abstain from eating such meat as Acts 15:29 and 21:35 make clear. But non-Jewish believers in the Pauline churches were not convinced that such regulations pertained to them since they had no Jewish religious heritage. This became for the references in Paul’s writings a particular problem at Corinth:

1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:19, 28. But it remained a problem even into the last decades of the first century in the province of Asia as Rev. 2:14, 20 reflect. For non Jews buying meat -- from cattle, sheep, goats, fish, birds, swine etc. -- in the marketplace was a normal, regular routine when one had the funds to make such purchases.

Paul's approach to addressing this issue required sensitivity to the non-Jewish as well as the Jewish segments in the Corinthian community of believers. In these verses he reflects great sensitivity to both sides of the church there.

a) Conceptual foundation, vv. 1-3. In typical 'topic sentence' fashion in v. 1 he lays down a basic premise which would be clear to both Jewish and non-Jewish members of the church: Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, οἴδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γινώσκουσιν ἔχομεν. *And concerning the things offered to idols we know that we all possess knowledge.* Probably, although not entirely certain, was the situation where one or both sides on this issue of to eat or not eat such meat was the accusation of ignorance toward the other side in the debates taking place over this issue. "Don't you know that only God exists!" "Are you so ignorant of what God said to His people, the Jews, about this?"

Paul begins with a common denominator for both sides of the issue. God has given all of us as believers a basic understanding of His existence and of His will. But in the subsequent elaborations in vv. 1b-3, Paul reminds everyone of the danger inherent in *knowledge*, γινώσκουσιν. He begins with two contrasting assertions (v. 1b) and follows this with two contrasting conditional sentences elaborating the two assertions (vv. 2-3). Central to this is the interaction between ἡ γινώσκουσιν, knowledge, and ἡ ἀγάπη, love. Both are important, and even more important is that they both be present together.

ἡ γινώσκουσιν φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ. Knowledge puffs up but love builds up. Knowledge can and often does generate individual pride and arrogance. But agape love focuses on building up spiritually one's fellow believer. Neither is inherently bad but love holds in check the bad inclinations of knowledge.

εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἔγνωκεῖν τι, οὐπω ἔγνω καθὼς δεῖ γινῶναι. εἰ δὲ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. *If one thinks he knows something, he doesn't yet know what is divinely required to know; and if one loves God, this one is known by Him.* Both the grammar structures and the verb tenses used here by Paul are impossible to adequately reproduce in translation. Modern western languages cannot frame an idea expression like Paul does here in Koine Greek.

The first class conditional protasis, εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἔγνωκεῖν τι (v. 2), assumes that some individuals in the Corinthian church supposed themselves to be in

possession of genuine knowledge. The primary thrust contextually points to knowledge that God alone has actual existence. Paul's point made then in the apodosis (conclusion) is that they don't yet really know what God requires them to know. That is, that knowledge alone is insufficient. Agape love must be combined with this awareness that God alone exists.

Thus the second first class conditional sentence (v. 3) completes the idea asserted in the first one. Again the protasis εἰ δὲ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, *and if one loves God*, makes the same assumption that individuals in the Corinthian church genuinely love God. The conclusion reached then is οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, *this one is known by Him*. Although at first glance, this may seem like 'double talk,' actually Paul's cleave use of γινώσκουσιν, *knowledge*, and γινώσκω, *I know*, in the Greek perfect tense passive voice underscores that when a person ἔγνωσται, *is known*, by God that person becomes a changed individual. The divine 'knowing' of a person creates a permanent change that opens up deeper understanding of the ways of God for His people. Central to that is the transforming power of agape love.

b) Application to this issue of meats, vv. 4-13. In light of the above spiritual principle Paul now applies this to the situation of food offered to idols as Περὶ τῆς βρώσεως οὖν τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων unmistakably signals (v. 4). He then begins a detailed application of his principle (vv. 1-3).

First he reiterates the initial statement (v. 1a) on the existence of God with two formula expressions:

οὐδὲν εἰδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ, *no idol in the world*
οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς, *no god except One*

These points Paul says οἴδαμεν ὅτι, *we know that*. Neither expression contains a verb and reflects a slogan kind of declaration. Thus Paul agrees with the common ἡ γινώσκουσιν shared with the Corinthians: no idol actually exists as a living supernatural being and thus God alone exists as a supernatural being. He expands these two slogans in vv. 5-6 in the same sequence. He distinguishes carefully in v. 5 between the historical existence of idols that are worshipped and though even to be in heaven from their being alive as real deities. In Paul's Greco-Roman world hundreds of pagan deities were assumed to have real existence and massive, luxurious temples existed all over the city of Corinth where they were worshipped.

In verse six, he addresses in elaboration the second slogan οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς, *no god but One*. The fuller meaning of the slogan is explained as ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ, *but for us the one God is the Father from Whom are all things and we (exist) for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ*

through Whom are all things and we through Him. Thus Christians acknowledge the existence of one God who is revealed both as Father and as Son. The Father is the source of all creation including believers, and the Son is the means through which this creation and existence comes.

Paul then moves on in vv. 7-12 to remind the Corinthians that now everyone in the church there has come to this deeper knowledge from God (cf. v. 3 principle): Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γινῶσις. What does this imply?

First in v. 7b, τινὲς δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὕσα μολύνεται, **but some until now being accustomed to idols eat this meat as having been offered to a real idol.** That is, some of the believers are still, after conversion, so used to the claim of idols as real gods, that eating meat having been offered to them is eating meat sacrificed to a real god even though it is only a lifeless idol. What does this say about them spiritually? Verse 7c asserts καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὕσα μολύνεται. That is, their ability to make correct choices continues to be weak and then eating such meat severely contaminates their decision making ability (ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν) further. They are left with the false conclusion of having done some wrong against God, if they eat such meat.

Verse 8 sets up Paul's reaction to the weak brothers first with a foundational 'knowledge' based principle: βρῶμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ· οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα, οὔτε ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν, **Now food does not bring us closer to God; neither if we don't eat are worse off. And if we eat are we better off.** Paul's very important point is that the food we eat has absolutely nothing to do with the quality of our spiritual life or relationship with God. Thus the 'knowledge' side of knowing that only God exists is that eating meat sacrificed to idols has absolutely no impact on our relationship with God.

Out of this elaboration of the implications of the 'knowledge' side of this issue comes the warning beginning in verse 9 which comes out of the agape love side of the issue: βλέπετε δὲ μή πως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν, **But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.**

Verses 10-12 expand with the reminder that should a weak brother see you eating this meat you become a πρόσκομμα, **stumbling block**, to the weak brother. Key here is where are you seen by this weak brother eating such meat? ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, **in a temple of an idol reclining in a banquet meal.** Thus the first scenario (above) of the meat issue is in Paul's mind here. Believers have gone to a pagan temple for a banquet meal. And the weak brother notices it. From a modern

perspective the natural question would be Why would a Christian go to a banquet meal in a pagan temple? In Paul's world the answer is very simple. Virtually every social group, including especially all the trade unions and guilds had a pagan deity and conducted their meetings after a banquet meal in the temple of their patron deity. One could not work at a job or operate a business in first century Corinth without belonging to one or more of these groups. Not only that, social networking with individuals through participation in a wide range of such groups was essential to one's economic survival in that world. This example then encourages the weak brother to violate the previous conclusion that eating such meat is wrong before God (v. 10b).

The conclusion in v. 11 is that your example is leading the weak brother to destroy his spiritual life by going against his decision that eating such meat is wrong. Thus the real sinner here is you because you violated the principle of agape love (v. 12).

In verse 13, Paul sets forth himself as an example of a 'knowledge & love' based believer: διότι περ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω, **Therefore if meat (βρῶμα) scandalizes my brother, I will never eat any kind of meat (κρέα) again so that my brother may not be scandalized.**¹⁰⁶ Thus the agape love side of the issue overrides the 'knowledge' side of the issue. To ignore my brother in claiming my rights out of a superior knowledge is where sinning takes place, and not in the life of the weak brother who goes against his early conclusion that eating such meat is wrong. He falsely thinks he has sinned, while the 'knowledge' based brother fails to recognize his sinning.

4) **Paul's rights as an apostle, 9:1-27.**¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶Many commentators make much of the shift from βρῶμα, food, to κρέα, meat in any form. But the point is not (as many mistakenly argue) a shift from food in general to meat in particular, but the use of the plural form κρέα (singular κρέας).²⁷³ When a collective noun (e.g., cheese, fruit, meat) is used in the plural (cheeses, fruits, meats), this regularly denotes kinds of cheese, fruit, or meat. With the negative, therefore, this excludes different kinds, i.e., meat in any form." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 657.

¹⁰⁷A comparison of the division points between the UBS 4th rev. ed and the N-A 28th rev. ed. is helpful as a *starting point* for grasping how Paul presents his ideas:

UBS 4th ed:	N-A 28th ed:	NRSV
¶ 1-2	¶ 1-18	¶ 1-2
¶ 3-12a	1-2	¶ 3-7
3-7	3-6	
8-12a	7	¶ 8-12a
	8-11	
	12	

The shift in theme here is not signaled with Περί δέ..., now concerning... as in the first three divisions (see above). But Paul utilizes another topic shift signal found commonly not only in his writings but generally in ancient Greek literature. In vv. 1-27, he injects a series of rhetorical questions that he then responds to with his own answer. He thus pulls all his points together through this rhetorical device of question/answer in these verses. One would want to notice that where a Greek negative adverb -- οὐκ, μὴ οὐκ, μὴ -- shows up with a finite verb a certain response is expected: οὐκ, μὴ οὐκ expect agreement, Do you not----? while μὴ expects disagreement, You don't ----, do you?

What is unclear is whether this topic was a question posed in any way by the Corinthian delegation that brought the list of questions over to Ephesus to put to Paul. The different style of grouping used here would suggest that it was not a question, at least for the delegation who made the trip across from Corinth to Ephesus in order to get Paul's advice. But, as the content of these verses clearly indicates, some inside the Corinthian church were challenging Paul's leadership and message.

a) The issue of freedom as an apostle, vv. 1-2.

9.1 Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος; οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐώρακα; οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ; 2 εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμι· ἢ γὰρ σφραγίς μου τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ.

9.1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

What is the topic in the verses?¹⁰⁸ The first two rhe-

¶ 12b-18	13-14 15-18	¶ 12b-14 ¶ 15-18
¶ 19-23	¶ 19-23	¶ 19-23
¶ 24-27	¶ 24-27	¶ 24-27

The above indented verse listings are internal break divisions with a paragraph, signaled in today's printed Greek texts by capitalization of the first word of the sentence. In part the English language philosophy of paragraphing (i.e., the UBS text) with five paragraphs (¶) shows up distinct from the German language philosophy of paragraphing (i.e., the N-A text) with three paragraphs (¶).

In contrast, the English language NRSV translation reflects greater influence from the UBS pattern, but with one or two exceptions. Verses 1-27 are grouped under the heading "The Rights of an Apostle."

¹⁰⁸"We strenuously urge that to construe this chapter as a 'defense of Paul's apostleship' as if this were the central issue in its own right is to miss the point of Paul's theology, ethics, and rhetoric in these verses. Scholars have been seduced along this path

9.1 Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος;
 316 οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος;
 317 οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐώρακα;
 318 οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ;
 9.2 εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος,
 ἀλλὰ
 γε ὑμῖν εἰμι·
 γὰρ
 ἢ σφραγίς μου τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ.

torical questions in verse one give us the signal: Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος; Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? The first question logically arises out of Paul use of himself as an example in the meats offered to idols issue in 8:13. The so-called knowledge side of this issue most likely felt that Paul was surrendering critical spiritual freedom to the lack of knowledge by those still considering idols to have a true spiritual existence. But to focus exclusively on one's freedom or 'rights' growing out of a deeper knowledge of reality to the neglect of a brother in Christ that does him harm misses the higher Christian value and actually reflects a failure of knowledge as Paul indicated in 8:2.

Does this considerate concern for a brother in Christ negate one's freedom in Christ? Paul's response in 9:1-27 is absolutely not. Paul in 8:13 is not surrendering his freedom but is using it wisely out of a greater knowledge of the will of God than claimed by the 'knowledge' side of the issue at Corinth.

All of this was linked to Paul's being an ἀπόστολος, apostle. His deeper knowledge of the will of God that went beyond just recognizing that only God exists to also include the central role of brotherly love for fellow believers came out of his standing and calling from God as an ἀπόστολος. Considerable probability exists that overlapping between the 'knowledge' group at Corinth and the εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, if to others I am not

partly because of blind alleys in the history of research on apostle in a variety of different contexts and partly because the implausibility of the many competing partition hypotheses have only relatively recently been fully grasped. We have argued above that partition theories concerning this epistle founder for three reasons, among others: (a) the complete failure to agree on where supposed units begin and end; (b) the recent argument of A. Stewart-Sykes about the sheer physical constraints on the task of scribes to 'cut and paste' papyrus rolls for redactional purposes; and (c) the more convincing compositional analysis offered by such writers as M. M. Mitchell, and the more convincing exegesis to which it gives rise.¹⁴⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 666.]

an apostle, group at Corinth as well (9:2).¹⁰⁹

Interestingly in vv. 1-2, two indications of apostleship are asserted by Paul to the Corinthians: οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐώρακα; οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ; **Have I not also seen our Lord Jesus? Are you not my work in the Lord?**¹¹⁰ Reflecting one interpretation of the guidelines stated in Acts 1:21-22, Paul refers to his encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) as evidence of his being an apostle. The second evidence is the existence of the Christian church itself as the product of Paul's preaching of the Gospel in Corinth earlier (Acts 18:1-17).

This second 'evidence' is then forcefully restated in greater detail in verse two: εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμι· ἡ γὰρ σφραγὶς μου τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ. **Since to others I am not an apostle, but indeed to you I am; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.** Thus Paul's considerate concern for the 'weaker brother' (8:13) is not a surrendering of his freedom but a reflection of deeper spiritual understanding.¹¹¹ To those in the Corinthian church who worked only off of the 'knowledge' side of the meats issue, such action by Paul raised questions in their minds regarding his claim to being an apostle of Christ.¹¹² The principle ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη

¹⁰⁹Fee's statement completely misses the contextual implications here:

Although what comes next [9:1-27] is understandable in terms of both what is said and the nature of the outburst itself, nothing that has immediately preceded quite prepares the "outside" reader for either the following sudden burst of self-justifying rhetoric or the passion with which it is expressed.

[Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., Revised Edition., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 433.]

¹¹⁰In Paul's writings three central places reflect a vigorous defense of his claim to being a divinely called apostle of Christ: Gal. 1-2; 1 Cor. 9; 2 Cor. 10-13. His defense of this claim takes on different contours in each of these sections by being customized to each unique situation that prompted a defense.

¹¹¹I strongly suspect that the 'knowledge' based members at Corinth were queenly disappointed that Paul did not 'put on a spectacular show' when he presented the Gospel at Corinth (cf. 2:1-5). This mentality stands behind Paul's earlier reminder in 8:1b, ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, **knowledge puffs up**. These folks either did not hear or did not agree with the other part of Paul's axiom (8:1c): ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, **but love builds up**.

¹¹²Paul's experience reflects a common 'truism' in Christian experience. Supposed superior spiritual knowledge coupled with pride and disregard to fellow believers ALWAYS questions the spiritual insight of anyone reminding them of authentic deeper spiritual wisdom focused on ministry to others. Such egocentric believers put blinders on and never see larger, more wholistic pictures of the will of God. In today's world there are always 'showmanship' type preachers, especially on TV, who preach such egocentric messages in spectacular fashion falsely claiming superior knowledge of God and of the Bible. These are the 'itching ears'

οἰκοδομεῖ, **But love builds up** (8:1c) was not from God in their thinking. Paul in asserting this then could not have received from God.

b) Paul's 'rights,' vv. 3-12a.

3 Ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν ἐστὶν αὕτη. 4 μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν; 5 μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς; 6 ἢ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι;

7 Τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίῳ ὄψωνίῳ ποτέ; τίς φυτεύει ἀμπελῶνα καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐσθίει; ἢ τίς ποιμαίνει ποίμνην καὶ ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τῆς ποίμνης οὐκ ἐσθίει;

8 Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ ἢ καὶ ὁ νόμος ταῦτα οὐ λέγει; 9 ἐν γὰρ τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται· οὐ κημῶσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα. μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ 10 ἢ δι' ἡμᾶς πάντως λέγει; δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη ὅτι ὀφείλει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὁ ἀροτριῶν ἀροτριᾶν καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν. 11 εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπείραμεν, μέγα εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικὰ θερίσομεν;

12 Εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν, οὐ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς;

3 This is my defense to those who would examine me. 4 Do we not have the right to our food and drink? 5 Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?

7 Who at any time pays the expenses for doing military service? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not get any of its milk?

8 Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop. 11 If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?

12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more?

Paul's defense of his approach is developed in two stages. He first asserts his legitimate 'rights' as an apostle in vv. 3-12a. Then he stresses his foregoing of those rights for the sake of ministry to others in vv. 12b-27.

Remember his logic here is playing of the previous principles laid down in 8:1b-3 regarding the meats offered to idols issue: ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ· 2 εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὕτω ἐγνω καθὼς δεῖ γνῶναι· 3 εἰ δὲ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἐγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

Christians alluded to by Paul in 2 Tim. 4:3.

321 ^{9.3} Ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσίν ἐστιν αὕτη.

322 ^{9.4} μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν
φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν;

323 ^{9.5} μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν
ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν
ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι
καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου
καὶ Κηφᾶς;

324 ^{9.6} ἢ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν
μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι;

325 ^{9.7} Τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίους ὀψωνίοις ποτέ;

326 τίς φυτεύει ἀμπελῶνα
καὶ

327 τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐσθίει;

ἢ

328 τίς ποιμαίνει ποίμνην
καὶ
ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τῆς ποίμνης

329 οὐκ ἐσθίει;

330 ^{9.8} Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ
ἢ
καὶ

331 ὁ νόμος ταῦτα οὐ λέγει;

^{9.9} γὰρ
ἐν τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ

332 γέγραπται·
οὐ κημῶσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα.

333 μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ

^{9.10} ἢ
δι' ἡμᾶς

334 πάντως λέγει;

γὰρ
δι' ἡμᾶς

335 ἐγράφη
ὅτι ὀφείλει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὁ ἀροτριῶν ἀροτριᾶν
καὶ
ὁ ἀλοῶν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν.

^{9.11} εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπείραμεν,
336 μέγα (ἐστὶν)
εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικὰ θερίσομεν;

^{9.12} Εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν,
337 οὐ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς (μετέχομεν);

Knowledge puffs up but love builds up; if one supposes that he knows something does not yet know as he is required to know; but if someone loves God, this one is known by Him. Knowledge that God only exists is but a beginning

level; the deeper and more critical knowledge is the importance of loving God by loving others. This deeper knowledge comes only through the life transforming experience of 'being know' by God in conversion. Failure to move beyond one's self to focus on others then casts doubt on whether the professing Christian has ever encountered the saving knowledge of God in conversion. This contains a stinging 'bite' toward the ego-centric 'knowledge' claimers in the church at Corinth.

Paul begins with the broad introductory declaration: Ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσίν ἐστιν αὕτη, *My defense to those questioning me is this:* (v. 3). The verb ἀνακρίνω, here in the present participle form of ἀνακρίνουσίν, is an important verb in First Corinthians. Eight of the fourteen NT uses occur across this letter. The verb idea is not an objective examination of something or someone as δοκαμίζω and related verbs would imply. Rather it is a suspicion based 'witch hunt' for flaws or false claims in order to justify criticism and/or rejection. The 'knowledgers' at

Corinth thought they had found a major flaw in Paul's emphasis upon selfless oriented ministry. His none

sensational preaching style signaled this in their minds. It suggested he was unskilled and lacking in communication abilities. But Paul stands his ground with a vigorous defense of his ministry as an apostle.

First in vv. 4-6, he asserts the same rights as other apostles and brothers who traveled around preaching the Gospel in different places. 4 μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πεινῆν; 5 μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς; 6 ἢ ὁ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι; **Do we not have authorization to eat and drink? Do we not have authorization to take with us believing wives as do both the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or do only I and Barnabas not have authorization to not work?** The repeated noun ἐξουσία is best translated as ‘authorization’ rather than authority or rights, since it clearly specifies divine authorization rather than some sort of authority inherent in Paul’s status as an apostle.

What is then claimed? Two specific ones as representative of others are mentioned. First (v. 4), φαγεῖν καὶ πεινῆν, is an idiom alluding to the divinely authorized (in the OT especially) obligation of God’s people to provide basic necessities to those called by God to teach and instruct them. Its primary OT allusion is to the priests who functioned in the temple out of the tribe of Levi. Implicit here is that most if not all of the others alluded to in v. 5 claim that divine authorization when they travel to the various churches.

Second (v. 5), the assertion to take their wives along with them on these travels is asserted as a divine authorization: μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς; **Do we not have authorization to take along believing wives, as do both the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?**¹¹³ The clear meaning of περιάγειν is for the wife to accompany her husband in his travels.¹¹⁴ Notice clearly that Paul assumes mar-

¹¹³In the later Christian celibacy emphasis on church leaders, this statement posed numerous questions about such teaching, and thus led to a variety of re-wording of the statement in many of the manuscripts. Particularly troubling was the distinctive wording by Paul of ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα, literally meaning ‘a Christian sister who is a wife.’ The tendency was to drop ἀδελφὴν. But the overwhelming evidence favors the reading ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα, with the meaning of a believer wife.

¹¹⁴The second minority variation is that of Allo, who attempts to argue for the view of Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Jerome, that Paul means taking about with us a Christian as a female assistant.⁸⁷ Allo agrees that “it is certain that in our epistle γυνή generally denotes ‘wife’ (e.g., 7:34) and that ἀδελφή has the general sense of ‘sister in the faith,’ Christian” (7:15). Allo disarmingly concedes that his exegesis is bound up with traditions about whether Paul or other apostles were married as viewed through the lenses of the Western Fathers and certain modern Catholic exegesis. He even allows that on these questions ‘we still hesitate a little to decide on a view.’⁸⁸ However, in view of evidence about ‘deacon-

riage as viable to these Christian leaders, but does not imply that every one of them in the first two categories, i.e., καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου, was married.

This verse also specifies the base comparison between himself and Barnabas to three designations: καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς. The first sets the Twelve in comparison to Paul. The brothers in the Lord may possibly set Σωσθένης, Sosthenes, (1:1) as the point of comparison, but this is not clear. The third reference to Peter, Κηφᾶς, sets Paul and Barnabas in comparison to Peter who took his wife with him on his travels.

Why does Paul mention Barnabas as in the same category as himself? This letter is written on the second missionary journey from Ephesus after Paul and Barnabas had their falling out over John Mark (cf. Acts 15:36-41). For one thing, later interpreters have probably read too much into Luke’s statement ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμὸς ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων, **and a disagreement happened so that they parted company from one another** (Acts 15:39a). This was not an angry fight, but simply an agreement for each to go different directions in covering the territory of the first missionary journey as vv. 39b-41 indicate.

The image of Barnabas in Acts 4:36-37 of his intense generosity of sharing his material possessions in order for the church to be able to minister to those in need provides a better clue about why Paul would reference him rather than Silas who was traveling with Paul at the time of the writing of this letter. The implications of Paul’s statement is that Barnabas preferred to earn his own keep rather than depend on new Christians to supply it. Perhaps, also it implies Barnabas as not being married along with Paul.

He ends this part in v. 6 with a double negative Greek expression that has no meaning when translated literally into English: ἢ ὁ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι; The NRSV gets it correctly with **Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to**

esses’ he thinks it ‘preferable’ to reconstruct 9:6 in this way, even if he concedes that on purely linguistic grounds this meaning is unlikely.⁸⁹ Tertullian in practice holds more than one, while Clement of Alexandria believed that an apostle could be accompanied by his wife, but would treat her ‘as a sister’ in the sense of not living maritally with her (against 7:1-7).⁹⁰ Moreover, Héring argues that ‘if *adelphē* meant here any Christian woman, travelling as a spiritual assistant, the substantive *gunē* would be quite superfluous.’⁹¹ The apostles, he concludes, had the right ‘not only to be married and to be accompanied by their wives on their journeys (peri-agein) but also to have them ‘upported by the Church.’⁹² Few if any among recent exegetes appear to accept Allo’s view.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 680-681.]



refrain from working for a living? What Paul asks rhetorically is simply whether these ‘examiners’ think that God forbid Paul and Barnabas from working to pay their own way, unlike the others who depended on local groups for support rather than working to pay their own way.

Were these other Christian leaders legitimately using these privileges? Before turning to the OT (vv. 8-12a) for validation of this divine authorization he appeals to his ‘knowledge based critics’ out of daily life illustrations (v. 7): *Τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίῳις ὀψωνίοις ποτέ; τίς φυτεύει ἀμπελῶνα καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐσθίει; ἢ τίς ποιμαίνει ποίμνην καὶ ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τῆς ποίμνης οὐκ ἐσθίει;* *Who pays the soldier at any time for doing military service? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit? Or who tends to a flock and does not get any of its milk?* The point is that common sense says that those benefiting from services given them are obligated to support those giving the services. Surely his ‘knowledge based’ critics could recognize this. Life itself teaches this.

But for Paul ‘divine authorization’ of certain privileges must be anchored primarily in God’s Word. In verses 8-10 he appeals to the OT Law: 8 *Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ ἢ καὶ ὁ νόμος ταῦτα οὐ λέγει;* 9 *ἐν γὰρ τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται· οὐ κημῶσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα. μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ* 10 *ἢ δὲ ἡμᾶς πάντως λέγει;* *δὲ ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη ὅτι ὀφείλει ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι ὁ ἀροτριῶν ἀροτριᾶν καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν.* 8 *Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same?* 9 *For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.”* Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 *Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop.* Using Deut. 25:4, he reminds his readers that supporting those giving service is a long standing Jewish religious principle embedded in God’s Law for His people.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵“Conzelmann insists that since the function of Deut 25:4 is to serve as ‘essentially a rule for the protection of animals’ this meaning remains ‘contrary to Paul’s exegesis ... God’s concern is with higher things.’¹¹¹ Conzelmann correctly cites evidence for such a view of the nonhuman creation in Philo and in hellenistic Judaism. Philo asserts, ‘The law does not concern the benefit of creatures without reason (οὐ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλόλογων) but the benefit of those who have mind and reason (νοῦν καὶ λόγον)’ (De Specialibus Legibus 1.260). Senft follows Conzelmann’s view, citing the same passage from Philo.¹¹²

“Schrage offers a detailed account of Paul’s use of OT scripture in which he recognizes that Paul very rarely resorts to allegorical interpretation (probably, he argues, only here, in 10:4, and in Gal 4:21ff.).¹¹³ The problem here is that the term ‘allegorical’ can be understood in a variety of ways, and Schrage’s discussion is less satisfactory than that of the two excellent discussions by Fee and most especially Richard Hays. The starting point rightly identified by Hays is to look anew at the context of Deut 25:4. Hays notes that many describe Paul’s exegesis as ‘an example of arbi-

Through a series of rhetorical questions in vv. 9b-10 he makes a standard Jewish scribal interpretation of this statement of Moses implying that the analogy of the oxen applies spiritually and not just literally. He also adds the image of the farmer ploughing the field to the oxen pulling the plough, and moves from ploughing to threshing at harvest time to complete the picture. His essential point is that this OT principle has abiding relevancy to Christian workers serving God in the Gospel.

Then in vv. 11-12a he applies the image to the Corinthians and himself: 11 *εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπέираμεν, μέγα εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικὰ θερίσομεν;* 12 *εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν, οὐ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς;* 11 *If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?* 12 *If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more?* As the initial preacher of the Gospel to the Corinthians, he and his assistants have even greater claim for support from the Corinthians than would the others who take support from those they visit.

In this section, Paul has moved toward establishing his legitimate divine authorization to receive and expect support from the Corinthians. Such expectation is both legitimate scripturally and a common sense conclusion out of daily life. His claim is even greater upon the Corinthians because he was the church’s founder. That is, the Corinthian church came into existence through his preaching of the Gospel in the city. This is the ‘knowledge’ side of the issue. But just like with the meats offered to idols issue, Paul moved deeper to the love for others side of the issue, and thus did not claim these privileges.

c) Paul’s foregoing of his rights, vv. 12b-27.

trary proof-texting on Paul’s part, but closer observation demonstrates a more complex hermeneutical strategy.... A careful look at the context of Deut 25:4 lends some credence to Paul’s claim.... The surrounding laws in Deut 24 and 25 (esp. Deut 24:6–7, 10–22; 25:1–3) almost all serve to promote dignity and justice for human beings’ (my italics).¹¹⁴ This comment is simply true to the text: Deut 24:1–4 concerns the implementation of divorce; 24:5–9 concerns exemption from military service on compassionate grounds, the limits of pledges of debt, treating persons as objects of commerce, and protection from disease; vv. 10–22 extend issues about pledges and debt, a minimum wage, and care of the family, resident aliens, orphans, and widows; 25:1–3 regulates legal disputes and restricts punishment to avoid ‘humiliation’; 25:5–10 concerns Levirate marriage.¹¹⁵ The unexpected insertion of one verse about threshing coheres most closely with the encouragement of human sensitivity and humane compassion toward the suffering or defenseless (e.g., the immediately preceding context concerns the plight of widows, orphans, and victims of punishment).”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 685–686.]



338 ^{ἀλλ'} οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ,
 339 ^{ἀλλὰ} πάντα στέγομεν,
 ἵνα μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν δῶμεν
 τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

340 ^{9.13} **Οὐκ οἴδατε**
 ὅτι οἱ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐργαζόμενοι [τὰ] ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐσθίουσιν,
 οἱ τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ παρεδρεύοντες τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ συμμερίζονται;

9.14 οὕτως
 καὶ ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

341 ὁ κύριος διέταξεν τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν...ζῆν.

9.15 δὲ

342 Ἐγὼ οὐ κέχρημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων.

δὲ

343 Οὐκ ἔγραψα ταῦτα,
 ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοί·

γάρ

344 καλὸν μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν
 ἢ

345 τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει.

9.16 γάρ

ἐὰν εὐαγγελίζωμαι,
 346 οὐκ ἔστιν μοι καύχημα·

γάρ

347 ἀνάγκη μοι ἐπίκειται·

γάρ

348 οὐαὶ μοί ἐστιν
 ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι.

9.17 γάρ

εἰ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω,
 349 μισθὸν ἔχω·

δὲ

εἰ ἄκων,
 350 οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι·

9.18 οὕτως

351 τίς μου ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός;
 352 (ἐστὶν)
 εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον
ἵνα...θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
 εἰς τὸ μὴ καταχρησασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου
 ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

9.19 γάρ

Ἐλεύθερος ὢν
 ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν

353 ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα,
 ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω·

12b ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἀλλὰ τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ συμμερίζονται; 14 οὕτως καὶ ὁ κύριος πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 13 Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐργαζόμενοι [τὰ] ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐσθίουσιν, οἱ τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ παρεδρεύοντες

9.20 καὶ
354 ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις
 ὡς Ἰουδαῖος,
 ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω·
355 (ἐγενόμην) τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον
 ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον,
 μὴ ὦν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον,
 ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω·
356 9.21 **(ἐγενόμην) τοῖς ἀνόμοις**
 ὡς ἄνομος,
 μὴ ὦν ἄνομος θεοῦ
 ἀλλ’
 -- ἔννομος Χριστοῦ,
 ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους·
357 9.22 **ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής,**
 ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω·
358 τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα,
 ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω.
 9.23 δὲ
359 πάντα ποιῶ
 διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον,
 ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι.
360 9.24 **Οὐκ οἶδατε**
 ὅτι οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες πάντες μὲν τρέχουσιν,
 δὲ
 εἷς λαμβάνει τὸ βραβεῖον;
 οὕτως
361 τρέχετε
 ἵνα καταλάβητε.
 9.25 δὲ
362 πᾶς ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται,
 οὖν
363 ἐκεῖνοι μὲν (ποιοῦσιν)
 ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν,
 δὲ
 ἡμεῖς ἄφθαρτον.
 9.26 τοίνυν
 οὕτως
364 ἐγὼ...τρέχω
 ὡς οὐκ ἀδήλως,
 οὕτως
365 πυκτεύω
 ὡς οὐκ ἀέρα δέρων·
 9.27 ἀλλ’
366 ὑπωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα
 καὶ
367 δουλαγωγῶ,
 | ἀλλοις κηρύξας
 μὴ πως...αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι.

γὰρ εὐαγγελίζωμαι, οὐκ ἔστιν μοι καύχημα· ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπίκειται· οὐαὶ γάρ μοι ἐστὶν ἐάν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι. 17 εἰ γὰρ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω, μισθὸν ἔχω· εἰ δὲ ἄκων, οικονομίαν πεπίστευμαι· 18 τίς οὖν μου ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός; ἵνα εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὸ μὴ καταχρησασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

19 Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω· 20 καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω· τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω· 21 τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ’ ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους· 22 ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής, ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω· τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω. 23 πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι.

24 Οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες πάντες μὲν τρέχουσιν, εἷς δὲ λαμβάνει τὸ βραβεῖον; οὕτως τρέχετε ἵνα καταλάβητε. 25 πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄφθαρτον. 26 ἐγὼ τοίνυν οὕτως τρέχω ὡς οὐκ ἀδήλως, οὕτως πυκτεύω ὡς οὐκ ἀέρα δέρων· 27 ἀλλ’ ὑπωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ, μὴ πως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι.

12b Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way

εὐαγγελίου ζῆν.

15 Ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέχρημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων. Οὐκ ἔγραψα δὲ ταῦτα, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοί· καλὸν γάρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ — τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει. 16 ἐάν

of the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the

temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that—no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting! 16 If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. 18 What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

19 For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

24 Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. 25 Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. 26 So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; 27 but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

In verses 12b-14 Paul completes the transition from divine privileges granted to this privileges not used. Then in vv. 15-27 he increasingly discusses his personal approach to ministry through 'paying his own way.' What one should notice here in the larger context of Paul's writings is that Paul never demanded local support while ministering in any city. But when local individuals offered support voluntarily to him he accepted it, e.g., Lydia opening her home to him in Philippi (Acts 16:14); Aquila and Priscilla opening their home to him in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3), et als.

From then to now, vv. 12b-14: ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν δώμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 13 Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐργαζόμενοι [τὰ] ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐσθίουσιν, οἱ τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ παρεδρεύοντες τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ συμμερίζονται; 14 οὕτως καὶ ὁ κύριος διέταξεν τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν. Never-

theless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. Paul begins with an assertion of not using these divinely given privileges. But adds to the image of the oxen and the farmer, the Jewish temple priests who received their support from portions of the sacrifices brought to the temple in Jerusalem. This is laid out in the Law of Moses in several places, e.g., Lev. 6:9-11. In verse 14 Paul brings this OT principle over into a Christian ministry application.

Paul's philosophy of ministry, vv. 15-23. This is set forth in two sections, 15-18 and 19-23 with 24-27 as the application to his readers.

Paul begins by repeating his opening statement in v. 12b:

v. 12b, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ,
but we did not use this authorization,

v. 15a, Ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέχρημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων.
but I have not used any of these.

Both these declarations with the same essential meaning provide a backdrop for further elaboration in different directions.¹¹⁶ In v. 12c he asserts: ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν δώμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *Instead we endure all things lest we produce some obstacle to the Gospel about Christ.* But in v. 15b he asserts: Οὐκ ἔγραψα δὲ ταῦτα, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοὶ καλὸν γάρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ — τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει. *But I am not writing these things so that it may be applied to me, for it would be better for me to die than¹¹⁷ -- someone take away my satisfaction (in serving as I*

¹¹⁶Note the shift from the first person plural "we" in the first instance to the first person singular "I" in the second one. Beginning in v. 15 Paul stresses his own philosophy of ministry, although his associates probably agreed with it.

¹¹⁷¹¹⁵The reading οὐδεὶς κενώσει, **no one shall invalidate or make empty** ..., is classified as 'B' by the UBS 4th ed., but has the support of P⁴⁶, N*, B, D*, 33, it^d, syr⁴, Tertullian, and Gregory of Nyssa. The variant readings virtually all provide ways round the occurrence of aposiopesis, i.e., Paul's beginning **I would rather die than** and then breaking off the construction in mid-flow to replace it by another.¹⁵⁹ Of these the alternative in N², C, and D² is ἵνα τις κενώσει, while A reads οὐθεὶς μὴ κενώσει. Other variants also occur. We have only to recall that Paul is no doubt dictating orally to understand how readily he speaks with such passion that he pauses to resume with a more succinct summary. Thus the UBS reading is likely to be correct. Senft and Robertson (among many) offer reasons for the disrupted syntax (see below), but too many English VSS (apart from NJB) seek to smooth it out." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 693.]

do). In part there stands behind both these sets of declarations the statements in 2:1-5 where Paul distanced himself from the Sophist style of sensationalistic presentation of the Gospel. He saw himself as a humble, submissive channel through which God could speak to the Corinthians and the further he stood in the background the more Christ crucified and resurrected stood in the foreground. The ‘knowledge’ based folks, however, saw this a signals of Paul’s weakness and lack of communication skills. But Paul knew that their picture of a powerful preacher was false and put the preacher at the center rather than God. So he willingly endured all kinds of insults and negative criticisms against him so that Christ would always stand at the very center of his Gospel messages.

His second point beginning in v. 15 is that he did not assert the legitimacy of the divine authorizations of expected support from the Corinthians so that now he could begin claiming them for himself. To the contrary, he would rather die than elevate himself to center stage in the preaching of the Gospel (καλὸν γάρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ...). Further as he ‘shifts gear in mid-stream here,’ he would allow no one to intimidate him to claim support from others for this would take away the profound sense of satisfaction of presenting the Gospel with Christ at its center rather than himself (τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει).¹¹⁸

Verses 16-18 continue this theme with a series of declarations. All are introduced by γὰρ signaling them to be explanatory amplifications of v. 15a that establish why Paul preaches the way his does.

Verse 16. ἐὰν γὰρ εὐαγγελίζωμαι, οὐκ ἔστιν μοι καύχημα, *for if I proclaim the Gospel, there is no boasting about me.* Here Paul’s point is that no credit comes to

¹¹⁸“The subapostolic 1 Clement (c. 96 AD) takes up this theme of **glorying** in the Lord: ‘Let our glorying (τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν) and bold confidence (ἡ παρρησία) be in him [the Lord]’ (1 Clement 34:5). Chrysostom affirms that Paul’s ground for **glorying** (τὸ καύχημα) is the cross of Christ (Hom. in Matt., 26:39 [3:19B]). Ignatius faces martyrdom, as he seeks to die not in boastful self-confidence (μὲν ἐν καυχῇσει ἀπόγωμαι) but in looking away glory from self (Ignatius, To the Trallians, 4:1). Origen quotes from Paul’s refrain of **glorying** (ἡ καύχησις) in the context of human weakness, suffering or death (Rom 5:3–5; 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Cor 1:5; On Martyrdom, 41 [Migne, PG, 11:617A]).¹⁷¹ Such texts contribute to what comes to represent a posthistory of the Pauline texts. This reaches a new peak in Luther and in the Reformers’ interpretations of Paul.¹⁷² The “Exegetical and Hermeneutical Reflections” on 9:14–15 offered by David G. Horrell confirms the kerygmatic and Christocentric focus shared by the exegesis of Käsemann, Fee, and Hays and the hermeneutical reflections of Origen and Luther. Horrell writes, ‘For Paul, the self-giving of Christ, his self-emptying and self-sacrifice, is a fundamental ethical resource, a paradigm.... In Paul’s view, obedient Christian discipleship.’¹⁷³ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 695.]

him when he preaches the Gospel. Why? ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπίκειται, *for heavy obligation is upon me.* A divine calling has been given to Paul. To preach is simply obeying God’s calling, and obeying God is the obligation of every believer. οὐαὶ γάρ μοί ἐστιν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι, *for woe is me if I should not preach the Gospel.* Attention would come to Paul only if he disobeyed God’s calling by failing to preach the Gospel, And this would not be good attention. It would signal God’s great displeasure with the apostle.

Verse 17. εἰ γὰρ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω, μισθὸν ἔχω· εἰ δὲ ἄκων, οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι. *For if I do this gladly I have a reward; but if unwillingly I’m entrusted with a stewardship responsibility.* Paul’s words here are very difficult to communicate clearly in English.¹¹⁹ Given the contrastive nature of the two sets ἐκὼν / ἄκων and μισθὸν / οἰκονομίαν, and also of the two apodosis verbs ἔχω / πεπίστευμαι, Paul here continues to elaborate on how he approaches preaching the Gospel. In the first instance, if he personally chose to preach then he could expect to receive a reward. He would be a ‘hired hand.’ But since he was called by God, expressed here as ἄκων, then he stands under divine obligation to preach, here described in terms of a household slave being assigned a task by the Master of the house (οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι). Preaching is his duty to his Master. He makes the same essential point here as in verse sixteen, but uses different images to express it so that it becomes more emphatic.

¹¹⁹“This verse generates sensitive problems of translation. Although strictly ἐκὼν means *willingly* or *gladly*, the word stands in semantic opposition to *that which is by force or compulsion* and hence denotes of one’s own free will (as NJB) or **entirely by personal choice.**¹⁷⁹ To translate μισθὸν ἔχω requires no less sensitive care. Paul is expounding not so much an issue of physical or empirical cause and effect (for which I have ... would be appropriate) as the logical grammar of a contrast between two conceptual fields. Thus lexicons (including BAGD) distinguish between ‘physical’ uses of ἔχω to mean *I have, I possess, I hold in my hands, I own as a possession* and extended, sometimes conceptual uses to mean *I have at hand, I experience, I consider, I view, I have the possibility of, I am situated in relation to...*¹⁸⁰ The flexibility and range of ἔχω in the papyri is striking.¹⁸¹ Louw and Nida distinguish a semantic domain in which ἔχω relates to content from another in which the verb relates to experiencing ‘a state or condition.’¹⁸² Hence Paul makes a logical point that only acts carried out from self-motivation or self-initiative belong to the logical order of ‘reward’; and thereby his own irresistible commission excludes such logic. One network is in the realm of reward; the other is that of one entrusted with a task (οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι). It is almost, as it were, like being within a given management chain (οἰκονομία), to which Paul also alludes in 4:1.¹⁸³ ‘The language recalls the appointment of imperial secretaries who as a rule were either slaves or freedmen.’¹⁸⁴”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 696–697.]

Verse 18. τίς οὖν μού ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός; ἵνα εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὸ μὴ καταχρησασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. *Therefore what is my reward? This: that in preaching the Gospel free of charge so as to not use my authorization in the Gospel.* Here Paul comes back to the beginning emphasis upon his legitimate 'rights' (τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου) as an apostolic preacher of the Gospel. He forewent those divine authorizations for support from the locals in order to preach the Gospel ἀδάπανον, *free of charge*. In one sense, he didn't have to forego them, but being under divine calling to preach he chose to forego them for the sake of the integrity of the Gospel.

In vv. 19-23, Paul continues his personal example but increasingly it is apparent that this is a strong appeal to the 'knowledge' based Corinthians to surrender their 'rights' for the sake of their brothers with more limited understanding of spiritual matters (cf. chap. 8).

The opening statement in v. 19 sets the tone for this unit of text material: Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω· *for although being free regard to all things, I have enslaved myself to all, so that I can win over more of them.* Behind this stands the first century freedman / slave contrast. Spiritually Paul in conversion was liberated from slavery to sin and Satan. But in that conversion he completely submitted himself to Christ as His slave. That is, he gave up his 'rights' even though divinely authorized in order to serve Christ. Why? ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω, *so that I might win over more of them.* Underneath this is the premise that being Christ's slave means loving others more than oneself, just as Christ demonstrated in His earthly life and ministry.

In elaborating this principle in v. 19, he puts several examples before his readers in vv. 20-22, and the summarizes in v. 23. *First the Jews in v. 20,* καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω· τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω. *To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law.* Indeed Paul had been set free from the Torah but he continued to live by it in order to win over Jews to Christ.

Second in v. 21 to the Gentiles, τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους· *To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law.* Here Paul asserts his freedom from the Jewish ceremonial and ritual laws which then enabled him to related more honestly to non-Jews not following such standards.

Third to the 'weak' in v. 22a. ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν

ἀσθενής, ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω· *To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak.* Clearly in the background here stands 8:7, 9, 10 with the reference to those in the Corinthian church who were convinced to some extent that idols represented real deities. But Paul avoids labeling these folks in the church with the negative label as τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς, *the weak ones*. He only states ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς, *his conscience is weak* (8:10). By this he means his decision making ability is less capable than those who recognized the exclusive existence of God. The modern commentator labels of weak and strong believers at Corinth is quite misleading and twists Paul's depictions into a negative perspective, which he refuses to adopt.

Here in v. 22a his terms are broader and simply allude to those less able to make clear cut religious decisions. Prof. Theissen is closer to Paul's idea by identifying weak and strong from a sociological perspective as the powerful, influential individuals over against those without such power and influence. Economic status is important here.¹²⁰ The 'weak' as those on the lower end of the economic ladder in ancient Corinth clearly would not have had purchasing choices about meat in the marketplace, and would generally have been more reticent about buying meat there without knowing its origin. But here Paul's referencing of them goes beyond just this one issue to the feeling of being weak and helpless in society generally. He could well identify well with them in his being an often persecuted individual, labeled as a common criminal in society by his enemies.

Fourth, in v. 22b in summary. τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω. *To all I have become all things so that by all means I can deliver some.* Here he gathers up the above three categories into a generalized principle declaration of being flexible in order to better relate to different kinds of people in order to preach the Gospel of salvation to them.

His elaboration on this core summary statement comes in v. 23: πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι. *And all things I do for the sake of the Gospel so that I may become a 'fellow sharer' in its blessings.* This plays off the earlier declaration in 8:1, ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, *Knowledge puffs up but love builds up.* If you have ever presented the

¹²⁰At the same time we must recall Theissen's point that the weak is a designation which derives from how 'the strong' perceive the social relationship, in addition to denoting an objective social contrast between the influential and the vulnerable.²²⁷ In this context the weak may mean those whose options for life and conduct were severely restricted because of their dependence on the wishes of patrons, employers, or slave owners." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 705.]



Gospel to an individual who then accepted Christ into his life through that presentation, then you understand clearly what Paul is saying here. The apostle reflects out of his experience the absolute joy of seeing others come to conversion to Christ in the Gospel. This being συγκοινωνός αὐτοῦ, [fellow participants in it](#), with those coming to Christ in the Gospel is a blessing beyond description.

This applies to you, vv. 24-27. Paul now turns to his readers with forceful application built off the athletic metaphors of the Olympic track races and boxing matches in ancient Greece.¹²¹ The key word stressed through the figure of the track runner is πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, he exercises strict self-control (v. 25a). The metaphor of the runner comes first (v. 24): Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες πάντες μὲν τρέχουσιν, εἷς δὲ λαμβάνει τὸ βραβεῖον; οὕτως τρέχετε ἵνα καταλάβητε. [Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it.](#) Here the runner's self discipline is decisive in whether he wins the race or not. Paul's admonition οὕτως τρέχετε ἵνα καταλάβητε, [Run in such a way that you may win it](#), applies the principle to the self centered 'knowledgers' who need self control in order to move beyond their 'rights' to brotherly love for fellow believers (cf. 8:1). The Christian motivation to self-disciplined 'running,' i.e., service to others, has the higher incentive of eternal blessing from God (v. 25): πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀφθαρτον. [Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one.](#)

Finally, Paul turns to himself as reflecting his stance through these metaphors of the runner and the boxer (vv. 26-27): 26 ἐγὼ τοίνυν οὕτως τρέχω ὡς οὐκ ἀδήλως, οὕτως πυκτεύω ὡς οὐκ ἀέρα δέρων· 27 ἀλλ' ὑπωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ, μὴ πως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι. [26 So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; 27 but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.](#) Living by the principle ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, [but love builds up](#), demands self discipline and control over our inherently sinful tenden-

¹²¹“Paul’s appeal to the principle of forbearance, or to voluntary renunciation of rights or entitlements, receives explication through three categories of examples. In 9:1–23 Paul appeals to his own personal example (cf. 11:1), although this appeal also embodies analogies and appeals to scripture and to the sayings of Jesus about ministerial maintenance. In 9:24–27 Paul appeals to an example drawn from Graeco-Roman competitive pursuits, namely, the Isthmian games. Straub, Pfitzner, and others agree that the central issue here is the need for ἐγκράτεια, self-control, or in some contexts abstinence (see below).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 708–709.]

cies (ὑπωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ,) even as believers. It requires a strategy of ministry (οὕτως πυκτεύω ὡς οὐκ ἀέρα δέρων). Failure to reach out to others above ourselves in ministry risks failure at a critical point of being Christian (μὴ πως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι). Paul's deep concern was not his fear of failing himself. Instead, his anxiety here concerned the 'knowledgers' in the church who showed little interest in or respect for those they considered inferior to themselves.

With chapter nine we are slowly beginning to realize the core problem in the church at Corinth. Some felt themselves superior to the rest in the church. This elitist mentality popped out in different ways, e.g., the meat offered to idols issue. But all through the letter body the apostle will address such elitism as it comes to the surface in connection to different problems and issues existing in the church and needing to be addressed by Paul.

5) *Learning from Israel's example, 10:1-22.*

10.1 Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλῃν ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον 2 καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ 3 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον 4 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα· ἔπιον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθοῦσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.

5 Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. 6 Ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κἀκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν. 7 μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν, ὡσπερ γέγραπται· ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν. 8 μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες. 9 μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπείρασαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφρων ἀπώλλυντο. 10 μηδὲ γογγύζετε, καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπώλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ. 11 ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινον ἐκεῖνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰῶνων κατήντηκεν.

12 Ὡστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλεπέτω μὴ πέση. 13 πειρασμός ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος· πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.

14 Διόπερ, ἀγαπητοί μου, φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας. 15 ὡς φρονίμοις λέγω· κρίνατε ὑμεῖς ὁ φημι.

16 Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; 17 ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ

ένος ἄρτου μετέχομεν. 18 βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα· οὐχ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θουσιαστηρίου εἰσίν;

19 Τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστὶν ἢ ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστὶν; 20 ἀλλ' ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαιμονίους καὶ οὐ θεῶ [θύουσιν]· οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι. 21 οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν

καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων. 22 ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον; μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν;

10.1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was

10.1 γὰρ
368 Οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,
ἀδελφοί,
ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες...ἦσαν
| καὶ
| διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης
πάντες...διῆλθον
10.2 | καὶ
| εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν
πάντες...ἐβαπτίσθησαν
| ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ
| καὶ
| ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ
10.3 | καὶ
πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον
10.4 | καὶ
πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα·
γὰρ
369 ἔπινον
ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας,
δὲ
370 ἡ πέτρα ἦν ὁ Χριστός.
10.5 Ἀλλ'
ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν
371 οὐκ...εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός,
γὰρ
372 κατεστρώθησαν
ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.
10.6 δὲ
373 Ταῦτα τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν,
εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν,
καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν.
374 10.7 μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε
καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν,
ὡσπερ γέγραπται·
ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν
καὶ
πεῖν
καὶ
ἀνέστησαν παίζειν.
375 10.8 μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν,
καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν
καὶ
376 ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες.
377 10.9 μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν,

καθώς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπέιρασαν
καὶ
ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφρων
ἀπώλλυντο.

378 ^{10.10} **μηδὲ γογγύζετε,**
καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν
καὶ
----- ἀπώλοντο
ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ.

^{10.11} δὲ
379 ταῦτα τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις,
δὲ
380 ἐγράφη
πρὸς νουθεσίαν ἡμῶν,
εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰῶνων κατήντηκεν.

^{11.12} Ὡστε
381 ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι
βλεπέτω
μὴ πέση.

382 ^{10.13} **πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν**
εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος·

δὲ
383 πιστὸς ὁ θεός,
ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι
ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε
ἀλλὰ
-- ποιήσει , , , τὴν ἔκβασιν
σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ |
καὶ τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.

^{10.14} Διόπερ,
ἀγαπητοί μου,
384 φεύγετε
ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας.

^{10.15} ὡς φρονίμοις
385 λέγω·
386 κρίνατε ὑμεῖς
ὁ φημι.

^{10.16} **Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας**
ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν,
387 οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ;

τὸν ἄρτον
ὃν κλῶμεν,
388 οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν;

^{10.17} ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος,
389 ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν,
γὰρ

ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου
390 οἱ πάντες...μετέχομεν.

391 ^{10.18} **βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα·**

392 οὐχ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυμαστηρίου εἰσίν;
10.19 οὖν
393 Τί φημι;
394 (φημι)
ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστίν
ἦ
ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστίν;
10.20 ἀλλ'
395 (φημι)
ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ [θύουσιν]·
δὲ
396 οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι.
397 10.21 οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων,
398 οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων.
399 10.22 ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον;
400 μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν;

Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

In 10:1 we encounter another standard signal of a topic shift: Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers,.... The phrase Οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, I don't want you to be ignorant, is used twice in First Corinthians as a new topic indicator: 10:1 and 12:1.¹²² In 12:1, it reinforces the major marker in the expression Περί δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, Now con-

Christ.

5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. 6 Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10 And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

12 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.

16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? 19 What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the

cerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I don't want you to be ignorant. But the topic shift here in 10:1 without the Περί δὲ τῶν..., But now concerning..., is not as strong, which most likely signals a closer connection to what precedes it.

The content of the new topic is expressed in summary fashion with a lengthy ὅτι clause covering vv. 1b-4a, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον 2 καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ 3 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον 4 καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα, that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were immersed into Moses by the cloud and by the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank a drink at the same spiritual place.¹²³ In an explanatory addendum Paul adds ἔπιον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. This helps establish a link to the application he will go on to make to the Corinthians. His main point, however, comes in the contrastive statement of v. 5: Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with

¹²²Elsewhere in Paul's writings at Rom. 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor. 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8

¹²³There is an important play on terms with τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν, the same spiritual place. It is then defined in v. 4b as ἡ πέτρα, the rock. The allusion is to Moses providing water for the Israelites by striking a rock: Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:8ff; Psalm 77:15-16, 20 et also. But Paul labels this a πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, a spiritual rock that follows, which he then identifies as Christ, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.



most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. In spite of all of them sharing together in the miraculous crossing of the Sea of Reeds and receiving God's marvelous provisions in the desert, they fell prey to idolatry and God's judgment struck most of the down in death in the wilderness.

What is Paul doing here? Verse six answers this question: Ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν. **Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did.** Paul sets up this historical scenario of the Israelites in the exodus as a τύποι, *topos*, for his Corinthian readers. What is a τύπος?¹²⁴ Here Paul reaches out to use a common ancient literary device of typology. The example of Israel in the exodus stands as a warning to the fusing and divisive Corinthians -- and to all believers for that matter.

The literary structure of vv. 1-22 then quite clearly revolves around the typological example of the Israelites in the exodus in vv. 1-5. Here he sets up the example. Then in vv. 6-22 he makes a detailed application of them and God's punishment of them to his Corinthians

¹²⁴10:1-11:1 concludes Paul's discussion of questions raised by the Corinthians about partaking of eidōlothuta. In ch. 10 we have an example of typology, and in fact Paul uses the word *typos* (type, example) to describe what he is doing. The idea behind typology is that since God's character never changes God acts in similar ways in different ages of history and, perhaps more importantly, provides persons and events that foreshadow other later persons and events in salvation history. Combined with this is the idea that all previous ages of salvation history prepare the way for and point toward the final eschatological age, which Paul believes has already begun. For Paul everything that happened to the OT people happened as examples for the benefit of the last age of believers. The OT is seen as the *ekklesia's* book, meant to teach Christians by analogy and example how they ought and ought not to live, with Israel providing both negative and positive examples.

"Strictly speaking, what we have in 1 Corinthians 10 is not a full typology like one finds in Hebrews in the comparison of Christ and Melchizedek. The correspondence is incomplete because the Corinthians have not yet perished in the 'desert' (v. 5). In fact, Paul uses the Israelite example so that the Corinthians will repent and not perish. He sees an analogy between the wicked behavior of the Israelites and that of at least some of the Corinthian Christians. Since God still judges such behavior, Paul warns them that their fate could be the same as that of those Israelites. Paul thus reckons with the possibility that some Corinthians might actually willfully wrench themselves free from the grasp of God and so be judged by God.

"Quintilian tells us that of the various sorts of *paradeigma* (paradigms) "the most important proofs of this class is what is most properly called 'example' (*exemplum*), that is to say the aducing of some past action real or assumed that may serve to persuade the audience of the truth of the point we are trying to make" (Inst. Or. 5.11.6). The term *paradeigma* was especially reserved by the Greeks for historical parallels (5.11.1)."¹²⁵

[Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 217.]

readers. It begins with a 'topic sentence' statement in v. 6, and is followed by weaving applications and admonitions together through v. 22. In doing this he draws upon not only several OT texts -- Exod. 14:19-22; 16:4-30; Num. 20:2-13 -- but also a lot of Jewish interpretive history of this episode, e.g., Wis. of Solomon 11.¹²⁵

One of the interpretive questions centers on the central point of the typology concerning the Israelites. Clearly in vv. 1-5 the contrast is drawn between common participation in divine blessing after blessing in the exodus on the one side and God's anger with the Israelites on the other which led him to strike down most of them.

Identification of that connecting point between the Israelites and the Corinthian believers comes first in the purpose clause statement (v. 6b): εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν, **so that we may not be passionate people for evil, just like those were.** The next signal comes in the admonitions with the comparative clause introduced with καθὼς (vv. 7-13). These seem to be developed out of this 'umbrella' statement in 6b of craving for things evil.¹²⁶

First, (v. 7): μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινας αὐτῶν, ὡσπερ γέγραπται· ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν

¹²⁵Paul draws on a series of OT texts and Jewish tradition about them. He first alludes to Exod. 14:19-22. He then moves on to Exod. 16:4-30 and Exod. 17:1-7/Num. 20:2-13, the latter being the story about water from the rock. Paul's interpretation of that story is indebted to the sapiential treatment of it in Wisdom of Solomon 11, where personified Wisdom provides the water to the Israelites. There was also a rabbinic tradition, probably from as early as Paul's day, about Miriam's well, shaped like a rock, which followed the Israelites in the desert and provided water whenever they needed it (cf. Num. 21:16-18).⁸ Paul probably did not take such rabbinic traditions as literal history. His historical point is that Christ provided the miraculous water then just as he provides benefits to the Christian now, as the Lord's Supper makes clear." [Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 219.]

¹²⁶"However, in our view craving represents the general stance from which the specific four failures of vv. 7-13 flow. Again, δὲ in this context of introducing a summarizing proposition has the force of the logical *now* in English, with NRSV, NJB, and NIV. Since Paul is considering a correspondence between events (as in typology), not merely ideas (as in allegory), and appeals to history (as Goppelt insists), ταῦτα is well translated these events in REB. In his article on τύπος in TDNT, Goppelt urges that although the Greek word means example or sometimes mark (in the sense of stamp or imprint), or example as a norm (Rom 6:17), there also 'occurs a new sense peculiar to the NT. In 1 Cor 10:6, Rom 5:14, τύπος is a hermeneutical term for the OT 'type'. A corresponding sense is borne by ... τυπικῶς in 1 Cor 10:11 and ἀντίτυπος in 1 Pet 3:21."⁶¹ Goppelt also notes the use of the word in the sense of a heavenly 'original' in Heb 9:24." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 731.]



καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” The translations all miserably fail in their rendering of παίζειν, which is virtually untranslatable into any modern western language by a single word.¹²⁷ The connection to the Corinthians

¹²⁷“Meeks embraces within ‘rose up to play’ (παίζειν) the list of five failures which he enumerates (see above). However, it arguably prepares for the transition between taking part in idol worship and the reference in the next verse to immorality. Paul cites as his biblical quotation the episode narrated in Exod 32:6 (cf. 32:1–6) where the story of the worship of the golden calf begins with unrestrained feasting and drinking which leads, in the absence of Moses, to virtual orgy. To translate παίζειν is an almost impossible task. NJB’s innocent-sounding to amuse themselves probably derives from BAGD’s unimaginatively wooden rendering of παίζω as to play, to amuse oneself.⁷⁹ Strictly this conveys its most frequent meaning, as its cognate relation with παιδία, childishness, and παιδίον, παῖς, a child, indicates: children play games. The word also denotes dancing. A wider semantic range, however, is rightly conveyed by Grimm-Thayer and Liddell-Scott-Jones who include to sport, to jest, to play amorously, to joke, to dance and sing, to play games, to make sport (cf. Collins, rose to play).⁸⁰ Bertram explores an even wider range.⁸¹ How, then, can we determine what part of the semantic range is in view?

“The answer lies in the force of Exod 32:1–6 (LXX) as Paul would have understood it, and although Paul cites the LXX wording, the LXX παίζειν was presumably chosen as the nearest equivalent to the Hebrew which it translated, namely, קָחַץ (*ts-ch-q*), here in the form קָחַץ (l-*ts-ch-q*). BDB renders the Qal form to laugh, but the form used in the context of Exod 32:6 is to make sport, allowing for a probably triple meaning: (i) ‘letting their hair down’ in the absence of Moses with nuances of (ii) idolatrous dancing before the golden calf, and (iii) sexual license approaching orgy — all in contrast to the theological and ethical restraint and sober self-control (cf. 9:24–27) demanded of God’s covenant people.⁸² This demands a more forceful translation than to play (NRSV) and a more sinister nuance than to revel (REB). Fee criticizes NIV’s to indulge in pagan revelry as reading pagan into the text, but his criticism overlooks Bertram’s exegesis of Exodus 32 in ‘cultic dancing’ or overly harsh in the light of the Hebrew and the context of Exod 32:1–6, where ‘pagan-like’ is implicit.⁸³ The combination ‘lifting the lid’ of control or restraint, fired by drink, a party mood, and the absence of the patriarchal figure of Moses led to more than mere play. Even though Louw-Nida separate the ‘semantic domain’ of παίζω from that of κῶμος, drunken orgy (in Rom 13:13), in 1 Pet 4:3 κῶμος is associated with ἐπιθυμία, and Louw-Nida recognize that a number of scholars understand παίζω in 1 Cor 10:7 ‘as a euphemism for sex.’⁸⁴ The two terms overlap. Brevard Childs well captures the mood of Exod 32:1–6. Aaron declares of the human constructs, ‘These are your gods, O Israel ...,’ and the section concludes with “a burst of frenzied activity... A religious orgy has begun.”⁸⁵ Only in order to preserve a semantic distinction from κῶμος do we translate to virtual orgy, but Paul is obliged to use the LXX word. Orgy allows for (i) lack of sober restraint and self-control; (ii) religious or cultic “enthusiasm” which goes beyond reasonable or sober limits; and (iii) probably sexual license. If it were not for the probable cultic dimension, we might try to capture the double meaning in modern English by got up to have a romp (cf. romp in the hay), or (in quotation marks) got up to have ‘fun and games.’ Schrage speaks of the ‘Kultisch-orgiastische Tänze vor dem Goldenen Kalb’.⁸⁶”

becomes clearer with translating μηδὲ εἰδωλόατραι γίνεσθε as Do not take part in idol worship, a topic Paul has addressed at length already. The lax attitude of the ‘knowledgers’ at Corinth was risking serious compromise of their faith commitment to Christ. Here the focus is on attending meetings in the temple where the traditional banquet and orgiastical partying were standard features of the various social and work groups.¹²⁸ It is a different issue from buying meat in the market place to be prepared and eaten at home (8:1-13; 10:23-33).

Second (v. 8), μηδὲ πορνέωμεν, καθώς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπασαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες.¹²⁹

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 734–735.]

¹²⁸“Archaeological evidence concerning the Temple of Asclepius (to which Pausanias refers also) provides an excellent example of the difference between attending a meal which might just happen to be located within the precincts of a temple, and accepting an invitation to attend a meal which was devoted to the offering of thanks and praise to Asclepius, the god of healing, for a return of health on the part of the one who arranges the cultic banquet. Vitruvius writes of ‘the shrines ... for Asclepius and Salus ... by whose medical power sick persons are manifestly healed ... so it will happen that the divinity, from the nature of the site [of the Temple], will gain a greater and higher reputation and authority.’⁹⁰ It is possible, but not certain, that three dining rooms to the east side of the courtyard of the Temple of Asclepius were in operation in Paul’s time. The couches around the walls could accommodate eleven persons, and the blackening of stone suggests that cooking was undertaken there. Murphy-O’Connor makes the fundamental point that ‘some of the functions would have been purely social in character [my italics; cf. 8:1–13; 10:23–33]; but others would have been gestures of gratitude to the god for such happy events as a cure, a birth, a coming of age, or a marriage [cf. 10:1–22].’⁹¹ The wording of an invitation would often indicate whether a religious or cultic dimension was involved. A well-known example is: ‘Herais asks you to dine in the room of the Serapheion [= Asclepion] at the banquet of the Lord Seraphis tomorrow from the 11th, from the 9th hour.’⁹²” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 736.]

¹²⁹“Paul cites the incident narrated in Num 25:1–9, according to which 24,000 fell (Num 25:9). However, Paul (against LXX, Philo et al.) speaks of twenty-three thousand. Commentators have exhausted their ingenuity in trying to explain the numerical ‘discrepancy.’ An early tradition found in Grotius suggests that 23,000 fell in one day, but 24,000 in all. Calvin speculates: ‘Moses gives the upper limit, Paul the lower, so there is really no discrepancy.’¹⁰⁶ Bengel refines Calvin’s proposal, urging that if, e.g., the actual number (we have to assume known to Moses and to Paul) were 23,600, the round number could plausibly be expressed by Paul’s retaining the twenty-three (23,000), while Moses rounded it up to the strictly nearest thousand, i.e., 24,000. Bengel disarmingly adds that this avoids ‘the subtleties of other interpreters’(!)¹⁰⁷ Charles Hodge follows Calvin and Bengel, including a brief defence of biblical ‘infallibility,’ in arguing that for people to resort to attacking this doctrine by appealing to a trivial problem which is capa-



We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand¹³⁰ fell in a single day. The connecting link of the Israelite orgy to the Corinthians is rather clear given temple prostitution in first century Corinth (cf. 6:12-20). Sexual immorality was rampant in first century Corinth and was often connected to participation in pagan temple practices.¹³¹ The atmosphere of Corinth in Paul's world was total self-gratification of any and all physical desires, and thus has much relevance to the modern world.¹³² But the example of the Isra-

ble of explanation exposes the weakness of the opposition.¹⁰⁸ Most modern commentators contend that Paul is not troubled to provide an exact memory, and may well have conflated his thought with a further allusion to Num 26:62.¹⁰⁹ Fee concludes that 'there is not an entirely satisfactory solution' to 'the infamous case of the missing thousand,' while Kistemaker reminds us not to draw any inference too readily in a case where we cannot be clearly certain what has occurred.¹¹⁰ It is worth noting that the patristic writers seem to be untroubled by this verse. I can find no discussion of the issue, e.g., in Origen, Chrysostom, or Augustine.¹¹¹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 739–740.]

¹³⁰Some manuscript copyists correct Paul's number of 23,000 to the source text of Num. 25:9 of 24,000. But the weight of evidence favoring 23,000 is overwhelming. Paul just has a different number from the original text in Numbers.

¹³¹In v. 8 these commands apply in general, except that 10:8 is recognized to apply more specifically to temple prostitution.¹⁰¹ The dual background to this verse must be borne in mind. (i) The first context is the traditions of the OT, hellenistic-Jewish literature (esp. Wisdom of Solomon), and the midrashic traditions which are found in developed form in rabbinic literature and with which Meeks and Collier, among others, associate these verses (see above under 10:6–7). (ii) The second fundamental context is that of the influence of the cults of Aphrodite, Dionysus/Bacchus, Apollo, Isis and Serapis, and Poseidon at Corinth. Archaeological evidence not only establishes, but brings to life, the reality and impact of these cults, many with implications for sexual license for Corinth in its civic, cultural, and everyday life. To be sure, we must note the problem of date. Those who cite the visual impact of the hilltop of Acrocorinth, e.g., long associated with Aphrodite as the protector of the city, often allude to excesses in the earlier pre-Roman period. The earlier Greek period was more responsible than the Roman for the specifically sexual influences of pagan idolatry. Nevertheless, the Roman period is far from innocent of this aspect, and archaeology offers abundant evidence of the influence of Graeco-Roman cults and images at every turn." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 738.]

¹³²As we have noted, the competitiveness and status-seeking at Corinth suggest parallels with early twentieth-first-century modern/post-modern cultures. Similarly, the cults of Aphrodite, Apollo, and Dionysus invited a 'freedom' to dispense with moral restraint and to tolerate everything except any transcontextual truth claim which might interfere with an individual's 'right' to instant self-gratification. All of this resonates with a post-modern ethic which is founded only on 'where society is' at the beginning of the twenty-first century.¹⁰⁵ "And Rose Up to Play" resonates with treating other human persons as 'playthings' in the 'play' of

elites, Paul asserts, warns believers that such activity can and will bring down the wrath of God upon them just it did with the Israelites.

Third (v. 9), μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπέιρασαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφρων ἀπώλλυντο. **We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents.** Several copyists substitute τὸν Χριστόν, **Christ**, with either τὸν κύριον, **the Lord**, or τὸν θεόν, **God**.¹³³ Although the external evidence is somewhat divided, the internal evidence clearly favors τὸν Χριστόν. The use of the prohibitive present subjunctive verb implies that Paul considered at least some of the Corinthians to already be engaging in such forbidden actions. They were serious risking the wrath of God which fell upon the Israelites (cf. Num. 21:4-5; Ps. 77:18; 94:9).

Fourth (v. 10), μηδὲ γογγύζετε, καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπώλλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ. **And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.** The precise meaning of μηδὲ γογγύζετε is important here.¹³⁴ Given the OT allusion to Num. 14, Paul is talking about more than petty griping. He is **warning, especially the 'knowledgers' against complaining** cultic and recreational sex (see the Introduction, 11). It is against this background that Paul presses the issue of whether it is the OT as scripture that provides the believers' formative models (10:6, 11) or whether they stand instead in solidarity with those of Israel who fell and with degenerate idolatry." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 739.]

¹³³g

* κυριον κ B C P 33. 104. 326. 365. 1175. 2464 sy^{hmg}

| θεον A 81

| txt P⁴⁶ D F G K L Ψ 630. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881 latt sy

co; Ir^{lat} Or^{1739mg}

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 536.]

¹³⁴The lexicons may well convey the normal semantic range of γογγύζω (v. 10), the onomatopoeic word for *murmuring, grumbling, griping, groaning, whining, whispering, complaining* (especially behind one's hand).¹²³ However, the OT contexts are decisive in assisting us to grasp what semantic nuances are operative. The bold statement *Don't complain... The angel of death killed them* (W. F. Beck, *The New Testament in the Language of Today*) or even *Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer* (AV/KJV) implies a questionable theology of God which is out of context. In context the concept is not petty complaints as such, but the constant grudging, carping, **querulous moaning** which transformed the bold, glad self-perception of those whom God had redeemed from Egypt for a new lifestyle into a self-pitying, false perception of themselves as 'victims' on whom God had weighed heavy burdens and trials, in contrast to a fantasy life of ideal existence in Egypt or the world." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 742.]

about needing to sacrifice their rights for the sake of the weaker brother etc. The destroyer is the angel of death as mentioned in Exod 12:23 (LXX) and 1 Chron. 21:12, 15).

With these four applications of the typology of Israel's experience in the exodus now before his readers, he repeats the statement of application in v. 11 from v. 6, ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. The difference in wording -- Ταῦτα τύποι, these things as examples (v. 6) and ταῦτα τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν, these things happenly 'examply' (as examples) -- is the use of the noun and the adverb to say the same thing. In this statement Paul asserts the relevancy of the Israelites experience as sources of spiritual insight into the consistent pattern of God's punishing of His people when they sin against Him, both then and now.

In vv. 12-13, he draws significant conclusions (Ὡστε) from the example of the Israelites: 12 Ὡστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλεπέτω μὴ πέση. 13 πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος· πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν. 12 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

The first (v. 12) is a warning, while the second (v. 13) is a promise. Let the believer assuming himself to be on the correct side of the issues that Paul has presented beware. Flippant assumptions lead to colossal downfalls! But to the believer honestly seeking to know and do God's will a terrific promise of God's protective care and assistance is given. God won't prevent severe testing of your faith commitment to Him from coming against you. Instead, He will sustain you in them and lead you successfully through them.

What then are some implications (Διόπερ) of all this? Vv. 14-22 spell out some of them.

a) 14 Διόπερ, ἀγαπητοὶ μου, φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας. 15 ὡς φρονίμοις λέγω· κρίνατε ὑμεῖς ὃ φημι. 14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. If Israel's experience in the OT teaches anything it urges God's people to put as much distance between themselves and pagan idols as possible. Paul saw huge spiritual danger for the Corinthian believers in attending the social club meetings in the various pagan temples. In spite of the 'knowledgers' having the awareness that these statues were nothing more

than chiseled stone with no life in them, a real spiritual danger was none the less present in such places. The immoral actions also connected with such gatherings were strictly off limits to the followers of Christ.

b) 16 Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστὶν; 17 ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Believers have but one religious ritual celebrating the blessing of their deity: holy communion. The cup and the bread bring us into intimate relationship with Him and also with one another in a unified celebration of communion. Thus for believers the meal celebrating Christ is the only appropriate religious meal and it excludes eating other meals in the temples of pagan gods.

c) 18 βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα· οὐχ οἱ ἐσθιόντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου εἰσίν; 18 Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar?

Out of the background of those who ate the meat offered on the altar of God Paul makes his point. When the Israelite brought an animal offering to the tabernacle or later on to the temple for sacrifice, the meat from the animal was divided three ways: a small portion was burned in the fire on the great altar; a larger portion was returned to the worshiper for eating in a festive dinner that completed the process of worship; and the remainder was kept as food for the thousands of priests living at the temple and officiating over these rituals. Paul's point then is that both the worshipper and the priest who eat portions of the sacrificed meat become κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, partners with the altar. That is, the worshipper enters into a special relationship with this meat dedication to God and this carries with it obligations from the worshipper to God. It represents a renewed commitment to his God.

d) 19 Τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδωλόθυτόν τί ἐστὶν ἢ ὅτι εἰδωλόν τί ἐστὶν; 20 ἀλλ' ὅτι ἂ θύουσιν, δαιμονίους καὶ οὐ θεῶ [θύουσιν]· οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι. 19 What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. Here is a pivotal point in Paul's expression. When the believer eats this meat offered to a pagan idol in one of the social group meetings, he indeed is eating this dedicated meat offered up to a pagan image which represents a non-existing deity.

BUT! That pagan statue does have life in it, although not any from the supposed god. Instead, the demons of Hell under the direction of Satan inhabit this meat and for the Christian to eat the meat mean ingesting into one's body the demonic. This makes the believers κοινωνούς τῶν δαιμονίων, *in partnership with demons!* Not where a serious Christian would ever want to be!

e) 21 οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων. 22 ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον; μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν; 21 *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? Thus the believer is caught in utter hypocrisy when drinking the cup of wine dedicated to the pagan deity at the social group meeting, and then drinking the Lord's cup in the Christian celebration of communion! Paul simple draws the line for the Corinthians, and especially the 'knowledgers.'* Choose either the Lord's table or that of the pagan deity. You cannot and must not sit down at both tables?

For believers living in the polytheistic world of first century Corinth hard choices had to be made if individuals were going to be obedient to Christ and His demands upon their lives. Socially and financially they might well pay a real price for their adherence to Christian principles. But God calls upon every follower of Christ to walk in the Savior's foot prints of non-compromising commitment to the will of God no matter what the personal cost may be.

6) Living in thoughtfulness of others, 10:23-11:1.

23 Πάντα ἕξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα ἕξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ. 24 μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου.

25 Πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε μὴδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν· 26 τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς. 27 εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε πορευέσθαι, πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε μὴδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. 28 ἐὰν δέ τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ· τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν, μὴ ἐσθίετε δι'

ἐκεῖνον τὸν μὴνύσαντα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν· 29 συνείδησιν δὲ λέγω οὐχὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ τὴν τοῦ ἑτέρου. ἵνατί γὰρ ἡ ἐλευθερία μου κρίνεται ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως; 30 εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ;

31 Εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε. 32 ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίους γίνεσθε καὶ Ἑλλήσιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, 33 καθὼς κἀγὼ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν, ἵνα σωθῶσιν. 11.1 μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε καθὼς κἀγὼ Χριστοῦ.

23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. 24 Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other.

25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, 26 for "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's." 27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— 29 I mean the other's conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

400	10.23	Πάντα ἕξεστιν ἀλλ'	
401		οὐ πάντα συμφέρει·	
402		πάντα ἕξεστιν ἀλλ'	
403		οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ.	
404	10.24	μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω ἀλλὰ	
405		τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου.	
406	10.25	Πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε μὴδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν·	
407	10.26	γὰρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς.	
408	10.27	εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε πορευέσθαι, πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε μὴδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν.	

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please

10.28 δέ
 ἄν τις ὑμῖν εἶπη·
 τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν,
409 μὴ ἐσθίετε
 δι' ἐκεῖνον τὸν μνηύσαντα
 καὶ
 τὴν συνείδησιν·
 10.29 δὲ
410 συνείδησιν λέγω
 οὐχὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ
 ἀλλὰ
 τὴν τοῦ ἐτέρου.
 γὰρ
411 ἵνατί ἡ ἐλευθερία μου κρίνεται
 ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως;
 10.30 εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω,
412 τί βλασφημοῦμαι
 ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ;
 10.31 οὖν
 Εἴτε ἐσθίετε
 εἴτε πίνετε
 εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε,
413 πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε.
414 10.32 ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίοις γίνεσθε
 καὶ Ἑλλήσιν |
 καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ | τοῦ θεοῦ,
 10.33 καθὼς κάγω πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω
 | μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σύμφορον
 | ἀλλὰ
 | ----- τὸ τῶν πολλῶν,
 ἵνα σωθῶσιν.
415 11.1 μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε
 καθὼς κάγω Χριστοῦ.

everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. 11.1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

What Paul seeks to do in this final theme that began primarily in 8:1 is to draw fundamental conclusions to this larger discussion.¹³⁵ But he will reach back to the beginning of the letter body in 1:10 to repeat core principles.

In continuing his basic emphasis on the foundational problems in the church that are surfacing in the various ways thus far described, the apostle begins with the same quoting of the ‘knowledgers’ superior understanding that was killing spiritual life in the church. In 6:12-13a, Paul had utilized similar quotes from the

¹³⁵The beginning header Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, **And concerning things offered to idols**, in 8:1 ultimately extends through 11:1. Failure here surfaced out of the spiritual arrogance of claiming a superior knowledge. The surrounding Greek cultural influences really played havoc on the development of a healthy spiritual life in the Christian community at Corinth.

Corinthians to introduce his condemnation of sexual misbehavior by some in the church.¹³⁶ Now again the ‘knowledgers’ are falsely seeking to justify their actions based on their ‘superior’ knowledge:

Πάντα ἔξεστιν
ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντα συμφέρει·

¹³⁶**1 Cor. 6:12-13a** The knowledgers’ viewpoint first, then followed by Paul’s response in bold/italic font. .

*Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν
 ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντα συμφέρει·
 πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν
 ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπὸ τινος.
 τὰ βρώματα τῆ κοιλίᾳ καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν,
 ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει.
 “All things are lawful for me,”
but not all things are beneficial.
 “All things are lawful for me,”
but I will not be dominated by anything.
 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,”
but God will destroy both one and the other.*



πάντα ἔξεστιν

ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ.

μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω

ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἐτέρου.

“All things are lawful,”

but not all things are beneficial.

“All things are lawful,”

but not all things build up.

Do not seek your own advantage,

but that of the other.

The first quote is virtually the same **Πάντα ἔξεστιν** (10:23) / **Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν** (6:12), but adapted in the second use to better fit what Paul wanted to say.¹³⁷ One of the translation challenges here is with the much broader range of meaning for the verb ἔξεστιν.¹³⁸ Since

¹³⁷“For the argument that Paul quotes a slogan current at Corinth and for exegetical comment see under 6:12, where the Greek is virtually identical except for the change from οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπό τινος in 6:12 to οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ here. There are advantages to translating ἔξεστιν as an issue of rights (cognate with ἐξουσία), but the slogan also reflects a concern for liberty which no doubt began as an authentic corollary of the gospel degenerated into a manipulative tool for license, self-gratification, and ‘autonomy.’ In 6:12 we translate ‘Liberty to do all things’ in order to retain Paul’s wordplay on ἐξουσιάζω: but I will not let anything take liberties with me (6:12b). Here, rather than stress that liberty (far from leading to autonomy) beguiles a believer into becoming mastered by the desires which reflect the craving (ἐπιθυμία of 10:7–13), Paul returns to his earlier theme of building up (see above under 3:9; 8:1, 10), which he will develop further in 14:3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26 (see there the exegetical comments, including allusion to P. Vielhauer’s Oikodomeu.)” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 781.]

¹³⁸“ἔξεστιν, ‘it is free’ (with the dat.), denotes a. that an action is possible in the sense that there are no hindrances or that the opportunity for it occurs, i.e., ‘to have the possibility,’ ‘to be able.’ Xen. An., VII, 1, 21: νῦν σοι ἔξεστιν, ὃ Ξενοφῶν, ἀνδρὶ γενέσθαι. Epict. Diss., III, 24, 6: ravens and crows, οἷς ἔξεστιν ἵπτασθαι ὅπου θέλουσιν, not that they have the power, but that they have unlimited opportunity (i.e., not δύανται). Similarly, Epict. often uses ἔξεστιν to denote something which we cannot prevent another from doing because it is in his “power” to do it: Diss., I, 1, 21: τί ἐμὸν καὶ τί οὐκ ἐμὸν καὶ τί μοι ἔξεστιν καὶ τί μοι οὐκ ἔξεστιν; It occurs in this sense in LXX only at 4 Macc. 1:12: περὶ τούτου νῦν αὐτίκα δὴ λέγειν ἐξέσται, and not at all in the NT, though cf. Mart. Pol., 12, 2: ὁ δὲ ἔρη, μὴ εἶναι ἐξὸν αὐτῷ (sc. ‘to throw Polycarp to the lions’), ἐπειδὴ πεπληρώκει τὰ κυνηγεία.

“b. It also means that an action is not prevented by a higher norm or court, that ‘it may be done or is not forbidden.’ Epict. Diss., I, 26, 8: ταῦτα ἐκεῖνόν μόνον λέγειν ἔξεστι τῷ τοιαύτην ἐπιβολὴν ἐνηνοχότι (“has the moral right”). So Ac. 2:29: ἐξὸν εἰπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας. In law esp. it denotes something which the law requires or forbids, Plat. Crito, 51d: Laws προαγορευόμεν τῷ ἐξουσίαν πεποιηκέναι Ἀθηναίων τῷ βουλομένῳ ... ἐξεῖναι λαβόντα τὰ αὐτοῦ ἀπιέναι. Thus often in the pap. it means to have ‘the right, authority, or permission to do or not to do something.’ Occasionally it is used also of religious and cultic commandments, Hdt., I, 183: ἐπὶ γὰρ τοῦ χρυσοῦ βωμοῦ οὐκ ἔξεστι θύειν, ὅτι μὴ

the ‘knowledgers’ at Corinth are using the term under heavy Greek cultural influence more than from Christian spiritual insights, the sense of the term contextually out of the Greek background covers “all things are proper”; “all things are possible”; “all things are legal”; “all things are okay”; etc. The arrogance out of recognizing that only God exists (8:1-4) created a spiritual elitism that blinded them to other spiritual truths just as important.

The first response to Πάντα ἔξεστιν in both uses is the same: ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει (10:23) / ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει. Again Paul stresses the limits on Christian freedom coming out of γνώσις by whether it serves to enhance the spiritual life or not. Here Paul reiterates the earlier spiritual axiom in 8:1b-3, ὅτι πάντες γνώσιν ἔχομεν. ἡ γνώσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ. 2 εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὕτω ἔγνω καθὼς δεῖ γνῶναι. 3 εἰ δὲ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. **that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up; if one supposes himself to know something does not yet know as it is necessary to know; if one loves God, this one will be known by Him.**

The second response, πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ, is set up as a synonymous parallel to the first one:

Πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει·

πάντα ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ.

Our right to do all things will not always benefit (συμφέρει) or build up (οἰκοδομεῖ). Thus the doublet here highlights emphasis upon the absolute necessity for spiritual wisdom in knowing how to use what God has given to us.

It is the following admonition in v. 24 that picks up the earlier axiom ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, **but love builds up** (8:1c). The deeper spiritual wisdom understands the concerns for the welfare of others takes priority over

γαλαθηνά μοῦνα. Also in the magic pap.: Preis. Zaub., IV, 2255 f.: τὸ δεῖ γενέσθαι, τοῦτ' οὐκ ἔξεστι φυγεῖν. But in this sense it is relatively rare (→ infra). In the LXX 2 Ἐσδρ. 4:14 (= 778 ḡl, ‘not seemly’); V 2, p 561 Est. 4:2; 1 Macc. 14:44; in the NT Jn. 18:31; Ac. 22:25; 2 C. 12:4; 1 also Ac. 16:21; 2 non-juridically Mt. 20:15; Ac. 21:37. It is used esp. to denote the prohibitions of the Jewish Law in the later LXX writings: 3 Macc. 1:11 (add ἐξεῖναι); 4 Macc. 5:18; 17:17; and in the NT in all other passages: Mk. 2:24 and par., 26 and par.; 10:2 and par.; 12:14 and par.; Mt. 12:10, 12; 27:6; 3 Lk. 14:3; Jn. 5:10; 1 C. 6:12; 10:23 (on both the last passages → ἐξουσία C. 5).

“c. In Epict. it often means that there are no psychic or ethical obstacles to an action: ‘to have the (inner) power to do it’: Diss., II, 16, 37: ᾧ γὰρ ἔξεστιν ἐξελεῖν, ὅταν θέλῃ, τοῦ συμποσίου. It is not used in the NT or the LXX in this sense, though cf. Philo Omn. Prob. Lib., 59.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 560–561.]



one's own 'rights' and freedom: μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου. **Let no one seek his own advantage, but rather the advantage of the other.** ¹³⁹

Out of this initial summarizing in vv. 23-24 come two applications: a) vv. 25-30 and b) vv. 31-11:1.

a) Dedicated Meat outside the pagan temple, vv. 25-30. Is eating meat okay for a Christian ever? Paul affirms that the knowledge that only God exists does open some opportunities for eating meat by Christians. In vv. 25-26, he makes the general statement about the Christian buying meat in the open marketplace: 25 Πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν· 26 τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς. **25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, 26 for "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's."** When shopping for meat in the marketplace,¹⁴⁰ the Christian show buy

¹³⁹“The diverse situations and case studies examined over the last three chapters now find expression as a ‘general axiom’ or aphorism.⁴ Concern for the other remains, in Bonhoeffer’s phrase, the Christomorphic pattern of the lifestyle and atoning work of ‘the Man for Others’ (cf. Matt 22:37–40), and Paul will appeal to this in the last verse of this section, 11:1b. It is also, as he states in v. 33 and 11a, a mode of life which he himself seeks to live out, and is a principle of apostolicity (cf. in 1:1; 9:1). The principle also finds expression in 13:5; Rom 14:7; 15:2; Gal 6:2; and Phil 2:1–4, 5–7. Greek often uses the singular other when modern English speaks of others. However, with the rise of hermeneutical theory in Gadamer, Betti, and Ricoeur, respect for ‘the otherness of the Other’ has entered hermeneutical, philosophical, and ethical vocabulary in precisely this Pauline sense, and hence the singular may be retained as a way of making this specific point.⁵ On this basis Barrett rightly questions those who render the other person (τοῦ ἑτέρου) as neighbor because this implies commonality in some degree (e.g., location).⁶ Paul’s demonstration of how this axiom should operate at Corinth has been set forth in 8:7–13, where concern for the brother or sister for whom Christ died takes priority over one’s own concerns for self-affirmation, self-gratification, or self-fulfillment (genuine or imagined). The complementary point about social realities is underlined by Collins: ‘the Christians at Corinth lived neither in a Christian quarter nor in a ghetto.... They had a variety of contacts with those who were not members of the church’.⁷” ;Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 782.]

¹⁴⁰“Older modern writers argue that the Greek μάκελλον (only here within the NT) is a late loanword from Lat. *macellum*.⁸ In spite of the close relationship of virtual transliteration however, the word can be traced to an inscription of 400 BC at Epidaurus as well as to Ionic Greek, and BAGD insist that it was ‘not originally a Latin word taken into Greek.’⁹ Robertson and Moulton-Milligan, among others, however, observe that it also relates to Hebrew, and demonstrate its use in Dio Cassius, Plutarch, the papyri, and inscriptions to mean market for provisions, or the meat market.¹⁰ Kent shows that of the 104 inscriptions dated prior to the reign of Hadrian, 101 are in Latin, and only 3 in Greek.¹¹ If Latin was used mainly in the early days of Corinth as a Roman colony (from 44 BC onward), in Paul’s day Greek would have been the language of trade and commerce, and interaction between the languages was

whatever meat he desires, and do so without asking whether or not it has been dedicated to some pagan deity before being offered for sale in the marketplace. In fact, the external evidence suggests that most all the meat offered in the butcher shops of Corinth would have been previously dedicated meat.¹⁴¹

The basis for this admonition is grounded in Psalm 24:1, which Paul uses here:

v. 26, τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς.

Ps. 24:1 (LXX 23:1). Τοῦ κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς,

God as Creator has created this meat, and it in no way belongs to some lifeless statue of a deity.¹⁴² Thus

inevitable. The markets, however, may not be identified with the row of shops immediately on the north side of the Agora. They were likely to have been situated between 70 and 100 meters further to the north along the Lechaem Road.¹² D. W. J. Gill has undertaken recent research on the site of the *macellum* at Corinth, and suggests that Latin inscriptions dating from very shortly before the period of Paul’s ministry attest to its presence as a gift from the social elite of the city.¹³ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 782–783.]

¹⁴¹“The more important question discussed by Cadbury, Isenberg, and others is whether sacrificial and nonsacrificial meat bought in the macellum was readily distinguishable, indiscriminately mixed, or distinguishable only after explicit inquiry.¹⁴ Isenberg argues on the basis of a first-century text, *Vita Aesopi*, that sacrificial and nonsacrificial meats were readily distinguishable, since the sacrificial meat would be valued more highly. He argues that this is also implied by Pliny’s Letter to Trajan (10.96.10), which seems to stand in tension, he believes, with 1 Cor 10:25. Murphy-O’Connor follows D. E. Smith in concluding that most of the meat which was sold would have originated as sacrificial offerings.¹⁵ However, Paul is not necessarily addressing only those who make the actual purchases rather than also those for whom others may have made the purchases. Conzelmann expresses extreme caution about how applicable to Paul’s addressees the evidence which provides apparently large generalizations may be. Arguments of this kind ‘cannot be maintained in general terms.’¹⁶ The work of Gill on food shortages seems to imply that market situations may well have varied from year to year.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Weiss anticipates and Eckstein corroborates the probability underlined by Murphy-O’Connor that ‘in a city such as Corinth scarcely any other meat would be for sale except for that supplied from the temple.’¹⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 783.]

¹⁴²“The quotation from Ps 24:1 performs three functions. (1) It lifts the attention from self and from overscrupulous anxiety to the reminder that the sovereign to whom everything belongs (including the care of the believer) is the Lord; (2) It reminds the anxious that even what may or may not have passed through pagan temples still belongs to the totality of God’s creation over which he (not the so-called gods of 1 Cor 8:1–6) reigns as sovereign.³¹ This verse may be compared with Mark 7:19, καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα. (3) Most especially (with Barrett) it implies that every

whether in ‘knowledge’ or ‘ignorance’ about the religious status of the meat, the believer can free eat out of his/her awareness that it is a product of God’s creation.

In vv. 27-30, Paul sets up another scenario closely linked to the first one in vv. 25-26: a dinner invitation to the home of a non-Christian. Here two possibilities can emerge as choices for believers: i) just eat whatever you are served without raising questions over the religious status of the meat (v. 27). ii) If someone raises the issue of the meat being dedicated then don’t eat it for the sake of the other person assuming it will offend him if you do (vv. 28-30).

i) 27 εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε πορεύεσθαι, πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. 27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. The last phrase διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν, because of conscience, simply means that earlier decisions about not eating such meat are not relevant to this present situation. Implicit in this in all likelihood is a tendency toward being overly scrupulous about this issue. The present imperative verb ἐσθίετε is more accurately understood as ‘make a practice of eating.’ This corresponds to the caution about being overly scrupulous regarding the dedicated meat issue.

ii) 28 ἐὰν δέ τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ, Τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν, μὴ ἐσθίετε δι’ ἐκεῖνον τὸν μνηύσαντα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν 29 συνείδησιν δὲ λέγω οὐχὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ τὴν τοῦ ἑτέρου. ἰνατί γὰρ ἡ ἐλευθερία μου κρίνεται ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως; 30 εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ; 28 But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— 29 I mean the other’s conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

It is important to note the difference between the two scenarios posed by Paul in vv. 27-28. The first one,

good gift of God is to be accepted with gratitude as the Lord’s gift. Nothing exists that is not lent or given by the Lord. Barrett argues that although there is no evidence that Ps 24:1 was used as a grace in Judaism, nevertheless the implications of the verse were pressed as an argument that grace at meals ought to be said. Τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς, its fullness (NRSV) denotes what it is full of, i.e., all that is in it (with REB). It is sometimes argued that this injunction contradicts the decree of Acts 15. Witherington considers various possible responses, but concludes that in all probability our epistle pre-dates any public policy agreement of the kind reflected in Acts.³² However, he also shows how complex a range of questions is involved, which should invite caution over too hasty a judgment.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 785–786.]

εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς, if someone invites you, is a first class condition protasis which assumes the occurrence of such invitations. The second one, ἐὰν δέ τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ, and someone may say, is a third class protasis which assumes a very hypothetical situation not likely to happen, although it might on rare occasions.

On such rare occasions the issue of dedicated meat is put on the table before the believer (pun intended!): Τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν, “this is dedicated meat.” In this instance then the admonition of Paul in the apodosis of the sentence is different: μὴ ἐσθίετε¹⁴³ δι’ ἐκεῖνον τὸν μνηύσαντα καὶ τὴν συνείδησιν, never eat because of consideration for that one and his conscience. Here the earlier principle takes priority: ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, but love builds up (8:1). The previous elaboration on brotherly love in 8:7-13 provides the foundation for Paul’s admonition here. If your action as a believer leads another brother to make decisions that he feels are likely wrong before God, then you become the sinner rather than him.

What is somewhat ambiguous in v. 28 is the spiritual status of the person referenced as τις who raises the issue with the believer. Contextually it would seem that he is an unbeliever as τις...τῶν ἀπίστων, someone... among unbelievers, in v. 27 clearly defines. The church fathers who commented on this verse typically understood it this way.¹⁴⁴ Thus the unbelieving host raises the issue with his Christian dinner guest. Yet, the ambiguity of the scenario as framed by Paul leaves open the possibility of another Christian being present at the dinner who is unsure about whether he should eat the meat being served and if he should ask where it came from.

But the real dilemma of this passage comes with Paul’s amplification in vv. 29b-30. ἰνατί γὰρ ἡ ἐλευθερία

¹⁴³The present prohibitive imperative verb denotes either the cessation of action in process, or, in gnomic uses, a prohibition of not ever engaging in the action. The prohibitive aorist subjunctive verb, however, emphatically prohibits the beginning of an action.

¹⁴⁴Many of the patristic writers suggest that this is an unbeliever, some think perhaps the host, largely on the ground that a person of pagan religion would describe as ἱερόθυτον what Jews and Christians call εἰδωλόθυτον, as Origen explicitly observes (comparing his own vocabulary with that of Celsus).³⁶ Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Erasmus believe that τις here is a pagan Gentile, perhaps acting even with a hostile attempt to embarrass the believer.³⁷ Weiss insists that /the host it certainly was not, because the τις would not be identified thus,/ especially not in relation to v. 27.³⁸ Moreover, he urges, a Christian would understandably use ἱερόθυτον to express a warning in a friendly manner in this context. Heinrici argues for the same conclusion on the ground of the probable meaning of τὴν συνείδησιν, which surely applies to a fellow Christian, and Robertson and Plummer make the same point.³⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 787.]

μου κρίνεται ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως; εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ; *For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks?*

At first glance Paul seems to be taking the side of the knowledgers in this issue. What is Paul trying to communicate here?¹⁴⁵ One should not overlook Paul's skill in using hyperbole and sarcasm in his writings! These were very important tools in the arsenal of the ancient rhetorician.

Some literary considerations are critical to note here. The text up to v. 29b flows in the second person plural signaling that Paul is addressing directly his Corinthian readers. Very abruptly the two rhetorical questions in vv. 29b-30 shift over to the first person singular. Then beginning in v. 31 Paul shifts back to the second person plural expressions. Additionally, the combination of declarative and imperatival statements dominate the discussion on both sides of these two rhetorical questions in vv. 29b-30. In the preceding pericope of vv. 14-22, rhetorical questions (cf. vv. 18-19, 22) become Paul's way of identifying with the Corinthian's thinking that he is criticizing.

In light of the above considerations, the most natural understanding of vv. 29b-30 is Paul's use of rhetorical questions cast in the first person singular as a way of framing the stance of the knowledgers which he is criticizing. Refusal to eat dedicated meat as a guest in a non-believers' home when to do so would harm the spiritual life of 'weaker brother' also present stands in direct contradiction of the knowledgers claiming their 'freedom' to eat regardless of the damage to a brother in Christ. Casting the rhetorical questions in the first person singular puts Paul 'in the shoes' of these knowledgers who are sounding very unchristian in such a stance. Even to a pagan beginning to understand something of the amazing levels of brotherly love inside a Christian community the self centered of the knowledgers would seem contradictory to the general image of Christians as people who deeply care for one another.

Evidently it is that last point of a lost opportunity

¹⁴⁵The problems of vv. 29b-30 have been described by Barrett and Fee as 'notoriously difficult' and as 'a notorious crux.'⁴⁴ No fewer than six possible accounts of the verses have been offered by major writers, although in our view the most careful and convincing explanation can be found in an article on the rhetorical function of these questions by Duane F. Watson.⁴⁵ Watson examines all the other major proposals, but convincingly concludes that these rhetorical questions serve a multilayered function of recapitulation, argumentation (which focuses the weakness of the position of 'the strong'), and a proposal of policy." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 788.]

for Christian witness to a pagan acquaintance that prompts Paul's resumption of positive emphasis in vv. 31-11:1.

b) Following Paul's example, vv. 31-11:1. 31 Εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε. 32 ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίοις γίνεσθε καὶ Ἑλλήσιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, 33 καθὼς καὶ ἐγὼ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν, ἵνα σωθῶσιν. 11 1 μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε καθὼς καὶ ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ. 31 *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. 11 1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

Paul's initial set of admonitions in v. 31 immediately grow out of the preceding pericope in vv. 23-30 (οὖν). Everything the believer does must disclose the presence and power of God in a sinful world. The actions of the knowledgers in the above example does just the opposite, and even worse does so in the home of a pagan evidently with interest in the Christian Gospel. His phony action of being thankful to God for this dedicated meat does not honor God: εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω (v. 30a). To the contrary it is hypocritical and condemned by God.

Everything must flow out of a genuine desire to honor God. Significant to such honoring of God is showing concern to others who are different than you: v. 32. In vv. 33-11:1, Paul appeals to his example of seeking to show godly respect to others as the key to honoring God genuinely. His μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σύμφορον, *not seeking my own advantage*, is a direct criticism of the stance of the knowledgers. He is just as 'enlightened' as they are, and actually more so. But his superior knowledge understands how to balance self interests with compassionate concern for others. This the knowledgers have missed.

7) Maintaining proper traditions in worship, 11:2-16.

2 Ἐπαινώ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε. 3 Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναί ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός. 4 πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. 5 πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς· ἐν γὰρ ἐστίν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένη. 6 εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω. 7 Ἄνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ

11.2 δὲ
416 Ἐπαινῶ ὑμᾶς
 ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε
 καί,
 καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν,
 τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε.

11.3 δὲ
417 Θέλω ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι
 ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν,
 δὲ
 κεφαλὴ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ,
 δὲ
 κεφαλὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός.

418 11.4 **πᾶς ἀνὴρ...**
 προσευχόμενος
 ἢ
 προφητεύων
 κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων
καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.

11.5 δὲ
419 πᾶσα γυνὴ...
 προσευχομένη
 ἢ
 προφητεύουσα
 ἀκατακαλύπτῳ τῇ κεφαλῇ
καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς·

γάρ
420 ἐν ἐστίν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ
 τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ.

11.6 γάρ
 εἰ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή,
 καὶ
421 κειράσθω·
 δὲ
 εἰ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι,
422 κατακαλυπτέσθω.

11.7 γάρ
423 Ἄνὴρ μὲν οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν
 εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων·
 δὲ
424 ἡ γυνὴ δόξα ἀνδρὸς ἐστίν.

11.8 γάρ
425 οὐ ἐστίν ἀνὴρ
 ἐκ γυναικὸς
 ἀλλὰ
426 γυνὴ (ἐστίν)
 ἐξ ἀνδρὸς·

11.9 γάρ
 καὶ
427 οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ
 διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα
 ἀλλὰ
428 γυνὴ (ἐκτίσθη)
 διὰ τὸν ἀνδρα.

ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρὸς ἐστίν. 8 οὐ γάρ ἐστίν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρὸς· 9 καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἀνδρα. 10 διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. 11 πλὴν οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ· 12 ὡσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικὸς· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. 13 Ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε· πρέπον ἐστίν γυναῖκα ἀκατακάλυπτον τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι; 14 οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτῆ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐάν κομᾷ ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν, 15 γυνὴ δὲ ἐάν κομᾷ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται [αὐτῇ]. 16 Εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνθήειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν οὐδὲ αἰ ἐκκλησιαί τοῦ θεοῦ.

2 I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you. 3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. 4 Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, 5 but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head—it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved,

11.10 διὰ τοῦτο
429 ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν
ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς
διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.

11.11 πλὴν
430 οὔτε γυνὴ (ἐστίν)
χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς
431 οὔτε ἀνὴρ (ἐστίν)
χωρὶς γυναικὸς
ἐν κυρίῳ·

11.12 γὰρ
ὡσπερ ἡ γυνὴ (ἐστίν)
ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός,
οὕτως
καὶ
432 ὁ ἀνὴρ (ἐστίν)
διὰ τῆς γυναικός·
δὲ
433 τὰ πάντα (ἐστίν)
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

11.13 Ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς
434 κρίνατε·
πρέπον ἐστὶν γυναῖκα
| ἀκατακάλυπτον
τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι;

435 11.14 οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς
| ἐὰν κομῶ
| ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν...ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν,
11.15 | δὲ
| ἐὰν κομῶ
| γυνὴ...δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν;
| ἀντὶ περιβολαίου
| ὅτι ἡ κόμη... δέδοται [αὐτῇ].

11.16 δέ
Εἰ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι,
436 ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν
οὐδὲ
437 αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ (ἔχουσιν).

it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

One of the ongoing commentary discussions is the inner structure of chapters 11 through 14, which do hang together.¹⁴⁶ But exactly how is frequently debated.¹⁴⁷ Most of

¹⁴⁶I find interesting Conzelmann's comment on the unifying theme of these chapters as a critique of 'enthusiasm' from styles of worship to the use of spiritual gifts. In very traditional German Lutheran fashion he picks up Luther's pejorative label for the Anabaptists of his day as enthusiasts and applies it to the problems at Corinth. Modern biases can easily be read back into the scripture text, even by careful scholars such as Conzelmann.

(Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Philadelphia: Fortress

she should wear a veil. 7 For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. 8 Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10 For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. 12 For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, 15 but if a woman has long hair,

Press, 1975)

¹⁴⁷“On first reading the pericope appears to deal with an issue quite unrelated to the one Paul has just treated, the matter of food that had been offered to idols. A new topic is formally introduced with words of praise (11:2; cf. 11:17). It begins with a kind of captatio benevolentiae and is brought to conclusion with reference to a practice recognized by Paul and the churches (v. 16). The verses delineating the pericope appear to be only loosely connected with the topic. On a closer reading the concluding verse (11:16) coheres with the thesis of the entire letter (1:10). Paul was urging the community to avoid contentiousness. His arguments are those from ethos and paradigma, the example of himself and the churches, so typical of Paul's appeal in the letter.” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 394.]



the chiasmic proposals are simply too speculative to have any persuasiveness to them. Related to this also is the question of connection to 8:1-11:1 as the preceding unit. Often chaps. 11-14 are treated as though unconnected to 8-10, but this overlooks some important literary signals of connectedness.¹⁴⁸ The outlining used here seeks to take each definable unit on its own terms. Also it is clear in my estimation that 10:23-11:1 not only brings to a summary close chapters 8-10, but also paves the way for chapters 11-14. The analysis below will seek to illustrate this.

Now, what is the proper appearance for either a man or a woman when praying and preaching in a house church gathering of believers?¹⁴⁹ Paul's discussion here is one of the most culturally embedded topics in all of his writings. This passage is often used in hermeneutics textbooks to illustrate the critical importance of understanding cultural backgrounds of a scripture passage.¹⁵⁰ Interpretive conclusions avoiding this become some of the strangest twisting of biblical texts

¹⁴⁸It is very surprising how readily virtually all commentators appear to ignore the fundamental continuity between the arguments and themes of 8:1-11:1 and the application of these very same themes to issues concerning public or corporate worship in 11:2-14:40. Just as some view 9:1-27 as a 'digression' about apostleship which intrudes into 8:1-11:1, so some view 13:1-13 as an unexpected interruption within 11:2-14:40, when the rhythmic discourse on love sums up the major issue in all parts of 11:2-14:40." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 798-799.]

¹⁴⁹"What is the topic? What was it that divided the community? What was it over which contentiousness might have arisen? The opening verse commends the Corinthians, but it is quickly followed by a forceful disclosure formula (v. 3). The contrast is such that Paul appears to be commending the Corinthians for following the traditions he had passed along to them but then wants them to know that there is something that stands in need of correction. That something has to do with the gathering of the community, specifically its gathering together for worship (vv. 4, 5, 10, 13). This links the passage to its immediate context. Previously Paul had addressed the issue of common meals (chs. 8-10), a topic to which he returns under another guise in 11:17-34. Thereafter he will treat of the various gifts that have been given to the community, a discussion that is oriented toward the use of these gifts in the liturgical assembly (ch. 14)." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 394-395.]

¹⁵⁰"For contemporary readers 11:2-16 is one of the most difficult passages in the entire letter. With its allusions to a specific situation within the Corinthian church and to the biblical stories about creation, the passage is somewhat confusing and difficult to understand. For many contemporary readers the passage is also difficult to accept. On first reading it appears to advance a Pauline claim that women are inferior and subordinate to men." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 393.]

found in interpretive history.¹⁵¹

The internal organization of ideas first moves along giving congratulations to the Corinthians for adhering to τὰς παραδόσεις, the traditions, that Paul had passed on to them in previous visits etc. (v. 2). He introduces the topic as a religious principle in v. 3. Verses 4 and 5 apply the principle to the leadership roles of both men and women in praying and preaching in the housechurch gatherings. Verses 6-15 contain a string of reasons (note the repeated use of the causal conjunction γὰρ) supporting his application of the religious principle. Verse 16 brings the discussion to a close in acknowledging that not all the Corinthians are likely to agree with him on this matter.

a) Congratulations, v. 2. Ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε. I praise you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you.

The main clause Ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς has more the meaning of praise than commend with the idea of Paul expressing joy over what he observed taking place among the Corinthians.¹⁵² This opening statement must

¹⁵¹"Our bibliography for this section alone identifies some eighty publications that invite attention in addition to commentaries and other standard works regularly cited. Yet with a few notable exceptions (see Murphy-O'Connor and others cited below), most writers insist that this passage concerns the clothing (or hair-style) of women rather than (as 11:4 makes clear) of men and women. As Roland Barthes among others points out, clothes and hair or beards play a role in a semiotic system which speak volumes about self-perceptions of gender identity, class identity, a sense of occasion, and respect or indifference toward the perception of others. Further, there are multilayered metaphorical and cultural nuances which exclude any understanding of language in these verses in terms of lexicography alone. As Gregory Dawes well argues, it is beside the point to count up how many instances of κεφαλή (11:3-7, 10) mean head, in the sense of chief; many denote source; and how many denote head in contrast to body, if Paul and his readers presuppose metaphorical extension or interactive application of the term."¹⁵²

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 800-801.]

¹⁵²"Ἐπαινῶ, I praise, reflects a change, once again, to the first person. The meaning of the verb remains closer to praise (NIV, AV/KJV) than to commend (REB, NRSV) or congratulate (NJB) since it is a stronger term associated in biblical Greek with giving praise to God, or in some contexts with honoring a person. In the context of an honor/shame culture some forceful attribution of honor (praise) is required, but REB, NJB, and NRSV recognize that to speak of praising adults smacks of a patronizing, schoolteacherish paternalism which the Greek would not convey.²⁹ Since praise is status-conferring, we suggest I give you full credit for." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 809.]



be considered closely with the concluding statement in v. 16, Εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι, **But if anyone is disposed to be contentious.** The first class conditional protasis assumes that disagreement with Paul over this matter is present among the Corinthians. Taken together a picture of a very sensitive issue is contained in this discussion of vv. 2-16. But his views he presents in a straightforward manner but not in a dogmatic, threatening way.

The *captatio benevolentiae* in v. 2 centers on ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθώς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε. **because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you.** Two points are made here. First, that the Corinthians still value Paul's insights into spiritual matters. The perfect tense μέμνησθε from μιμνήσκομαι is more than just remembering. The Corinthians assigned significant value to Paul's teachings at the beginning of his ministry to them and that 'valuing' of these insights remains strong at the writing of this letter. Contrary to what beginning Greek students would first assume, the object of μέμνησθε is the genitive case μου with the accusative case πάντα in the accusative of reference function. Thus the sense is to hold Paul in special attention in every way.

Second, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε, **you have been maintaining the traditions.** The comparative clause καθώς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, **just as I passed on to you,** is attached and provides more defining of τὰς παραδόσεις. Note the play on παρέδωκα and παραδόσεις from the same root stem.

The etymological idea of παράδοσις is the handing over of something to another. At one level of meaning this is the sense of passing down to others religious teachings that one has received.

Inside the NT and also by Paul this can be either negative or positive. The negative sense of tradition is referring to teachings that stand opposite to or in contradiction to the revelation of God: τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, **the tradition(s) of the elders** (Mt. 15:2, 3, 6; Mk. 7:3, 5); τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, **man made tradition** (Mk. 7:8; Col. 2:8); τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων, **traditions of ancestors** (Gal. 1:14). The positive sense of apostolic traditions centered in the Gospel surfaces at 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6, usually qualified by ὅς ἐδιδάχθητε, **which you have been taught** (2 Thess 2:15); ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ' ἡμῶν, **which they received from us** (2 Thess 3:6); καθώς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, **just as I passed on to you** (1 Cor. 11:2). Not just the content of the παράδοσις but its source defines whether it is legitimate or not.

What then is παράδοσις in terms of content? Paul references παράδοσις as related to τοιαύτην συνήθειαν, **such custom,** in v. 16. This provides important insight contextually to what Paul means by παράδοσις. In v.

3 Paul sets forth a religious principle which he then applies to the appearance of men and women praying and preaching in a house church gathering (vv. 4-5). What emerges here is rather clear. A παράδοσις is a spiritual principle understood as implicit in the Gospel. How it is specifically applied in a given situation can be defined as a συνήθεια, **custom.** Again the legitimacy of a παράδοσις depends completely upon its source. That is, can it be correctly traced back to God through the apostles? Or, does it only go back to human reckoning? If the latter, it is not legitimate.¹⁵³ Unfortunately in the later patristic Christianity the meaning of παράδοσις shifted away from Paul's use of the term.¹⁵⁴ From the Reformation onward παράδοσις tends to be viewed by Protestants only from the negative use of the term inside the NT, and little or no attention is given to a positive meaning.

b) Principle & application, vv. 3-5. 3 Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός. **4** πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. **5** πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς· ἐν γὰρ ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ. **3** **But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. 4** **Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, 5** **but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head—it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved.**

In the principle expression Paul asserts a chain connection between God, Christ, a man and a woman around the image of a κεφαλὴ, **head.** God to Christ to man to woman. The first is the κεφαλὴ of the next. Untold volumes have been written on the perceived meaning of this figurative usage by Paul.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³Note that in 1 Cor. 15:1-4, Paul uses the verbal terms connected to παράδοσις: Here the Gospel is received by the Corinthians through Paul's preaching of it to them: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, Paul passed on to the Corinthians this Gospel which he had received: παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον. The ὅτι clauses in vv. 3b-8 stress the resurrection of Christ as at the heart of this Gospel message. This is consistent with Paul's elaboration here in 11:2-16.

¹⁵⁴In early Christian literature the words soon come to denote an authoritative tradition of Christian teaching (Polycarp, Epistles, 7:2; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 3:3:4; Clement, Stromata, 1:12; Origen, Contra Celsum, 4:32).³⁸⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 810.]

¹⁵⁵This is only one of three instances, I think, for which we find ourselves compelled to offer an alternative translation or translations in square brackets (cf. 11:4). The translation of this verse



The two opposing sides of viewpoint range between the hierarchial (head=authority) and head as source (of life).¹⁵⁶ Thiselton in the NIGT commentary series provides a carefully reasoned and well document tracing of the history of interpretation of κεφαλή in Christian history. Although rather lengthy, I will quote it here for has caused more personal agony and difficulty than any other in the epistle, not least because the huge array of research literature and lexicographical data which presses controversially and polemically for diverse translations of κεφαλή, in which each of three main views finds powerful and well-informed advocates. (The decision about husband [NRSV] or man [REB, NJB, NIV] is of a different order.) NRSV, REB, NJB, NIV, AV/KJV, Moffatt, Barrett, and Collins all translate κεφαλή as head (also Jerome, caput; Luther, Haupt; Luther, Stuttgart 1984 ed., Haupt). Out of respect for their strong tradition together with the arguments of Fitzmyer and others we place head in square brackets as one clearly possible alternative, but weighty arguments also occur for “source.” In the end we are convinced by advocates of a third view, even if barely. The work of Cervin (1989) and more especially Perriman (1994) and Dawes (1998) must be given due weight. Our translation coheres with the recognition by Collins (1999) that Paul deliberately uses a polymorphous concept, through a word that has multiple meanings (see below).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 811.]

¹⁵⁶“The history of claims about the meaning of κεφαλή is immense and daunting. It is doubtful whether Fee is entirely correct in suggesting that ‘all commentaries up to Barrett and Conzelmann’ perceive the metaphorical force of κεφαλή as ‘hierarchical, setting up structures of authority,’ any more than he can claim so confidently that ‘nothing in the passage suggests as much [i.e., this view].... Paul’s understanding of the metaphor [and] ... the only one the Corinthians would have grasped is ‘head’ as ‘source’, especially ‘source of life.’”⁴² It does not seem to be the case on careful scrutiny that up until the 1970s the view was virtually always that of ‘headship,’ after which virtually all exegetes perceived that κεφαλή really meant source. This is open to question because (i) more than one patristic commentator notes the highly open-textured, multivalent force of κεφαλή as revolving metaphorically around the physiological head-body contrast; (ii) the view that κεφαλή means source has undergone serious criticism recently. Thus Horrell (1996) observes, ‘Recent work has cast doubt on the appropriateness of ‘source’ as a translation of κεφαλή.’⁴³ Even if we hesitate to accept the careful and detailed arguments of Wayne Grudem (1985) and J. Fitzmyer (1989 and 1993) that the word denotes authoritative headship (see below), no less important and perhaps still more convincing are the arguments of Richard S. Cervin (1989) and especially A. C. Perriman (1994) that κεφαλή denotes primarily head in contrast to body but more widely (including in 11:3) ‘that which is most prominent, foremost, uppermost, pre-eminent.’⁴⁴ The sustained arguments about κεφαλή put forward by Gregory Dawes (1998) confirm these conclusions with sufficient evidence and argument (albeit much relating to Eph 5:21–33) to persuade us to use the three English words **preeminent** (of Christ), **foremost** (of man), and **preeminent** (of God), even if we felt obliged to leave head in square brackets as a still arguable translation.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 812.]

the sake of clarity on the issue:¹⁵⁷

κεφαλή AND ITS MULTIPLE MEANINGS

1. Authority, Supremacy, Leadership

This is the traditional rendering from the medieval period onward. Robertson and Plummer write, “By κεφαλή is meant supremacy.... Christ is the head of man; man is the head of woman ... 3:23; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23.... God is supreme.... This was a favorite Arian text; it is in harmony with 15:24–28.”⁴⁵ J. A. Fitzmyer has strongly contended that this view should be reinstated in contrast to the attempts of S. Bedale (1954), Robin Scroggs (1972), and J. Murphy-O’Connor (1980, 1988) to argue for the meaning source (see below).⁴⁶ Fitzmyer notes that in the LXX κεφαλή translates Heb. ראש (ro’sh) head, some 281 times, of which the subcategory meaning leader occurs in at least 3 places in Exodus and at least 11 times in Judges (e.g., Judg 10:18; 11:8, 9, 11). 2 Sam 22:44 is a key text for this meaning, as Murphy-O’Connor concedes.⁴⁷ However, if we understand κεφαλή— ראש to include head in the sense of English top, the numerical ratio is increased.⁴⁸ Fitzmyer shows that a wider range of passages than those cited by Murphy-O’Connor bear the meaning chief, leader, leadership especially in conjunction with the sense of preeminent or top. We shall explore these further in the light of the data from Brown-Driver-Briggs (1980 ed.) when we return to our own translation. Fitzmyer concludes: “The upshot ... is that a Hellenistic Jewish writer such as Paul of Tarsus could well have intended that κεφαλή in 1 Cor 11:3 be understood as ‘head’ in the sense of authority or supremacy over someone else.”⁴⁹

Fitzmyer’s work largely vindicates the “traditional” interpretation of Weiss, Robertson and Plummer, Wendland, Allo, Lietzmann and Kümmel, Grosheide, and Héring, whose arguments Murphy-O’Connor and Fee tend to underrate. Héring argues that even in the case of Christ “the term clearly indicates the Son’s subordination to the Father.”⁵⁰ Conzelmann also notes the role of “subordination” but only (rightly) within a broader and more complex frame: “ ‘Head’ does not [in the OT] denote the sovereignty of one person over another but over a community.... Subordination [in Christology] is also expressed in terms of a totally different complex of ideas.”⁵¹ Wolff, however, underlines the Pauline emphasis on the creation “order” as against Corinthian cries for “freedom.”⁵²

Wayne Grudem provides a survey of 2,336 instances of κεφαλή in the writings of thirty-six Greek authors (based on *Thesaurae Linguae Graecae* from the eighth century BC to the fourth century AD).⁵³ Of these, over 2,000 denote the “actual physical head of a man or animal,” while of the remaining 302 metaphorical uses, 49 apply to a “person of superior authority or rank, or ‘ruler’, ‘ruling part.’ No instances were discovered in which κεφαλή had the meaning ‘source’, ‘origin.’”⁵⁴ R. S. Cervin offered different conclusions, and hence in 1990 Grudem produced “a Response” to Cervin and to other recent studies which attempt to reinstate “source” or the meaning of “preeminent” or “foremost” without the

¹⁵⁷Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 812–822.



explicit entailment of “authority over.”⁵⁵ Here he repeats his conclusions of 1985 and subjects Cervin’s methods and conclusions to criticism. Grudem’s critique of the proposals about “source” seems convincing, but his attempt to insist that the sense of “head” used by Paul necessarily carries with it notions of authority rather than prominence, eminence, representation, or preeminence is less conclusive, especially when he concedes that some 2,000 of 2,336 occurrences presuppose the semantic contrast between physical head and physical body.

2. Source, Origin, Temporal Priority

As early as 1954, S. Bedale proposed that κεφαλή could mean source.⁵⁶ However, he does not deny, as Murphy-O’Connor was to do, that the Greek word “carries with it the sense of ‘authority,’” including its use in 1 Cor 11:3.⁵⁷ By contrast, Murphy-O’Connor in 1989 argued that the word “never denotes authority or superiority,” while by 1997 he had softened this to “the instances where ‘head’ implies superiority are very rare.”⁵⁸ F. F. Bruce holds a position between Bedale and Murphy-O’Connor on the same spectrum: “we are probably to understand not ... ‘chief’ or ‘ruler’ but rather ‘source’ or ‘origin’—a sense well attested for Gk. kephalē.”⁵⁹ Bruce bases his argument largely on the assumption that “source” fits the logic of later verses in this passage, and the role of Christ as “source” of human existence. Christ “derives his eternal being” from God (3:23; 8:6).⁶⁰ Barrett is perhaps on firmer ground when he argues that since κεφαλή can denote the part standing for the whole (e.g., head of cattle, see below), this may extend as a metaphor for the source or origin of the person or object in question. Barrett then expresses the view which he shares with Bruce, that this sense “is strongly suggested by verses 8f. Paul does not say that man is the lord (κύριος) of the woman; he says he is the origin of her being.”⁶¹ He argues further, with Bruce, that the relation between Christ and God “can be understood in a similar way. The Father is *fons divinitatis*; the Son is what he is in relation to the Father.”⁶² R. Scroggs (1972 and 1974) presses the case further. Gal 3:27–28 had already established “the societal levelling quality of baptism,” and the use of κεφαλή in 1 Cor 11:3 carries no hint of female subordination. Everything hinges on mutual dependence throughout the passage.⁶³ “In normal Greek κεφαλή does not mean lordship.”⁶⁴

John P. Meier also argues that “we have here a later Hellenistic use of *kephalē* with metaphysical overtones. The idea is ‘source’ or ‘origin,’ especially the origin of something’s existence. A chain of sources or emanations is being set up. God is the source of the Messiah ... the Son is God’s instrument in creation ... (1 Cor 8:6). Christ is the source and perhaps also the Platonic archetype of the male.... Genesis 2 states that woman was made from the rib of man. The chain of being, the order of creation, necessarily involves subordination, with set places and roles.”⁶⁵ Fee also argues for “source,” but is closer to Scroggs and Murphy-O’Connor in rejecting the subordinationist aspect. Fee writes: “Paul’s understanding of the metaphor, therefore, and almost certainly the only one the Corinthians would have grasped is ‘head’ as ‘source,’ especially ‘source of life.’ This seems corroborated by vv. 8–9.”⁶⁶ Witherington (1988), Radcliffe (1990), and with more caution Schrage (1995) favor “source.”⁶⁷ Schrage follows Schlier and

Conzelmann in rejecting the notion that κεφαλή can normally denote authority over an individual (although he readily concedes that Heb. רֹאשׁ (*ro’sh*) can denote leadership over a group), and rightly insists that the preponderance of uses in this passage denote the physiological head in contrast to body (cf. vv. 4a, 5a, 7, 10). He also points out, with J. D. G. Dunn, that since in 11:10 the woman who uses prophetic speech is said to have “authority” (ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ...’ it is unlikely that the opening propositions serve to establish man’s authority over woman.⁶⁸ Finally, Horsley (1998) advocates source on the basis of Philo’s use of κεφαλή as progenitor for Abraham (Philo, *De Congressu Quaerendae* 61).⁶⁹

This argument comes up against three problems among others. (a) Is it convincing to ignore the weight of evidence adduced by Fitzmyer about the Hebrew and LXX and by Grudem about uses of κεφαλή in Greek literature? At times the debate degenerates into a confrontation over which meaning is allegedly “rare.”⁷⁰ Certainly the LXX usage cannot be ignored. Scroggs presents a one-sided and incautious view, while arguably even the ever judicious Murphy-O’Connor may perhaps tend to overstate his case. (b) Granted that (as cannot be denied) the physiological use of κεφαλή hugely preponderates, can a metaphorical extension of the physical head readily mean source? We have to envisage a two-stage process in which a direct or level-one metaphor (preeminence, foremost, top) becomes a second-level metaphor for that preeminence from which other existence flows. However, this does not entail the total eclipse of the preeminence, top-stone dimension. (c) Much depends on drawing inferences about the christological relation to God in other Pauline passages. Here, although it is true that God is regarded as source (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) in contrast to mediate ground of existence (δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ, 8:6), it remains the case for Paul that Christ’s work is “for” God as preeminent (3:23; 15:24–28). The valid point in all of the arguments for “source” is not that κεφαλή necessarily means source but that (pace Grudem) it does not seem to denote a relation of “subordination” or “authority over.”

3. Synecdoche and Preeminence, Foremost, Topmost Serving Interactively as a Metaphor Drawn from the Physiological Head

Whether we scrutinize the use of κεφαλή in Greek literature (including the LXX and Jewish texts) or the Heb רֹאשׁ (*ro’sh*), we find (a) the overwhelming majority of references to physiological head in contrast to body; and (b) a substantial number of occurrences of synecdoche, where heads denotes persons or animals (for which the part denotes the whole, as in “head of cattle,” or “counting heads”). In theological terms this hints at a representative use: Christ stands for man or humankind in the new order, just as Adam is “head” of the race without the gospel (1 Cor 15:21–24; cf. Rom 5:12–21). This is further corroborated by the language about shame, image, and glory common to 11:4–6 and esp. 11:7 (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα) and 15:49 (τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου). This suggests only one nuance of the word, however.

Gregory Dawes devotes eighty pages of his study of this subject to theories of metaphor, including those of M. Beard-

sley, D. Davidson, Max Black, Janet Martin Soskice, and Paul Ricoeur. He concludes: “If this word is a living metaphor, it can (and should) be translated as ‘head.’ ... To translate the word as ‘source’ is to pre-judge an important issue: it is to imply that in this context the word is functioning as a dead metaphor” (his italics).⁷¹ Dawes himself argues that it is a living metaphor that carries neither the sense of “overload” (i.e., the approach under [i] is not fully satisfactory), “nor does it mean ‘source’ [view (ii)].”⁷² He cannot accept Grudem’s conclusions on the ground that a word count overlooks the issues concerning metaphorical extension which lie at the heart of Dawes’s argument.⁷³ Rightly, in my view, he asks the question over which I have agonized: in what sense would Paul and his readers use and understand this metaphor which not only elsewhere but specifically in 1 Cor 11:2–16 and in Eph 5:21–33 rests upon the head-body distinction of physiology? From the side of the hellenistic linguistic background, it is possible to reconstruct a broad medical understanding of κεφαλή in the period from Hippocrates (460–380 BC) to Galen (AD 130–200). Contrary to what is often implied in older modern biblical studies, the ancient world was aware that the brain (ὁ ἐγκέφαλος) constituted a “source.” “From the brain and from the brain only arise our pleasures, joys, laughter and jests, as well as our sorrows, pains, griefs ...,” but the brain also served as a “control”: “It makes us mad or delirious, inspires us with dread ... brings sleeplessness ... and acts that are contrary to habit.... All come from the brain” (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου).⁷⁴ Dawes cites sources in Pythagorean philosophy which apparently ascribed a “ruling” function to the brain.

Galen opposed the widespread claim that the heart is the source of nervous experience: “the source of all the nerves (τῶν νεύρων) is the brain (ὑπάρχειν τὸν ἐγκέφαλον).”⁷⁵ Galen perceives that motion and sensation owe their function to the brain: the themes of “source” and of “controlling function” both play a part in medical vocabulary and thought.⁷⁶ Within two or three years of the date of our epistle, Seneca writes to Nero that the head is a source of health or well-being: a capite bona valetudo.⁷⁷ However, Sevenster emphasizes the metaphor of headship and control in these passages, where Dawes focuses more closely on source. As Sevenster notes, the issue in *de clementia* is to plead that as Emperor Nero will, like the head of a body, radiate kindness which will permeate the empire to bring it health, the people will do the same; Dawes cites the parallel in the Moral Epistles of Nero as a source of well-being to the “body” of the empire.⁷⁸

From the side of the LXX and Hebrew background, W. J. Martin very well maps a wide semantic field within which topmost, synecdoche for totality, responsible eminence, and cornerstone play major roles.⁷⁹ Similarly, Dawes concludes that the precise force of the metaphor must be contextually determined: in Eph 5:22–24 it can have no other meaning than “authority over,” but this depends on context rather than on lexicography. The problem about translating κεφαλή as head in 1 Cor 11:3 remains that, as R. Cervin notes, in English-speaking contexts “the head” almost always implies leadership and authority, as in headmaster, Head of School, Head of Department, head steward.⁸⁰ As we noted earlier, Perriman convincingly urges that the equivalent assumption in first-century hellenistic contexts would be to construe

the metaphorical force of head not as authoritative leader in charge, but as one who is “prominent, foremost, uppermost, preeminent.”⁸¹ Senft, Horrell, and in effect Hasler share this view, although Hasler argues that in the context of Paul’s deliberative rhetoric a dialectic embraces both the arrangement or “placing” of creation and the new liturgical dignity and equality of the woman who uses prophetic speech within the frame of “glory” received from God.⁸² BDB (for Heb.), LSJ (classical Gk.), BAGD, Grimm-Thayer, MM, and Louw-Nida point in this direction (see below).

The multivalency of the term ראש (ro’sh) for Jewish converts who know the LXX translations should not be forgotten, as Fitzmyer rightly insists (against Scroggs). Of five Hebrew words which κεφαλή translates this is by far the most common.⁸³ Brown-Driver-Briggs (1980) divide uses into eight categories with subdivisions as follows: (1) head, (a) of humans; (b) of animals; (2) top (e.g., of rocks, towers, pillars, ladders); (3) chief, (a) chief man (see Fitzmyer, above); (b) chief city; (c) chief nation; (d) chief priest; (e) head of family; (4) front place, e.g., taken by the leader but also used of priority in time; (5) best; (6) of an army company; (7) sum or total; (8) residual nuances.⁸⁴ Liddell-Scott-Jones offer a survey of classical Greek uses which is remarkably similar, beginning with (1) head of man or beast; (2) synecdoche for the whole person; (3) head of a vegetable; (4) the capital or chief place; (5) the crown or completion of something; (6) chief (and the idiom κατὰ κεφαλῆς, over the head, e.g., from Homer, Iliad 18.24, onward; cf. 11:4).⁸⁵

For the period of NT Greek, BAGD does not differ significantly. The most frequent and prominent, once again, are (1) heads of persons or animals in the physiological sense, e.g., the hairs of the head (Matt 10:30; Luke 7:38; Philo, *De Legatione ad Gaium* 223); and after this (2) synecdoche (e.g., Rom 12:20, “coals of fire on his head,” perhaps from a curse formula); (3) head “metaphorically” in contrast to the church as body (Col 1:18; cf. 2:19); (4) “figuratively” to denote superior rank; (5) also to denote uppermost part, end, point, keystone (Acts 4:12; 1 Pet 2:7) and either capital or frontier city (Acts 16:12). With Grudem, neither BAGD nor Lattke in EDNT nor Grimm-Thayer appear to propose source, even under either “metaphor” (BAGD, 16) or “figurative” use (BAGD’s 2a, b).⁸⁶ It appears that Louw and Nida also focus on physiological head, superior, or cornerstone, but not source.⁸⁷ Moulton-Milligan stress the occurrence of (1) physiological head; (2) synecdoche, and (3) extremity or topmost in the papyri, also without apparent mention of source.⁸⁸ H. Schlier, as we earlier noted, identifies “first,” “prominent,” and synecdoche, with only a couple of isolated instances in Herodotus (484–425 BC!). And perhaps in Philo.⁸⁹ He does not appear to propose this meaning for 1 Cor 11:3.

It is significant that in Lampe’s Patristic Greek Lexicon virtually the only occasion on which the meaning of κεφαλή is compared with ἀρχή as “equivalent” is with reference to 1 Cor 11:3, on the basis of the application of ἀρχή to God in relation to Christ, and Christ in relation to the world (but with the important proviso that ἀρχή is also multivalent as beginning or source, or as first principle, or as ruler, authority).⁹⁰ In the patristic era the emphasis begins to shift from physiological head to the metaphorical use in the ecclesial order



as religious superior or bishop (e.g., Athanasius, Apology 89), head of the house, or to Christ as head of creation, or as head of the church (Origen, John 1:13). Nevertheless, whether we consult the standard lexicons or the TLG (with Grudem), this kind of data is insufficiently nuanced contextually to give us a complete picture.

Here it becomes significant to return to Chrysostom, whom we had in mind when we initially queried Fee's generalization about eras of study and their related conclusion. Chrysostom is highly sensitive to the multivalency of κεφαλή in 1 Cor 11:3. Chrysostom is aware that a parallel between men/women and God/Christ should not give "the heretics" grounds for a subordinationist Christology. In certain respects head denotes a kind of primacy, but both God and Christ on one side and men and women on the other are of the same mode of being. "For had Paul meant to speak of rule and subjection ... he would not have brought forward the instance of a woman (or wife), but rather of a slave and a master.... It is a wife (or woman) as free, as equal in honour; and the Son also, though He did become obedient to the Father, it was as the Son of God; it was as God."⁹¹ While we must avoid reading back patristic doctrines of the Trinity into Pauline texts, Chrysostom (a) reflects Paul's notion that in the context of love between God and Christ, or between man and woman, obedience or response is chosen, not imposed; and (b) reflects the endeavor to do justice to the duality or wholeness of difference and "order" on one side and reciprocity and mutual dignity and respect on the other.

Chrysostom's one major deviation from Paul's explicit argument in this chapter arises when he distinguishes between woman in creation and woman after the fall. Initially, he comments, woman is "bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh" (Gen 2:23). In creation, he argues, "there is no subjection," but when freedom was misused this status was revised (Gen 3:16). Chrysostom is influenced, it seems, by 1 Tim 2:14 at this point. On the other hand, this observation may be deemed a digression from his main point: "Even to the simple the difference is evident" between applications of the word head to Christ, to man, and to God (my italics). In the case of the man-woman relationship the physiological head shares "like passions with the body," just as God and Christ share the same nature and being. By contrast the first proportion entails a sharper difference: Christ as head of man does share man's order of being.⁹² Chrysostom appreciates the sensitivity of the various nuances that may be conveyed.

Tertullian similarly recognizes the interactive force of the metaphor of head: "This, to be sure, is an astonishing thing, that the Father can be taken to be the face of the Son (2 Cor 4:6) when he is his head; for 'the head of Christ is God' " (1 Cor 11:3).⁹³ In effect he anticipates Ian Ramsey's principle that where models conflict or complement each other, unwanted meanings fall away, and the models are thereby qualified.⁹⁴ On the other hand, Tertullian goes further. In his specific discussion of the meaning of veils upon the head, he argues that here head is used as a synecdoche for the woman herself: "the whole head constitutes the woman."⁹⁵ Clearly Augustine is wary of conceiving of caput either as head in an authoritarian sense or still more any notion of "source," since he cites 11:3 in his treatise on the Trinity precisely to underline the eternal sonship of Christ and the aseity, equali-

ty, and "immortality" of the Trinity: "some things were made by the Father, and some by the Son.... The Son is equal with the Father, and the working of the Father and the Son is indivisible.... 'Being in the form of God ...' [Phil 2:6] ... 'the head of Christ is God' [1 Cor 11:3]."⁹⁶

Fee's general statement may perhaps more readily apply to such patristic writers as Origen and Jerome. Origen is more at ease with a quasi-subordinationist Christology, qualifying Col 1:16, 17, with reference to 1 Cor 11:3, "alone having as head God the Father, for it is written 'The head of Christ is God' " (1 Cor 11:3).⁹⁷ Jerome comments on 11:3: "Vir nulli subjectus est nisi Christo, ... Mulier vero et Christo et viro debet esse subjecta."⁹⁸ However, this misses the subtlety of Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, and several other patristic writers. Patristic writers, as well as modern lexicographical research, encourage the conclusion of Collins: "Paul's rhetorical argument is constructed on the basis of a pun. He plays on the multiple meanings of 'head'.⁹⁹

4. Summary and Conclusions

(a) Head

The value of this translation and interpretation is that it addresses the issues raised by Fitzmyer and the lexicographical survey of TLG undertaken by Grudem. If our network of reader expectations in the modern West matched those of first-century Corinth and hellenistic Judaism, this would offer the most open-ended translation to carry the several nuances associated with the metaphorical extension and application of the term, and especially a wordplay with subsequent uses of the physiological head seems to be entailed in the following verses. Nevertheless, today's chain of literal and metaphorical associations is so exclusively bound up with institutional authority (witness the use of the term "headship" in late twentieth-century debates) that this translation and interpretation suggest a narrower focus than Paul probably has in mind. It is possible that it is drawn from its use in Corinthian discussion, but we cannot be sufficiently certain to place part of the verse in quotation marks (see below on Schrage's critique of Padgett). If we use the term "head," its multiple meanings from context to context as serving a polymorphous concept must always be kept in view.

(b) Source

This has eminent advocates, including three leading commentators, namely, Barrett, Fee, and Schrage. Yet in spite of claims to the contrary, the paucity of lexicographical evidence remains a major obstacle to this translation. Such contexts of head of the river are so self-evident as a transferred metaphor that they should be held aside from those contexts where no such clear signal is generated by the immediate context. Arguments from the relation between Christ and God as a parallel "control" in actuality would support all three (or four) translations or interpretations. Oddly, although we ourselves are hesitant to adopt source, advocates of this view might have strengthened their case by pointing out more strongly that ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός (of source) and διὰ τῆς γυναικός (of "mediate" creation) in 11:12 offers precisely the terminology of 8:6 about God and Christ. This weighs more seriously

than broader discussions, and we have to judge whether it is sufficient to make it plausible that Paul expected this meaning to be understood by his readers in v. 3, ahead of his argument in v. 12.

(c) Preeminent, Foremost, and Synecdoche for a Representative Role

This proposal has the merit of most clearly drawing interactively on the metaphorical conjunction between physiological head (which is far and away the most frequent, “normal” meaning) and the notion of prominence, i.e., the most conspicuous or topmost manifestation of that for which the term also functions as synecdoche for the whole. The public face is linked with responsibility and representation in the public domain, since head is both the part of a person which is most conspicuous and that by which they are most readily distinguished or recognized. These aspects feature more frequently and prominently in first-century Greek texts than either the notions of ruler or source, although we agree with Fitzmyer and Grudem that a survey of Hatch-Redpath does not corroborate claims that when ראש (ro’sh) means rule, LXX almost always uses a different Greek word.

More striking than links between source and the use of Genesis 2 in the immediate context is the total perspective of 1 Cor 8:1–14:40 that Paul corroborates the theoretical right of the “strong” or “prominent” to exercise their “knowledge” and “freedom,” but dramatically places boundaries and qualifications around freedom and knowledge by insisting on the priority of love (as in 13:1–13), most especially love which will respect the self-awareness (conscience??) and self-esteem of the “weak,” who must not be permitted to stumble. If Paul asserts a theoretical hierarchy, which does indeed correspond with “knowledge” of the creation order, the foremost within this order must protect the status and self-respect of “the weak” for whom they must take responsibility (synecdoche). The more anyone stresses “prominence,” the more that person must ensure that “the other” does not experience the self-humiliation expressed in 12:15. “If the foot (sic, πούς), should say, ‘because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ just because of this does it not belong to the body?” Hence women use prophetic speech alongside men. However, at Corinth women as well as men tended to place “knowledge” and “freedom” before love in the Christian sense. Paul does not permit their “freedom” as part of the gospel new creation to destroy their proper self-respect and respect in the eyes of others by taking part in worship dressed like an “available” woman. That is not love, for it brings “shame” on themselves, their menfolk, and on God.

One writer goes a considerable part of the way toward making this point, but exempts gender for the wrong reason. Dale Martin rightly agrees that the appropriate head covering provides a sign of “nonavailability” for respectable women who appear in public, most especially when thoughts are to be focused on God in corporate worship. This “was understood in ancient culture to protect vulnerable women from the penetrating gaze and from dangerous invasion.”¹⁰⁰ Throughout this epistle, Martin rightly urges, there is a sense in which Paul “attempts to make the weak strong and the strong weak.”¹⁰¹ Although Martin does not invoke the principle here, this is part of the “reversal” which stems from the

role of the cross as “ground and criterion” (Schrage) of Christian life and thought. However, Martin argues that “when it comes to the male-female hierarchy, Paul abruptly renounces any status-questioning stance.... This ... has to do with physiology. The ‘stuff’ of female nature is differently constituted from that of male nature.”¹⁰²

This is less than convincing, however, in the light of J. Gundry-Volf’s more careful arguments about the dialectic between creation, culture, or society and eschatology. Paul insists on gender distinctiveness. That goes for the men (vv. 4, 7 with Murphy-O’Connor) no less than for the women (vv. 5, 6, 7b). However, if love takes priority over freedom, any competitiveness about “authority” becomes obsolete in the new order, even if a reciprocity of relationship allows different inputs to the relation of mutuality; rather, the entailments of protection of, and respect for, “the other” hold greater prominence than issues of “authority” within the wholeness of Paul’s dialectic. Here lexicography, theories of metaphor, exegesis, and the continuity of 8:1–14:14 cohere well together. Neither “headship,” nor “order,” nor “equality” alone conveys the complexity and wholeness of Paul’s theology. Again, multiple meaning holds the key.

Some residual issues in v. 3 deserve brief attention. NRSV translates ὁ ἀνὴρ in the middle clause as husband (against man in REB, NIV, NJB), although it has man in the first and third propositions. A few commentators defend husband, but the overwhelming majority of writers convincingly argue that the issue concerns gender relations as a whole, not simply those within the more restricted family circle.¹⁰³ θέλω δέ should be rendered as an adversative (with NRSV, NJB, REB, Fee, and others; as against NIV, now ...). This also renders still more problematic A. Padgett’s argument that the θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι wording suggests that Paul is introducing a Corinthian formula in v. 3, a thesis which Fee and Schrage both reject.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps, as Murphy-O’Connor argues, Paul commends the readers for maintaining the tradition that women can be active in prophetic speech, but (δέ) attacks men and women equally for generating signals which blur gender distinctiveness in unacceptable ways by each appearing with inappropriate headgear.¹⁰⁵

Clearly both the immediate context along with the Jewish background of the use of this image favor the idea of one’s head signaling the source of existence. But also a leadership responsibility for both men and women in the house church groups is at the heart of Paul’s discussion here. Thus the inner connectivity and mutual dependence ideas stand at the heart of his use of this image. The issue has nothing to do with power or control; just the opposite.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ 3 This is only one of three instances, I think, for which we find ourselves compelled to offer an alternative translation or translations in square brackets (cf. 11:4). The translation of this verse has caused more personal agony and difficulty than any other in the epistle, not least because the huge array of research literature and lexicographical data which presses controversially and polemically for diverse translations of κεφαλή, in which each of three main views finds powerful and well-informed advocates. (The decision about husband [NRSV] or man [REB, NJB, NIV] is of a



The application of Paul's principle in v. 3 comes in vv. 4-5 and is applied equally to both men and women in a leadership role before the gathered community of believers.

Men:

πᾶς ἀνὴρ

προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων

κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων

καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.

every man

praying or preaching

according to the head having (?)

brings shame to his head

Women:

δέ

πᾶσα γυνή

προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα

ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ κεφαλῆ

καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς.

and

every woman/wife

praying or preaching

with an uncovered head

brings shame to her head.

Notice that the only difference has to do with one's head. Thus the issue revolves around the meaning of κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων for the men, and ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ κεφαλῆ for the women. Very likely given hot topic social issues current in mid-first century Roman society Paul's major problem here centered on gender distinction between the men and the women.¹⁵⁹ From Augustus

different order.) NRSV, REB, NJB, NIV, AV/KJV, Moffatt, Barrett, and Collins all translate κεφαλή as head (also Jerome, caput; Luther, Haupt; Luther, Stuttgart 1984 ed., Haupt). Out of respect for their strong tradition together with the arguments of Fitzmyer and others we place head in square brackets as one clearly possible alternative, but weighty arguments also occur for "source." In the end we are convinced by advocates of a third view, even if barely. The work of Cervin (1989) and more especially Perriman (1994) and Dawes (1998) must be given due weight. Our translation coheres with the recognition by Collins (1999) that Paul deliberately uses a polymorphous concept, through a word that has multiple meanings (see below)." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 811.]

¹⁵⁹Paul's concern is not with subordination but with gender distinction. He expresses no less disquiet (probably indeed more) about men whose style is effeminate with possible hints of a quasi-homosexual blurring of male gender than about women who likewise reject the use of signals of respectable and respected gender distinctiveness. We shall return to Murphy-O'Connor's article, which is illuminating and important in its general approach, even if not necessarily in every detail. It supports the genuine mutuality and symmetry of Paul's gender concerns. 11:2-16 is not simply about "the head covering of women," but about men and women, freedom and respect for the otherness of the other in public wor-

onward Roman laws laid out specific dress codes etc. for both men and women appearing in public events pressing the conviction that 'men should look like men' and 'women should look like women.' This came as a part of the push for equal status of women with men in Roman society that developed gradually throughout the first Christian century.¹⁶⁰ One of the by-products of this push for equality was the tendency of many women to alter their appearance via dress etc. in order to appear in public more male like, and thus more liberated.

The use of ἀκατακαλύπτω, **unveiled** (*ohne Schleier/Kopftuch* in German), in vv. 5, 13 (only in the NT) is not the precise opposite of κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων for the men (v. 4). The covering of the woman's head in that world hid her face from public view, not just her hair.¹⁶¹ With-

ship." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 805]

¹⁶⁰How does this relate to language about head (κεφαλή)? (i) The laws of Augustus to which we have alluded also modified the system of guardianship (*tutela*) of women inherited from the closing years of the Republic. A guardian could authorize (cf. ἐξουσιάζω) a woman's actions, but after the laws approved under Augustus a woman had the right (ἐξουσία) to take legal action against a guardian whose refusal to give authorization was deemed to be unreasonable. *Under Claudius guardianship of freeborn women was abolished, although not for freedwomen.*⁸ This context raises nuances of meaning about head in the sense of chief, in relation to mutuality and reciprocity. (ii) Juvenal (c. AD 58-138) shows that by the late first century and early second century women sought quasi-male status by going to public baths (Juvenal 6.419-21), by training to fight (1.23), or by hunting (1.247). However, this is the post-Pauline era, and Cantarella notes Juvenal's antifemale bias.⁹ On the other hand, there is evidence of earlier debate and practice about gender distinctiveness. In this context Dawes's work on head as differentiated from body assumes a necessary prominence. (iii) Sarah Pomeroy further shows that women's clothing has an impact on the status of men. She argues that in the early Roman imperial period it was men, rather than women, on whom a woman's clothing most reflected. Regulation was required when 'men participated in status-seeking by means of the clothing of their women.... The usual purpose of honouring women was to exalt the men to whom they were mothers, wives or sisters.'¹⁰ In this context language about glory, source, and reciprocity becomes important." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 802.]

¹⁶¹The key connection between the need for a head covering (Gk. ἀκατακαλύπτω, feminine privative adjective uncovered) and shames (καταισχύνει) finds precise expression in the comments of Aline Rousselle and Dale Martin.¹⁴⁴ The wearing of appropriate head covering (such as a hood) denoted respect and respectability. Within the semiotic clothing code of first-century Roman society (see above on Roland Barthes) 'a veil or hood constituted a warning: it signified that the wearer was a respectable woman and that no man dare approach her,' i.e., as one potentially or actually sexually 'available' (my italics).¹⁴⁵ We postpone for the present whether ἀκατακαλύπτω may conceivably denote long hair that is



out such covering the public message of the unveiled woman was “I’m available for sex.” Now did the Corinthian Christian women view it the same way? Most likely not, for they were preoccupied with spiritual liberty and freedom from cultural restraints.¹⁶²

Paul’s Jewish heritage, even in Diaspora Judaism, was to resist such a trend stoutly. In a congregation where both Jews and non-Jews comprised the membership of the group, such a trend toward ‘male-like’ appearance by women and also some of the Roman trends of males to diminish their ‘maleness’ by dress and appearance just would not work inside the religious community of believers. Given, additionally, the tendencies of the mystery cults, mostly coming out of the eastern empire as well, to push the envelope even harder toward a ‘genderless’ appearance between men and women in religious worship, Christianity needed greatly to distance itself from such. Already movements toward asceticism inside the church at Corinth toward ‘sexless marriage’ etc. only compounded the problem for a healthy Christian witness to the city at the point of gender identity of males and females (cf. chap. 7).

Thus Paul insists that the men resist putting any-

‘loosed’ down the back, since this would generate the very same signal. If Roland Barthes showed that the semiotics of dress is far from trivial, enormous weight is provided by the context of public worship. We recall again, with Murphy-O’Connor and Richard Oster, that an issue about the semiotic signals generated by men at public worship introduces the principle. In vv. 4 (men) and 5 (women) the principle remains the same: self-advertisement, especially if it relates to perceptions of the worship leader as an object of sexual attraction, diverts attention from God who should be the center of undivided attention. To employ a dress code which hints at sexual availability while leading worship is unthinkable.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 828–829.]

^{162c}That is not to say, however, that this was the conscious intention of women who attended prophetic speech or prayer at Corinth. It is likely that for them the issue was one of freedom and equality on the basis of the gospel axiom which finds expression in such a passage as Gal 3:28. Sociology of religion confirms that ‘order’ and ‘tradition’ often become overwhelmed where there is a flood of ‘spiritual’ or ‘charismatic’ vitality and dynamism. Hence J. Gundry-Volf may plausibly allude to ‘the Corinthian pneumatics’ praying and prophesying with unfeminine or unmasculine headdress ... in the worship assembly where outsiders might be present and ... thus ... a loss of social acceptability.... The pneumatic head-covering practices ignored the social boundaries between male and female and thus brought shame upon themselves and their ‘heads.’¹⁴⁶ In other words, they confused equality with sameness or lack of gender difference. Collins writes: ‘It is probable that the situation was one that resulted from the attitude ‘anything goes’ (see 6:12; 10:23).... [But] because God has created the human genders in different ways a distinction is to be maintained when the community assembles for worship.’¹⁴⁷” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 829.]

thing on their head that would de-emphasize them as men giving leadership.¹⁶³ This stands possibly behind the rather vague expression of κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων used by Paul in v. 4 which potentially could cover doing something with their hair as well, as v. 14 alludes to.¹⁶⁴ Quite interestingly, a relatively strong case can be made for Paul condemning ‘long hair’ (κόμη in v. 14) in this expression because it pushed the male toward an effeminate appearance -- a trend found among male homosexuals in the first century world.¹⁶⁵ But it is not

^{163c}Archaeological evidence from Rome itself to the Roman East is unambiguous, Oster urges, in depicting the ‘liturgical head covering’ of men when they pray or use prophetic speech: ‘the practice of men covering their heads in the context of prayer and prophecy was a common pattern of Roman piety and widespread during the late Republic and early Empire. Since Corinth was a Roman colony, there should be little doubt that this aspect of Roman religious practice deserves greater attention by commentators than it was received.’¹⁰⁸” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 823.]

¹⁶⁴One of the common interpretive mistakes with Paul’s references to men not having a head covering of some kind is to appeal to the Jewish background, as though the modern use of the Jewish *tallith* or *yarmulke*, i.e., skull cap, was a practice of Jews in the first century either in the temple or Judean synagogue life or especially in Hellenistic Jewish synagogue life whose practices often differed from their fellow Jews in Judea. The simple truth is we have no idea what the Jewish practice for men was either in Judea or in the Diaspora during the first century. Some see Paul thus rejecting a Jewish practice for Christian men in worship.

“Horsley (1998) is one of the most recent writers to argue that Romans and Jews prayed with heads ... covered, in contrast to the Greek practice of praying bare-headed.¹⁰⁹ Yet Oster also insists that it is a third standard “error” to impose “later Jewish practices onto the Corinthian situation.”¹¹⁰ Bruce, Barrett, Kümmel, and Oepke, among others, all appeal to Jewish traditions.¹¹¹ We also know from archaeological evidence that there was a Jewish synagogue at Corinth.¹¹² Nevertheless, Oster argues that neither the OT, nor the LXX, nor Qumran, nor the Gospels, nor Philo, nor Josephus, nor even the Mishnah offers any evidence for this. Hypotheses that men wore the traditional Jewish tallith or yarmulke “distort the historical use of the prayer shawl by Jewish men.”¹¹³ The context of wrapping oneself in a cloak “while absolving his vows ... is not the specific activity that Paul addresses,” even if the Tosefta mentions such a practice.¹¹⁴

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 823.]

^{165c}From classical to Hellenistic times κόμη often denotes hair perceived as an ornament, while θρίξ usually denotes hair in a more anatomical sense.¹²⁶ But Pseudo-Phocylides uses the former; Philo, the latter. Murphy-O’Connor insists, ‘Philo’s comment must mean that homosexuals let their hair grow longer than usual.’¹²⁷ He sees three parallels in this context between Philo, De Specialibus Legibus III 7:36–38 and 1 Cor 11:2–16: (i) the blurring of gender identity and distinctiveness, (ii) falsifying the ‘stamp of nature’ (Philo; cf. φύσις in 11:14); and (iii) the theme of shame or disgrace. Evidence is far wider than Philo and Hellenistic Judaism.



certain that Paul is moving this direction with his expression. That the Corinthian Christian men would look like homosexuals would be secondary to the larger implication of their appearance, a message similar to the unveiled woman: "I'm available sexually." Not a message Christian men should be sending out.

In addition, the deeply held Roman tradition of men using head coverings of various kinds during their worship in the pagan temples stands behind Paul's concern for men's head coverings.¹⁶⁶ His appeal to ἡ φύσις αὐτῆ, *nature itself*, in v. 14 points toward these types of concerns generated by cultural dynamics. Central to Paul's concerns was the integrity of the witness of the believing community to the city.

Commitment to the Gospel of Christ implies honoring God's creation of male and female in appearance etc. One's appearance as a believer must demonstrate reverence for God and His ways. Particularly is this important for those giving leadership to a gathered community of believers. This is stressed by Paul in the statement of shaming one's head by both men and women: καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ / καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς. These wrong actions both show lack of proper respect for how God has made us, in His image (cf. Gen. 1-2). But our Christian commitment is to honor God in every possible way in our lives, including acknowledging the gender distinctions through creation. The Roman social cultural background of honor and shame only adds intensity to Paul's statement

The Roman satirists Juvenal and Horace also reflect this stance. Juvenal depicts an all-male gathering in which some of the men 'filled a golden hair net with prodigious locks (*reticulumque comis auratum ingentibus implet*).'¹²⁸ Horace alludes disparagingly to 'a well-shaped youth whose long hair is tied in a knot (*longam renodantis comam* ...).'¹²⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 825.]

¹⁶⁶Further, a considerable amount of archaeological research on this subject also demands attention. Richard E. Oster's article on the misuse and neglect of archaeological evidence relating to 1 Corinthians (1992) is instructive. Roman customs, as we know, are paramount for understanding the Roman Corinth of Paul's day. Archaeological evidence shows 'the widespread use of male liturgical head coverings in the city of Rome, in Italy, and in numerous cities in the Roman East ... on coins, statues and architectural monuments from around the Mediterranean Basin.'²¹ 'Men covering their heads in the context of prayer and prophecy was a common pattern of Roman piety.'²² Oster finds himself astonished that not only do many writers look far afield to Philo, Tertullian, Gnosticism, and rabbinic sources to try to explain 11:4, but Weiss calls 11:4 'hypothetical,' while F. F. Bruce considers the background either 'improbable' as an actuality or cited 'hypothetically' as 'necessary to complete the argument.'²³ Even Fee uses the word 'speculative' of the implied practice." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 805–806.]

here.¹⁶⁷

c) Basis for application, vv. 5b-15 Through the repeated use of the causal conjunction γάρ Paul adds a series of both amplifying and justifying statements to his principle and its application (vv. 3-5a).

ἐν γὰρ ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ. for it is one and the same thing as being shaved (v. 5b). The 'it' refers to the woman without a veil. Although a wide variety of first century nuances of implication for this phrase exist,¹⁶⁸ the bottom line is that it universally signaled the loss of her femininity, just the opposite of wearing a veil

¹⁶⁷“The remaining difficulty in this verse concerns the meaning of καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ, translated above as shames his head. It has become an axiom of research on this epistle especially in the 1980s and 1990s that the honor-shame semiotic contrast permeates the culture of Roman Corinth, much ancient Mediterranean culture, and not least this passage. J. Gundry-Volf observes: ‘This characterization of the Mediterranean world as a shame/honor society supplies the background for the shame/glory contrast in 1 Cor 11:2–16.’¹³⁴ Bruce Malina and numerous studies of social or cultural anthropology in relation to the world of Paul underline the point.¹³⁵ As Moxnes notes, ‘Interaction between people was characterized by the competition for recognition and the defence of one’s own status and honor. To refuse a person’s claim for honor was to put the person to shame.... Shame and honor ... represent the value of a person in her or his own eyes but also in the eyes of his or her society.’¹³⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 826–827.]

¹⁶⁸“Several explanations have been offered for the last clause of this verse: ἐν γὰρ ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ. BDF underline the sense of the woman’s being one and the same as a woman whose head had been shaved, although Collins stresses the lighter touch of sarcasm here.¹⁶⁶ The two most widespread explanations are: (i) if she really wishes to dissolve the socio-symbolic expression of gender distinctiveness, this is tantamount to adopting the sexless symbolic expression of the shaven head (see above, esp. in Hallpike); (ii) if she is really bent on dressing like a sexually “available” woman, she might as well accept the public humiliation apportioned out to women caught in sexual misdemeanors. No doubt Paul intends this to enact a rhetorical shock: do you really want to shame yourself, your family, and your God in such a way? Or alternatively: are you really serious about no longer wanting to be honored as a woman, or do you genuinely want to use ‘gospel freedom’ to eradicate all that relates to gender distinctiveness? Which of these two interpretations we accept will depend upon our exegesis and understanding of the whole verse and the situation behind it. Fee observes, ‘The shame seems clearly to be related to her becoming like a man with regard to her hair ... blurring male/female relationships in general and sexual distinctions in particular.’¹⁶⁷ Classical literature contains examples of the blurring of gender complementarity in lesbian relations in the context of ‘cropped’ or ‘shaved’ hair, which coheres with arguments above, including Murphy-O’Connor’s allusion to male homosexuality in v. 4.¹⁶⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 832.]



or hood out in public.¹⁶⁹

εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω. **For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. (v. 6).** This emphasizes the same essential point that Paul made in v. 5. But the rhetorical structure of his thought expression strongly signals an appeal to the Roman custom of honor and shame.¹⁷⁰ The first class

¹⁶⁹“This entirely explains why Paul perceives the shame of self-advertising dress and sexless, genderless dress (the removal of hair altogether by having been shaved) as in effect one and the same thing. There are many hypothetical explanations for Paul’s reference to having been shaved. Depending on context, it may allude to the status of one convicted of prostitution, or sometimes one who has borne the shame of being a menial slave, but for the most part the loss of a woman’s hair is taken to denote a loss of her femininity. By contrast, covered hair denotes self-controlled sexuality.¹⁴⁸ Precisely the same contrast would be implied by the semantic opposition between long, flowing hair which reaches back over the shoulders and remains unbound as a focus of view and the shaven head. In the context of social anthropology Hallpike correlates the former with ‘undisciplined sexuality’ and the latter with ‘celibacy’ or ‘sexlessness.’¹⁴⁹ Paul states, in effect, that by confusing equality (both male and female may preach and pray in public) with the effective abolition of gender roles and gender identities (as later associated with God’s decree for the creation order) people bring shame upon themselves; both shaming an expression of gender identity, shaming the God who decreed it, and perhaps also shaming the person or persons who were perceived as the generally more public associate of the woman (whether husband, guardian, father, or wider family). A. C. Wire may be right: some Corinthian women prophets may have insisted that the private domain of the home restricted their autonomy.¹⁵⁰ That is all very well, Paul replies, but (as in 8:1–11:1) do the consequences for ‘the other’ (husband, father, or other associates) no longer remain your concern? Shame is not merely that which attaches to an isolated individual. What kind of preaching or prayer would cohere with bringing shame upon another simply in order to assert one’s rights?

“The case for interpreting ἀκατακαλύπτω (only here and in 11:13 in the NT) to denote having flowing, loose hair is not conclusive, although it is possible to envisage, with Hays, a double allusion to loose, flowing hair in conjunction with the lack of a hood or head covering. Hays paraphrases the reconstructed report sent to Paul: ‘some of the women, acting in the freedom and power of the Spirit, have begun to remove their head coverings and loose their hair when they prophesy as a sign of their freedom in Christ.’¹⁵¹ In other words, they want to give socio-symbolic expression to their freedom and equality; Paul insists that a socio-symbolic expression of gender identity cannot be brushed aside in the name of gospel freedom as no longer relevant (cf. Gal 3:28) since (Paul will argue) even the eschatological freedom of the gospel does not revoke expressions of the divine will established in the order of creation, or even sensitivities of perception within a surrounding culture.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 829–830.]

¹⁷⁰“Verse 6 adds rhetorical force to v. 5 but largely repeats the point, explicating appeal to choice by a deliberative rhetoric

conditional sentence here also carries a tone of accusation against the Christian women who refused to cover their heads in the gatherings of the house church groups. Very likely Paul’s statement carries a certain tone of sarcasm against such women in the church.

ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν. **For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man (v. 7).** This statement reaches back to verse 4 where the focus is on the man.¹⁷¹ Key to Paul’s thinking here is εἰκῶν and δόξα. When properly considered against their OT Hebrew background, they concerning future action (for advantage or disadvantage), which nevertheless also embodies an epideictic rhetoric of praise or blame (shame or honor) and even a forensic rhetoric of accusation or acceptance (let her have it cropped close ... or ... shaved ... [or] let her retain her head covering).¹⁶⁹ Paul introduces κείπω as a part synonym for ξυρῶ, except that the former denotes the act of cropping hair very close to the head, whereas the latter denotes shaving off all hair.¹⁷⁰ Dio Cassius quotes an aphorism ascribed to Tiberius, ‘I want my sheep to be sheared (κείρεσθαι), not to be shaved (ἀποξυρῆσθαι).’¹⁷¹ Some argue that the former term denotes a ‘boylike’ style, with possible hints of lesbian gender-crossing, while the second denotes the shaven state of one who is either sexless or shamed for uncontrolled behavior. However, the terms sometimes function as virtual synonyms (Acts 18:18, κειράμενος ... τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἶχεν [παῦλος] γὰρ εὐχὴν), and allowance must be made for stylistic variation. Robertson and Plummer paraphrase, ‘If a woman refuses to be veiled, let her be consistently masculine and cut her hair close.’¹⁷² The middle voice denotes the agent of action as the woman herself, performing a self-involving or reflexive action. Chrysostom regards this verse as a rhetorical *reductio ad absurdum* which sharpens the point to the axiom ‘If you cast away the ‘covering’ appointed by divine law, then cast away the ‘covering’ appointed by nature.... Thereby she falls from her proper honour.’¹⁷³

“The use of expanded rhetorical repetition here seems to provide a decisive objection to Alan Padgett’s view that vv. 4–7 represent a Corinthian statement which Paul rejects.¹⁷⁴ When Paul cites a slogan from Corinth (e.g., 6:12; 8:1[b]; 10:23) he does so succinctly. In any case, Padgett’s claims about ‘coiffure’ also remain open to question, for reasons noted above. We should allow the contemporary Roman evidence concerning societal perception (Rousselle, Martin, Lefkowitz, and Flint) to interact with the relevant theological and eschatological dialectic identified above (esp. Gundry-Volf).”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 832–833.

¹⁷¹Paul creates an informal chiasmus here:

- a - man (v. 4)
- b - woman (v. 5)
- b' - woman (v. 6)
- a' - man (v. 7)

The first set (a / b) contain the application of the principle (v. 3), while the second set (b' / a') stress amplification of the application.

point of rationality, not to a hierarchy of some sort.¹⁷²

Image and glory εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα in Genesis 1-2 stress first that man is to reflect God who is otherwise invisible. Others should be able to look at man and know who God is. The woman was taken from the side of man and thus should reflect what man reflects. Yet she is distinct from man in her gender, but both should reflect God.¹⁷³ By unveiling herself in public, she de-emphasizes her distinctiveness gender wise from the man and thus blurs the ability to reflect God like the man should. And the man by covering his head in a move toward femininity to appear less male likewise diminishes his ability to reflect God. Thus improper appearance by both in public diminish their ability to both honor God and to reflect Him to the world around them.

8 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός 9 καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα, ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα. 8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man, 9 and neither was man created because of woman, but woman because of man (vv. 8-9). Paul con-

¹⁷²7-9 Although normally we have been considering one verse at a time, to guard against an atomistic misunderstanding of each verse we shall examine vv. 7-9 as one theme which draws its force from the role of Gen 1:26-28 and Gen 2:18, 22 in Jewish and Christian traditions, with particular reference to the specific force of εἰκὼν, image (Heb. תְּצֵלֶם, *tselem*) in Gen 1:26-27 (LXX) and the special semantic range of δόξα, glory (Heb. usually כְּבוֹד, *kabodh*) which may also represent ὁμοίωσις, likeness (Heb. דְּמוּת, *demuth*) in Gen 1:26-27 (LXX). If we give due care to the nuances and force of image and glory in the biblical writings, esp. Hebrew, it becomes clear that the emphasis falls less on hierarchy as such (although this has a place) than on relationality.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 833.]

¹⁷³44 “In the context of Genesis 1 and 2, therefore, man as male first comes onto the cosmic scene as the image which is to manifest God in his life and deeds, since authentic personhood entails living ‘for’ and ‘in relation to’ an Other, not as one centered upon the self. This relationality is then extended in Genesis 2 by the creation of woman out of (ἐκ) man, in which man now enjoys a twofold relationality to God and to woman, each as ‘Other.’ Woman is both ‘other’ than man-as-male and yet equally reflects or manifests what man is. For the relationality of human personhood lies neither in absolute difference from, nor in absolute identity with, ‘the Other.’¹⁸⁰ As Fee argues, a chiasmatic structure with v. 10 (or vv. 10-12) underlines the axis of mutuality.¹⁸¹ Fee lays the groundwork for understanding Paul’s use of glory in relation to image and to the mutuality of v. 12 when he asserts: ‘Paul probably means that the existence of the one brings honor and praise to the other. By creating man in his own image God set his own glory in man.... [Yet] man by himself is not complete ... without a companion ... one who is like him but different from him; one who is uniquely his own ‘glory.’ ... Man ... ‘glories’ in her.... Paul’s point ... is that in the creation narrative this did not happen the other way around....’¹⁸²” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 834-835.]

tinues his line of reasoning begun in v. 7. The appeal to Gen. 1:26-28 and 2:18-25 indirectly here by Paul states the obvious in terms of sequence of creation. In spite of some modern commentators taking this as signaling a lower status for the woman, ancient Jewish interpretive tradition did not so understand this sequence of creation.¹⁷⁴ Instead, the ‘order of creation’ principle in Genesis and in the Torah as well stresses gender distinction and differentiation of functions. Paul clearly objects to the diminishing of this gender distinction as symbolized by how the head of the person is treated. Why? Because it diminishes the ability of both the man and the woman to be reflections of God’s creation of them. Given the background in Roman society with the trend to diminish gender distinctions, often in the name

¹⁷⁴44 “In translation, then, it is essential to signal Paul’s explicit use of the contrastive μέν and δέ: we render a man for his part.... Woman, on the other hand.... The allusion, which follows, to the sequence of creation moves from Gen 1:26-28 to Gen 2:18-25. *We have only to read Philo to observe that in Paul’s era this was not necessarily understood as a brute report rather than pointing to socio-symbolic differentiation.* Thus Wayne Meeks observes that while ambiguities and loose ends still remain in Paul’s account of gender equality and gender difference, for the most part he stresses gender equality in the gospel (cf. Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 7:2-4) but ‘objects to symbolic disregard for sexual differences in the dress of male and female prophets.’¹⁹⁴ It would be impossible for a man (or a woman) to glory in the otherness of the other if gender differentiation were reduced so that ‘the other’ became ‘the same’; and it would be impossible for man or woman to glory (in the Christian sense) in another human person if they were not accorded dignity and respect as a fellow human being of equal status in the gospel.

“With Judith Gundry-Volf (1997) and with P. J. Harland (1998) we conclude that gender differentiation relates to that which God wills, decrees, and expresses in creation or in the creation order. For us a confirmation of this lies in the continuing principle of ‘order’ and differentiation expressed in eschatology (see below on 15:24-28). Harland argues this point in relation to the laws of Deut 12:1-26:15 (and not least 22:5): gender differentiation and its expression in the semiotic code of clothes (Deut 22:5) *depends neither on cultus* (cf. A. Phillips on anti-Canaanite legislation), *nor issues to do with warfare*, but because of ‘the order of the world ... diversity and order ... characteristic of creation ... a distinction in the creation of male and female.... Man’s essence is in two sexes; humanity exists in community ... centred around the creation of male and female.’¹⁹⁵ Judith Gundry-Volf concludes: ‘Paul’s main point is that man and woman are both the glory of another and therefore both have an obligation not to cause shame to their ‘heads’ ... since they are the glory of different persons—man is the glory of God, and woman is the glory of man—they must use different means to avoid shaming their ‘heads.’ But Paul appeals to creation to show their obligation to bring glory—each to the particular one whose glory they are by creation—which they do through distinctive masculine and feminine hairstyles [or head coverings]’ (her italics).¹⁹⁶”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 836-837.]



of religion, one can see why he vigorously protests such practices inside the church.

διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν¹⁷⁵ ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. *Because of this the woman ought to possess authority on her head because of the angels. (v. 10).* The long standing view of head equaling authority¹⁷⁶ has generated a never ending stream of unsolvable issues from this statement of Paul.¹⁷⁷ The only

¹⁷⁵“A secondary gloss in certain patristic writers and VSS (but not in major uncials) inserts κάλυμμα, *hood, covering, or veil*, to explicate the meaning of ἐξουσίαν (e.g., Irenaeus, Tertullian, Jerome, coptic bohairic).¹⁹⁷ However, this is a witness to the early perceptions of the problematic meaning rather than to a genuine textual variant.¹⁹⁸” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 837.]

¹⁷⁶“We should note in passing that most patristic commentators saw no problem in understanding ἐξουσία in an active sense as metonymy for a sign of power over. Chrysostom observes: ‘Being covered is a mark of subjection and authority,’ and Theophylact explicitly understands the metonymic sign of power.²⁰³ Irenaeus understands κάλυμμα here.²⁰⁴ However, Edwards (1885), Ramsay (1907), Robertson and Plummer (1911), and Allo (1956) all anticipate the view for which credit is given to Morna Hooker by comparing ‘symbol of one’s own authority and that of another’s’ as being linguistically symmetrical and equally possible.²⁰⁵ Conzelmann follows Kittel and Foerster in seeing an intertextual resonance between the dual meaning of Heb. שָׁלוּט (shalat), which denotes both to have power over and to conceal, and Aram. שְׁלוֹטוֹנְיָא (shaltonayia) (sh-l-t-w-nyh) to denote ‘something like ‘headband’, ‘veil.’²⁰⁶ Foerster argues that such a resonance cannot be denied, although he concedes that it remains only conjecture.²⁰⁷ Kümmel, Barrett, and Schrage, however, offer more penetrating criticisms, including the point that such a resonance would lie entirely beyond the awareness of the Corinthian readers.²⁰⁸ The fullest discussion of the hypothesis can be found in Allo’s extended Note on this difficult verse.²⁰⁹ Allo traces the complexities of the rabbinic texts but also asks whether Corinthian readers could be expected to appreciate the Semitic background.²¹⁰ He concludes that because of the context on account of the angels ἐξουσία may signify a woman’s power against attack by evil angels (along the lines of Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 5:8) and *On the Veiling of Virgins*, 7); but in the end he follows the argument advocated by Edwards and Ramsay and later developed by Hooker that a veiled or hooded woman has her own power of protection in public because of what she wears.²¹¹” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 838.]

¹⁷⁷“Fee regards this as ‘one of the truly difficult texts in this letter.’¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, although on account of the angels has invited speculation since the era of Tertullian (c. AD 200), the problematic status of ἐξουσία arises from generation after generation of interpreters and translators rendering the term authority. This lies behind the well-known polarization of opinion between the traditional view that woman’s head should a sign of authority over her (in which a sign of is inserted without any basis in the Greek) and Morna Hooker’s now famous ‘solution’ (1964) that authority on her head denotes her own active authority to use prophetic utterance as an empowered woman.²⁰⁰ She writes, ‘The head-cover-

way to break this misleading cycle is move away from this interpretive view. The ἀκατακάλυπτος τῆ κεφαλῆ, *uncovered head*, of the woman (v. 5) in public left her defenseless against being seen as sexually available and often in physical danger of being attacked. For a Christian woman, especially a married Christian woman, the covering of her head, perhaps a κάλυμμα as some church fathers assumes, became not only her protection but especially her ἐξουσίαν, *authorization*, to pray or preach in the gathered assembly of believers. It represented her commitment to God and His order of creation in making her female. Thus glory came to God through covering her head. The covering then became the woman’s authorization to control her appearance and to present a Christian witness both in her appearance and actions of praying and preaching.¹⁷⁸

What does διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, *because of the angels*, mean in this context? In spite of the sometime wild speculation about its meaning,¹⁷⁹ the view that best

ing ... also serves as the sign of the ἐξουσία which is given to the woman ...—authority: in prayer and prophecy....²⁰¹” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 837.]

¹⁷⁸“When this view is placed within its proper historical context in Roman society (described above with reference to Dale Martin and Aline Rousselle), this demonstrates how seriously the traditional controversy about ‘authority’ was misconceived and misleading. As A. C. Wire and many others have urged, many women prophets suffered peer-group pressure to throw aside their hoods (or just possibly but less probably the binding of their hair) in the name of gospel freedom and gender equality.²¹² Paul insists, however, that they keep control of (how people perceive) their heads, because the issue here (as throughout 8:1–11:1 or even 8:1–14:40) remains that of assertive autonomy (ἐξέστω, 6:12, 10:23; cf. ἐξουσία, I have the right to ...) versus self-control or an ethic of moderation and restraint (ἐξουσία ... ἔξεστω).²¹³ Although ἔχειν often means *to have*, abundant examples of its use to denote to keep, to hold, to retain, also occur in the NT.²¹⁴ Moreover, ἐπὶ with the genitive (here ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς) does not always have the force of power over; it often denotes control of something as well as (in Hooker’s argument) on something.²¹⁵ If a woman exercises the control that exemplifies respectability in Roman society, and retains the semiotic code of gender differentiation in public, ‘with the veil on her head she can go anywhere in security and profound respect.’²¹⁶ This extends to the act of using prophetic speech in public worship, but (against M. D. Hooker) is not restricted to being specifically a sign of ‘authority’ to use prophetic speech as such. The form of the semiotic code may be culturally variable, but the need to express some kind of semiotic of gender differentiation belongs to the created order. As Gundry-Volf urges, the two principles overlap here.²¹⁷” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 839.]

¹⁷⁹“Much speculation surrounds the interpretation of διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. (1) Ephrem of Syria and Ambrosiaster (followed by Cajetan) interpreted the angels respectively as priests (sacerdotes) or



bishops (episcopi), supposedly on the basis of ‘the angels of the churches’ in Rev 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14.218 (2) Tertullian, as is well known, understands angels to refer to angels ‘fallen from God and heaven on account of their lustful desire for earthly women (ob concupiscentiam feminarum).’²¹⁹ The hood or veil protects the women who worship from the gaze of these fallen angels whom Tertullian identifies with the ‘watchers’ of Gen 6:1–2 (i.e., the sons of God who desired the daughters of men). Tertullian ascribes 11:10 to the impropriety of fallen angels in a second passage, this time emphasizing the need for clothing which is not only protective but also modest.²²⁰ (3) Augustine, Peter Lombard, Aquinas, Grotius, Estius, and others identify the angels with holy angels who as hosts of heaven participate in the worship of the church. Augustine argues that Paul’s allusion to the covering of the head here ‘is pleasing to the holy angels’ on account of the purity and propriety of the heavenly realm.²²¹ Aquinas cites Augustine’s interpretation and records Peter Lombard as following the same view.²²² (4) Theodoret more specifically alludes to the guardian angels, or protecting angels, of Matt 18:10.²²³ (5) Another view cites the angels as ‘covering’ themselves in God’s presence in Isa 6:2, and proposes that v. 10 means in imitation of the angels.

“Many modern commentators conflate (3) and (4) either in a general sense of ‘on display’ to ‘the whole universe’ (Fee) or ‘to glorify God in the company of the heavenly host’ (Wire; cf. Schrage).²²⁴ J. Fitzmyer sheds limited light on this verse with reference to the angiology of Qumran.²²⁵ Two passages mention the presence of angels at sacred gatherings: IQM 7:4–6, in which ‘holy angels accompany their armies’; and IQS 2:3–11, in which ‘holy angels are in their congregation.’²²⁶ Because of the presence of the angels, both the volunteer for the holy war in IQM (the War Scroll), and members of the congregation in IQS (the Rule of the Congregation or Manual of Discipline) ‘had to be perfect not only in spirit but also in body.’²²⁷ Fitzmyer compares this with Lev 21:17–23, which excludes those with ‘defects’ and suggests a further parallel between ‘the unveiled head of a woman’ and the analogy of ‘a bodily defect.’²²⁸ He concludes, ‘διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους in 1 Cor 11:10 is to be explained in terms of Qumran angiology,’ not least because this proposed link is not an isolated one between Paul and Qumran.²²⁹

“Although Fitzmyer’s approach converges with that of Cadbury and is accepted by Kistemaker, Herbert Braun rejects it by preferring to return to the notion of protection from evil forces, while Héring and Hurd simply regard the proposed parallel as respectively implausible or distant.²³⁰ We have described Fitzmyer’s proposal as one of ‘limited light’ because on one side we may doubt the specificity of his suggestion while on the other side we may affirm the more general point that in NT traditions from Paul to the Revelation of John Christian theology shares the Jewish tradition that Christians worship the transcendent God of heaven in company with the heavenly host.²³¹ In such a public context of universal cosmic reverence, Paul urges, the axiom ‘as in heaven, so on earth’ should apply to the recognition of respect, reverence, and order which receives symbolic and semiotic expression in the ways indicated. Paul attacks the notion that individual autonomy (questions about ‘my rights,’ ‘my freedom’) genuinely remains unqualified in the presence of the otherness of the other (created gender) and the heavenly hosts who perform their due roles and tasks.

“One final point may be made. Among the Jewish traditions which find their way into the NT, those in which angels are perceived as ‘guardians of order’ as well as ‘participants in the church’s praise to God’ provide the best clue to Paul’s meaning.²³² Again, this element is noted in the Qumran writings by Fitzmyer,

follows Paul’s referencing to angels elsewhere in his writings sees the angels in the divine ordering of things having their role in the worship of God. The veiled woman praying or preaching affirms her divine authorization for worshiping God among the people of God in harmony with that of the angels: all is done in submission to God’s will, whether by people or angels.

πλὴν οὐτε γυνή χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς οὐτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ ὡσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνή ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικὸς· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God (vv. 11-12). Here the foundational issue of mutuality comes to the surface as the heart of the issue being addressed. Modern translators have difficulty communicating clearly and accurately the words of Paul in this sentence contained in vv. 11-12.¹⁸⁰

and the role of their ‘ordering’ structures and nations has been emphasized by G. B. Caird among others.²³³ In Gal 3:19 Paul observes that the law was put into operation ‘through angels by a mediator,’ which coheres with Caird’s argument. On the other hand, a recent attempt to argue that in 1 Cor 11:10 Paul alludes to ‘evil spirit beings’ runs against lexicographical evidence for Paul’s use of ἀγγελοι, especially with the definite article.^{234”}

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 839–841.]

180 “11–12 AV/KJV follows D2, K, L, and the Vulgate in transposing the sequence of the clauses in v. 11, but all the early major MSS have the order adopted by UBS 4th ed. and translated here.

“No single modern English VS translates the Greek exactly as it stands without addition or modification, if v. 11 is to read as good English. REB eliminates the double negative οὐτε ... χωρὶς (with the genitive) by translating woman is as essential to man as man to woman. NRSV and NIV translate, is not independent of, but this adds a nuance which goes beyond the adverb χωρὶς, which means separated from, or without, when with a genitive of person. NJB preserves without, and with justice renders the οὐτε clause as is nothing without.... We are tempted to follow BAGD’s translation, neither (is) woman (anything) apart from man, nor man from woman.²³⁵ It seems best to combine BAGD’s accurate apart from with NJB’s idiomatic rendering of the double negative, although we then have to add although at the price of disturbing the symmetry of οὐτε ... οὐτε.... The emphatic πλὴν, nevertheless, on the other hand, fully justifies this placing of emphasis by implication.²³⁶

“It is also difficult to translate ἐν κυρίῳ both accurately (as NIV, NRSV, NJB, in the Lord) and intelligibly (as REB, in the Lord’s fellowship). In spite of arguments to the contrary by Barrett and Fee, since he has appealed both to the order of creation and to societal convention, it seems that Paul now uses his third ‘lens’ or ‘point of reference’ as that of eschatology or the order of the gospel.²³⁷ Paul almost certainly means to say that gender differentiation is decreed in creation, expressed in convention, and not abrogated in the order of the gospel, i.e., in the Lord in the sense of among the Lord’s people, or more strictly as those in the Lord. On the other hand, Collins understands the phrase to emphasize ‘similarity’ in



The first main clause reflects the balanced expression of the Greek that causes so much translation problem.

πλήν
οὔτε γυνή χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς
οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς
ἐν κυρίῳ

How to express the mutuality or reciprocity obviously contained in Paul's words here is the challenge. The contrastive conjunction πλήν, nevertheless, sets this up as contrastive to the previous declaration in v. 10. The woman's veiling of herself does express in individual authorization from God to give leadership in worship. But it in no way frees her from heavy dependence upon the males in the worship. She does not function χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς, separated from them in an autonomous fashion. Christian worship is always a cooperative action with both men and women participating.¹⁸¹ This is indeed the Christian distinctive, as the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, in the Lord, stresses.

Paul's word here bases his demands for distinctive gender appearance between the men and the women on the solid grounds of complete mutual dependence on one another. Both need one another and only by maintaining their distinctiveness can this mutuality find healthy expression.

In verse 12, Paul offers a line of justifying expression to the principle set forth in v. 11. ὡςπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνή ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. **For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God.** The appeal to human birth validates the principle of mutuality. Also the deeper principle that human birthing

the Lord, even if 'difference' still has a part to play on the basis of creation.²³⁸ Whereas the creation order entails a differentiation that may also embody a hint of priority, at least in terms of the Genesis narrative, Paul adds that in the gospel differentiation is determined more explicitly by a principle of mutuality and reciprocity. There could be no reciprocity or mutuality unless each was differentiated from the other. Even so, the very experience of human birth in the natural or created order demonstrates that the principle of mutual interdependence does not originate, Marcion-like, with the new order of the gospel in the Lord or among the Lord's people. For if the Genesis narratives seem to suggest the priority of man over woman in terms of a primordial decree, at the same time the everyday experience of birth reminds man of his dependence on woman for his very existence in the world.²³⁹

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 841–842.]

¹⁸¹Here is where the Christian house church gathers really distinguished themselves from the Friday evening Jewish synagogue meetings where only the men participated while the women were silent, passive listeners in another room with a drawn curtain between them. How liberating Christian worship must have seemed to the Jewish women having grown up in synagogue worship, as well as to the non-Jewish women who also attended the synagogue gatherings.

has its origin in God solidifies this principle from creation.

13 ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε· πρέπον ἐστὶν γυναῖκα ἀκατακάλυπτον τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι; 14 οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾷ ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν, 15 γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται [αὐτῇ]. **13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.**

Verses 13-15 draw implications from Paul's presentation in vv. 3-12. Essentially he introduces these with the admonition, **Now among yourselves determine that this makes sense.** The rhetorical question in v. 13 assumes that a veiled woman praying to God when her appearance signals her respect for God make better sense than the alternative. In v. 14, alternatively ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ teaches that a man should not wear his hair excessively long. First, the issue of long hair is indeed a part of this larger issue and not just some kind of covering placed on top of the hair.¹⁸² The length of one's hair is also a part of the gender distinction issue. Second, what does ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ mean?¹⁸³ The ancient Hebrew

¹⁸²Commentators seem to have become hopelessly confused by attempting to press the logic in the form of an inverted symmetry between a covering (for which Paul now introduces a new Greek term, περιβόλαιον, covering, wrap, cloak, mantle) relating to hair and a covering in the form of a hood, or the lack of each respectively.²⁷¹ Even F. F. Bruce first suggests that Paul is drawing 'an analogical inference' from woman's covering and man's lack of covering, but then concedes that 'readily the opposite conclusion might be drawn from Paul's promise,' i.e., that woman then 'needs no other head covering.'²⁷² He excludes the latter not on grounds of logic, but because Paul's earlier argument demands this. Such a tortuous problem of logic arises, however, only if we press the argument further than Paul intends. In vv. 14 and 15 his main concern is simply to press the issue of gender differentiation and its expression through some semiotic code such as hair or dress. Semiotic code depends on shared conventions, and social norms generally encourage gender differentiation." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 846.]

¹⁸³One of the most discriminating discussions of ἡ φύσις in this particular verse comes from Schrage. He compares its use here with the occurrences of the term in Rom 1:26; 2:14. To be sure, he observes, unlike the Stoics Paul does not hear 'the voice of God from nature' as some competing or alternate source to scripture.²⁴⁸ In contrast to Cicero, φύσις as 'nature' is characterized by 'ambivalence and relativity' of a kind unlike the concept among the Stoics.²⁴⁹ In Paul's sense of the term, 'natural' need not refer to a structure inherent in creation but may include 'the state of affairs surrounding a convention' or the quality, property, or nature (Beschaffenheit) of male or female gender and the order, or arrangement, or system of things as they are (die Ordnung der Dinge).²⁵⁰

Unless we take fully into account ‘the ambivalence of ‘natural,’ ’ we shall find insoluble problems with such historical counterexamples as the custom of Spartan warriors of wearing shoulder-length hair.²⁵¹ Paul simply appeals to ‘how things are’ or ‘how things are ordered’ in the period and context for which he is writing. Judiciously Schrage cites Calvin: ‘Now he means by ‘natural’ what was accepted by common consent and usage at that time.... For long hair was not always regarded as a disgraceful thing in man.’²⁵²

“In this history of interpretation four distinct views of ἡ φύσις in this verse may be identified: (1) an intuitive or inborn sense of what is fitting, right, or seemly (Bengel and Meyer); (2) the way humans are created, i.e., their constitution as men and women (de Wette); (3) the physical reality of how the world is ordered (Osiander, Hofius); and (4) the customs of a given society (Chrysostom, Calvin, Grotius, Schrage). Bengel comments on ἡ φύσις, ‘natura, ejusque de decoro lumen.’²⁵³ Köster has little difficulty in identifying a multitude of such uses in his extensive lexicographical survey of 1973.²⁵⁴ Among the pre-Socratic philosophers, ethics may be defined as each living κατὰ φύσιν (Heraclitus, Fragments 1.8, 9). Euripides speaks of the normative character of nature as an expression of the divine.²⁵⁵ Plato rejects a merely materialist view of nature, but sees ἡ φύσις as the true or essential being of things.²⁵⁶

“The notion of ἡ φύσις as denoting how things are constituted can be found in Aristotle, i.e., in an ontological sense the essence of something, or how things are.²⁵⁷ ‘There is no disorder in it.’²⁵⁸ The Cynic-Stoic philosopher of Paul’s era, Epictetus, can appeal to φύσις as that which rules over all things and becomes virtually deified.²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, even in Epictetus ἡ φύσις comes to denote the order of things or the ordering of how things are. He observes, e.g., that a man who removes hair from his body is complaining against nature that he is a man: ‘Woman is born smooth and dainty by nature (φύσις); if she is very hairy she is a prodigy (κὰν ἔχη τρίχας πολλούς, τέρας ἐστὶ ...). But for a man not to be hairy ... if by nature he has no hair (κὰν μὲν φύσει μὴ ἔχη) he is a prodigy (τέρας ἐστὶ). If he removes his hair ... he is a man who wishes to be a woman.... You complain against your nature (σουτῆ φύσις).’²⁶⁰ Among the Roman Stoic philosophical writers this slides into the notion of natural law. Cicero speaks of *lex naturae* or *lex naturalis*.²⁶¹ Epictetus also argues that for the more competent or superior to gain advantage over the lower or inferior is simply ‘a law of nature’ (νόμος ... φυσικός).²⁶²

“Paul would doubtless be aware of these contemporary resonances of the term ἡ φύσις, and the above citations may lend some force to Murphy-O’Connor’s claims about long hair and male homosexuality. However, the Hebrew OT does not speak of ‘nature’ in the Stoic sense, but of God’s ordering of the world by his command. Hatch-Redpath’s Concordance to the Septuagint establishes that the LXX uses φύσις only in the books outside the Hebrew canon, e.g., Wis 7:20; 13:1; 19:20; 3 Macc 3:29; 4 Macc 1:20; 5:7, 8; 13:27.²⁶⁴ This point is corroborated and rightly emphasized both by Fitzmyer and by Dunn in their comments in Rom 1:26.²⁶⁵ Often the word denotes ‘the order intended by the Creator.’²⁶⁶ Fee, therefore, is entirely right to take up the NIV phrase about the ‘way things are.’²⁶⁷ Depending on the context of thought Paul may use ἡ φύσις sometimes to denote the very ‘grain’ of the created order as a whole, or at other times (as here) to denote ‘how things are’ in more situational or societal terms. With the exception of the first category taken up by Bengel and Meyer, instances of all three remaining categories can find support in various passages. However, that identified by Calvin and Schrage offers the best understanding of Paul’s meaning here.²⁶⁸

“Bruce succinctly observes: ‘It is unnecessary to postulate

world never spoke of a ‘natural order’ in the material world. But philosophers in the Greek and Roman tradition debated extensively what ‘natural order’ meant. Does this mean that Paul borrows Greek philosophical concepts here? Not really. All that he intends here is as the NIV translation renders it, “the very nature of things.” This concurs with the use of ἡ φύσις as ‘with no human interference’ in Rom. 11:21. This sense fits well here in the sense of gender distinction via divine creation, and this distinction should be honored rather than tampered with as was happening in the surrounding society. If the Christian woman refusing to cover her head also cut her hair to look more like a male she is tampering with ἡ φύσις, along with the man who refuses to cut his hair and thus looks more feminine.¹⁸⁴ The view that male homosexual practices loom in the background here certainly concur with Paul’s logic in vv. 14-15.

d) Conclusion, v. 16. Εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ. But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

The precise intention of Paul’s statement hinges on correct understanding of what he means by τοιαύτην συνήθειαν. Contextually, he is alluding to the Corinthian demand for equality based on diminishing gender distinctions as represented by appearance especially of the head by both men and women. Probably this surfaces as a part of the sexless asceticism being promoted in at least some of the house church groups as depicted in chapter seven. Paul’s point is that he doesn’t accept such demands as legitimate. Nor do any of the church’s he knows about accept it either.

a Stoic source for Paul’s present reference to patent physical facts.²⁶⁹ When we recall that in Rom 11:21 κατὰ φύσιν, according to nature, means ‘with no human interference’ (Fitzmyer), we may see how readily Paul underlines the point that ‘gender distinction is not something human beings created’ (Witherington).²⁷⁰ This still speaks today when many ascribe gender distinctions largely (although by definition never exhaustively) to social construction.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 844–846.]

¹⁸⁴“Paul has already made out his case in terms of the ordering of creation in accordance with the will of God, and the relation between God’s creation decrees and gospel newness. Although, like Conzelmann, he makes too much of ‘nature,’ Wolff at least reminds us that Paul is remonstrating with a particular group at Corinth whose ‘demands’ need to be placed in perspective.²⁷³ The force of δέδοται underlines the folly of trying to force people ‘to go against the grain’ of how things are and their very ordering. (On other phrases and words of vv. 14–15, see above, where they are already discussed.)” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 846.]



What Paul has presented in vv. 2-15 is a carefully thought out and prayed through view of how to properly honor God in worship by both men and women, and especially for those contributing to the worship in prayer and preaching. If anyone in the church at Corinth wants to argue about this (= φιλόνηκος εἶναι), Paul is not prepared to accept any legitimacy for an alternative view than what he has already presented.

Ultimately the issue over head covering reflects the same mentality as lies behind most of the other previous issues addressed in the letter. When are our 'rights' overridden by other principles? Consistently Paul has argued for a Christianity modeled on the self-sacrificing love of Christ that put the needs of others ahead of His own. The integrity of the Christian community as truly committed to God and respectful of His ways is at stake here. The 'demand for rights' is dangerously misguided because it ignores the signals communicated to the outside world by one's appearance. In this case the demands for personal rights was signaling that Christianity is just as corrupt sexually as the surrounding world in Corinth. Thus, the Gospel had nothing to offer a pagan world.

8) Correct observation of the Lord's Supper, 11:17-34.

17 Τοῦτο δε παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινῶ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε. 18 πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν καὶ μέρος

τι πιστεύω. 19 δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα [καὶ] οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν. 20 Συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν· 21 ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν, καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ μεθύει. 22 μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ

11.17 δε
 Τοῦτο παραγγέλλων
 438 οὐκ ἐπαινῶ
 ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον
 ἀλλ'
 εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε.

11.18 γὰρ
 πρῶτον
 μὲν
 439 ἀκούω
 |
 ἐν ὑμῖν
 σχίσματα... ὑπάρχειν
 καὶ
 μέρος
 440 τι πιστεύω.

11.19 γὰρ
 ἐν ὑμῖν
 441 δεῖ καὶ αἰρέσεις... εἶναι,
 ἵνα [καὶ] οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται
 ἐν ὑμῖν.

11.20 οὖν
 Συνερχομένων ὑμῶν
 | ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ
 |
 442 οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν·

11.21 γὰρ
 443 ἕκαστος τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει
 ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν,
 καὶ
 444 ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ
 δε
 445 ὃς μεθύει.

11.22 γὰρ
 446 μὴ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε
 εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν;

ἢ
 447 τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε,
 καὶ
 448 καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας;

449 τί εἶπω ὑμῖν;
 450 ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς;
 ἐν τούτῳ
 451 οὐκ ἐπαινῶ.

11.23 γὰρ
452 Ἐγὼ παρέλαβον _____
ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, |
ὁ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν,
| ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ
| ἣ παρεδίδοτο
ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς... ἔλαβεν ἄρτον
11.24 | καὶ
| εὐχαριστήσας
- ----- ----- ἔκλασεν
| καὶ
- ----- ----- εἶπεν·
| τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα
| τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν·
| τοῦτο ποιεῖτε
| εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.
11.25 |
| ὡσαύτως
| καὶ
- ----- ----- (ἔλαβεν) τὸ ποτήριον
| μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι
| λέγων·
/-----|
| τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν
| ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι·
| τοῦτο ποιεῖτε,
| ὡσάκεις ἐὰν πίνητε,
| εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.
11.26 | γὰρ
|-----| ὡσάκεις ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον
| καὶ
| τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε,
| τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε
| ἄχρι οὔ ἔλθῃ.

11.27 Ὡστε
ὅς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον
ἢ
πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον
τοῦ κυρίου
ἀναξίως,

453 ἔνοχος ἐστὶ
τοῦ σώματος
καὶ
τοῦ αἵματος
τοῦ κυρίου.

11.28 δὲ
454 δοκιμαζέτω ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν
καὶ
οὕτως
ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου

455 πινέτω·

11.29 γὰρ
456 ὁ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει
καὶ
457 - ----- --- πίνει
μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα.

11.30 διὰ τοῦτο
ἐν ὑμῖν
458 πολλοὶ (εἰσὶν) ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοι
καὶ
459 κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί.

11.31 δὲ
εἰ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν,
460 οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα·
11.32 δὲ
κρινόμενοι
ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου
461 παιδευόμεθα,
ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν.

11.33 Ὡστε,
ἀδελφοί μου,
συνερχόμενοι
εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν
462 ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε.

11.34 εἰ τις πεινᾷ,
ἐν οἴκῳ
463 ἐσθιέτω,
ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχησθε.

δὲ
ὡς ἂν ἔλθω
464 τὰ λοιπὰ... διατάξομαι.

ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν; ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε, καὶ κατασχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας; τί εἶπω ὑμῖν; ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς; ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινῶ.

23 Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον 24 καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· τοῦτό μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. 25 ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπῆσαι λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. 26 ὡσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ.

27 Ὡστε ὅς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου. 28 δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω· 29 ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα. 30 διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοι καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί. 31 εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα· 32 κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου παιδευόμεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν. 33 Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε. 34 εἰ τις πεινᾷ, ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω, ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχησθε. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω διατάξομαι.

17 Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the bet-

ter but for the worse. 18 For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. 19 Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. 20 When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. 22 What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. 30 For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. 33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

With the raising of this issue Paul sees another huge mistake due of the cultural inroads of Greek elitist thinking that was circulating among the house church groups. As the phrase ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν, I hear that divisions exist among you (v. 18), clearly signals, Paul's response here is based upon the report of Chloe's people (1:11).¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ "The style of this section, together with Paul's redescription of what he understands to be taking place at the Lord's Supper, indicates that he is not responding to a question first raised by the addressees, but initiates the raising of an urgent matter for censure and re-education. This is prompted by oral reports of occurrences and practices at Corinth. Along with 1:10–4:21 and 5:1–13 (cf. also ch. 6), 'at 1 Cor 11:18 occurs the third of Paul's explicit references to this oral and unofficial information: '... I hear that there are divisions (σχίσματα) among you (11:18)... One goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry ...' (11:21).'¹ Whereas he had commended the addressees for observing certain traditions shared by the churches as a whole in v. 2 (ἐπαινῶ ὑμᾶς ὅτι ...



One of the interpretive ‘curves’ tossed onto this text is the modern perception of two very different types of communion services in early Christianity: a Pauline style described here and a Jerusalem style reflected in Acts 2:47 etc.¹⁸⁶ This modern conjecture has too much Protestant anti-catholic projection from the early 1900s when the debates first emerged. Further it retrojects third and fourth century theological debates back into the apostolic age with absolutely no justification at all.

To be sure, some variation of style in how communion was observed both by Jewish Christianity in Judea and elsewhere with both Jews and non-Jews present is bound to have existed. But Paul’s concern here is with a style of observance that undergirds the religious meaning of this particular worship service.¹⁸⁷

τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε, i.e., probably in acknowledging the legitimate role of women under the gospel to lead in public prayer or preaching [see under ‘prophecy’], Paul now explicitly retracts such commendation in 11:17: οὐκ ἐπαίνῳ ὅτι οὐκ.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 849.]

¹⁸⁶“From the 1920s to the 1960s Hans Lietzmann’s work *Mass and Lord’s Supper* (first German ed. 1926; successive English eds. from 1953 to 1979) popularized the notion of a contrast between two ‘primitive types’ of Eucharist or Lord’s Supper: a so-called ‘Pauline’ type which focused on the death of Christ and finds expression in the Roman liturgy of Hippolytus, and a so-called ‘Jerusalem’ type which reflects a joyous celebration of fellowship meals in communion with the risen Christ as reflected in Acts 2:46 and the early Egyptian liturgy represented in Serapion.¹⁰ Gregory Dix promoted Lietzmann’s view in Anglican circles, while A. J. B. Higgins accepted a modified version with the proviso that both ‘types’ go back to earliest times.¹¹ Even Cullmann regarded Lietzmann’s view as unduly neglected, even though he concedes that he was ‘too conscious of the [alleged] gulf separating these two conceptions.’¹² At the time Cullmann acknowledges that behind Lietzmann’s theory lay the tradition of postresurrection Christophanies which in the radical views of A. Schweitzer, M. Goguel, and A. Loisy assumed the form of ‘myths of the table-fellowship of the Risen One with His disciples.’¹³ E. Lohmeyer subsequently argued that a ‘Galilean’ type (which corresponds with Lietzmann’s ‘Jerusalem’ type) should be distinguished from a “Jerusalem” type (close to Lietzmann’s ‘Pauline’ type).¹⁴

“Lietzmann (followed by Dix) also postulated a parallel between the ‘Jerusalem’ type of the eucharistic tradition and the Haburah meal of ‘Jewish meals invested with religious solemnity.’ However, more recent research dismisses such a theory as ‘an ad hoc conjecture for which there is absolutely no evidence.’¹⁵ Jeremiah’s evaluation has been endorsed by I. H. Marshall and others (discussed under exegesis of v. 17). We should not approach vv. 17–34 with any anachronistic preconceptions about ‘agapē (love-feast)’ and ‘Lord’s Supper’ as reconstructed hypothetically by Lietzmann and his legacy of thought (see below).”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 851–852.]

¹⁸⁷Notice that most modern issues over the observance of the Lord’s Supper are not addressed either here or anywhere else in the

This wasn’t consistently happening among the house church groups at Corinth.

One interesting background issue, that of regular famines in this part of the Mediterranean world in the middle of the first century, may very well have contributed to the unwillingness of the ‘haves’ to share a fellowship meal with the ‘have nots’ in the house church groups.¹⁸⁸ The interpretive problem here is that the historical data out of this period of time documents such food shortages quite well. But Paul does not clearly mention such food shortages as playing a role in the problem. But it is bound to have impacted the Christian community in Corinth along with all other residents of the city when such shortages happened. This would have made the Corinthian abuses all the more repugnant as a denial of the proper meaning of the obser-

New Testament: Should we use wine or is grape juice okay? Should the bread be a special ‘unleavened’ cake or can just regular bread or crackers be used? Should everyone drink out of a common cup? Or can individualized glasses be used? Should the Lord’s Supper be observed weekly, monthly, quarterly etc.? Should just deacons and the pastor administer the observance, or can any member serve the supper? Over the past four hundred years of Protestantism, more energy has been devoted to battling out these issues than any other aspect of communion services. Only the battle over doctrinal meaning as Eucharist, communion, or Lord’s Supper rivals these other side issues in attention.

¹⁸⁸“The second of the final two points concerns the possibility that the contrast between those who were well provided for and the ‘have nots’ was exacerbated not only by socioeconomic differences of background, birth, patronage, and occupation but also by the specific circumstances of famine (or at least of severe food shortages) around the date of this epistle.¹⁶ B. W. Winter, B. B. Blue, and A. D. Clarke cite the appointment of Tiberius Claudius Dinippus as curator for problems caused by the shortages, although the dating may be a few years later.¹⁷ Donald Engels calculates that even with high yields (e.g., 18 bushels per acre, or 16 hectoliters per hectare) of barley, the 80 square miles (207 square kilometers) of cultivatable land which belonged to the agricultural territorium of Roman Corinth ‘would scarcely support 17,600 people’ at around 1.2 kilograms (2,600 calories in barley) per day. This figure, even if we include fruit, vegetables, and other crops, represents ‘absolute maximum.’¹⁸ Granted that the city could not be self-supporting, it might well entail relatively small climatic irregularities, especially lack of adequate rain, to cause a degree of scarcity that would raise prices. The effect would be to widen the gap between the well-to-do who could take price rises in their stride, and those already on the bread line who could not. Suetonius attests several famines or at least shortages during the reign of Claudius (AD 41–54), and Josephus alludes to high prices during this period.¹⁹ Whether or not Blue’s reconstruction actually reflects the precise timing of our epistle, the principle of nonagricultural economics and high commercial population at Corinth, as well as a wide range of socioeconomic status, suggests the vulnerability of the poor to shortages. This would make the distinction between first-class and second-class guests at ‘the Lord’s Supper’ all the more poignant.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 852–853.]

vance.

The organization of Paul's thoughts in vv. 17-34 needs to be illuminated if we are to correctly understand him. The repetition of οὐκ ἔπαινω, I do not commend you, in vv. 17 and 22 form a boundary around the first subunit of vv. 17-22. This is generally recognized in the paragraphing of most modern translations. The heart of vv. 17-22 is reflected in ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω, I hear that divisions exist among you and to some degree I believe it. (v. 18b).

The second subunit is marked out well also in vv. 23-26 as a recounting of how Christ set up the observance in the beginning. This constitutes the earliest written account of the Thursday evening Passover gathering of Christ and His disciples. The Synoptic Gospels, written in the late 60s through the 70s, include their individual accounts -- Mt. 26:26-29 // Mk. 14:22-25 // Lk. 22:14-20 -- but these three documents were written years after First Corinthians in 54/55 AD.

The third unit in vv. 27-34 stands as Paul's application of both the principles of institution in vv. 23-26 to the problem depicted in vv. 17-22. The conjunction Ὡστε in v. 27a sets up the application.

Thus Paul moves along rather clear lines of thinking here in addressing the issue at Corinth.

a) Problem at Corinth, vv. 17-22.¹⁸⁹ What was the heart of the problem at Corinth over their observance of the Lord's Supper? The pattern of observance among the Corinthian house church groups combined a regular fellowship meal with observance of the Lord's Supper at the end of the regular meal. Such a pattern reflected modification of regular meetings of trade guilds, social organizations etc. virtually universal across first century Greco-Roman society.¹⁹⁰ The evening meal

¹⁸⁹One should note the structural arrangement of vv. 17-22 as revealed by Talbert

Verses 17-22 are held together by an inclusion, v. 17a ("But in the following instructions I do not commend you") and v. 22b ("Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not commend you"). The subsection is divided into two balanced halves (vv. 17b-19 and vv. 20-22a), each with an indictment followed by the reason for the charge.

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 93.]

¹⁹⁰"Probably some people saw Christian gatherings as meetings of some sort of association or *collegium*, especially in view of the fact that early Christianity had no temples, no priests, and no sacrifices. Furthermore, just like a Christian meeting, an association meeting could involve a variety of people from up and down the social strata. It could involve a wealthy patron, male or female, a group of artisans both freeborn and freed, and even some slaves, who perhaps had taken up a trade or started a business using their peculium, money of their own.

"There was a trade association of leather workers.⁸ Since Paul practiced his trade in Corinth and stayed, according to Acts 18, with Priscilla and Aquila, who also practiced this trade, we can

played a hugely important role in the social fabric of Paul's world. And more often than not it was connected to belonging to a organization of some sort.¹⁹¹ When assume that he was involved in setting up or participating in some sort of trade association, which, to avoid suspicion or banning by the authorities, had a variety of religious functions and activities.

"One of the main functions of these associations was to provide for those who were not among the very wealthy or the aristocrats but who had social aspirations a venue in which they could feel appreciated and gain honor and acclaim from their peers.

No one smiled at their pretensions when their banners paraded through the streets in homage to a god or emperor; no one found their honorific decrees or their emphatically advertised votes of thanks, even to people [such as patrons] miles above them socially, in the least ridiculous.... The arrogation of fancy titles raised no laugh against the Sacred Craft of Linen-Workers, the Most August Work-Center of Wool-Washers, the Most August Union of Fishers.... It followed that their internal organization should ape the high-sounding terminology of larger municipal bodies, the nomenclature of officialdom, and honors like ... the award of gold crowns in their meetings.⁹

"We have clear evidence of what club or association rules for banquet meetings were like in this era. D. E. Smith summarizes the more common rules as follows:

1) injunctions against quarreling and fighting; 2) injunctions against taking the assigned place of another; 3) injunctions against speaking out of turn or without permission; 4) injunctions against fomenting factions; 5) injunctions against accusing a fellow member before a public court; 6) specifications for trials within the club for inter-club disputes; 7) specifications for worship activities.¹⁰

"Paul addresses nearly all of these concerns in this letter."

[Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 243-244.]

¹⁹¹"Smith goes on to argue that 1 Corinthians 11 should be connected with chs. 12-14 and that what Paul is discussing is a worship event that involves a meal, a symposium, followed by the religious acts described in chs. 12-14, this being the normal order of events in Greco-Roman ceremonial meals, including club meals.¹¹ A formal transition was marked between the meal and the drinking party by a wine ceremony, in which wine was poured out to the god. Smith suggests that the Christians substituted for this the cup of blessing of the Lord's Supper to mark this formal transition. After the transition (cf. Plato Symposium 176A), a hymn or chant would be sung to the god, and perhaps the god would be invoked as savior (cf. Athenaeus Deipnosophists 15.675b-c). The drinking party could then continue with entertainment or, for the more sober-minded, conversation, which was considered an essential feature of symposia. Plutarch, writing shortly after Paul's time, notes that proper conversation at such an occasion could focus on history, current events, lessons in philosophy or piety, or exhortations to charitable or brave deeds (cf. Quaest. Conviv. 697E). The conversation often was prompted by a guest teacher or Sophist.¹²

"In many ways such a meal was an occasion for gaining or showing social status. And it might be in many regards a microcosm of the aspirations and aims of the culture as a whole. Paul's attempt to deconstruct the social stratification that was happening in the Lord's Supper goes directly against the tendency of such meals.¹³ The ekklesia, of course, was not exactly identical with an association."

[Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth:*



chapter eleven is seen in linkage to chapters twelve through fourteen, the general agenda of a Greco-Roman collegium in an evening meeting comes to the surface with appropriate Christian modifications.¹⁹² The abuses that occurred among the house church observances reflect at least to some extent a failure of some of the Christians to recognize that in a Christian gathering they were in a very different kind of meeting. The general similarities to be sure were present with a typical association meeting. But very important differences were guiding this Christian gathering.

Central to these differences was the posture of *σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν*, *divisions existing among you* (v. 18). In the standard practice of a social organization meeting was the maintaining of well defined social distinctions, as rule 2) in the above footnote shows. At the meal this meant that every member had a preassigned seat determined by a 'pecking order' based usually on wealth and general social status.

The first criticism in 17b-19. ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε. 18 πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ¹⁹³ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω. 19 δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα [καὶ] οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ

A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 244.]

¹⁹²The *ekklesia*, of course, was not exactly identical with an association.

The Christian groups were exclusive and totalistic in a way that no club nor even any pagan cultic association was.... [Baptism] signaled for Pauline converts an extraordinarily thoroughgoing resocialization, in which the sect was intended to become virtually the primary group for its members, supplanting all other loyalties. The only convincing parallel in antiquity was conversion to Judaism.... Students of private associations generally agree that their primary goals were fellowship and conviviality.... The goals of Christians were less segmented; they had to do with "salvation" in a comprehensive sense.

On the other hand, the Christian groups were much more inclusive in terms of social stratification and other social categories than were the voluntary associations.¹⁴

"The point is not that the *ekklesia* was identical with such an association, but rather that the similarities were great enough that some Corinthian Christians could well have viewed the Christian assembly as some sort of association, perhaps even a cultic association, and might have behaved accordingly at Christian fellowship meals.¹⁵ Furthermore, in the topics he advises the Corinthians on, Paul seems to be cognizant of the sort of rules set up in such associations. In his view, the sacred tradition concerning the Last Supper is recited specifically to encourage social leveling, to overcome factionalism created by stratification and its expression at meals, and to create unity and harmony in the congregation."

[Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 244–245.]

¹⁹³The phrase *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*, *in your gathering*, does not refer to a place of meeting, but to the gathering of the group itself. At this point in time, the gathering would have been in someone's home as a small group.

γέωνται ἐν ὑμῖν. because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. 18 For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. 19 Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine.

The causal dependent clause *ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε*, *because you gather together not for the better but instead for the worse*. This has a sting in it when Paul asserts that their Christian gatherings produce more bad rather than good. These meetings form a major part of the discussion as the repetition of *συνέρχεσθε*, *you gather together*, in vv. 17, 18, 20, 33, and 34 emphasize. Here Paul is speaking generally of the house church meetings, but he does not specify how often or what time and days they took place.

Some of them at least occurred around the structure of an evening meal followed by the Lord's Supper observance and probably concluded with discussion, prayers etc. over relevant topics to the group. This would reflect the core structure of the *collegium* meetings so common in first century Corinth.¹⁹⁴

But from Paul's information the atmosphere and tone of these gatherings emphasized just the opposite teaching of the Lord's Supper with its emphasis on harmony and unity (v. 18). As also used in 1:10-12, *σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν*, *divisions among you*, does not here

¹⁹⁴The idea of a formal liturgical worship service being alluded to here is the injection of a centuries later model back into a first century setting -- something utterly impossible in the first century, as most commentators now recognize. Note Thiselton's observations:

As Hays observes, we should be careful to avoid reading back anachronistically the distinction between "the *agapē* (love-feast)" and "the Eucharist" of which Lietzmann made so much.²² We have already outlined Lietzmann's hypothesis in our introduction to this section, noting its connections with theories of myths of postresurrection Christophanies among such controversial thinkers as Schweitzer, Goguel, and Loisy, its popularization among English-speaking readers by Dix and Higgins, and its subsequent criticism by Jeremias and Marshall, among others.²³ Indeed, the work of Otfried Hofius establishes that the tradition of "remembering" (*εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*), especially in the context of Heb. זָכַר (*z-k-r*), constitutes a joyful "recalling" or "proclaiming" of God's saving acts (cf. Ps 105:1, 5) which reaches its highest peak in grateful praise and celebration of grace through the cross and identification with Christ ("fellowship," "sharing") as the Crucified and Raised Lord.²⁴ The two dimensions postulated as "two types" by Lietzmann achieve a historical and theological unity in the more convincing work of Hofius. This does not exclude the various "readings" of the early tradition which express several specific emphases in the liturgies of early centuries.²⁵

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 856–857.]



imply issues over doctrine or Christian belief. The divisions in the individual house church gatherings centered in social distinctions between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in each group. Economic discrimination so common in the surrounding society was gaining a foothold inside the Christian gatherings.

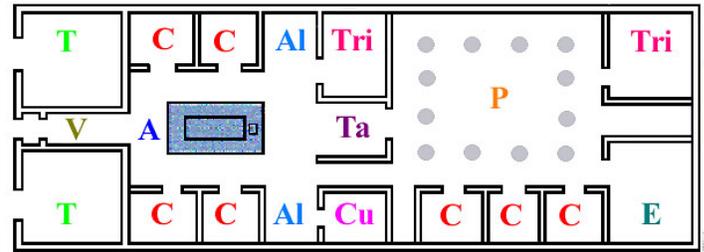
Paul's secondary comment, καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω, raises some questions about just what he meant by it.¹⁹⁵ One rather clear implication of his statement is that this discrimination was not evidently a uniform practice among all the house church groups. There were offenders by some of the groups, but other groups did not so discriminate at their meetings. Thus Paul does not make a blanket condemnation of all of the groups.

Verse 19 stands as a justifying declaration (γὰρ) for what he said in vv. 17b-18. A truism is expressed first: δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, **for indeed factions have to be among you**. One of the contextual issues here concerns who said this? Paul or some of the discriminators in the church? Clearly the purpose ἵνα clause places the saying in an eschatological final judgment context: ἵνα [καὶ] οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν, **so that also the 'seemers' among you will become clear**. The inevitability of factions in a Christian gathering will be made obvious on judgment day with the 'chaff' is separated out from the 'wheat' (Mt. 24:11).

Now is Paul saying this? Probably not. More likely those whom he is criticizing are making this claim in order to justify their discrimination. They did not accept the demand for unity and oneness at the Lord's Supper which Paul makes strongly. Paul's strategy is to set up their opposition to his assertions and then he proceeds to utterly destroy their thinking in vv. 20-22a.¹⁹⁶ **The second criticism in 20-22. 20 Συνερχομένων**

¹⁹⁵Commentators make heavy weather of μέρος τι πιστεύω, not least since a variety of understandings are permitted by the Greek. Hays interprets it as an expression of outrage: I can hardly credit it; I can't believe it.²⁹ Robertson and Plummer take the opposite view: Christian hope and charity are always reluctant to believe the worst.³⁰ Fee argues: 'he really does believe it but also acknowledges that his informants are scarcely disinterested observers.'³¹ Wolff and Kistemaker view this as a case of judicious pastoral 'caution': Paul avoids unnecessary confrontation and especially rash, overly hasty speech.³² This last suggestion is the most reasonable, and is well conveyed by REB, *I believe there is some truth in it*. Our translation, *to some extent I believe it*, assimilates this rendering, together with leaving open what Paul himself probably wishes to leave open, namely that while splits on the basis of first-class and second-class guests at dinner clearly occurred, some hosts or patrons may have shown more sensitivity than others. The accusation might not have been entirely universal. This strengthens the point noted above about the need for responsible pastoral speech over against rash generalization and the accusation of all and sundry." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 858.]

¹⁹⁶ "If our proposed interpretation is accepted, γὰρ contin-



Sample Plan of a Roman House

A	atrium	formal entrance hall
Al	ala	"wings" opening from atrium
C	cubiculum	small room; bedroom
Cu	culina	kitchen
E	exedra	garden room
P	peristylum	colonnaded garden
T	taberna	shop
Ta	tablinum	office; study
Tri	triclinium	dining room
V	vestibulum	entrance hall

ues the explanation for the abuses, which are then described further in vv. 20-21. On αἰρέσεις, δόκιμοι, and φανεροί, see BAGD, which accords with our translation.³³ We may begin, however, with Paulsen's argument that Paul is referring here to a saying about the unavoidable process of 'dissension' or 'division' in the light of an eschatology of judgment.³⁴ Justin explicitly cites the saying [There shall be splits and dissensions] precisely in such a context of eschatological judgment: 'many shall come in My name clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves' [Matt 7:15].... 'There shall be many false Christs and false apostles ... [Matt 24:11].'³⁵ However, while we take up the allusion to a saying probably related to eschatology, we do not accept the view that it is Paul who himself appeals to this axiom in this eucharistic context. May it not be that the educated and sophisticated 'strong' at Corinth had already anticipated and addressed criticism about 'divisiveness' by taking up the saying, 'Not everyone who claimed to be a believer might be proved to be **tried and true**'; hence all this talk of unconditional eucharistic 'oneness' was debatable. They appealed to the eschatological maxim '**dissensions are unavoidable**.'

This meaning of ἀδόκιμος and the eschatological context is supported by Barrett, Conzelmann, Schrage, and Lange, among others.³⁶ Kümmel and Conzelmann insist that Paul is neither 'ironic' nor merely 'resigned.' However, how can Paul otherwise appear to lend support to the very splits which he condemns? Hays sees it as 'presumably necessary in the divine plan.'³⁷ Fee, however, calls this 'one of the true puzzles in the letter.'³⁸ He can suggest only the possibility of 'irony,' or alternatively an anticipation of Paul's later allusion to judgment in 11:28-32. This would amount to 'resignation in the face of the inevitable: Paul expected 'divisions' to accompany the End.'³⁹ Yet Fee is not fully satisfied with his own attempt at an explanation. The suggestion of Weiss and of Robertson and Plummer that splits (v. 18) lead to more serious dissensions or factions (v. 19) might be plausible for the first half of the verse, but then the following maxim about the tried and true seems to make a virtue out of a sad necessity. If the second part of the verse indeed represents Paul's own comments, this sentence remains 'one of the true puzzles of the letter' (Fee). However, what Paulsen and many others identify is likely to have been in circulation among the pre-Pauline churches, and most probably derives from the sayings



οὐν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν
21 ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ
 φαγεῖν, καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ μεθύει. **22** μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας
 οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν; ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ
 θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε, καὶ καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας; τί
 εἶπω ὑμῖν; ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς; ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινώ. **20** *When
 you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper.*
21 *For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead
 with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another
 becomes drunk. 22* *What! Do you not have homes to eat
 and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of
 God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I
 say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not
 commend you!*¹⁹⁷

of Jesus. Such sayings were cited later to explain its phenomenon of spurious faith or the danger of Christian presumption, as indeed in the context of Justin's citation.⁴⁰ This credibly forms a parenthetical allusion to excuses for a problem of which some at Corinth were fully aware (cf. comments above on to some extent I believe it, v. 18). From initial remonstrance Paul moves to the point that if the dining situation divides participants in the Lord's Supper into a favored [triclinium](#) group of 'first class' guests and hangers on in the [atrium](#) (see below), this is not the Lord's Supper at all, but a meal in a private house.

"If our interpretation is rejected, one possible alternative exists. We may perhaps follow Horsley in understanding the verse as Pauline irony, although not in a context of eschatology and judgment. Horsley's own translation makes clear the possibility of an ironic allusion to the social categorization which prevailed: 'For of course there must be 'discrimination' among you so that it will become clear who among you are 'the distinguished ones.'"⁴¹ The reason for ranking this as a second choice is that while it makes good sense and fits the context, it construes Paul's pastoral response as unusually sharp and sarcastic. Admittedly he is sharper and more confrontational when he responds to oral reports than when he replies to the Corinthians' questions.⁴² Further, 4:8–13 witnesses to his use of accusatory irony, and the notion that the Lord's Supper is so undermined that it does positive harm and becomes drunken revelry which divides the church into socially accepted and socially second-class is an outrage. Nevertheless, an even better purpose is served if the hypocrisy of self-justification is noted. Either of these two explanations explains what is otherwise regarded as a 'puzzle'."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 858–860.]

¹⁹⁷The depiction of an excavated Roman house near Corinth dated from 50 to 75 AD provides a helpful description of what Paul possibly alludes to here.

Virtually every commentator since the early 1980s rightly alludes to the dining customs and arrangements of the Roman world, which would certainly have a direct bearing on the source of splits or dissensions when believers met to share a common meal at which the death and risen presence of Christ was celebrated as the New Passover. The two major factors related to issues of space within a large Roman villa and to cultural customs of distinctions between the status of, and respective provision for, guests of the house.

It is possible to visit the site excavated by the American team led in the late 1970s by James Wiseman of the villa dated between

Paul begins by denying that the supper conducted this way represents the Lord's Supper: Συνερχομένων

AD 50 and 75 at Anaploga.⁴⁴ It lies outside the formal boundaries of the site of ancient Corinth beyond the Erastus inscription. In the Museum of Corinth inside the formally contained site of ancient Corinth the impressive mosaic floor of the triclinium (dining room) remains in view and is sufficiently complete to compare its size with the site from which it has been removed. As Murphy-O'Connor observes, the triclinium measures 5.5 × 7.5 meters, giving a floor area of 41.25 square meters (roughly 24 × 18 feet). If we allow for the couches on which guests could recline at an appropriate table, it may well be the case that (as Hays suggests) nine guests may have been a normal maximum for this comfortable dining area.⁴⁵

An entrance vestibule led into a central atrium or courtyard-hallway, which in turn led to four or five other rooms. These included the triclinium (in the Anaploga villa, the first entrance on the right). The atrium measured 5 × 6 meters (approximately 16 × 20 feet). However, the impluvium (pool to collect water) stood at its center, thereby diminishing practical floor space. Between twenty and thirty people might be able to squeeze into such a place (up to fifty perhaps in the largest villas excavated, but at a post-Pauline date). If they sat or stood, Hays suggests that between thirty and forty would be possible. It is quite clear that when more than nine or ten people came to dinner, the poorer or less esteemed guests would be accorded space not in the already occupied triclinium but in the scarcely furnished atrium, which functioned in effect as an "overflow" for those who were, in the eyes of the host, lucky to be included at all. The quality of food, drink, service, and comfort would be of a higher order in the triclinium, especially if some in the atrium could arrive only after the best of the meal was over.

"A second factor exacerbates such a category distinction. Pliny the Younger describes in detail the categorization of qualities of food and drink as marks of favor to grades of guests: "The best dishes were set in front of himself [the host] and a select few, and cheap scraps of food before the rest of the company. He had even put the wine into very small flasks, divided into three categories ... one for himself and us, another for his lesser friends (all his friends are graded) and the third for his and our freed persons."⁴⁶ The volume of essays *Dining in a Classical Context* takes us still further.⁴⁷ According to Booth, only those who assumed the toga virilis (i.e., those who were adult males of high status) had authority "to bestow freedom to recline" in a triclinium.⁴⁸ Favored boys might sit at the foot of the couch used by a high-status male. The pattern encouraged the notion (even if indirectly by analogy) that to be invited to recline near the host in the triclinium signified a mark of favor from the host which thereby conferred added status upon the recipient of the honor. Seneca readily identifies the connections between luxurious banquets, abuse of pretty servuli or "luckless slave boys," and the abuse of power to confer the status of convivius on young men.⁴⁹ We should not, of course, equate provincial civic life with all that took place in Rome. However, the very use for manipulative purposes of the varying status indicated by food, drink and the possible locations of diners as close friends, second-class friends, hangers on, clients, head persons, youngsters, and servants speaks volumes about the discriminatory conventions presupposed in Graeco-Roman society. This is all part and parcel of the symbolic world of an honor-shame culture.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 860–862.]

οὐν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν. *When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper* (v. 20).¹⁹⁸ He references the observance as κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, *the Lord's supper*. This characterizes the observance as belonging to the Lord. In 10:21 it was labeled τραπέζης κυρίου, *the table of the Lord*, with the sense of a table that honors the Lord. The synoptic gospel writers only refer to the Passover meal as the contextual setting for Jesus' actions and words. The terms eucharist or holy communion come much later in the church fathers and represent a dramatic re-interpretation of the meaning of the observance based on the emerging doctrines of sacramentalism. These labels reflect the much later view of the significance of the observance, and have no connection to the biblical texts themselves.

He raises the issue of whether this dinner is intended to honor Christ or the host providing it for the house church group. To be sure Συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, *when you come together in the same place*, as a genitive absolute participle phrase in the adverbial temporal function sets up the gathering as at least in intention a Christian gathering. And this gathering includes both a regular meal and Lord's Supper observance. What precisely does Paul mean by οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν? Contextually it implies a denial of the gathering being genuinely to honor Christ in the supper observance.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸“The foundation for further research on the reliance of such material for our understanding of the present passage emerged largely with Gerd Theissen’s essay “Social Integration and Sacramental Activity: An Analysis of 1 Cor 11:17–34,” first published in German in 1974.⁵⁰ Commenting on vv. 21 and 22, Theissen notes that ‘have nots’ (μὴ ἔχοντες) stand in contrast to those who can have ‘their own meal, ἴδιον δεῖπνον.’ This is the primary emphasis of ἕκαστος and τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον, although it does not exclude a critique of individualism as well. This issue would assume still sharper proportions if B. B. Blue and B. W. Winter are correct in their assessments of the impact of the famine of AD 51 upon the poor in cities.⁵¹ Followed by Fee, Theissen rightly declares, ‘ἴδιος and κυριακός refer to questions of ownership’: Is it the Lord’s [own] supper which is being held, or that of the host and his most favored guests?⁵² Who is the focus of attention? For whose benefit is it being held? Indeed, to put it most sharply: Who, indeed, is ‘hosting’ this meal?” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 862.]

¹⁹⁹“The syntactical relationship between οὐκ ἔστιν and the aorist infinitive φαγεῖν expresses a logical definition of what the act of eating actually counts as in the situation described. Hence we translate οὐκ ἔστιν does not amount to being (or, we might suggest, does not constitute). From at least the time of Cranmer this has been expressed by many in English as a matter of ‘logical possibility.’ Thus Cranmer’s Bible has the *Lordes Supper cannot bee eaten*, and Meyer, Edwards, Héring, and Conzelmann (with the RV of 1881) translate, ‘It is not possible for you to eat the Lord’s Supper.’⁵³ The difficulty is that can or possible are also regularly un-

The reason why such a dinner cannot be the Lord's Supper is given in v. 21: ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν, καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ μεθύει. *For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk*. Here Paul describes the actions that nullify the dinner as legitimately connected to the Lord's Supper. Central to this is the precise meaning of προλαμβάνει. Does it mean ‘goes ahead’ as the NRSV translates it (cf. also the NIV and NJB)? Then Paul describes a scenario where the wealthier members gather early and eat their regular meal before the poorer members and the slaves are able to arrive. This seems to be confirmed by v. 33 in Paul's instructions: ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε. *Thus, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait on one another*. Of the three NT uses (Mk. 14:8, *done beforehand*; Gal. 6:1, *is detected*) this meaning of ‘goes ahead’ is only adopted here. The etymological meaning of προλαμβάνω is ‘to take in advance.’ But this view assumes the understanding that the adverbial prefix προ function temporally. Very often adverbial prefixes from prepositions such as προ have instead an intensifying impact on the action of the core verb. Some commentators have argued that this is the proper meaning of προλαμβάνει here thus creating the sense of ‘devour’ from a selfish, greedy perspective rather than not waiting to eat as a case of bad manners.²⁰⁰

derstood not as logical possibility (it amounts to; it constitutes), but as contingent or empirical capacity. NRSV's ‘it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper’ tends to shift the emphasis from logical status to psychological intention.⁵⁴ The simpler *It is not the Lord's Supper that you eat* (REB, NIV, NJB) at least avoids this possible misunderstanding and adheres closely to the Greek. Conzelmann well comments, ‘The Corinthians destroy its character by their conduct. It is not the Lord who determines the celebration [i.e., in v. 21] but the individual. Fellowship [joint sharing] is canceled.’⁵⁵ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 862–863.]

²⁰⁰“The next controversial Greek term is προλαμβάνει (v. 21). Traditionally this has been understood to mean goes ahead with (NRSV, NIV, NJB [variant], and Barrett). However, Bruce Winter has argued that here the Greek has the sense of devours or consumes, and Horsley strongly supports this.⁵⁶ The value of this translation is that it places the emphasis on selfish greed rather than on courtesy or manners, and understands the prefix προ- to function as an intensive rather than as a temporal marker. Hays correctly observes that the temporal sense is possible but not demanded.⁵⁷ It may refer to the problem of those who are forced to arrive late, but we cannot assume this.⁵⁸ Hence, he suggests, consumes his own supper offers the best translation, which comes close to REB's takes his own supper (against NRSV, NIV, NJB), but rightly conveys the intensive aspect. If the background is that of the further exacerbation of ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ through food shortage (Winter and others), devour or consume seems more appropriate to such a context. Fee offers the useful comment that the



Although this heightens the accusation of wrongdoing from Paul, no lexicographical evidence for such a meaning of προλαμβάνω exists in ancient Greek.²⁰¹

After the core depiction of the wrong action (v. 22), verse 23 contains some rhetorical questions criticizing the action of the ‘haves’ at Corinth: μή γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν; ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε, καὶ καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας; τί εἶπω ὑμῖν; ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς; ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινῶ. **What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!**

The first question is structured in Greek as to anticipate a negative answer: μή γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν; **For it can’t be that you have no homes for eating and drinking?**²⁰² To be sure this wrong action took place in an individual home, but the difference is that this action was set up as a meeting of the community of believers for a fellowship meal and supper observance.²⁰³ It was not just a meal among some invited

force of Paul’s point (although not a precise translation) may be conveyed by the sense of self-absorption: ‘each enjoys his ‘own supper’ instead of the Lord’s Supper.’⁵⁹ Collins translates takes by preference, which ‘may mean starting to eat before others do...’ Paul, however, does not stress the temporal aspect of the verb on the only other occasion that he uses it (Gal 6:1).⁶⁰ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 863.]

²⁰¹The classical Greek lexicon of LSJ contains no evidence of such meaning in the midst of a large number of nuanced meanings around the core idea of anticipation or surprise. Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996..

²⁰²“The Greek grammar and syntax deserve close attention. The first negative μή introduces a question which anticipates the answer ‘no,’ surely it cannot be ... can it? The second negative οὐκ qualifies the statement about having houses. Could it be (surely not!) that you have no homes ...? The use of εἰς with the articular infinitive conveys the sense of with a view to, for the purpose of... Hence Paul expostulates that if what is in view is a celebratory party or private dinner, they should use their homes for such a purpose. Are they really forced by some economic or social factor to hold dual-purpose events in the same house? Hence, have you no houses for your eating and drinking takes account of the εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν construction more explicitly than do you not have homes to eat and drink in? (NRSV, REB, NIV; cf., better, for doing your eating and drinking in? (NJB). The genitive τοῦ θεοῦ is doubtless possessive, as it is in 1:2 (see above; cf. also 3:16). The church is more than simply a human society in institution; it belongs to God. To show contempt for the church, which is God’s, is to despise what God has made his own, and on which God has set his love, and therefore given it status and honor in his own eyes.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 864.]

²⁰³To see in Paul’s statement here an implication that Christian’s did not meet in individual homes but rather in some other

friends in an individual’s home.²⁰⁴ All of the “haves” in the community were fully able to have friends over for dinner, but not all of them had opened their homes as a regular meeting place for the community of believers.

This criticism is followed by another sharper one: ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε, καὶ καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας; **Or do you show contempt for God’s church, and put to shame those having nothing?** Statements like this made in a culture where honor / shame played a hugely important role in society take on a level of se-

kind of building is completely false and unwarranted.

That Christians met in individual homes in small groups is overwhelmingly documented through the third century AD. Not until Constantine in the early 300s were Christians given legal status and gradually through the fourth century began to establish church buildings. Interestingly, most of them were formerly pagan temples that Christians took control of now with the support of the Roman government.

Paul’s contrast here between a dinner for invited guests conducted in a home and an official gathering of believers in perhaps the same home.

²⁰⁴Quite interesting is the recounting of [Pliny the Younger](#), a Roman official in the second half of the first century: In one of his letters written during the reign of Trajan (98-117 AD), he recounts being invited to a dinner of a wealthy friend. He is not writing from a Christian perspective, but what he describes so clearly illustrates the type of thing that Paul is alluding to here.

It would be a long story, and of no importance, were I to recount too particularly by what accident I (who am not fond at all of society) supped lately with a person, who in his own opinion lives in splendor combined with economy; but according to mine, in a sordid but expensive manner. Some very elegant dishes were served up to himself and a few more of the company; while those which were placed before the rest were cheap and paltry. He had apportioned in small flagons three different sorts of wine; but you are not to suppose it was that the guests might take their choice: on the contrary, that they might not choose at all. One was for himself and me; the next for his friends of a lower order (for you must know, he measures out his friendship according to the degrees of quality); and the third for his own freed-men and mine. One who sat next to me took notice of this, and asked me if I approved of it. “Not at all,” I told him. “Pray, then,” said he, “what is your method on such occasions?” “Mine,” I returned, “is to give all my company the same fare; for when I make an invitation, it is to sup, not to be censoring. Every man whom I have placed on an equality with myself by admitting him to my table, I treat as an equal in all particulars.” “Even freed-men?” he asked. “Even them,” I said; “for on those occasions I regard them not as freed-men, but boon companions.” “This must put you to great expense,” says he. I assured him not at all; and on his asking how that could be, I said, “Why you must know my freedmen do not drink the same wine I do—but I drink what they do.” (Pliny the Younger, *Letters II*, 6, LCL 109–13; see also Martial, *Epigrams*, I, 20; III, 60, LCL 43, 201; Juvenal, *Satires V*, LCL 69–83)

[Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 108–110.]

verity hard to understand in cultures without such a tradition.²⁰⁵ By treating a meeting of God’s church this way these individuals -- and particularly the member who hosted the church meeting in his home -- treated with contempt the people of God, the very church that Christ sacrificed His life for! Additionally their discrimination of τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντες, *the have nots*, was a humiliating shaming of these individuals before the entire group of believers. Although such was common place by pagans in Roman society as Pliny’s letter alludes to, Paul’s point is that this is a Christian gathering and must be guided by Christian principles of equality and unity. This meeting is in no way to show off a superior economic status of either the host or a small circle of close friends.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵“From the time of Findlay some have translated μὴ ἔχοντες as the have nots (taken up, e.g., by B. W. Winter and our heading).⁶⁵ Since Paul is concerned about the effect of this selfish, thoughtless, and insensitive conduct upon brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer deprivation in an honor-shame culture, we translate κατασχόνετε as put to shame (with NJB; cf. shame, REB), although the intensive preposition justifies humiliate (NRSV, NIV) as a legitimate alternative. The nuance of the deliberative subjunctives should be preserved: what I am to say? Am I to congratulate you (see above on textual note). NJB’s congratulate adds force to Paul’s irony. The second occurrence of ἐπαινῶ, however, signifies the withholding approval.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 865.]

²⁰⁶Talbert also has a helpful depiction of the scenario that brings into the picture some other social customs of Paul’s world as well:

What was eaten? Two items of background information assist us at this point. First, Plutarch describes a banquet at which guests brought their individual meals and complains that this resulted in many banquets and the destruction of fellowship. He says, “Where each guest has his own private portion, fellowship perishes” (Table Talk 644C). First Corinthians 11:21 indicates that this was part of the problem in Corinth: “Each goes ahead with his own meal.” Various members brought their own food and consumed it on their own schedule (cf. Jude 12). Second, there was a Roman custom to serve different types of food to different categories of guests (Pliny the Younger Letters 2.6; Juvenal Epigrams 3.60; 4.85). Juvenal tells of a dinner with a patron that reflects this practice:

You’re given a wine that even a poultice would not take ... but your host drinks vintage wine, bottled when consuls wore long hair and beards.

You’re served bread you can scarcely break, a hard lump of dough already spread with mold, impervious to teeth and sure to crack your jaws. But a loaf made out of fine flour, snow-white and soft as gauze, is served your host.

Look at that mammoth lobster, with garnish of asparagus, being served your host ... For you a shrimp is served in state—one shrimp afloat on one half of one egg on a tiny plate.

Look, that half-eaten hare he’ll give us now, or from the haunch of boar some bits; we’ll get what’s left of the capon soon. So all of you sit in silence, ready, with bread held tight, untasted, and wait. (Creekmore, 1963, 5)

The final two rhetorical questions bring the discussion to a close: τί εἶπω ὑμῖν; ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς; ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινῶ. *What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!* Paul brings his criticisms to a sharp conclusion. Do you want me to approve what you are doing? Under no circumstances would I approve such conduct! Remember that his biting criticisms are leveled at the ‘haves’ in the Christian community who were reflecting such pagan attitudes in a Christian gathering.²⁰⁷ These were among those

Given such a custom, it would have been normal behavior for the wealthier members not to have any qualms about eating their bountiful provisions and letting the poorer do the best they could.

Where was the meal eaten? In the average well-to-do house of the Roman era, a dining room accommodated about nine people, the atrium thirty to forty. In any large Christian gatherings at Gaius’s house (Rom 16:23), some would have been in the dining room, others in the atrium outside. It would have been the natural procedure for the host’s social equals to gather early in the dining room and for the lesser lights to find their places in the atrium.

When was the meal eaten? Since the Corinthian church was composed of well-to-do (e.g., Gaius, Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14; Titius Justus, Acts 18:7; Crispus, Acts 18:8), as well as slaves (e.g., 1 Cor 1:26; 7:21–23), the time of arrival would differ. The well-to-do could come early, while the slaves would arrive late. The latecomers would doubtless find no place to be besides the atrium of the house and would be entering hungrily a scene where others had already reached the point of satiety.

These three factors enable one to conceptualize the situation like this. The wealthy came early, joined the host in the dining room for the best food and drink. By the time the slaves gathered in the atrium to partake of the meager amount that they brought or that was left, the early arrivals would be in their cups (“and another is drunk,” v. 21) (Murphy-O’Connor, 1983, 156–61). What Paul refers to is a real meal, but one with a religious purpose. The purpose of the supper forgotten by the Corinthians, customary social convention prevailed and divisions resulted. Paul was incensed: “Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?” (v. 22).

[Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 94–96.]

²⁰⁷“It is interesting to note that the meals of other religious communities of the times suffered from similar strains. From a Bacchic society of the second century BC, one finds regulations such as disruptive behavior at the meetings is not to be tolerated, and if anyone starts a quarrel, he is to be excluded until a fine is paid (Danker, 1982, 158–59). From the regulations of the guild of Zeus Hypistos of the first century BC, one hears: ‘It shall not be permissible ... to make factions’ (Roberts, Skeat, Nock, 1936). One does not make rules that are not needed. The problem in Corinth, then, was that cultural norms took precedence over Christian distinctives at the meal.’ [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*,



1 Cor. 11:23-26
ca.. 54-55 AD

23 Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἧ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον 24 καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν, Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. 25 ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων, Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. 26 ὡσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ.

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

who opened their home as a regular place of meeting for the Christian groups. Their actions had a shaming impact upon the 'have nots,' but his criticisms were a much sharper shaming of these wealthy Christians in the community. This discriminating practice thus stands behind the criticism of σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν, factions existing among you, in v. 18. This represented a deplorable corruption of the Gospel and nullified a positive Christian witness to the pagans in the city. This criticism's sharper bite is heightened by even some of the pagan groups forbidding any actions leading to σχίσματα in their group. These discriminating Christians weren't even measuring up to the standards of many of the pagan religious gatherings!

b) Institution of the observance, vv. 23-26. Verses 23-26 stand as a justification (γὰρ) of his criticisms

Mk. 14:22-25
ca.. 65-67 AD

22 Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν, Λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου. 23 καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες. 24 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν. 25 ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ πῖω ἐκ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. 26 Καὶ ὑμνήσαντες ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν.

22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." 26 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mt. 26:26-29
ca.. 68-72 AD

26 Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον καὶ εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ δούς τοῖς μαθηταῖς εἶπεν, Λάβετε φάγετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου. 27 καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων, Πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες, 28 τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεισιν ἁμαρτιῶν. 29 λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ πῖω ἀπ' ἄρτι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω μεθ' ὑμῶν καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου. 30 Καὶ ὑμνήσαντες ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν

26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

of the practises described in vv. 17-22. How Jesus first established the Lord's Supper is the standard for all subsequent Christian observance. Such a comparison not only would highlight the hypocrisy of these practices at Corinth, but would become the basis for solving them as well (vv. 27-34).

Paul's account of the initial establish-

Lk. 22:15-20
ca.. 70-77 AD

14 Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡ ὥρα, ἀνέπεσεν καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι σὺν αὐτῷ. 15 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς, Ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν 16 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ φάγω αὐτὸ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἔν τῃ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. 17 καὶ δεξάμενος ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας εἶπεν, Λάβετε τοῦτο καὶ διαμερίσατε εἰς ἑαυτούς· 18 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, [ὅτι] οὐ μὴ πῖω ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως οὗ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθῃ. 19 καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων, Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. 20 καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λέγων, Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον. 21 πλὴν ἰδοὺ ἡ χεὶρ τοῦ παραδιδόντος με μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης. 22 ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς μὲν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατὰ τὸ ὀρισμένον πορεύεται, πλὴν οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ δι' οὗ παραδίδοται. 23 καὶ αὐτοὶ ἤρξαντο συζητεῖν πρὸς ἑαυτούς τὸ τίς ἄρα εἶη ἐξ αὐτῶν ὁ τοῦτο μέλλων πράσσειν.

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

ment of the Lord's Supper by Jesus is the earliest written description although orally transmitted depictions had been in circulation among Christians since the beginning in 30 AD. And his use here of a piece of preformed Christian tradition means that this text predates even First Corinthians.²⁰⁸ Paul's use of technical language for oral transmission of materials -- παρέλαβον / παρέδωκα²⁰⁹ -- underscores his picking up an oral version which the Lord validated to him as correct: ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου.²¹⁰ Each of the four narratives have their individ-

²⁰⁸“1 Corinthians 11:23–26 contains the oldest literary account of the Last Supper. The account antedates the letter. Paul's introduction (11:23a) reminds the Corinthians that the account is something he had previously shared with them, presumably at the time of his visit to them in the middle of the first century C.E. The tradition is older than that. Paul's introductory formula tells his correspondents that the account he passed along circa 51 C.E. was a tradition that he himself had received and that he had faithfully (ho kai, v. 23) passed on to them.” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 425.]

²⁰⁹“Over against the culture-specific issues which undermined the very purpose of sharing in the Lord's Supper at Corinth (v. 17b), Paul appeals to the givenness and universality of a pre-Pauline tradition which originated with the Lord himself as a dominical institution and is transmitted as Christian paradosis in terms which soon became a formulaic liturgical narrative in the life of the churches. At the time of writing the most recent research of substance and detail on Paul's use of tradition for the purposes of argument comes from Anders Eriksson in a careful and most useful study (although O. Hofius's shorter treatment of the same subject [1993, in oral form 1988] remains also of the utmost importance).⁷⁶ The introductory formula ἐγὼ παρέλαβον ὃ καὶ παράδωκα ὑμῖν makes it clear that Paul has delivered this tradition to the Corinthians.⁷⁷” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 866–867.]

²¹⁰“23–24 (1) D replaces the earlier ἀπὸ before τοῦ κυρίου in v. 23 with παρά. Both mean from with the genitive, but D can be explained because Paul usually uses παρά with παραλαμβάνειν, understandably (cf. 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; Gal 1:12, et al.). It is conceivable that the original difference of preposition calls attention to the reception of a tradition originally rather than ‘directly’ (in a charismatic sense) from the Lord, but this can be suggested not on the basis of any difference between the force of the prepositions, but only in the sense that received from occurs here in a slightly different sense from most occurrences of the phrase. The reading ἀπὸ θεοῦ (F and G) is secondary and later. (2) In v. 24 the KJV/AV, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Textus Receptus of the Western tradition presuppose λάβετε φάγετε, take, eat. However, this reading is secondary, found in C3, K, L, P, Old Latin and Vulgate Clementine ed., Syriac witnesses, and many minuscule MSS. Its absence from the early P⁴⁶, κ, A, B, C*, D, F, G, 33, Coptic, Cyprian, Basil, Chrysostom, et al., together with its occurrence in Matt 26:26 as an obvious source of assimilation, rightly leads Metzger and others to endorse the UBS 4th ed. in categorizing its omission as ‘A,’ i.e., ‘certain.’⁷³ From RV (1881 onward), translators render the clause which is for you (RV, REB, NIV, NJB) or that is for you (NRSV).

“(3) Another later variant inserts κλώμενον before ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν,

uality but all build off these core actions: bread - blessing - command to eat and cup - blessing - command to drink - summary meaning.

The context of this supper is a Jewish Passover observance supper. This time setting for the meal is established by ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣν παρέδιδετο, on the same night he was betrayed. This corresponds well to the synoptic gospel accounts which clearly locate the institution of the supper as a part of a traditional Jewish Passover meal.²¹¹ The verb παρέδιδετο literally means to give over. It does imply the treachery of Judas but Paul does make a play on παρέδωκα / παρέδιδετο here which is lost in translating παρέδιδετο as he was betrayed. Thus

broken for you, found in κc, C3, Db, G, K, and many Syriac MSS and Byzantine witnesses. Again, however, it is absent from the early P⁴⁶, κ*, A, B, C*, 33, Origen, Cyprian, et al., and can readily be explained as an explication of ἐκλασεν (v. 24), which is authentic. Hence no issue of meaning other than fuller explication is at issue. Similarly, one other later insertion, διδόμενον, given for you (Vulgate, Coptic), is an assimilation on the basis of Luke 22:19 and is already implicit in Paul's **which is for you**. The concise phrase is characteristic of Paul's style.⁷⁴ Among major modern translations, only Moffatt seems to have retained the longer and later *broken for you*, although Marshall holds that the inclusion of Luke's given (for you) may reflect the earliest stage of the saying.⁷⁵”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 866.]

²¹¹“This now throws into relief the importance of Paul's specific allusion to the context of the words of institution as ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣν παρέδιδετο. The allusion to the meal's being at **night** favors the view that it was a Passover meal (see the Note below). But should the verb (in Koine form) be translated *he was betrayed* (with AV/KJV, 1662 Book of Common Prayer, NRSV, NIV, NJB, Barrett, Conzelmann), or *he was arrested* (REB), or *delivered up* (Rotherham, The Emphasized NT), or **he was handed over** (as above with Collins)? BAGD list **hand over**, *deliver*, as their first entry under the active παραδίδωμι, with examples from the Gospels (Matt 25:20, 22), Josephus (Antiquities 4.83), and the subapostolic period (1 Clement 12:5), as well as from Paul (1 Cor 13:3, “I hand over my body ...”). However, they also note the use of the verb ‘especially of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas w. acc and dat Matt 26:15; cf. Mk 14:10; Lk 22:4, 6; Jn 19:11; passive Matt 20:18; Mk 10:33a.’ They conclude, however, ‘It is not certain that when Paul uses such terms as ‘handing over’, ‘delivering up’, ‘arrest’ ... he is thinking of the betrayal of Judas.’⁹⁰ Moulton-Milligan also suggest **hand over** as ‘its ordinary meaning,’ allowing that deliver up constitutes an additional area.⁹¹ Within these domains, we may agree, *betrayed* may or may not denote a specific subdomain. Fee observes, ‘The verb ‘betrayed’ is just ambiguous enough so that it could mean ‘handed over’ (as in ‘... over to death’).⁹² He concludes that the word ‘most likely’ refers first to the treachery of Judas, but his main reason is simply that an allusion to the betrayal occurs in the Jesus tradition of the announcement of the betrayal at the time of the Last Supper.⁹³” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 869.]



the apostle moves from **I handed over to you** the tradition that the Lord **was handed over**. The sacredness of this teaching is emphasized against the abuse of it by these Corinthians.

Paul does not even hint that the Corinthians were ignoring or rejecting this well established Christian tradition. The problem was how they were observing it. But this requires careful delineation of the text details in order to avoid misrepresenting their actions. An atmosphere of celebration was not improper for the Passover preparatory meal was intended as a joyous occasion. Paul does not criticize an attitude of celebration for the supper, nor does he demand a level of solemnity for its observance. Instead, the observance was treated as an 'add on' to the main event of the banquet meal. And the self grandiosity nature of the banquet meal contradicted the thrust of the self-sacrificing action of Christ that lay at the heart of the supper observance. This was seen in the actions of the 'haves' who refused to share food with the 'have nots.'

Bread-blessing-eat (vv. 23b-24). ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν, Τοῦτό μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. **that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."**

Important for proper understanding of the passage are the words ἔλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν, **he took bread and after having given thanks he broke it and said**. The Jewish practice of table grace stands in the background, especially of εὐχαριστήσας,²¹² and expresses gratitude to God generally for his blessings.²¹³

²¹²Paul and Luke use the word εὐχαριστέω, rather than εὐλογέω, for the 'blessing' (however, see 1 Cor 10:16). The latter more closely reflects the semitic idiom; but both imply that thanksgiving is being offered to God for the food, and in the case of the Passover God is blessed for Israel's deliverance from Egypt. See esp. m.Pes. 10:5, where R. Gamaliel uses a whole series of such words: 'Therefore are we bound to give thanks, to praise, to glorify, to honour, to exalt, to extol, and to bless him who wrought all these wonders for our fathers and for us' (Danby, p. 151)." [Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987).]

²¹³The participle εὐχαριστήσας may, as Jeremias urges, mean simply, *said grace* (i.e., at table) or **gave thanks**.¹⁰⁰ If, with Fee, we speak of the Jewish practice in which the head of the house would be 'giving the traditional blessing over the bread, breaking it, and giving it to those at table,' we must avoid any hint that the object of such blessing was the bread, as if to read back an anachronistic parallel with eucharistic 'consecration of the elements.' The Jewish table grace expressed blessing God for God's good gifts. REB's explanatory gloss **gave thanks to God** is useful and on this basis perfectly justifiable, although it explicates what is implicit but absent from the text, no doubt because to God was quite obviously understood by the readers. If we compare m. Berakoth 8:1-5 with m. Pesahim 10:2-7, whether the context is grace at meals or the

The formal meal of gratitude on the eve of the Passover sacrifices in the Jewish temple as the framing of the institution of the Last Supper helps Paul underscore that this observance by the Christian community is not an ordinary meal occasion as evidently it was being treated by the Corinthian abusers. They either were ignorant of its special meaning or else had chosen to ignore its significance.

The breaking of pieces off the loaf of bread to distribute to each of the disciples by Jesus signaled participation in the community of disciples. This in turn by Jesus' explanation drew upon the common source of the broken body of Christ on the cross. The community of believers is drawn into a sharing community from the single giving up of life by Christ in His death. Also built into the action of breaking the loaf of bread into pieces is the signaling of an eschatological time when the scattered pieces of the body of Christ, the church, will be brought back together for eternal celebration in Heaven.²¹⁴ The actions of the 'haves' at Corinth was severely contradicting this fundamental principle in the supper observance.

Jesus' interpretive words Τοῦτό μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, **This is my body for you**, must be understood against the background of somewhat similar declarations made by the head of the family in the Jewish Passover meal.²¹⁵ The later church father debates as-

blessing of God for the three cups at the Passover meal, 'saying the Benediction' uniformly means blessing God for his gifts, not 'blessing' the gifts.¹⁰¹ Hence gave thanks is an appropriate translation for the verb εὐχαριστεῖν in a Greek-speaking setting, even if Jesus would have blessed God as the customary Jewish form of thanksgiving. Such modern versions of 'grace' as 'bless this food ...' are not only alien to the meaning conveyed by giving thanks to God, whether in the context of Jerusalem, Jesus, or Paul, but also risk imposing at the earliest stage an overly explicit overtone of eucharistic 'consecration'." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 870-871.]

²¹⁴This is not to deny, however, that through the process of identification and participation the broken bread also (secondarily) comes to designate a pledge of eschatological promise that God's fragmented people will finally be gathered as one in the eschatological consummation (cf. Didache 9:4; 10:5). However, the Jewish Passover Haggadah, the Synoptic tradition, and the Pauline use of the common tradition all convey a strong eschatological dimension (1 Cor 11:26b; cf. Luke 22:16; Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25)." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 878.]

²¹⁵"In the Passover Haggadah, as we have seen, 'In every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt... 'What the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt' (m. Pesahim 10:5). 'I' was/am 'there.' The recital of the Jewish Haggadah (Order of the Seder Service) begins with doxology: 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Uni-



serting that the pieces of bread at consecration somehow turn into the actual body of Christ lay well beyond anything connected to the Jewish Passover and thus to Jesus and his disciples in observing the Passover meal.²¹⁶

The interpretive ending τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, **this be doing for my remembrance**, goes back to the complete action of breaking the bread, distributing it, and each person eating his piece via the neuter gender τοῦτο, **this**. Interestingly this admonition is found only in Paul's and Luke's (22:19) account of the Last Supper.²¹⁷ Crucial here is the meaning of ἀνάμνησις. The word is used only four times in the NT: Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25; Heb. 10:3. In Heb. 10:3, ἀνάμνησις is a reminder of sin which the annual Jewish sacrifices functioned as. In the other three uses the action of observance of the supper is a periodic reminder of Christ's sacrifice for us.²¹⁸ But In the background of the use of

verse, Creator of the produce of the vine. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has chosen us from all peoples....' Following the benediction, the *karpas* (or *hors d'oeuvre* characteristic of Passover) is dipped in salt water or in vinegar and distributed, associated with the hyssop dipped in the blood of the first Passover sacrifice, with the words of a further benediction, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the produce of the earth.'¹³¹ The Haggadah then begins: 'This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt.' (הַזֶּה לַחֲמַת עֲנִיָּא דִּי - אַכְלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּרַצָּא דְּמִצְרַיִם) *ha' lachma' anya' diy-akalu abahatana be'arats demitsrayim*.)¹³² The 'surprise' (to use Leenhardt's imaginative phrase) is that my body now replaces the events or objects of redemption from Egypt made participatory and contemporary." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 876–877.]

²¹⁶It lies quite beyond both Jesus' intent and the framework within which he and the disciples lived to imagine that some actual change took place, or was intended to take place, in the bread itself. Such a view could only have arisen in the church at a much later stage when Greek modes of thinking had rather thoroughly replaced semitic ones." [Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 550.]

²¹⁷Only Luke and Paul (on Luke's text see above) include the dominical injunction to repeat the rite (Gk. τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, v. 24b) do this in remembrance of me in the context of the bread. Since Paul also includes it in the context of the cup, some have suggested that its absence from Mark and the lack of a second occurrence in Luke cast doubt on its authenticity as part of the common tradition. However, it may well be implicit in Luke's likewise.¹⁴¹ Moreover, Horsley observes, 'Mark may have eliminated this command because it did not suit his historical narrative.'¹⁴² [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 878.]

²¹⁸Discussion of the force of ἀνάμνησις must, once again, be shaped by the horizon of expectation which the Passover context and OT narrative, prayer, and promise establish. Remembrance denotes neither the exclusively subjective mental or psychologi-

ἀνάμνησις and its cognates²¹⁹ in the NT is reflected the

cal process of recollection characteristic of Cartesian or modern thought, nor the often exaggerated, overly objectified claims about 'reenactment' associated with the so-called myth-and-ritual school of A. Bentzen, S. H. Hooke, and S. Mowinckel.¹⁴³ Bentzen argued in the context of a history-of-religions approach to the OT: "To 'remember' the saving facts of religion means to the ancient world that these facts are tangibly experienced."¹⁴⁴ If this is understood in the sense of 'reenactment' of cyclical myth and ritual, this idea should not be imposed onto the biblical tradition with its more complex (in very broad terms, more linear) view of time and history. However, Bentzen's approach retains plausibility because he describes an area which genuinely overlaps with the narrative remembrance of the Passover Haggadah and the Lord's Supper. He rightly declares, 'members of the congregation ... 'become contemporary' with the fundamental act of salvation,' although he then appeals to 'the Roman Mass and the Lutheran interpretation of the Communion Service' to press his point.¹⁴⁵

"If we press the analogy with the 'remembrance' of the Passover in the Haggadah, making contemporary is achieved primarily by projecting the reality of the 'world' of the Passover and drawing participants of later generations into it, then transferring the Passover into the present in a process of reenactment, although these two intersecting 'worlds' inevitably both cross boundaries of time. However, the notion in Mowinckel's earlier writings that certain 'Coronation Psalms' served in effect to 'reenact' God's mythical victory over cosmic forces cannot be applied to the Lord's Supper. Such mistaken 'objective' attributions to the 'Hebraic mind' as J. Pedersen's notion that to 'remember' a name 'calls forth the soul it designates' were long since discredited by the work of James Barr and others.¹⁴⁶

"On the other hand, 'to remember God's mighty acts' or 'to remember the poor' is not simply to call them to mind but to assign to them an active role within one's 'world.' 'To remember' God (cf. Deut 8:18; Judg 8:34; Ps 22:7) is to engage in worship, trust, and obedience, just as 'to forget' God is to turn one's back on him. Failure to remember is not absent-mindedness but unfaithfulness to the covenant and disobedience. 'Remembering' the gospel tradition (Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 15:3) or 'remembering' Christian leaders (Acts 20:31; Heb 13:7) transforms attitude and action. To 'remember' the poor is to relieve their needs."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 878–879.]

²¹⁹29.7 **μνημονεύω^a; μμνήσκομαι^a; μνήμη, ἡς f; μνεία, ας f**: to recall information from memory, but without necessarily the implication that persons have actually forgotten—'to remember, to recall, to think about again, memory, remembrance.'

29.8 **μνημονεύω^b**: (compare μνημονεύωα 'to remember, to recall,' 29.7) to keep on recalling and thinking about again and again—'to keep thinking about, to think about again and again.'

29.9 **ἀναμνήσκομαι; ὑπομνήσκομαι**: to cause oneself to remember or to be caused to remember—'to recall, to remember.'

29.10 **ἀναμνήσκω; ἐπαναμνήσκω; ὑπομνήσκω; ὑπόμνησις, εὼς f**: to cause to recall and to think about again—'to remind, to cause to remember, to cause to think about again.'¹

29.11 **ἀνάμνησις, εὼς f**: (derivative of ἀναμνήσκω 'to cause to remember,' 29.10) the means for causing someone to remember—'means of remembering, reminder.'

29.12 **μνημόσυνον, ον n**: (derivative of μνημονεύωα 'to think



Hebrew perspective of an affirmation of the values that the object of remembering evokes. For example, to remember the poor does not mean to just think about them; it means coming to their aid. Thus Jesus instructions here mean that every observance of the supper must lead to a reaffirming of the values symbolized by the focus on Christ's self-sacrificing death on the cross. Anything less than such reaffirmation means that we have not 'remembered' Christ in our observance. The hypocritical action of the 'haves' toward the 'have nots' at Corinth reflected the opposite of Jesus instruction.

Blessing-cup-drink (v. 25). ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων, Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὅσακις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. **In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."**

Interestingly Paul's observation μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, **after the supper**, signals an understanding that matches Luke's μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, **after the supper**, in 22:20. Clearly the understanding is that of the Passover supper setting the framework for the Lord's supper establishment. Very likely the mentioning of the second cup in Lk. 22:20 stands as the traditional third cup of the Passover observance to which Jesus now gives a new meaning. Paul's use of this phrase, μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, **after the supper**, is to highlight this cup as the significant one for Christian observance.²²⁰

The introductory ὡσαύτως καὶ, **thus also**, sets up the same pattern for the cup as for the bread. After blessing the cup, it was offered to the disciples to take a sip from. Thus all of those present that night with Jesus shared in both the bread and the cup. No discrimination here!²²¹

about again, to remember,' 29.7) an instrument or means designed to cause to remember—'memorial, in memory of, something to cause people to remember.'

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 346-347.]

²²⁰"We also concluded that although Cohn-Sherbok identifies the cup with the fourth cup of the Passover, there is no reason to doubt that the cup in 10:16 and 11:25 denotes the third cup of the Passover sequence (with Allo, Barrett, Conzelmann, and Wolff, among many others). As Marshall observes, no sequential significance should be attached to the fact that in 10:16 the cup of blessing occurs in a different order from 11:24-25 since in 1 Cor 10:16 Paul 'wanted to make a point about the bread rather than about the cup.'¹⁷¹" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 883.]

²²¹One should note that in the interpretive tradition in Protestantism, the use of a single cup from which the entire congregation drank is a long standing view based on the example here. The use of individualized glasses is an early twentieth century deviation

His interpretation of the cup is Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι, **This cup is the new covenant in my blood**. Again this language close matches that of Lk. 22:20, τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον. **This cup the new covenant in my blood, the one poured out for you.**²²² How does Paul's use of this perspective deal with the problem at Corinth? Paul's use of διαθήκη, **covenant**, here is an important affirmation of God's promise of salvation made as ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη, **the new covenant**, and established ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι, **in My blood**, that Christ shed on **Calvary**.²²³ **Thus when an individual becomes a Chris-**

from the single cup. This is primarily found in western hemisphere Protestant churches, while the European Protestant pattern tends to follow multiple cups with a select number of worshippers on designated rows all drinking from the same cup. The Roman Catholic pattern limits participation in the cup to the priests only, while the rest, the laity, is limited to eating the bread.

²²²Note the somewhat different terminology of Matthew and Mark but containing a similar point to that of Luke and Paul.

Mk. 24:24, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν. **He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.**

Mt. 26:27-28, 27 καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων, Πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες, 28 τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περι πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. 27 **Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**

²²³"In the Synoptic Gospels three of the four occurrences of διαθήκη belong to accounts of the last supper, and the fourth to God's 'remembering' his holy covenantal promise (Luke 1:72). In the major Pauline epistles covenant refers to the continuity of God's faithful promises to Israel (Rom 9:4; 11:27 [from Isa 49:21]), to the ratification of God's promises through the free gift of grace made operative in and through Christ (Gal 3:15, 17; 4:24), and to the glory of the new covenant (2 Cor 3:6, 14) ratified through the blood of Christ and visibly articulated in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:25). Outside the Pauline corpus, the new covenant constitutes 'a linchpin' without which the Epistle to the Hebrews would 'fall apart.'¹⁸² There it denotes the irrevocable nature of the divine promise both in continuity with the OT and in contrast to it as 'better' or fully efficacious (Heb 8:7-13; cf. Jer 31:31-34). Given this theological background, it is entirely unnecessary to follow Lietzmann in ascribing the mood of joy and celebration to an emphasis on fellowship and on Christ's risen presence rather than his death. It is precisely the death of Christ, the new covenant in my blood, which establishes the assurance of redemption, and which permits believers to know where they stand with God, namely, in identification with Christ the vindicated Messiah and exalted Lord on the basis of God's promise duly ratified in the events of Calvary. There is no contrast here between Christ's death and the celebration of his risen identification with the One who gave his body and shed his blood 'for others,' i.e., for you. Celebration which ignores this identity is hollow and self-contradictory." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 885.]



tian in conversion, his/her faith surrender constitutes a commitment to follow God's ways rather than those of the world. The conduct of the Corinthian 'haves' represented a serious breach of that commitment to God.²²⁴ And one which God would not ignore, as v. 30 signals by asserting that some of the Corinthian members had been punished with physical death for this breach of commitment in their abuse of the Lord's supper.

In the admonition of v. 25b, τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, **This be doing, as often as you may drink, as a remembrance of me**, the cup functions just as the bread for a remembrance of Christ. That is, the observance is the occasion for reaffirming the values of Christ's self-sacrificing of Himself for others. But the discriminating actions of the Corinthian 'haves' toward the 'have nots' in the church contradicted this completely. The adding of the temporal ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, **as often as you may drink**, probably reflects an interpretive understanding of Paul, since this idea is not contained in any of the gospel accounts. What it does assert is that by the middle of the first century the Lord's supper observance was not a part of every gathering of the house church groups established by Paul. How frequently it was a part of their meetings is left by Paul as completely undefined, although the clear assumption is that it did on occasion become a part of their meetings. The Greek construction ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε using the temporal adverb ὡσάκις with a third class conditional protasis ἐὰν πίνητε leaves a wide range of differing frequencies covered by the expression.

This indefiniteness of frequency of observance is repeated in the third class conditional sentence in v. 26 that gathers the entire observance into one action: ὡσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ. **For as often as you may eat this bread and drink the cup, the Lord's death you are proclaiming until the moment He may come.** Thus the entire observance is intended to be a repeated proclamation of the Gospel by the gathered community.

²²⁴“**Covenant** also reflects precisely the major theme which persists from 8:1 to 14:40, namely, that of *constraint*, or *the free choice to forego one's rights*. For God himself limits his own range of actions by free sovereign choice when he determines to act only in accordance with declared promises of grace.¹⁸³ On such a basis Christian believers may be confident that they are redeemed and accepted. Hence the unwillingness of many of the 'strong' at Corinth to permit constraints of their own 'rights' for the sake of the weak (cf. 8:7–13; 9:1–12) contradicts not only identification with the Christ who shed his blood for others, but also the very principle of divine covenant in which the faithful God pledges his faithfulness and thereby also constrains his own 'rights' by a voluntary decision of sheer grace.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 885.]

Remember the above described scenario of the non-private nature of the house church gatherings in individual homes in the first century world. Many non-believers would be attracted to these meetings from the sounds of singing, praying, and preaching flowing out into the street. The observance of the Lord's supper would most likely spark curiosity over what this meant. To most it would have resembled the transition point from the meal to the symposium in the gatherings of the various associations in the surrounding culture. This was where the meat and drink were dedicated to the patron deity of the group. But for the gathered community of believers, it became a prime moment to bear witness to the by-standers to the centrality of the death of Jesus in the Christian Gospel. The eating and drinking in the observance affirmed Christian commitment to this central message of the Gospel.

Unfortunately, by the middle of the second century when Christian meetings had to go underground in secret meetings due to persecution, this witnessing opportunity was lost and largely replaced by highly suspicious misunderstandings based at least in part on the language of the Lord's supper given here by Paul. Thus accusations of cannibalism began to circulate in criticism of Christians.²²⁵

c) Solving the Corinthian problem, vv. 27-34. Now Paul applies the principles contained in the institution of the supper (vv. 23-26) to the problem of abuse at Corinth described in vv. 17-22. He sees a clear solution to the abuse as necessary for the integrity of the Christian community in the city and for its witness to the surround non-Christian world.

The structuring of ideas is built around the repeated ὥστε, **so then**, in vv. 27 and 33.²²⁶ First there comes the individualized emphasis in vv. 27-32, and the collective emphasis in vv. 33-34. The ὥστε signals the idea of result, which here reflects applications in order to solve the problem of abuses taking place at Corinth.

Solution for each church member, vv. 27-32. 27 Ὡστε ὅς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου. 28 δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὕτως

²²⁵For a very helpful analysis of this second century material, see “Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism Against Christians in the Second Century” in the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2.3 (1994): 413-442, by Andrew McGowan at academics.edu. Unfortunately materials in this web site are only available to members of the group.

²²⁶“ὥστε denotes a logical consequence, i.e., *therefore* (NRSV, NJB), or *it follows that* (REB), or **consequently**, which embraces the full force of result. ὅς ἂν ἐσθίῃ is indefinite (whoever ...).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 888.]

ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω 29 ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα. 30 διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί. 31 εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα 32 κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου παιδευόμεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν. 27 *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. 30 For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.*

Paul begins with a warning, moves to an admonition, and then provides a series of justifying declarations.

The warning is blunt (v. 27): “Ὡστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου. *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.* This is pointedly directed to the ‘haves’ in the Corinthian community who were the abusers. What does ἀναξίως mean in this context? Verse 21 is what it points to: ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν, καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ μεθύει. *For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk.* The selfish discrimination of the ‘haves’ against the poor in refusing to share food with them constitutes an ἀναξίως, unworthy, observance of the supper.²²⁷ That is,

²²⁷“The first major problem concerns the precise meaning of ἀναξίως (*in an unworthy manner*, NRSV, NIV; *unworthily*, REB, NJB, KJV/AV, Barrett). BAGD and Grimm-Thayer propose for this verse *in an unworthy* (or *careless*) *manner*.¹⁹⁸ However, the adjectival form of ἀναξίως in 1 Cor 6:2 conveys the sense of *incompetency*, or being not good enough for a task, and this coheres with the adjectival meaning in Epictetus and Philo (although it seems to mean *unworthy* in 1 Clement 47:6). The adverb clearly stands in semantic opposition to the ἀξίως, ἄξιος, and ἀξιώ group.¹⁹⁹ Liturgy and song have familiarized Rev 4:11, ‘You are worthy, O Lord ... to receive glory and honor and power...’ However, as BAGD note, in more common parlance the Prodigal Son exclaims, ‘I am no longer fit to be called your son, οὐκέτι εἰμὶ ἄξιος.’ ἄξιος may be used in a bad sense: *deserving blows* (Luke 12:48), i.e., *fit to be punished*. In the Apocalypse of John, God and Christ are deserving of honor; for the adjective most broadly denotes fitting correspondence (BAGD) or appropriate weight (Grimm-Thayer). Paul’s primary point is that attitude and conduct should fit the message and solemnity of what is proclaimed. At Corinth these were too often *not fitting*, or, in Meyer’s accurate words, ‘in a way morally out of keeping with the nature (10:16) and design of the ordinance (11:24–25; his italics).’²⁰⁰ Similarly Wolff, describes this as an ‘inappropriate’ or ‘unsuitable’ attitude (inunangemessener Haltung).²⁰¹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on*

their actions made them unfit to observe the supper. A Christian worship service promoting disunity or discrimination against some of its members automatically nullifies the observance of the Lord’s Supper in that service! In this Corinthian scene, it was the fellowship meal that preceded the observance which created the problem.

This ἀναξίως action then brings ἔνοχος upon the observers of the supper. The core idea of ἔνοχος is accountability.²²⁸ Their actions of discrimination have so abused the body and blood of Christ that God will inflict punishment on them. This is the sense of ἔνοχος with the genitive case noun modifiers, rather than the usual dative case: τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος. They have not polluted the elements of the supper, but rather the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as an expression of divine love to others. That is, what the elements symbolize. Christ gave His life in crucifixion for sinners, but the ‘haves’ won’t even share their food with the ‘have nots’ fellow members of the community! This is undiluted hypocrisy on their part!

The admonition naturally follows the warning (v. 28): δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω. *Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup.* The sense of δοκιμαζέτω is far more than mere reflection on one’s situation. It is linked contextually here to ἀναξίως (v. 27) and its opposite ἀξίως, *worthily, fit*. Each person must determine that he/she is prepared to observe the supper ἀξίως. That is, in unity and brotherly love for the members of the community no matter what their status economically etc. might be.²²⁹ It must always be remembered that this admonition in its context centers on manner and approach to observance, not on one’s spiritual status before God. How we approach the observance must always support and undergird our Christian commitment to loving and respecting one another in the community of faith (cf. Jhn. 13:35, ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκονται πάντες ὅτι ἐμοὶ μαθηταὶ ἔστε, ἐὰν ἀγάπην ἔχητε *the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 888–889.]

²²⁸“Although we must be extremely cautious about etymology, which usually says more about history than meaning at a later time, Edwards confirms the lexicographical evidence of liable with reference to the continuing force of ἐν—ἐχόμενος, *held in*, i.e., *held responsible for*.²⁰⁵ However, as he also points out, in legal contexts such liability to (e.g., the law) usually finds expression with the dative, while that which a person is liable for (e.g., the crime) is usually expressed by the genitive (as here), and then in Koine Greek came to denote the person against whom the crime is committed.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 889.]

²²⁹One should be very cautious about ‘psychologizing’ this admonition against a backdrop of pseudo perfectionism.



ἐν ἀλλήλοις. *By this all will know that My disciples you are, if you have love for one another.*)

Next Paul follows up with a series of justifying declarations (γὰρ) as the basis for the warning and the admonition:

ι) ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. (v. 29).²³⁰ The phrase μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα, *not discerning the body*, defines δοκιμαζέτω (v. 28) from the negative as failing to examine oneself before observing the supper. Here is where ἔνοχος (v. 27) comes into the picture. By failing to observe the supper with proper motivation and actions the individual incurs accountability by God that leads to punishment.²³¹

²³⁰“28–29 The UBS 4th ed. text of v. 29 is rightly ranked as certain (‘A’). The earliest witnesses confirm it: P⁴⁶, κ*, A, B, C*, 33, Coptic (Boh and Sah). However, κ^o, C³, D, G, K, most minuscules, and Latin and Syriac VSS insert ἀναξίως from v. 27 after πίνων and add τοῦ κυρίου after σῶμα. The AV/KJV includes both drinks unworthily and not discerning the Lord’s body, with the later Western readings, while oddly the NIV reads the Lord’s in the second instance. Clearly the longer text explicates and specifies the meaning on the basis of earlier verses, but, as Metzger urges, there would be no reason for the shorter text (with such support) except its authenticity.²¹²” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 890–891.]

²³¹ “This prepares the way for a proper understanding of the much discussed wording κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα in v. 29. We have already noted how readily the theme of eschatology in the sacraments relates to the anticipation of judgment with reference to C. F. D. Moule’s classic essay “The Judgement Theme in the Sacraments” (see above under 11:24). Before we take this discussion further, we must note the force that Paul uses in διακρίνω. The verb, according to BAGD, Grimm-Thayer, Lampe, and others, has the force of *to separate, to make a distinction, to differentiate*. Only on the basis of discrimination (i.e., separating x from y) does the word come to mean to judge or judge correctly (under which BAGD include 1 Cor 11:31) and finally to recognize (under which they include our present v. 29).²¹⁴ Clearly, therefore, the central motif of separation leads to the force of *recognizing ... what [is] different*. However, if we translate simply *to recognize what is different about the body*, this risks imposing upon Paul a more narrow ‘sacramentalist’ interpretation than the context of thought warrants. As Barrett observes, any thought that the ground of condemnation arises from failure to perceive a difference of substance between the eucharistic elements and ordinary bread ‘introduces a distinction that does not appear in the context.’²¹⁵ Expressed differently, Horsley reminds us that the contextual issue remains that of ‘certain Corinthians’ sense of their own importance.’²¹⁶ This, however, is not merely a ‘social’ matter; as Conzelmann observes in v. 27, it is a matter of ‘*theologia crucis* as opposed to *theologia gloriae*,” in the sense in which Luther so finely expounds this.²¹⁷

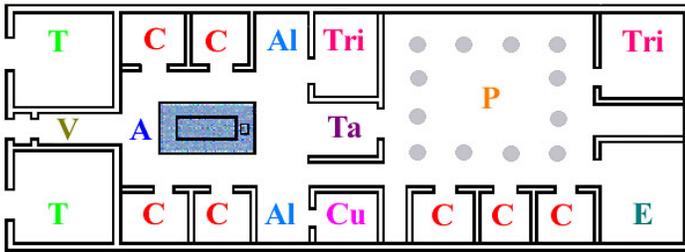
“Three broad traditions of interpretation reflect different understandings of the phrase in question: (1) A strong tradition from Justin and Augustine through Thomas Aquinas, Peter Lombard, and even Beza to a number of modern (mainly nineteenth-century)

writers, including Heinrici, Weiss, and even (in modified Protestant form) Godet, interpret Paul’s words to mean distinguishing between the sacred eucharistic elements of the Lord’s body and ordinary bread from the table.²¹⁸ Godet believes that even Reformed theology can find room for the view that Paul is concerned for proper respect at the Lord’s Table, in contrast to merely social gatherings of Christians. Schrage rejects such a view as too narrow, and cites numerous writers in support.²¹⁹

“(2) A reaction, represented by such writers as Bornkamm, Käsemann, Kümmel, Schweizer, and earlier Robertson and Plummer, tends, in effect, to understand discerning the body as referring primarily to respect for the congregation of believers as the body of the Lord.²²⁰ Bornkamm believes that Paul alludes to “‘the mystical body of Christ’ of the congregation ... the [united] ‘body’ of the congregation.”²²¹ Kümmel, in the 4th ed. (1949) of *An die Korinther*, 1–2, interestingly dissents from Lietzmann’s 3d ed. (1942) in the same series. Lietzmann had spoken of treating the body of Christ as ‘profaner Speise.’ Kümmel rejects the notion of a contrast between ‘ordinary food’ and the holy elements of the Eucharist; it alludes to ‘the congregation’ of the body of Christ. He approves Moffatt’s gloss ‘without a proper sense of the Body,’ in the sense that ‘they forgot what the Body meant as they acted so selfishly towards their humbler fellow-Christians.’²²² A flood of modern (often but not always evangelical Protestant) writers follow this approach, often citing (i) a parallel with 10:16–17 and (ii) the use of the body here without the addition of the blood or of the Lord. These arguments are repeated in Witherington, Blomberg, Senft, Horrell, Stanley, and Hays; Collins follows this mainly, but recognizing other nuances.²²³ One of the most detailed arguments in support of this comes from Fee, who claims that this verse ‘makes sense of what is otherwise an unusual short digression in 10:17,’ where the ‘one loaf’ is identified as the participating solidarity of the community of believers. In v. 29 Paul speaks of this ‘further sense, the church as that body.’²²⁴

“(3) Arguments of this nature (for they are regularly repeated) fail to convince Barrett, Marshall, Hofius, Wolff, Schrage, and the present writer. Barrett argues that the second view ‘strains the meaning of διακρίνεν’ (cf. also Hofius, although this may not be decisive); that it would require τὸ σῶμα to serve with a genitive; and (especially with Marshall) that v. 29 is too far in distance from 10:16–17 for Paul to expect his readers to refer to it as the decisive frame for his meaning.²²⁵ Hofius insists that in this verse ‘τὸ σῶμα stands pars pro toto’ for the body and blood.²²⁶ Wolff makes the decisive point. The social is founded on the salvific: the issue is understanding the entailments of ‘sharing as participants in the death of Jesus ‘for you.’²²⁷ The context of vv. 24 and 27, Wolff rightly urges, is most decisive of all, since it is this that impinges transformatively on believers’ attitudes and behavior toward others. Schrage sees v. 31 as an important indicator of the meaning of v. 29. ‘Right judgment’ extends to what it means to be identified with, and involved in, the cross of Christ, in anticipation of judgment.²²⁸ In this sense our verse states that they must recognize what characterizes the body as different, i.e., be mindful of the uniqueness of Christ, who is separated from others in the sense of giving himself for others in sheer grace. The Lord’s Supper, by underlining participation in, and identification with, the cruciform Christ, thereby generates the social transformation, which is Paul’s second concern. Nevertheless, he never leaves behind the proclamation of the cross (1:18–25) as the ground of identity transformation, and it is of the very essence of the Lord’s Supper (and of baptism) to keep this anchorage in grace and in the cross in sharp focus.”





Sample Plan of a Roman House

A	atrium	formal entrance hall
Al	ala	“wings” opening from atrium
C	cubiculum	small room; bedroom
Cu	culina	kitchen
E	exedra	garden room
P	peristylum	colonnaded garden
T	taberna	shop
Ta	tablinum	office; study
Tri	triclinium	dining room
V	vestibulum	entrance hall

ii) *διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί.* **For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died** (v. 30). That incurring ἔνοχος (v. 27) is a serious matter becomes clear now. The punishments of God for ἔνοχος has produced physical illness and death for ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοί, *many among you*. Here these instances of ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί, *weaknesses and illnesses and many sleep*, are not the regular impacts of life, but instead represent specific divine actions of punishment for the abuse of the supper. The three terms are graphic and dramatic references to life experiences of people who experience loss of physical strength, illness, and death, here defined as sleep. But while not necessarily visible to the members that many in their midst had experienced these as actions of divine wrath, the reality remained the same. God’s displeasure was showed down on the Corinthian Christian community in the form of punishments.

Most likely in the background of Paul’s thought is that the abusers of the supper at Corinth have breached their covenant with God in ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη, *the new covenant* (v. 25), and just as with covenant Israel divine punishments follow such breaches.²³²

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 891–893.

²³²“Such lack of *genuineness* (see under v. 28) could well add force to M. Pesce’s proposal that this amounts to a breach of covenant or willful sin (cf. Moule’s ‘fundamental blindness’) demanding ‘a sacrifice of reparation’ (Num 5:18; cf. 5:11–31), expanded in m. Sotah 1:1–4:3 in terms of ‘the water of bitterness that causes the curse.’ The breach of covenant is comparable to an adultery in which covenant loyalty is compromised.²³⁵ When she has ‘finished drinking,’ ‘the suspected adulteress’ who is being ‘tested’ or ‘judged’ by ‘drinking the water’ either shows immediate signs of serious illness (yellow complexion, bulging eyes, swelling veins)

iii) *31 εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα 32 κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου παιδευόμεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν.* **31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world** (vv. 31-32).

Paul sets this up with a first class conditional protasis εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, *but if we thorough examine ourselves*, which assumes that his readers will respond positively to what he is advocating. That is, before observing the supper they will be certain that their motivations and actions in observing match the self sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Proper respect for fellow Christians guides their sharing in the observance. Such self examination then avoids the ἔνοχος (v. 27) of God that brings down divine punishments for abuse of the supper (v. 30).

Paul’s second declaration in v. 32 asserts that the divine punishments represent ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου παιδευόμεθα, *by the Lord we are being disciplined*. This ‘divine spanking’ is far better than the eternal damnation of the wicked: ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν. Paul somewhat echoes the writer of Hebrews in 12:7-13, εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένετε, ὡς υἱοῖς ὑμῖν προσφέρεται ὁ θεός. τίς γὰρ υἱὸς ὄν οὐ παιδεύει πατήρ; *Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline?* (v. 7). God loves His children too much to let them get away with misbehavior. Plus the disciplining of some in the community for their abuse of the supper should serve as a reminder to the rest to take the observance very seriously.

Solution for the community of believers, vv. 33-34. 33 ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε. 34 εἴ τις πεινᾷ, ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω, ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρησθε. Τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω διατάξομαι. **33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.**

The first admonition is ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε. **So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.** The participle phrase, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν, *when you gather to eat*, assumes a Christian

or ‘if she has any merit this holds her punishment in suspense ...’ (m. Sot. 3:4). Pesce relates this to the illness and death that befalls the covenant breaker who refuses to be judged by the Lord, or judged by himself, and the one who, in effect, is willing to plead guilty in accordance with vv. 31–32.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 894–895.]

assembly where the Lord's Supper will be observed. The admonition ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε then demands **Wait on one another**. This corrects the failure described in v. 21, ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν, καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ μεθύει. **For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk**. The 'haves' have gathered in the triclinium while the rest are to gather in the atrium. Rather than going forward with the meal where different groups are served different foods (1st scenario) or while the 'haves' go ahead and eat in the triclinium while the 'have nots' won't arrive in the atrium until the meal is about concluded (2nd scenario, more likely). Paul demands that the 'haves' either wait until the entire group is assembled before eating the regular meal. Or, more likely given the admonition in v. 34a, that this gathering only include the Lord's Supper and not be following a regular meal, especially a meal only for the 'haves.' Pragmatically this is the best way to avoid observing the supper ἀναξίως, **unworthily** (v. 27) meaning μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα, **not discerning the body** (v. 29). The gathering to observe the Lord's Supper is a very special meeting. Let the 'haves' eat at home before coming to the gathering so as to not desecrate the observance! This way they can avoid divine judgment: ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχησθε, **lest you come into divine judgment**. The 'haves' must not ever try to combine a purely social meal among themselves with the Lord's supper observance of the gathered community of believers.

Τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω διατάξομαι. About the other things I will give instructions when I come. Although not entirely clear, it evidently points to further instructions about the observance of the Lord's Supper that Paul felt important but decided to wait to give them in person in his next visit to Corinth. We have no idea what τὰ λοιπὰ, **the remaining things**, might have been.

9) Concerning spiritual gifts, 12:1-14:40.

One should recognize first the interconnectedness of this large unit of text with what has preceded it from the beginning of the letter.²³³ Spiritual elitism pa-

²³³Too many writers treat 12:1–14:40 as if it were simply an ad hoc response to questions about spiritual gifts (or spiritual persons) rather than an address to this topic within the broader theological framework of 11:2–14:40 in deliberate continuity with 8:1–11:1, and indeed ultimately with 1:1–4:21. The way in which some ranked their self-perceived 'spirituality' or giftedness by the Holy Spirit so as to encourage superior status enhancement which resulted in the attitude 'I have no need of you' (12:21–26) provides a close parallel to the status enjoyment of those who enjoyed the more comfortable location and better table fare than the latecomers at the Lord's Supper (11:21–22; see above). We noted this unity of thought and theology in our short introduction to 11:2–14:40 (above). This whole section (11:2–14:40) takes up, in turn, the theme of 'respect for the other' which characterizes Paul's

reading under the banner of 'being spiritual' comes to the surface repeatedly in claims to superior wisdom, insistence on 'my rights' in disregard for others in the church in matters of meat offered to idols, how one appears in the gathered community, to the abuses in the observance of the Lord's Supper -- all of this is deeply connected to the perception of 'giftedness' that Paul discusses beginning in chapter twelve.

The internal structure of these three chapters has been extensively analyzed by many modern commentators.²³⁴ **The extensive use of γλῶσσα (21x only in chaps** demand and plea for 'the strong' to put themselves in a position of understanding and respect for 'the weak' in 8:1–11:1. Paul himself had offered a model of such concern by foregoing his 'right' to financial support from a person or persons to whom he might need to give privileged acknowledgment, in effect, as benefactor(s) or patron(s). The church of God ceases to be the church if it remains no longer characterized by an inclusive mutuality and reciprocity.

"The problem of rich and poor, of influential and deprived, however, offers less subtle opportunities for status enhancement and self-deception than issues of 'spirituality.' Here the temptation to glory in being 'one of us' (i.e., those people who are 'spiritual') takes a more insidious and ultimately more disastrously damaging form. For it engenders a self-glorifying at variance with the reality of divine grace and the transformative proclamation of the cross (1:18–2:5, esp. 1:10, 31). Three-quarters of a century before the work of Dale Martin on glossolalia as a 'status indicator,' Karl Barth perceived the unity of the whole epistle as turning on the contrast between glorying 'in God' and glorying in 'their own belief in God and in particular leader and heroes; in the fact that they confuse belief with specific human experiences, convictions....' Against this, the clarion call of Paul rings out, 'Let no man glory in man' (3:21), or, expressed in positive form: 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord' (1:31).¹ Barth acknowledges that chs. 12–14 display an almost dazzling wealth of spiritual and religious life, but observes that 'what we are really concerned with is not phenomena in themselves, but with their 'whence?' and 'whither?' To what do they point? To what do they testify?'² As soon as their character as gifts has been recognized, with all the implications of the logic of that term, the Corinthians in that light only may "covet the best gifts" (v. 31).³ The chapter on love, however, underlines that these gifts are given for the mutual building up the whole church inclusively; not for the self, or for the enhancement of any exclusive 'spiritual' group within the church. 'The criterion by which Paul compares ... the phenomena.... is the idea of mutual and common edification.'⁴ Yet edification, or building up in mutuality for the benefit of the whole, also emerges as the theme of chs. 8–10 and 11, and indeed of the entire epistle, as Margaret Mitchell demonstrates.⁵"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 900–901.]

²³⁴It is also customary today to offer a comment on the rhetorical structure and strategy of these chapters, even if this often amounts to a more sophisticated version of what more traditional commentators have termed their 'argument.' Some attempts remain speculative, but in addition to Margaret Mitchell's constructive analysis two accounts deserve particular attention. First, the argument of Eriksson, to which we have already referred, succeeds



12-14) and the word group προφητεία, προφητεύω, προφήτης (20x in chaps 12-14 out of 22x total uses in the letter) clearly point to a central theme for all three chapters. Structural parallels can also be traced:

Confirmatio	12:7-30	14:6-33a
Partitio	12:4-6	14:1-5
Exordium	12:1-3-----	

Chapter 13 forms a rhetorical pinnacle with emphasis on the highest expression of spiritual giftedness. Here the earlier theme of reciprocity resurfaces as foundational to authentic Christian community. The tone of these chapters reflects a deliberative rhetoric with an appeal to utility and advantage. But the earlier theme of concern for one another permeates all of these chapters.²³⁵ One cannot be a Christian and a church cannot

in relating Paul's strategy, in part at least to his appeal where possible to shared prePauline traditions. His chapter on chs. 12-14 remains constructive and largely convincing.⁹ Further, Joop Smit's work on the argument and genre of 12-14 also deserves note.¹⁰ Like Mitchell, he clearly demonstrates the coherence of Paul's argument in chs. 12-14. Although we have emphasized the continuity of thought with 8:1-11:1 and indeed also with 1:10-4:21, Smit points out that γλωσσα occurs twenty-one times in chs. 12-14, but not elsewhere in the epistle. Similarly, the group προφητεία, προφητεύω, προφήτης occurs twenty times, but otherwise only twice in this epistle (11:4, 5). Smit regards 12:1-3 as an exordium, in which he opts for the rhetorical method of insinuatio (i.e., the indirect approach in contrast to the overt principium).¹¹ He then expounds two rounds of argumentation: 12:4-30 and 14:1-33a. Within the first, 12:4-6 form a *partitio*, or succinct introduction to promote clarity for the *confirmatio* of vv. 7-30. 14:1-5 provide a *partitio* for the *confirmatio* of 14:6-33a.¹² Smit agrees with Mitchell that *the main strategy or genre is that of deliberative rhetoric, an appeal to utility and advantage, especially in 14:1-33a.*¹³ A detailed analysis is included with which we are in broad agreement, subject to wider reservations about how much is certain and how much can be achieved by such an analysis (expressed above).¹⁴ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 902.]

²³⁵Too many writers treat 12:1-14:40 as if it were simply an ad hoc response to questions about spiritual gifts (or spiritual persons) rather than an address to this topic within the broader theological framework of 11:2-14:40 in deliberate continuity with 8:1-11:1, and indeed ultimately with 1:1-4:21. The way in which some ranked their self-perceived 'spirituality' or giftedness by the Holy Spirit so as to encourage superior status enhancement which resulted in the attitude 'I have no need of you' (12:21-26) provides a close parallel to the status enjoyment of those who enjoyed the more comfortable location and better table fare than the latecomers at the Lord's Supper (11:21-22; see above). We noted this unity of thought and theology in our short introduction to 11:2-14:40 (above). This whole section (11:2-14:40) takes up, in turn, the theme of 'respect for the other' which characterizes Paul's demand and plea for 'the strong' to put themselves in a position of understanding and respect for 'the weak' in 8:1-11:1. Paul himself had offered a model of such concern by foregoing his 'right' to financial support from a person or persons to whom he might need to give privileged acknowledgment, in effect, as benefactor(s) or

be a community of believers unless love for one another centers in mutual respect and regard for others above one's self. Social distinction of class and differing status have no place in the community of God's true people. To inject the discriminating ways of the surrounding world into the life of the church is to nullify its basis for existing. At minimal as the episode over the Lord's supper reveals such worldliness brings down the wrath of God on both the community and its members.

Exordium, 12:1-3. 1 Περί δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν. 2 Οἴδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι. 3 διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει, Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν, Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. 1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. 3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

patron(s). *The church of God ceases to be the church if it remains no longer characterized by an inclusive mutuality and reciprocity.*

"The problem of rich and poor, of influential and deprived, however, offers less subtle opportunities for status enhancement and self-deception than issues of 'spirituality.' Here the temptation to glory in being 'one of us' (i.e., those people who are 'spiritual') takes a more insidious and ultimately more disastrously damaging form. For it engenders a self-glorifying at variance with the reality of divine grace and the transformative proclamation of the cross (1:18-2:5, esp. 1:10, 31). Three-quarters of a century before the work of Dale Martin on glossolalia as a 'status indicator,' Karl Barth perceived the unity of the whole epistle as turning on the contrast between glorying 'in God' and glorying in 'their own belief in God and in particular leader and heroes; in the fact that they confuse belief with specific human experiences, convictions....' Against this, the clarion call of Paul rings out, 'Let no man glory in man' (3:21), or, expressed in positive form: 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord' (1:31).¹ Barth acknowledges that chs. 12-14 display an almost dazzling wealth of spiritual and religious life, but observes that 'what we are really concerned with is not phenomena in themselves, but with their 'whence?' and 'whither?' To what do they point? To what do they testify?'² As soon as their character as gifts has been recognized, with all the implications of the logic of that term, the Corinthians in that light only may 'covet the best gifts' (v. 31).³ The chapter on love, however, underlines that these gifts are given for the mutual building up the whole church inclusively; not for the self, or for the enhancement of any exclusive 'spiritual' group within the church. 'The criterion by which Paul compares ... the phenomena.... is the idea of mutual and common edification.'⁴ Yet edification, or building up in mutuality for the benefit of the whole, also emerges as the theme of chs. 8-10 and 11, and indeed of the entire epistle, as Margaret Mitchell demonstrates.⁵"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 900-901.]

12.1 δὲ
 Περὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν,
 ἀδελφοί,
 465 οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν.

466 12.2 Οἴδατε
 ὅτι... πρὸς τὰ εἶδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε
 ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε
 ἀπαγόμενοι.

12.3 διὸ
 467 γνωρίζω ὑμῖν
 ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ
 λαλῶν
 ὅτι οὐδεὶς...λέγει·
 Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς,
 καὶ
 οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν·
 Κύριος Ἰησοῦς,
 εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ.



It has often been taken as neuter gender and wrongly translated as ‘spiritual gifts’ based on equating πνευματικῶν (v. 1) with χαρισμάτων (v. 4). But this latter word technically means ‘expressions of grace.’ And clearly from the discussion in vv. 4-6 Paul is going to talk

The ancient Greek rhetorical label ‘exordium’ simply means the introduction of a theme or topic for discussion. Here Paul uses the standard new topic structure Περὶ δὲ ..., *And concerning ...*, at the beginning of the sentence: 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12. Generally this is a signal of Paul responding to one of the questions posed to him by the delegation sent from Corinth to Ephesus to seek his advice (cf. 16:15-18).

Here the topic to be treated is identified as τῶν πνευματικῶν. But what does this mean? Huge difference of viewpoint over the meaning of the phrase typifies the interpretive history.²³⁶ The issue arises because the adjective πνευματικός, -ή, -όν, here in the genitive case plural number can be taken either as masculine, i.e., *spiritual persons*, or as neuter, i.e., *spiritual things*.²³⁷

²³⁶“The translation and meaning of τῶν πνευματικῶν is universally discussed. Since the genitive plural masculine and neuter share the same Greek ending, some understand the Greek to mean spiritual persons (modern writers from Heinrici and Weiss to Blomberg and Wire and earlier commentators from Grotius to Locke).¹⁶ Most interpreters, however, believe that the term denotes spiritual gifts (from Tertullian, Novatian, and Cyril of Jerusalem to Conzelmann, Senft, and Lange).¹⁷ This is adopted by AV/KJV, RSV, NRSV, JB, and NIV (cf. NJB, REB, gifts of the Spirit). The main argument for the latter view that the Greek ‘is to be taken in a neuter, not a masculine sense ... is clear from 14:1 and from the interchange with χαρίσματα.’¹⁸ Conzelmann further equates gifts with ‘ecstatic phenomena,’ an interpretation which has been questioned by Gundry and recently attacked in detail by Forbes.¹⁹”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 909–911.]

²³⁷It belongs to the larger word group including πνεῦμα, πνευματικός, πνέω, ἐμπνέω, πνοή, ἐκπνέω, θεόπνευστος. All of the work off the etymological meaning of breath or breathing in both the Greek and the Jewish background. This relates to both humans and deities. The πνεῦμα as breath was the expression of life and

about an issue far broader than just χαρισμάτων. It is part of the discussion but just one part.

The etymological sense of the adjective πνευματικός, -ή, -όν means ‘having been breathed upon.’ Typically in both the Greek world along with some strands of Judaism, as well as early Christianity, the ‘breathing’ was done by deity rather than humans who normally were the objects of the divine breathing.

This lent itself in the Greek world especially to the idea of ecstatic speech. That is, the speech or language(s) of the gods and goddesses. The influence of [Delphi](#) upon Greek thinking was enormous, and soundly criticized by many of the philosophers, especially Plato for its use of emotion in supposedly communicating ideas from the invisible world. As early as 1,400 BCE the site at Delphi was the mythical source of divine oracles from the Pythia, the priestess at the temple of Apollo located at Delphi. The priestess Pythia functioned as the voice of Apollo and was given the ability to speak the language of Apollo²³⁸ and then

the act of breathing signaled being alive. The English word *spirit* comes ultimately from the Latin *spiritus* meaning breath: “Middle English, from Anglo-French or Latin; Anglo-French, *espirit*, *spirit*, from Latin *spiritus*, literally, breath, from *spirare* to blow, breathe. First Known Use: 13th century” [[Merriam-Webster online dictionary](#), s.v., ‘spirit’]

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:332.]

²³⁸“For the theme and content as well as the source of the experience of the spirit, which is not granted to everyone but only to chosen and pre-disposed souls, is always something divine or a god, especially the most ‘spiritual’ of the gods, Apollo.

A final poetic witness to Apollonian inspiration manticism is

translate it into human expression as an oracle expressed in Greek either orally or in written form.²³⁹ The earlier Greek background of manticism²⁴⁰ stood as a foundational influence upon the Greek understanding of ecstatic speech as the speech of the gods that could be translated into human language by the priests and priestesses of the individual deities. The large Corinthian temple of Apollo provided a convenient access to these traditions for the residents of the city.

Delphi was not that far from Corinth but much closer was Eleusis (ca. 20 km) where the [Eleusinian Mysteries](#) were practiced as the initiation rites for the cults of Demeter and Persephone. Ecstatic speech, i.e., glosolalia, was a central activity of the worship of these pagan deities, and reflected one stream of the Delphic influence which permeated virtually all of Greek life in Paul's day. What helped the tongues speaking here was that the rites were performed at the mouths

the Didyma inscr. of 263 A.D.⁵⁶ which extols the new form of the ancient oracular source of Apollo: its θεῖον πνεῦμα προφήταις ἄρδεται etc. through nymphs, to whom manticism is dear. Here πνεῦμα θεῖον might well be an apologetic concept of the movement of pagan restoration in opposition to the spiritual utterances of Christianity. In a late magic pap. which has rules for giving oracles the ἅγιον πνεῦμα which makes magic possible by causing ecstasy is called syncretistically the "messenger of Apollo": πρὸς ἐπιταγὴν ἁγίου πνεύματος, ἀγ[γέ]λου Φοίβου, Preis. Zaub., III, 289.

In what we read elsewhere of the inspiration of pneuma at Delphi and other places the original cultic-mythological understanding of the religion of Apollo has been widely permeated partly by scientific and partly by speculative theories which Platonism, Stoicism and Neo-Platonism developed in explanation and evaluation of the phenomenon of manticism and its decline.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:347.]

²³⁹“Theologically significant is the idea that πνεῦμα is the cause and source of ecstatic speech⁴⁹ in which the priestess becomes so directly the ‘divine voice’ (→ 344, 5 ff.) that the Delphic πνεῦμα can be called the voice (ὀμφή) which blows forth from the στόμιον (ἀναπνεῖ, Ps.-Luc. Nero, 10; Dio C., 63, 14, 2). Lucan (De Bello Civili, V, 83) speaks of the *venti loquaces* of the site of the oracle. The coming and going of the πνεῦμα are characteristically linked with φωνή-effects, e.g., the sound of a wind-instrument (Vergil. Aen., 6, 82 ff.) or of the πρῶκτός (Aristoph. Nu., 164), the ecstatic speech of the sibyl (Vergil. Aen., 6, 82 ff.) and Delphic prophecy (Diod. S., 16, 26), or the κραυγὴ ἰσχυρά of a Pythia into which an ἄλαλον καὶ κακὸν πνεῦμα came (Plut. Def. Orac., 51 [II, 438b]). From the standpoint of religious phenomenology the NT bears witness to the same original combination when it constantly links πνεῦμα and προφητεύειν (Lk. 1:67; 2 Pt. 1:21 etc.), or when it refers to speaking with tongues as a gift of the Spirit (a reflection of Pythian prophesying in Corinth, 1 C. 12–14),⁵⁰ or when it speaks of the crying out either of the unclean spirit which departs from a man or of the Holy Spirit which fills him.⁵¹” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:345–346.]

²⁴⁰“The art of divination and prophecy” [*The Free Dictionary*, s.v., [manticism](#)]

of caves spewing out sulphur fumes which were taken to be the ‘breathing’ of the gods from inside the caves. Just a little breathing of these fumes and everyone could speak making unknowable sounds in the ritual dances performed in the worship. Residents of Corinth in large numbers participated regularly in these rites.

Once more Paul is having to deal with Greek cultural influences filtering into the life of the church as a superior way of religious understanding. The elitism deeply associated with Greek based ecstatic speech tradition played well into the thinking of the Christian elitists in the church at Corinth.

What is gradually being recognized by more recent commentators is that ultimately not much difference in meaning comes from taking τῶν πνευματικῶν²⁴¹ either masculine or neuter in gender.²⁴² But the most important point of the term as used by Paul centers on the Holy Spirit as the source of the blessing upon those committed to Christ. The translation of τῶν πνευματικῶν by Thiselton as “the things that come from the Spirit” represents a more accurate rendering of the inclusive nature of Paul's discussion.

The main clause in v. 1 is οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, **I do not want you to be ignorant**. Paul implies here that a lot of discussion about τῶν πνευματικῶν had been taking

²⁴¹The one often forgotten reality is that τῶν πνευματικῶν fundamentally means actions by the Spirit of God both to individuals and with the granting of divine blessings. Always foundational is the work of God's Spirit, and not the individual or the blessing granted to him/her. This was where the elitists in the church at Corinth went completely astray, due to their Greek heritage defining terms rather than the Gospel of Christ.

²⁴²“A relatively wide range of writers conclude that it is ‘impossible to find objective ground for a decision between the two possibilities, and little difference in sense is involved—spiritual persons are those who have spiritual gifts.’²⁰ It refers to either. But if both the writer and the readers well knew that the Greek ending included both genders (i.e., excluded neither), why should the meaning be construed in either-or terms at all? Hence Schrage notes that the masculine may embrace the Corinthians' meaning, while the neuter reflects Paul's preference to substitute χαρίσματα.²¹ Meyer rightly cites Chrysostom and Luther as interpreting the Greek to mean *Concerning the forms of action which proceed from the Holy Spirit and make manifest his agency*.²² The key issue which has been raised (at least the form in which Paul wishes to address it), is this: What criteria are we to apply for specific people or specific gifts to be considered genuinely ‘of the Holy Spirit’? This is what vv. 2 and 3 explicate in terms of a Christomorphic criterion.²³ Since it would overtranslate the Greek to render *Concerning what counts as people or as gifts of the Spirit*, we use quotation marks. The church needed clarification about a status-earning buzz slogan: *Now about things that “come from the Spirit,”* i.e., people say they do, but do they? How are we to know? Well, Paul replies, I do not want you to be ‘not knowing’ (ἀγνοεῖν), i.e., to remain without knowledge.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 910–911.]

place among the Corinthian Christians. But, most all of it was misinformation that needed to be corrected. Many in the church felt deeply knowledgeable about τῶν πνευματικῶν but their ‘knowledge’ was coming out of their Greek background and traditions and consequently misrepresented the apostolic teaching of the Gospel.

The amplification of the topic in vv. 2-3 puts emphasis upon the individuals rather than just ‘things.’ First, Paul alludes to the influence of their pagan religious background about communicating with the gods: Οἴδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε πρὸς τὰ εἰδῶλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray in regard to non speaking idols.²⁴³ That is, the Corinthians in their pre-Christian life worshiped idols which they were convinced could and did speak to the worshippers through the voices of the priests and priestesses.²⁴⁴ Ecstatic speaking and ritualistic dancing, especially by the female priests, typified the worship practices in most of the Corinthian temples as central to establishing communication with the patron deity of the individual temples.²⁴⁵ Quite naturally the ideas

²⁴³(i) Syntax. If ἤγεσθε is construed as the finite verb within the subordinate ὅτε clause, there is no finite verb for the main clause, in place of which the text has only the participle ἀπαγόμενοι. The simplest way of restoring an intelligible syntax and completing the finite verb is to assume that a final (i.e., second) ἦτε is to be supplied by the readers, thus adding the copula to the participle to transpose it into a periphrastic imperfect passive, you used to be carried away.²⁷ The omission of the copula is a regular example of elliptic construction and is perhaps rendered all the more probable by the fact that ἦτε has already occurred once in the subordinate clause.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 911.]

²⁴⁴“Whether or not Forbes is right about the need to modify our view of the content of the ‘gifts’ of 12:1–2 (see below), the issue remains that in preChristian paganism the notion of status-conferring ‘experiences’ (like claims to ‘wisdom’) cohered with the cultural, social, rhetorical, and religious climate of Corinth and had found its way into the church. Thus John Painter draws a contrast between the ‘spirituality’ of the πνευματικοί which stressed knowledge, wisdom, and exalted states of consciousness and ‘the proclamation of the cross as the saving event.’⁵³ While Painter links 12:2 with 1 Cor 1:1–4:21, Martin connects v. 2 with the emphasis on unity-in-diversity in 12:1–14:40.⁵⁴ Both point toward the divine act of ‘status-conferring’ in the corporate event of 15:1–58. The contrast with attitudes carried over from paganism thus becomes fundamental and not ‘minimal.’⁵⁵” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 916.]

²⁴⁵“Greeks considered *madness* an important aspect of worship. Women in particular responded to Bacchus (also known as Dionysus), the god of madness; ‘him of the orgiastic cry, exciter of women, Dionysus, glorified with mad honors’. (Plutarch, *Moralia* 671c). Ancient Corinth was a center of Dionysiac worship, and Pausinius, world traveler of the second century of our era gives

this description:

In the market-place, for most of the temples are there, is the Ephesian Artemis, and there are two wooden statues of Dionysus, gilt except the faces, which are painted with red paint, one they call Lysian Dionysus and the other Dionysus the Reveler. The tradition about these statues I will record. Pentheus, they say, when he outraged Dionysus, among other acts of reckless daring actually at last went to mount Cithaeron to spy on the women, and climbed up into a tree to see what they were doing; and when they detected him, they forthwith dragged him down, and tore him limb from limb. And afterwards, so they say at Corinth, the Pythian priestess told them to discover that tree and pay it divine honors. And that is why these statues are made of that very wood. (Description of Greece, II.ii; tr. A.R. Shilleto)

“There was in Corinth, then, a significant monument memorializing the savagery of female Bacchus worshippers. Nor was such a feminine ferocity confined to Pentheus alone. Women under the inspiration of Bacchus were said to have torn Orpheus limb from limb; and Alexander the Great was supposed to have incorporated a group of these maenads (mad women) into his army in his attempt to conquer India. There was also a tradition that women during the course of the worship tore apart young animals and ate them raw, warm and bleeding, thereby receiving within themselves the life of the god. In a 1976 address to the Mystery Religions Division of the Society of Biblical Literature, Ross Kraemer argued that there is evidence that women participated in a second level of initiation in Bacchic worship that was not available to men. Among Dionysiac worshippers, writes Livy in his *History of Rome*, ‘the majority are women’ (XXXIX.xv)

While women were famed for their wildness in the Bacchic cult and in certain other mystery cults, other aspects of their worship were more traditional. Of special importance to the study of the situation Paul addresses is the concept of clamor, noisy outbursts of religious pandemonium. Strabo (first century) explains how popular writers describe the phenomenon:

They represent them, one and all, as a kind of inspired people and as subject to Bacchic frenzy, and, in the guise of minister, as inspiring terror at the celebration of the sacred rites by means of war-dances accompanied by uproar and noise and cymbals and drums and also by flute and outcry... (Georg., X, 3:7)

“The ‘sounding gong and tinkling cymbal’ used in such worship are mentioned in a derogatory sense in 1 Corinthians 13:1; but the religious outcry itself is dealt with more directly. It is essential that we understand that much of the shouting involved in the rite was the specific function of women. Euripides describes the advent of Dionysiac religion to Thebes thus:

‘This city, first in Hellas, now shrills and echoes to my women’s cries, their ecstasy of joy’ (Bacchae, 11, 20-24)

“The word used here for ‘cry’ is **olulugia**, defined by the *Etymologicum Magnum* as ‘the sound which women make to exult in worship’ and by E.R. Dodds as ‘the women’s ritual cry of triumph or thanksgiving’. Pausanias tells of ‘the mountain they say was called Eva from the Bacchic cry ‘Evoe’ which Dionysus and his attendant women first uttered there’ (Descr. of Greece, IV, xxxi)

“Menander also demonstrates women’s role in worship:

‘We were offering sacrifice five times a day, and seven serving women were beating cymbals around us while the rest of the women pitched high the chant (olulugia)’ (Fragment 326).

“Women were expected, then, to provide certain types of sound-effects; and some of these effects seem to have been limited



instilled into the thinking of the Corinthians would not be left behind easily upon conversion to Christianity. But Paul's agenda as outlined here at the beginning in 12:1-3 is to help the Corinthian believers shed completely this kind of thinking and replace it with apostolic teaching.

Thus against this atmosphere in the city Paul makes the declarations in v. 3 that sound unusual to a modern western reader: διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει, Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν, Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. **Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. What indeed does constitute authentic spirituality, i.e., who is truly πνευματικός?**²⁴⁶ Evidently from actual occurrences at

to feminine ministrants.

"Apart from savagery and shouting, ancient writers usually describe worshipers of Dionysus as engaging in dancing, drinking, sexual promiscuity, varying degrees of undress, and other forms of excessive behavior. It was only in frenzy that one could hold communion with the god, or - in ecstasy so great that the soul seemed to leave the body - to become one with him.

"There are significant indications that the old pagan religion still exerted a powerful influence on the recent converts at Corinth. They were uncomfortable over meat that had been offered to idols (8:1-13), and they had to be reminded not to attend sacrificial meals in pagan temples (10:20, 21) As in Bacchic feasts, there was drunkenness at the Lord's Supper and ecstatic madness at the worship services. A surprising description comes from the pen of the neo-Platonist Iamblichus as he explains the mystery cults, the popular religions of the day, for Dionysus was not the only god who inspired frenzy:

It is necessary to investigate the causes of the divine frenzy (madness). These are illuminations that come down from the gods, the inspirations that are imparted from them, and the absolute authority from them, which not only encompasses all things in us but banishes entirely away the notions and activities which are peculiarly our own. The frenzy causes words to be let fall that are not uttered with the understanding of those who speak them; but it is declared, on the contrary, that they are sounded with a frenzied mouth, the speakers being all of them subservient and entirely controlled by the energy of a dominant intelligence. All enthusiasm is of such a character, and is brought to perfection from causes of such a kind. (The Egyptian Mysteries, tr. Alexander Wilder. pp. 119f.)

[Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger, "Pandemonium and Silence at Corinth," [IntelligentChristian website](#)]

²⁴⁶"The preposition with the dative ἐν πνεύματι could denote the sphere of the Spirit of God, understood in effect as a locative, and could be translated in the Spirit (NJB) or under the influence of the Spirit (REB, JB). But the context and theology of confessional declaration point to the dative of instrumentality, or agency of the Spirit of God. Schrage and Collins both endorse this, and NRSV, RSV, NIV rightly translate by the Spirit of God, which we have simply made more explicit to reflect Paul's double use of the same syntax.⁵⁷ We find here a classic model of Wolterstorff's philosophical analysis of human acts of speaking (λαλῶν) which represent speech generated by divine agency (λέγει). Wolterstorff argues that just as the words which a secretary speaks can count as words which her employer speaks (if the secretary knows his or

Corinth the mark of false spirituality for Christians are the declarations Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, **Let Jesus be cursed!**, and Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, **Jesus is Lord**. The second declaration can only be made authentically ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, **by the Holy Spirit**. The authentic declaration comes only ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν, **when speaking by the Spirit of God**. God would never lead a person the call down a curse upon Jesus!

But just what is Paul getting at with Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς?²⁴⁷ The specific setting for such utterances is not defined. If Paul is alluding to a moment of persecu-

her mind and is empowered or authorized to speak on his or her behalf), so human words can in appropriate situations, count as 'divine discourse.' He calls this 'double agency discourse.'⁵⁸ On this basis Paul is asking what content of human speech may be said to count as what is spoken by the Spirit or through the agency of the Spirit of God. Wolterstorff readily shows that, e.g., in the case of ambassadors who speak for a head of state 'double-speaking' and 'double agency' is entirely intelligible.⁵⁹ So Paul asks: Under what conditions does an utterance of a πνευματικός count as an utterance of τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα? More broadly, what experiences and actions, as well as words, will count as manifestations of the Holy Spirit, rather than self-induced experiences, acts, or words, or even those induced by other agencies?" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 917.]

²⁴⁷"Astonishing as it may seem, no less than twelve distinct explanations have been offered to try to account for the use of the phrase ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς. Before we briefly list these, it may be helpful provisionally to note the semantic range and lexicographical data which relate to ἀνάθεμα. In classical Greek literature the word regularly means votive offering devoted to a deity. In the history of the word the active voice of ἀνατίθημι, *to set up* (i.e., in a temple) or *place upon* (another), takes the middle form ἀνεθέμην, *to lay before*. With the long vowel ἀνάθημα occurs in, e.g., Sophocles, *Antigone* 286; 3 *Macc* 3:17; *Jdt* 16:19; *Epistle of Aristeas* 40; *Josephus*, *Wars* 6.335; *Antiquities* 17.156. The form with the shorter vowel, ἀνάθεμα, assumes: (i) this votive offering meaning from its hellenistic background (Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 25.7; Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.253); and (ii) the LXX translation for Heb. *cherem*, that which is to be thoroughly destroyed as holy-to-God, that which is taboo and unavailable to human use or contact (*Lev* 27:28; *Josh* 6:17; 7:12; *Judg* 1:17). (iii) In noncultic contexts it then enters ordinary discourse as *cursed* or *cut off*, especially cut off from God (*Gal* 1:8-9; *Rom* 9:3; 10:1). Schrage and Davis discuss especially (ii) and (iii).⁶² The absence of the verb in ἀναθέμα Ἰησοῦς permits either the imperatival or subjunctive *Jesus be cursed* or the indicative assertion *Jesus is cursed*. We shall argue that the utterance concerning κύριος is a confession which combines an assertion about Jesus Christ with self-involvement on the part of the speaker. There need to be compelling reasons for understanding the parallel clause in a different way. This will emerge as we set forth the various possibilities, pausing where more general remarks serve our purpose and evaluation. A final assessment, however, awaits the examination of the κύριος confession." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 918.]

tion when especially the Jewish synagogue is pressuring the individual to recant his/her conversion to Christianity, then both declarations become understandable. Another less likely possibility in light of the mentioning of individuals in the church who denied the resurrection of Jesus (cf. chap 15) would be that Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς is referring to the human Jesus in distinction to the spiritual Christ. The most likely scenario is the first one, given the opposition of Christian from the Jewish synagogue depicted by Luke in his account in Acts.

Thus Paul asserts that the authentically πνευματικός individual will claim Jesus as Lord both in confession and living. Notice carefully that for Paul being πνευματικός, *spiritual*, means ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν, i.e., being guided by the Spirit of God. It has nothing to do with status oriented actions such as ecstatic speech etc. It does not mean being able to speak directly with God in a some kind of heavenly language. Instead, πνευματικός means being under the guidance of the Holy Spirit doing the will of God. The emphasis flow from God to the individual, not the reverse direction understood from the Corinthian's pagan background. This pagan background from the religious atmosphere of Corinth represented a total misunderstanding of authentic πνευματικός. This Paul intended to correct in his discussion in 12:4-14:40.

Partitio 1, 12:4-6. 4 Διαρέσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσίν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα 5 καὶ διαρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσίν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος 6 καὶ διαρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσίν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. **4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.**

In this beginning expansion of the general theme of τῶν πνευματικῶν, the apostle puts on the table the idea of unity in the midst of diversity.

Διαρέσεις χαρισμάτων εἰσίν,
τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα
καὶ διαρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσίν,
καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος
καὶ διαρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσίν,
ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς
ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

**Diversities of giftings exist
but one Spirit
and diversities of ministries exist
and the same Lord
and diversities of enablings exist,
but the same God
who enables all things in all people.**

The diversity emphasis is found in the threefold use of διαρέσεις, the plural of διαίρεσις. What precisely does διαρέσεις mean?²⁴⁸ The context emphasis

²⁴⁸In the NT it [διαίρεω] obviously means ‘to apportion and

12.4 δὲ
468 Διαρέσεις χαρισμάτων εἰσίν,
δὲ
469 τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα ·
12.5 καὶ
470 διαρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσίν,
καὶ
471 ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος ·
12.6 καὶ
472 διαρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσίν,
δὲ
473 ὁ αὐτὸς θεὸς
ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα
ἐν πᾶσιν.

here is on divine distribution of various χαρισμάτων, *grace giftings*, διακονιῶν, *ministries*, and ἐνεργημάτων, *enablings*. But the tendency of many commentators is to draw too sharp a distinction between ‘distinctions’ and ‘distributions.’ In the subsequent amplification both ideas received emphasis from Paul. The main point of διαρέσεις is to stress that the three fold blessings defined come as distributions from God. They are not humanly produced. The concluding declaration in v. 11 makes this point very clear: πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται. **And all these are enabled by the one and same Spirit distributing to each one individually just as He chooses.**

distribute,’ as in Lk. 15:12: τὸν βίον; 1 C. 12:11: τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, διαροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται. The πνεῦμα allots the gifts of the Spirit to the various members of the community according to His will.

διαίρεσις has three important meanings in secular Greek: “separation or dissolution”; “division” either generally or logically; and “distribution,” as the apportionment of property or an estate in the pap.1 In the LXX it means “distribution” in Jdt. 9:4; Sir. 14:5; or “what is distributed”: a. a part in ψ 135:13 (parts of the sea), or Jos. 19:51 V 1, p 185 == 19:8f. (an inheritance); or b. a “division,” as in Ju. 5:16; εἰς διαίρεσις Ρουβὴν == 5:15: εἰς τὰς μερίδας Ρουβὴν == clan; 1 Ch. 24:1; 2 Ch. 8:14; 35:5, 10, 12; 2 Esr. 6:18: courses of priests; 1 Ch. 26:19: διαίρεσις τῶν πυλωρῶν, 1 Ch. 27:1–15: divisions of the army.

“So far as concerns 1 C. 12:4 f.), this can be decided only from the context. The plur. διαίρεσις, the opposition to τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, and the parallelism with the basic concept of ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος (v. 7) all favour ‘distribution’ rather than ‘distinction.’ The one Spirit is manifested in apportionments of gifts of the Spirit, so that in the community the one χάρις of God is experienced by charismatics in these distributions (of χαρίσματα). The one concept διαίρεσις here includes both distribution and what is distributed.

In early patristic writing we find the peculiar use of διαίρεσις to denote the distinction in the intertrinitarian relationship. Cf. Athénag. Suppl., 10:3: τὴν ἐν τῇ ἐνώσει δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Cf. 12, 2; Tatian, 5, 1 f.; Origin. Joh., II, 10, 74.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:184–185.]



What is then distributed? *χαρισμάτων, grace gifts, διακονιών, ministries, and ένεργημάτων, enablings* is Paul's answer. One should be careful to not draw much distinction between these three groupings. Essentially they refer to the same fundament entity depicted three different ways. The individual blessings are first '*gifts of God's grace, χαρισμάτων*'.²⁴⁹ Thus no believer earns or deserves them. But they are also *διακονιών, ministries*.²⁵⁰ That is, these blessings are intended to benefit others through service to them, and not the individual recipient. Thirdly, these blessings are *ένεργημάτων, enablings*.²⁵¹ That is, the blessings are realized only through the infusion of divine strength and power -- something done only as the believer seeks to use them proper to serve others. In brilliant fashion Paul sets up an inner linking of the idea of divine blessings with all three aspects essential to authentic blessing from God.

Boy, the self glorifying and elitist mentality that Paul has targeted throughout the letter really receives a hard blow here. If one seeks to be blessed of God, then he/she must seek that blessing within the framework laid out by Paul. It comes not as reward for self accomplishment. It must be utilized in service to others. Its spiritual strength depends solely upon the enabling presence of God through His Spirit. This completely dismantles the seeking of spiritual gifts for self glorification, as many of the Corinthians were doing. It's easy to understand Paul's earlier declaration in 3:1-3.

1 Κάγω, άδελφοί, ουκ ήδυνήθην λαλήσαι ύμίν ως πνευματικοίς άλλ' **ώς σαρκίνοις, ως νηπίοις έν Χριστώ**.
2 γάλα ύμάς έπότισα, ου βρώμα· ουπω γάρ έδύνασθε. άλλ' ουδέ έτι νυν δύνασθε, 3 έτι γάρ σαρκικοί έστε. όπου γάρ έν ύμίν ζήλος και έρις, ουχι σαρκικοί έστε και κατά άνθρωπον περιπατείτε;

1 And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but **rather as people of the**

²⁴⁹χαρισμα is a Pauline word in the NT with 16 of the 17 NT uses in his writings. Clearly he plays off root idea of the word group χαίρω, χαρά, συγχαίρω, χάρις, χαρίζομαι, χαριτώ, άχάριστος, χάρισμα, εύχαριστέω, εύχαριστία, εύχάριστος. The idea of χάρις, grace, stands foundational with χάρισμα as a concrete expression of divine χάρις.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964—), 9:359.]

²⁵⁰διακονία is a heavily used word by Paul with 24 of the 34 NT uses in his writings. A part of the word group διακονέω, διακονία, διάκονος, the emphasis is upon helping others in humble service.

²⁵¹This less frequently used word (2x in NT) is exclusively a Pauline First Corinthians term (12:6, 10). A part of the larger word group έργον, έργάζομαι, έργάτης, έργασία, ένεργής, ένεργεια, ένεργέω, ένεργημα, ευεργεσία, ευεργετέω, ευεργέτης, the noun ένεργημα stresses action that has been put into effect. The English word 'energized' is pretty close to the Greek noun in meaning.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964—), 2:635.]

flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?

In Paul's three fold stress on divine blessings, he repeats the exclusive divine source three times as well: τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, but the same Spirit; καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος, **and the same Lord**; ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ένεργῶν τὰ πάντα έν πᾶσιν, **but the same God who enables all things among all people**. Blessing to the believer is totally and completely dependent upon God, His grace and strength. Special emphasis is given to the third declaration in order to emphasis that only within the continuing strength of God can His blessing be used for the benefit of others. In clear terms Paul is condemning the selfish orientation of so many of the Corinthians. For them, elitism was based upon "God, look at what I am doing for you." It was intently concerned that others think the same way toward the elitist. Such thinking is utterly condemned by Paul here. Plus any possible effort at 'status ranking' of the various blessings, or gifts, is likewise condemned by Paul here.

Confirmatio 1, 12:7-31a. Based on the premise set forth in vv. 4-6, Paul now applies and amplifies his principles concerning spiritual blessings. First he turns to specifying some of these blessings more precisely (vv. 7-11). Then using the analogy of a body, both literally as a human body and figuratively as the community as the body of Christ, Paul applies the principles of vv. 4-6 to the issue of factions in the Corinthian community in vv. 12-31a with the central theme of unity.

Illustrations of spiritual blessings, vv. 7-11. 7 **έκάστῳ δὲ δίδοται ή φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον. 8 ὃ μὲν γάρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδοται λόγος σοφίας, άλλῳ δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατά τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, 9 έτέρῳ πίστις έν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, άλλῳ δὲ χαρίσματα ιαμάτων έν τῷ ένί πνεύματι, 10 άλλῳ δὲ ένεργήματα δυνάμεων, άλλῳ [δέ] προφητεία, άλλῳ [δέ] διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, έτέρῳ γένη γλωσσῶν, άλλῳ δὲ έρμηνεία γλωσσῶν 11 πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ένεργεῖ τὸ έν και τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαιροῦν ίδία έκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.**

12.7	δὲ	
474	ἐκάστῳ δίδονται ἢ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος	πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.
12.8	γὰρ	διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος
475	ὧ μὲν...δίδονται λόγος σοφίας,	δὲ
476	ἄλλῳ λόγος γνώσεως (δίδονται)	κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα,
477	12.9 ἑτέρῳ πίστις (δίδονται)	ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι,
478	ἄλλῳ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων (δίδονται)	ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι,
12.10	δὲ	
479	ἄλλῳ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων (δίδονται),	[δὲ]
480	ἄλλῳ προφητεία (δίδονται),	[δὲ]
481	ἄλλῳ διακρίσεις πνευμάτων (δίδονται),	
482	ἑτέρῳ γένη γλωσσῶν, (δίδονται),	δὲ
483	ἄλλῳ ἐρμηνεία γλωσσῶν	
12.11	δὲ	
484	πάντα ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν	καὶ
485	τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ	καθὼς βούλεται.

The header statement (v. 7) sets up the illustration of nine examples of specific spiritual blessings for ministry to others in vv. 8-10. Verse 11 both summarizes and reapplies the earlier principles in vv. 4-6. What is central in Paul's emphasis here is not specific 'gifts' but the use of all spiritual blessings for the benefit of the community, rather than the individual. Paul does not have any sort of 'master list' of spiritual gifts. He knows quite well that the work of the Holy Spirit can never be boxed into such a man made listing!

7 ἐκάστῳ δὲ δίδονται ἢ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Here τῶν πνευματικῶν in v. 1, which is first expanded by the threefold definition in vv. 4-6, is now labeled ἢ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος, **the manifestation of the Spirit**. In the other use of ἢ φανέρωσις in 2 Cor. 4:2, the emphasis is upon a public declaration. The adverb φανερώς built off the same root stresses **openly, publicly** in contrast to ἐν κρυπτῷ or κρυπτῶς, **in secret or secretly**, as its opposite. That is, the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual member of the community will be obvious, rather than secret or hidden. How? The prepositional phrase defines this as πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον, **for the common advantage**.²⁵² That

²⁵²To the primary criterion of pointing to the Lordship of Christ or Christlikeness (12:3) as a mark of being authentically activated by the Spirit, Paul now adds a second criterion: the Spirit is

is, when the Holy Spirit is active in a believer's life it will be seen in ministry actions to others, the διαιρέσεις διακονιῶν of v. 5.

In vv. 8-10, a specification of nine areas of activities by the Holy Spirit are given. Despite innumerable efforts to categorize these, such efforts are useless and a waste of time.²⁵³ Plus, this attempt dangerously moves in the direction of attaching differing values on these that the spiritual elitists at Corinth were doing. This Paul was condemning soundly. But even worse is what I have personally seen attempted in a Texas congregation. That is, a compilation of the various listings²⁵⁴

at work where the public manifestation serves the common advantage of others, and not merely self-affirmation, self-fulfillment, or individual status. The Spirit produces visible effects for the profit of all, not for self-glorification. If the latter is prominent, suspicion is invited. δίδονται reflects both a continuous process of giving, and the sovereignty of God in choosing and in freely giving.⁵³⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 936.]

²⁵³Numerous attempts have been made to 'classify' the nine instances of gifts which Paul now enumerates. Weiss and Allo are among those who perceive a triad of triads here, while Collins argues for a 2 + 5 + 2 chiasmus.¹ Bengel and Meyer divide the list into three: (a) gifts which relate to 'intellectual power': λόγος σοφίας, λόγος γνώσεως (v. 8); (b) those which depend on 'special energy of faith': πίστις, ἰάματα, δυναμεις, προφητεία, διακρίσεις πνευμάτων (vv. 9-10a); and (c) 'Charismata which have reference to the γλώσσαι: γένη γλωσσῶν, ἐρμηνεία γλωσσῶν (v. 10b)' (Meyer's italics).² Tertullian began similarly by marking off (a) the first two gifts as *sermo intelligentiae et consilii*; but then subdivided (b) πίστις as *spiritus religionis et timoris Dei* from (c) ἰάματα and δυνάμεις as *valentiae spiritus*; and finally (d) προφητεία, διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, γένη γλωσσῶν and ἐρμηνεία γλωσσῶν.³⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 937.]

²⁵⁴**Rom. 12:4-8.** 4 καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν, τὰ δὲ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πράξιν, 5 οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σώματι ἑσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ' εἰς ἀλλήλων μέλη. 6 ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, 7 εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, 8 εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει· ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.



into a 'master list' which served as the basis of a complete reorganization of the administrative structure of a modern congregation.²⁵⁵ It was a fiasco of the first

1 Cor. 12:8-10. 8 ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, 9 ἐτέρω πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἄλλω δὲ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι, 10 ἄλλω δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, ἄλλω [δὲ] προφητεία, ἄλλω [δὲ] διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, ἐτέρω γένη γλωσσῶν, ἄλλω δὲ ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν 8 *To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*

1 Cor. 12:27-31a. 27 Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. 28 καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. 29 μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφῆται; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις; 30 μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν; 31 ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. 27 *Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But strive for the greater gifts.*

Eph. 4:11-14. 11 Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, 12 πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 13 μέχρι κατανήσωμεν οὐ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 14 ἵνα μηκέτι ὦμεν νήπιοι, κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδεῖαν τῆς πλάνης, 11 *The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.*

²⁵⁵“Different ‘lists’ of instantiations of gifts in Paul assume various shapes and sizes. Four lists occur in Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor 12:8–11; 12:27–28; and Eph 4:11. On this basis Dunn prefers to distinguish thematically between gifts which relate respectively to miracles, revelation, inspired utterance, and service, perceiving all of them to proceed from divine grace.⁴ Above all, ‘charisma is always an event, the gracious activity (ἐνέργημα) of God through a man.’⁵ The word ‘event,’ however, may be open to question. Paul’s charisma of living a celibate life without distraction no doubt entailed a continuous divine sustaining. In his earlier work Dunn’s use of ‘event’ slides too readily into assumptions about ‘spontaneity,’ but in his volume on Paul’s theology (1998) he fully recognizes that these gifts include ‘more humdrum tasks and organizational roles, as the more eye-catching.... The grace was in the giving, we might say, not in the form of the manifestation.’⁶ He

order and eventually ripped the congregation apart into bitter division. The futility of such efforts becomes clear when measured carefully against the scripture text, in large measure because they in reality attempt to do essentially the same thing that the Corinthian elitists were attempting.

God will never bless such an overt rejection of His Word given through the apostle Paul! That is, primary emphasis is placed on what the individual believer possesses. Paul condemns such individual seeking and reminds us that the bottom line is the spiritual well being of the community. The good news is that each believer has a contribution to make to the common advantage of the community. In the hugely class conscious society of first century Corinth that was most inspiring and encouraging. Plus, no contribution is valued over all the others by God. Even better good news!

What are the manifestations of the Spirit described here by Paul? Note the syntax of the Greek in vv. 8-10:

ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται

- λόγος σοφίας,
- ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα,
- ἐτέρω πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι,
- ἄλλω δὲ **χαρίσματα** ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι,
- ἄλλω δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων,
- ἄλλω [δὲ] προφητεία,
- ἄλλω [δὲ] διακρίσεις πνευμάτων,
- ἐτέρω γένη γλωσσῶν,
- ἄλλω δὲ ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν

Note the grouping of the first two with ὃ μὲν... ἄλλω δὲ, *to the one on the one hand...but to the other....* The common use of λόγος but with the distinction of σοφίας and γνώσεως motivates the structure. Logos here is best understood as either as ‘utterance’ or ‘articulate utterance.’²⁵⁶ Against the backdrop of 16 uses of σοφία

adds: the ‘event’ character should not be ‘overpressed.... 1 Cor 14:26–32 suggests a mixture of prepared contribution and some spontaneous utterance’ (my italics).⁷ Such gifts as teaching and critically evaluating can hardly be ‘spontaneous,’ but are habits of trained judgment marked precisely by a continuity of the Spirit’s giving as a process over time (cf. Rom 12:7–8; 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 4:11). ‘Almsgiving’ and ‘works of mercy’ (Rom 12:8) may well seem ‘more excellent’ if the use of the gifts is planned, deliberate, and entails a conscious act of will and service rather than a spontaneous welling up of a gesture without reflection. We shall note the importance of Theissen’s claims (in effect, against Dunn) that ‘tongues,’ e.g., far from being merely spontaneous, may reflect ‘socially learned behavior.’⁸ This issue is discussed further with reference especially to healing and to prophecy.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 937–938.]

²⁵⁶“We insert **on his or her part** to provide a gender-inclusive way of communicating the contrastive particles which qualify the distribution or apportionment of gifts: ὃ μὲν ... ἄλλω δέ.... It is quite unsatisfactory to translate λόγος as *word*, even if in Chris-



inside First Corinthians (1:17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 30; 2:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13; 3:19) the idea here is the wisdom of God provided to the believer.²⁵⁷ From Paul's earlier discus-

sion of σοφία the central emphasis of the term has to be understood as insight into God's unique working in the cross of Christ to provide salvation.

Drawing a clear distinction between σοφία and γνῶσις is virtually impossible within either First Corin-

comments suggest. Kistemaker, Dunn, Schatzmann, and Schrage broadly view the articulation of 'wisdom' as the intelligible communication of the purposes of God, as focused in the 'reversals' of the cross (1:26–31), for the world and for the common advantage of all believers. We can but speculate whether this could include 'inspired messages' for specific individuals; certainly there is no firm evidence to warrant such an understanding. If we interpret the phrase to reflect Paul's other uses of σοφία in this epistle, such an utterance seems more than likely to allude to Christ-centered gospel wisdom. It would not, in other contexts, denote simply some convenient communication without any implicit christological connection. The introductory formulae in 12:1–3 and in 12:4–7 also lead us to expect such a function and content. Wisdom relates to building up the community for the common advantage of all through appropriation of the power and lifestyle of Christ. Craig goes so far as to allude to 1 Corinthians 1–4 to urge the conclusion that the first two of the nine 'gifts' (and probably several others) refer to 'the teaching ministries of the church.'¹⁷

"A hint from Chrysostom might seem to imply a different understanding. Chrysostom regards the 'spiritual gifts' in general in 12:1–11 as 'such as used to occur but now no longer take place.'¹⁸ Further, whereas he comments in detail on 12:1–7, he simply repeats the text of vv. 8–10 without comment, as if to imply that we can know nothing about the meaning of these gifts, which, he seems to imply, have ceased.¹⁹ Tertullian, however, returns to christological perspectives. The utterance which relates to wisdom is 'the Spirit of wisdom' to which Isaiah alludes: the messianic anointing of Isa 11:1–3 anticipates the christological counterparts in 1 Cor 12:8–11.²⁰ Wisdom and knowledge, for Tertullian, is gospel wisdom and gospel knowledge.²¹ Clement of Alexandria stresses the unity and diversity of the gifts rather than their content, except to comment that they are 'apostolic,' i.e., reflect the 'knowledge, life, preaching, righteousness, purity and prophecy' of the apostles, concerning especially 'faith in Christ and the knowledge of the gospel.'²² Origen is quite clear that 'in the catalogue of charismata bestowed by God, Paul placed first λόγος σοφίας ... because he regarded proclamation (λόγος) as higher than miraculous powers.'²³

"Among older modern writers Godet and Heinrici echo the same point. Godet stresses an intellectual grasp of gospel principles; Heinrici interprets λόγος σοφίας as knowledge of salvation communicated to others.²⁴ Allo stresses the compatibility between the agency of the Holy Spirit and intellectual insight, citing the interpretation of this verse by Thomas Aquinas.²⁵ Allo's understanding borders on permitting a more individualistic view, as entailing knowledge of God's intimate purposes, but the emphasis remains on the intellectual. On the other hand, Héring points out that wisdom in the LXX tradition includes especially moral guidance for life.²⁶ Yet in the light of James Davis's study of Jewish sapiential traditions, this must not be understood to take us into the domain of 'achievement' rather than of divine grace.²⁷ We have already noted the kerygmatic aspect urged by Wolff, Collins, and Schrage."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 938–941.]

"Wisdom, in this context, becomes an evaluation of realities in the light of God's grace and the cross of Christ. It is part of a response to grace.¹³ Dunn compares 2 Cor 1:12 in this context: 'not by human wisdom but by the grace of God.'¹⁴ But it is the articulate utterance of this wisdom. Hence it relates to 'God's plan of salvation' and its articulation or communication. Schatzmann and Schrage confirm this point. First, Paul emphasizes 'the actual utterance of wisdom which becomes a shared experience because it results in the upbuilding of the body'; second, 'From 1 Cor. 1–3 it is almost certain that Paul identified the wisdom from God with God's saving deed in the crucified Christ, particularly in the proclamation of the saving event.'¹⁵ It relates primarily to 'the revelation of God in the cross.'¹⁶

"Some popular interpretations of this phrase are therefore clearly far more individualistic and pragmatic than the above

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thians and the larger body of all of his letters.²⁵⁸ Perhaps

²⁵⁸There is no consensus whatever about any clear distinction between (1) λόγος σοφίας ... and (2) λόγος γνώσεως. ‘Knowledge’ (γνώσις) is no less a Corinthian catchphrase than ‘wisdom’ (see above on 1:5; 8:1, 7, 10, 11; also on 13:2, 8 and 14:6). Of twenty uses of the noun γνώσις in Paul (excluding Ephesians and the Pastorals) no less than seventeen occur in 1 and 2 Corinthians, of which nine appear in 1 Corinthians, while only nine or ten further uses occur through Ephesians, the Pastorals, and the rest of the NT (three in 2 Pet. 1:5, 6; 3:18). In his initial thanksgiving (1:4–9) Paul gave thanks that the Corinthians had been made rich ἐν παντί λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει, while in 8:1 the fundamental contrast is set up between ἀγάπη as that which builds up and γνώσις as that inflates. Hence, just as wisdom occurs in this epistle both in a pejorative sense of human status-seeking and achievement and in a positive sense as the divine wisdom of the cross, so knowledge in a ‘proto-gnostic’ or ‘standing-on-one’s-rights’ frame means ‘the static, cognitive epistemology of the gnostics’ and in a positive, relational, christological frame ‘a dynamic affectional relationship from knowledge of God to being known by God’ (Yeo).²⁸ Moreover, ‘wisdom and knowledge appear together among the basic elements of the spirit of the children of light in IQS 4:3–4. The Qumran text lists them at the end ...’ (Collins).²⁹

‘Bengel assigns a more theoretical role to articulate utterance relating to “wisdom” and a more practical role to discourse relating to “knowledge” (sapientiae ... cognitionis ...); for “knowledge relates to things to be done; wisdom to things eternal; hence wisdom is not said to pass away (13:8) and knowledge occurs more frequently.”³⁰ Paul speaks of these gifts as if they were daily events for the Corinthians (quae Corinthiis sint quotidianae); but today we encounter ambiguity about the force of the words and their distinction (hodie de ipsarum vocum vi et differentia ambigimus). Meyer, however, takes an opposing, even a reverse view, anticipating Yeo about the relational significance of γνώσις.³¹ Augustine observes that for Paul “in Christ Jesus are hidden all the treasurers of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3); hence in 1 Cor 12:8, although wisdom may relate to “divine things” and “knowledge to human things,” both aspects concern the believer’s relationship to Christ, activated through the Spirit.³²

‘Elsewhere Augustine comments that Paul ‘certainly distinguishes these two things, although he does not there explain the difference, nor in what way one may be distinguished from the other.’³³ In yet another reference Augustine relates wisdom to the intellectual understanding of eternal realities, and knowledge to ‘rational cognizance of temporal things,’ which come as gifts from the Holy Spirit who is beyond the merely earthly.³⁴ If in On the Trinity, 5:4, he stresses the unity and sovereignty of the Spirit, in John 21 Augustine draws attention to the definitive nature of God’s apportioning of gifts to one (e.g., λόγος σοφίας) and differently to another (e.g., λόγος γνώσεως) as no more a person’s business than Peter’s query ‘Lord, what about this man?’ (John 21:21) and Jesus’ reply ‘What is that to you? You go on following me’ (21:22).³⁵

‘All this comes close to Dunn’s conclusion: ‘Gnōsis and sophia ... present us with special difficulties ... because in the Corinthian letters in particular they are not Paul’s own choice of expression; his use of them has been determined in large measure by the situation which he addresses at Corinth.... This is why gnosis keeps recurring within the Corinthian letters and only rarely elsewhere.’³⁶ After this introduction, however, Dunn hazards the view that since knowledge in 8:1, 4, concerns idols and monotheism, ‘knowledge here, then, is an insight into the real nature of the cosmos.... ‘Utterance of knowledge’ may therefore quite properly be

understood as a word spoken under inspiration giving an insight into cosmical realities and relationships.’³⁷ On the other hand, Dunn perceives a ‘broad parallel’ between wisdom and ‘revelation and grace,’ and his later book on Paul’s theology constructively relates these two gifts to Rom 12:6–8 in terms of a general gift of speech for ‘prophecy, teaching, encouraging’ in contrast to gifts which relate specifically to action.³⁸

‘While his account of knowledge contains elements of conjecture for interpreting 12:8, Dunn makes the valid point that Paul’s focus on the utterance or discourse of wisdom and knowledge suggests that the gift character of the Spirit’s activation includes the moment and mode of their use: ‘The charisma of God is no possession of man to be used at his will.’³⁹ However, in his earlier work he also argues, ‘only in the act and moment for uttering it.’⁴⁰ I firmly agree that since utterances are speech-acts in time, the temporal dimension is fundamental to the character of the gift as gift. But in this early work Dunn too readily translates this into modern notions of ‘spontaneity.’ *In my view, these gifts are not given primarily in the moment of their use, but for such a moment.* Part of the sovereignty of God and of God as Spirit consists in his giving gifts for the common advantage of all which find visible expression at the right moment of pastoral timing. But this in no way contradicts the notion of a trained, habituated disposition, shaped and nourished by the Holy Spirit for use at the moment of God’s choice. This is different from popular assumptions about ‘flashes of insight’ into this or that particular situation. While the text does not exclude this, it offers no evidence for it.⁴¹

‘Bittlinger tends to overlook the specific issues which concern wisdom and knowledge in the Corinthian situation. Nevertheless, his link with Jesus’ promise of the Spirit to provide intelligible or articulate utterance in difficult situations, such as that of persecution, provides a convincing allusion to pre-Pauline traditions of the words of Jesus.⁴² Our earlier comments suggest that this would apply especially to the articulation of the gospel. However, Bittlinger’s attempts to distinguish this from ‘the word of knowledge’ remain more speculative and less contextually determined.⁴³ His comments about the situational dimension of utterance serve to underline our observation about God’s choice of timing of the use of gifts, which have molded the believer’s disposition to respond to situations in appropriate ways. This relates the gift of utterance to holiness and to Christlikeness, as we should expect if they are Spirit-given.

‘Senft views both as ‘gifts of theological reflection.’⁴⁴ This is a helpful counter-balance against ad hoc notions of spontaneous intuition, but it offers only one component within the larger framework explored here. We must not neglect the weight of scholarship, which emphasizes the reflective and dialectic nature of the gift as a habit of mind or a bestowed skill. Thus Banks interprets λόγος γνώσεως as the gift of ‘understanding the Old Testament, Christian tradition, and the capacity to expound them correctly.’⁴⁵ But H. Schürmann insists that as a ‘gift of the Spirit’ who works in the depths of the human heart the phrase denotes ‘pneumatic understanding, from the depth of the human spirit, directed more toward the practical.’⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the rediscovery of a wisdom-related rationality embedded in historical and practical life which has emerged since the 1960s in such writers as H.-G. Gadamer, B. Lonergan, A. MacIntyre, and Paul Ricoeur may help us here.⁴⁷ They may save us from allowing our exegesis to be shaped by imposing upon the text an illusory alternative: either abstract rationalist reflection based on the model of Enlightenment philosophy or an interactive search for creative spontaneity based on the



the slight difference relates to divinely provided insight into the Gospel (σοφίας) and divinely understanding of how the Gospel impacts life (γνώσεως).

Another tendency of modern interpreters is to read either the rationalism of the Enlightenment into both of these as theological reflection or as creative spontaneity based on the model of pietism and Romanticism. That the action of the Spirit comes either from reflection that can explain coherently or from spontaneously in making the utterance is a false dichotomy dictated by eisegesis rather than by exegesis. Paul draws no such artificial distinctions. His agenda is very different.

The syntactical arrangement of vv. 9-10 group these closer to one another:

ἐτέρω πίστις

ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι,

ἄλλω δὲ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων

ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι,

ἄλλω δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων,

ἄλλω [δὲ] προφητεία,

ἄλλω [δὲ] διακρίσεις πνευμάτων,

ἐτέρω γένη γλωσσῶν,

ἄλλω δὲ ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν

to another faith

by the same Spirit

but to another grace gifts of healings,

by the same Spirit

but to another workings of powers,

but to another prophecy

but to another discernments of spirits

to another different kinds of tongues

but to another interpretation of tongues.

All of these assume the core clause expression at the beginning: ᾧ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδοται, **to one through the Spirit has been given....** The contrastives are set up with

ᾧ μὲν // ἄλλω δὲ (v. 8);

ἐτέρω // ἄλλω δὲ, ἄλλω δὲ, ἄλλω δὲ (vv. 9-10a);

ἐτέρω // ἄλλω δὲ (v. 10b).

Thus in vv. 9-10, πίστις is set in contrast to χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, προφητεία, and διακρίσεις πνευμάτων (1//4). Also γένη γλωσσῶν with ἐτέρω is set in contrast to ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν as an additional grouping (1//1). This structure should not be

model of pietism and Romanticism. This passage poses no such false alternative. Paul does not seek the wisdom of the Sophists, but neither does he disparage practical reflection and judicious evaluation.⁴⁸ Gifts of articular communicative utterance may draw on wisdom and knowledge from God especially when this serves both ‘the common good’ of all and the proclamation of the cross. (This is a far cry from some modern notions about coded messages for the welfare of individuals.)

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 941–944.]

overlooked in the exegesis. The three pronouns ὅς, ἄλλος, and ἕτερος carry nuances of meaning in this kind of usage that are virtually impossible to preserve in translation.

(v. 8): **To one individual**, ᾧ, comes λόγος σοφίας, **articulate speaking with divine insight**. But ἄλλω, **to another**, comes λόγος γνώσεως, **articulate speaking with divine understanding**. The μὲν...δὲ adds contrast, while ᾧ and ἄλλω highlight commonality, which is then directly stated in κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, **by the same Spirit**. Speculation on the difference between σοφίας and γνώσεως is both endless and largely useless. Whatever the slight difference between the two may be, it is little more than “twiddle Dee & twiddle Dum” in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. In both instances the Spirit of God provides perception of the things of God that can be explained helpfully to the entire community of believers.

(vv. 9-10): Here ἐτέρω, **to another**, stands in contrast to ἄλλω, **to another**, which is repeated four times. Thus these four entities stand in contrast to the first one in the listing. That is, πίστις, **faith**, stands in contrast to χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, **grace gifts of healings**; ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, **enablings of powers**; προφητεία, **prophecy**; and διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, **discernments of spirits**. The ἐτέρω and ἄλλω pronouns highlight contrast between the two. The unity idea comes with the ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, **by the same Spirit** and ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι, **by the one Spirit**, which repeats κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, **according to the same Spirit** in v. 8.²⁵⁹ A pair of real challenges emerge

²⁵⁹Interpreters differ in placing emphasis on unity or on diversity in this chapter. But Dale Martin, Harrington, and Lategan argue convincingly that in these verses, at least, *Paul places his emphasis on the unity of source which lies behind a diversity of phenomena*. In spite of G. Wright’s arguments that Paul here portrays God as a God of diversity, Martin observes, ‘Thus in 12:4–11 Paul continually stresses unity in diversity in order to overcome divisiveness owing to different valuations being assigned to different gifts, with tongues as the implied higher-status gift.’¹ Lategan argues that the body imagery which expresses a careful balance between unity and diversity here undergoes revision and qualification in the light of the same Spirit ... the same Lord ... the same God (vv. 4–6) in order to stress that the diversity is secondary to the unity.² The cohesive bestowal of the gifts ensures their fundamental unity. Thus both contextually and theologically the unity constitutes the major emphasis in vv. 4–11, since ‘building’ provides the cohesive goal and purpose of the gifts, whatever their variety. Harrington stresses unity of source where Lategan stresses unity of goal and Martin underlines the unity of community. The ‘one source’ is not only the one Spirit (12:1–3), but God as giver of grace through Christ and the Spirit.³ Hence the Corinthian elitist talk of πνευματικῶν (12:1) is transposed by Paul into unifying speech about χαρισμάτων (12:4). Collins also argues that ‘the same Spirit’ holds the unit together, and the principle finds a parallel in Rom 12:6–8 and in Paul’s own example as one who constantly alludes to grace.⁴ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 941–944.]



here in the effort to grasp what Paul is talking about.

First, what does πίστις in this context reference? Normally πίστις inside the NT means a faith surrender of oneself to Christ as Saviour and Lord. But the contrastive context of its usage here means that πίστις has a different meaning. Clearly it moves beyond what is required of all Christians since it is something given to ἑτέρῳ, *another*, i.e., one Christian in distinction from others.

But what is that 'beyondness'?²⁶⁰ Paul does not

mans, 2000), 928–929.]

²⁶⁰“It is universally agreed, or virtually so, that in this verse πίστις, faith, cannot therefore refer to saving faith, or to appropriation of salvation by grace through faith, since Paul explicitly attributes to the Spirit the apportioning of this gift ἑτέρῳ, i.e., to someone who is different from, or other than, certain Christians or even the majority of believers. It is a specific gift reserved for specific persons. By definition, therefore, it cannot designate that faith through which all who are believers (cf. Paul’s semantic opposite to believer as ἄπιστος, 7:13) are indeed ‘believers’ or Christians. Bruce observes: ‘not the saving faith which is basic to all Christian life, but a special endowment of faith for a special service (cf. 13:2b),’ while Collins calls it ‘something different from the faith that characterizes all believers.’⁵¹

“This admirably sums up the point. But some wish to be more specific. Conzelmann thinks that it should be linked to the next two of the nine gifts: ‘accordingly, not faith, but apparently the ability to perform miracles (13:2) and thus akin to the χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, gifts of healing.’⁵² Fee offers an intermediate proposal: ‘It probably refers to a supernatural conviction that God will reveal his power or mercy in a special way in a specific instance.’⁵³ Bittlinger acknowledges that this gift is not ‘saving faith,’ but then appeals to instances (e.g., Hebrews 11) which are offered as paradigms of faith in general.⁵⁴ According to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, all faith entails a willingness to act or to venture in the present on the basis of a reality which has yet to become fully visible when it finally occurs. Thus Luther defines saving faith as ‘a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life upon it a thousand times. This confidence in God’s grace ... makes men glad and bold...’⁵⁵ But this is no different from the notion of staking one’s life on God’s promise; whether it be on the model of Abraham in Rom 4:13–25 or of Noah, Abraham, and Moses in Heb 11:6–29. We must resist the temptation to make ‘saving faith’ so passive a gift that anything bold or trustful is associated with this specific gift. A distinction here remains essential.⁵⁶ Schatzmann thus speaks of ‘charismatic faith’ (following Hasenhüttl) but adds: ‘provided it does not imply a relegation of justifying faith to a lesser degree of spirituality.’⁵⁷ This may perhaps include ‘a mysterious surge of confidence.’⁵⁸

“Much exegesis becomes speculative because the verse is read through the lens of modern Western individualism. In a community situation, certain specific persons often come onto the scene as ‘gifted’ with a robust confidence that becomes supportive for the entire community. This may or may not presuppose some specific situation of crisis. The second problematic factor is a dualistic worldview which places each gift either too readily in the ‘supernatural’ *Deus ex machina* category or else views it too naturalistically and reductively as merely an enhanced natural capacity. It seems unwise and unnecessary to impose onto Paul dual models of ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ which fell into two only after the rise of English Deism and mechanistic world-views around the end of the

specify what this is; he only sets it in contrast to the following four categories of grace giftedness. The rather useless speculation of commentators trying to give greater preciseness to the idea of πίστις only shows us what it isn’t via speculation. The community contribution aspect of this divine blessing may be the key to a very generalized sense of πίστις as an unusual level of living in absolute dependence upon God that one typically finds among a few members of the congregation. Their example inspires the rest to greater levels of commitment and trust in God to order their lives.

One the other side of the πίστις contrast stands four grace blessings: χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, προφητεία, and διακρίσεις πνευμάτων. Note that three of the four are double references with both nouns in the plural. Only προφητεία is in the singular. The use of the plural with the core noun of the pairs, χαρίσματα, ἐνεργήματα, διακρίσεις takes the abstract noun idea of grace, enablement, discernment and expresses them as concrete expressions rather than just an abstract concept. These are specific actions by believers for the benefit of the entire community²⁶¹; not resident powers vested into the life of individual believers.

The ideas in the four specified actions are not as problematic for understanding. **χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων.** First, ἰαμάτων, *of healings*, is interesting.²⁶² The noun

seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century. We must at the same time leave the door open to include inexplicable, prodigious acts of faith, such as ‘faith to move mountains,’ whatever the metaphorical status of this image (Matt 17:20; 1 Cor 13:2). However, rather than focus on the category of miracle, it is more helpful to consider the conceptual entailments of faith in the God who is Almighty and sovereign in relation to his own world. This links faith here with λόγος γνώσεως (v. 8).⁵⁹ We shall next consider issues about healing, but this will bring us back to further questions about faith (see below).”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 944–946.]

²⁶¹Very likely this emphasis on concrete action toward others in need inside the community of believers serves to highlight the contrastive structure with πίστις which is vertical in core meaning and benefits others by example over against interactive ministry actions as stressed in these four items.

²⁶²“This gift of various kinds of healing does not appear in the comparable samples of gifts in Rom 12:3–8 and Ephesians 4:11. Indeed, the specific noun ἴαμα, healing, occurs in the NT only here and in 12:28, 30, although the cognate verb ἰάομαι occurs nineteen times in the Gospels (including twelve times in Luke), four times in Acts, and once each in Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter. The verb does not occur in Paul. The main alternative word for to heal, θεραπεύω, occurs some forty times in the Gospels and Acts, but not in Paul, and elsewhere in the NT only twice (in Rev 13:3, 12). Under the semantic domain of healing, Louw and Nida list only ἰάομαι, to heal, to cause a change from an earlier state, to cure; ἴαμα (only in



ἴαμα is only found here (3x) in all of the NT: vv. 9, 28, 30. Paul never uses the verb form ἰάομαι that is used some 33 times mostly in the gospels in reference to Jesus' actions. Neither does Paul use the other terms *θεραπεία* / *θεραπεύω* having to do with curing diseases in ancient Greek. It is not listed in any of the three other so-called gift lists.²⁶³ In the first century perception of disease and cures one should not ever read a post Enlightenment mindset that distinguishes between 'natural' and 'supernatural' enter into the exegesis of this text.²⁶⁴ That God can and does work through hu-

Cor 2:3–5; 2 Cor 12:8; Gal 4:15) indicate that the final decision lies with God's sovereign choice. Would Paul entirely provide warrant for Max Turner's principle about 'expecting' healing as joyful anticipations of 'the holistic nature of God's eschatological salvation' in the light of his eschatology in 1 Cor 4:8–13?²⁶⁹

"The plural, which implies various kinds of healings, should also be given its full scope. The kinds may appear to include sudden or gradual, physical, psychosomatic, or mental, the use of medication or more 'direct' divine agency, and variations which are not to be subsumed in advance under some stereotypical pattern of expectation.⁷⁰ From within the Pentecostal tradition even if W. R. Jones perceives these nine gifts of vv. 8–10 to be hallmarks of Pentecostal doctrine, nevertheless Donald Gee declared that kinds of healings should 'not preclude' what he called 'the merciful and manifold work of medical healing.'⁷¹ Bengel, too, insists that while these gifts in vv. 9–10 include the miraculous, they do not thereby exclude 'natural remedies' (per naturalia remedia).⁷² It is indeed doubtful whether Conzelmann's mere allusion to hellenistic parallels of miraculous healings as listed in G. Delling's *Antike Wundertexte* assists us in understanding this verse.⁷³ Godet, Meyer, Robertson and Plummer, Goudge, Carson, and Schatzmann confirm the point initially drawn from Edwards that the plural denotes various kinds of healings enacted in a diversity of ways to address a variety of conditions, and not a uniform stereotypical ministry performed by a permanently endowed 'healer.'⁷⁴"

²⁶³With the exception of 1 Cor. 12:9, 28, and 30, Paul appears not to refer to healing at all in his epistles, except implicitly in 2 Cor 12:8, where he writes that three times he prayed that God would remove his thorn in the flesh or sharp physical pain (σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί ... ἴνα με κολαφίζη), but rather than a χάρισμα of healing God gave him ἡ χάρις μου as his sufficiency (ἄρκει σοι), leaving his weakness (ἀσθενεία) without special healing. We discussed above issues about Paul's illness with reference to the hypotheses of Dibelius, Deissmann, and Schweitzer (see above on 2:3, I came to you in weakness ...). Collins argues that Paul 'does not claim for himself the gift of healing.'⁶³ On the other hand, Turner subsumes 'healings' within Paul's claim to preach 'with 'signs and wonders' (Rom 15:18, 19; cf. 1 Thess 1:5) ... 1 Cor 2:2–5.'⁶⁴ (See further below, toward the end of this section.)

"Nevertheless, other parts of the NT associate healing either with God's sovereign choice alone or sometimes with the special kind of faith to which the first part of this verse alludes. Jas 5:15 declares that 'the prayer of faith (ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως) will save (σώσει) the sick or ill person, and the Lord will restore him to health (ἐγερῆ αὐτόν).' Hence Allo, Senft, Kistemaker, and Lange associate the special faith of v. 9a with kinds of healing (v. 9b).⁶⁵ Bruce, Héring, and Barrett offer virtually no comment on healings, presumably believing that everything is self-evident. Schrage refers the use of the plural to traditions of healings performed by Jesus.⁶⁶ But if the majority associate healing with the faith cited in the first part of the verse, and if this faith is a sovereign gift given to specific, chosen persons and not to all believers, Paul may not expect that all believers who need various kinds of healing will necessarily manifest the gift of faith with which healing may be associated. This is given to ἑτέρω, a different person, or another. Fee's comment that the manifestation of the gift is given to the healer, not to the healed, leaves this principle intact.⁶⁷ Moreover, if faith is said to be a condition for healing, this makes it awkward that the special faith is given to ἑτέρω, and *χαρίσματα* *ιαμάτων* to ἄλλω. It is not necessarily the healer who receives the gift of special faith.

"This underlines the corporate rather than individual dimension of these gifts and of Paul's understanding of the apportionment of the Holy Spirit to the church. There is a place for efficacious corporate faith within the community which may influence the effectiveness of the entire community. In other words, to cite Moffatt's understanding of the gift of faith, 'an indomitable assurance that God can overcome any difficulties and meet any emergencies' may be granted to a specific individual in such a way that this radiant confidence in God's grace and sovereignty may pave the way for another to advance processes of healing, and yet another to be restored.⁶⁸ Even so, we must not forget that such counter-examples as Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' and probable problems with health (1

tion of disease and cures one should not ever read a post Enlightenment mindset that distinguishes between 'natural' and 'supernatural' enter into the exegesis of this text.²⁶⁴ That God can and does work through hu-

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[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 946–948.]

²⁶⁴Healers are given varied gifts at varied times for varied tasks, and we should not impose a post-eighteenth-century dualism of 'natural' and 'supernatural' upon the ways in which God chooses to use, or not to use, regular physical means.⁷⁵ As the Pentecostalist writer Donald Gee points out in relation to the Pastoral Epistles, in 1 Tim 5:23 Paul (or a Pauline writer) enjoins Timothy to gain healing of the stomach by drinking wine rather than the more dubious water supply but in 2 Tim 4:10 he leaves Trophimus sick at Miletus.⁷⁶ The illness of Epaphroditus is also mentioned (Phil 2:27).

"Parry reminds us that 'this is the only passage where S. Paul refers to these 'gifts of healing'.⁷⁷ Hence it remains all the more surprising that many writers offer virtually no comment whatever on this phrase. Even Fee, subsequent to a relatively brief comment in his commentary, adds little in his more recent volume of around a thousand pages on the Holy Spirit in Paul's Letters. He writes: 'Gifts of Healings. What this refers to needs little comment.'⁷⁸ He then adds that for Jesus, Paul, and the early church, healing of a physical nature was a 'regular expectation' largely, or at least 'in part,' based on 'OT promises that in a Messianic age God would 'heal' his people.'⁷⁹ Although he concedes that 'healing' also refers to salvation, Fee places weight on Matthew's use of Isa 53:4 as a 'promise for physical healing' in Matt 8:17, supposedly to shed light on the meaning of 1 Cor 12:9. At Corinth, however, the modern visitor has only to witness the astonishing display of body parts recovered from the Temple of Asklepios, the Greek god of healing, to begin to understand the importance of prayers for 'supernatural' healing by a god in the daily life of Corinth.⁸⁰



“At a minimum, however, the issue is far more complex than Fee and several other writers allow. In a Ph.D. thesis (1993) David Petts allows that for Matthew himself the healing miracles of Jesus are perceived as a fulfillment of Isa 53:4: ‘he bore our infirmities.’ But, writing from within a Pentecostal tradition, Petts nevertheless demonstrates that any universal ‘claim’ by believers to be covered by, or to participate in, the atonement of the cross remains of a different order in kind from requests for healing which may (to use Fee’s phrase) be ‘expected,’ but are certainly not always granted.⁸¹ The very fact that the gifts of the Spirit are apportioned out differently to one and to another, and that their bestowal and use is temporally conditioned by God’s sovereign choice, precludes any precise parallel from being drawn.

“Moreover, no ‘gift’ can be claimed unless it is promised. Reconciliation with God and justification by grace constitutes a universal promise to all who appropriate it through acceptance or ‘through faith’ in the Pauline writings. No such universal promise relates to various kinds of healings, subject to fallible human judgments about the ‘promises’ which may be suggested in religious consciousness or personal experience. That these gifts are sometimes (rightly or wrongly) perceived as promises by given communities or individuals need not be denied. But the authentication of such suppositions partly depends on the corporate spread of other gifts in the church, such as teaching, wisdom, and discernment.⁸²

“An exegetical scrutiny leaves open the possibility of gifts of various kinds of healings in whatever mode, through whatever instrument or human agent, and at whatever time God may choose, as one of many specific gifts (*χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων*). Perhaps it is no accident that *χαρίσματα*, which is otherwise omitted in connection with the other gifts in this list, appears explicitly here. Tertullian and Cyril of Alexandria make particular play of the connection between these gifts (including healing) and the anointing of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit in the Spirit’s sevenfold apportionings within the framework of Isa 11:1–3.⁸³ This serves further to modify any simplistic view of healing. On one side, as Tertullian and Cyril stress, Christ is raised by the Father as Lord and ‘has dominion.’ The fallenness of the fallen world with all of its ills stands under his sovereign victory as crumbling in its power. Yet on the other side, Christ’s victory entailed the acceptance of constraints and the limitations of flesh-and-blood vulnerability within the created order. Hence eschatological timing becomes one factor: when is victory complete? The relationship between participation (sharing Christ’s sufferings as a reflection of identification with Christ in his redemptive work) and substitution (Christ wins the victory on behalf of his people) constitutes another factor. Hence Paul stresses the role of the Spirit as a sovereign given, who works unfathomable designs which cannot fully be penetrated until that design is complete at the last day (1 Cor 2:10–16; 4:5).

“This christological and eschatological perspective is found in Augustine and in Basil, who relate the Spirit’s gifts primarily to the purposes of God in Christ in terms of the process of salvation for the world.⁸⁴ The advance of the gospel in the power of the Spirit steadily transposes a variety of evils into goods, and gifts of knowledge, wisdom, healing, and prophetic utterance belong to this holistic, cosmic context of gospel transformation. They are not individualistic universes of self-contained reality.⁸⁵ It is difficult to exaggerate how much part of a post-Enlightenment modern world-view some of the popular religious literature is, when dualistic ‘laws of the supernatural’ are spuriously applied as supposed exegesis. As Peter Mullen observes, Francis McNutt’s claim that “it is always God’s normal will to heal,” together with ‘eleven reasons why God does not always heal,’ is in a very different world

mans including doctors in effecting ‘healing’ is a bottom line affirmation here. In a community perspective, rather than an individualistic one (cf. James 5:13-18), the prayer of one for another can be used by God to effect healing, within the framework of the sovereign will of God. In stark contrast to the myriad of secret ‘incantations’ necessary in the Corinthian the Temple of Asklepios where the priest / priestess had to use the correct one to bring about healing of individuals seeking help at the temple, God’s power is not couched in such nonsense. Inside the community of believers who are blessed of God can be found a divine cure for every kind of illness through the simple prayer of the individuals in the community.

If the first category of *χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων* didn’t have enough controversy built into it, the situation doesn’t get any easier with the subsequent three categories.²⁶⁵

The second grouping, *ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων*, has often been understood as referring to miracles, but this is not clear from the language Paul uses.²⁶⁶ By the

from Paul’s.⁸⁶ The very notion of God’s ‘normal will’ owes more to scientific notions of regularity than to the unfathomable depths of Paul’s Ὡ βᾶθος πλοῦτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ: ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ἰδοὶ αὐτοῦ (Rom 11:33).

“The Pauline context of Christology, eschatology, and corporate ‘building’ is well articulated in the Joint Statement “Gospel and Spirit,” documented in K. McDonnell (ed.), *Presence, Power, Praise*.⁸⁷ On the gift of healings the statement declares: ‘All true wholeness, health, and healing come from God. We do not therefore regard ‘divine healing’ as being always miraculous. We also look forward to the resurrection, knowing that only then shall we be finally and fully freed from sickness, weakness, pain and mortality [cf. 1 Cor. 15:44 and comment on this view below]. At the same time we welcome the recovery by the Church of a concern for healing ... but also wish to express caution against giving wrong impressions and causing unnecessary distress through (i) making it appear that it is sinful for a Christian to be ill; (ii) laying too great a stress and responsibility upon the faith of the individual who is seeking healing....’⁸⁸ The statement appears to reflect the exegetical arguments presented above.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 948–951.]

²⁶⁵“Each phrase has, alas, to be translated into terms which already presuppose a particular interpretation of no less than six terms or phrases, each of which bristles with controversial exegetical possibilities and judgments. Unless we specify a variety of options for the translation above, all that we can do is to set forth the arguments for the various alternatives and explain why we have reached the conclusions implicit in the above translation.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 952.]

²⁶⁶“On *ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων* Schrage points both forward to 12:28 and backward to the use of the term *δύναμις* as a word



related to salvation elsewhere in the epistle.⁸⁹ It is usually translated as the **working of miracles** (NRSV, NJB, AV/KJB, Barrett, in effect Collins) or as **miraculous powers** (REB, NIV, Moffatt). The RV margin recognizes that miraculous is not explicit in the Greek, which it renders workings of powers. Needless to say (we hope), deeds of power (which stresses the plural of δυνάμις and the place of this gift among deeds of action [healings] as against words of utterance [utterance relating to ‘wisdom,’ discourse relating to ‘knowledge’]) does not exclude the miraculous, but neither does it narrowly specify it as the entire content and range of these deeds of power. The mere use of the plural alone does not guarantee that the word designates only the miraculous. On the other hand, as Barth urges throughout *The Resurrection of the Dead*, in this epistle power (whether singular or plural) characteristically designates what is effective against any obstacle or constraint because it is validated by God in contrast to human aspirations, which may fail.⁹⁰

“We have already discussed the meaning of ἐνεργήματα (see above on v. 6). The link with the genitive δυνάμεων, however, remains disputed. Many assume that it is a subjective genitive, workings of powers, which, in abstraction from the considerations discussed above on vv. 6–10, would imply that only workings of miracles fully avoids tautology. But Calvin among the Reformers, Hodge among post-Reformation writers, and H. Thielicke among modern theologians follow a very widespread patristic tradition of interpretation in regarding δυνάμεων as an objective genitive. Calvin doubts whether it means power to effect miracles: ‘I am however inclined to think that it is the power (virtutem) which is exercised against demons and also hypocrites.’⁹¹ Rightly he views ἐνεργήματα as effective working (cf. above) and more speculatively compares Paul’s bringing of judicial blindness on Elymas the magician (Acts 13:11) and Peter’s juridical speech-act which led to the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11). Hodge takes up this theme, and Thielicke similarly understands this gift of the Spirit as ‘authority over the powers.’ He recognizes that only relatively rarely does δυνάμις mean forces of evil, but considers that the use of the plural here (which is unusual in the NT) is ‘used of ungodly forces ... a power given *over* the powers’ (his italics), and compares the reference to “handing over to Satan” in 1 Cor 5:5.92

“It remains open whether δυνάμεων is intended to be read as an objective or a subjective genitive. Collins rightly makes room for the term activities in his translation the activities of working miracles, but the text leaves open whether these powers or deeds of power are restricted to the ‘miraculous’ or simply may include the miraculous where otherwise they would not be effective ones.⁹³ Our proposed translation, therefore, allows for all these possibilities, except that while in formal grammatical terms deeds of power assumes technically a subjective construction of the genitive, in terms of content it allows room for the force of the phrase advocated by Calvin, Thielicke, and many early Fathers. Hence our translation is by no means reductionist or critical of the possibility of what we think of as ‘miracle,’ but it avoids pre-judging and narrowing the scope of terms which convey a broader semantic range than is implied by all of the major English versions.

“On these matters patristic evidence and arguments deserve serious attention. Chrysostom perceives both overlap and contrast with healings: ‘He who had a gift of healing used only to do cures; but he who possessed ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων used to punish also ... even as Paul imposed blindness and Peter brought death’ (Acts 13:11; 5:1–11).⁹⁴ Ambrose (c. AD 397) includes the power to cast out demons, or to perform ‘signs’: *potestatem dari significat in ejiciendis demoniis, aut signis faciendis*.⁹⁵ Similarly, Cyril of Alexandria understands this gift as ἐξουσίαν κατὰ πνευμάτων

ἀκαθάρτων ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν αὐτά.⁹⁶ But in addition to giving its meaning as ‘casting out unclean spirits,’ Cyril quotes the words of the Gospels to extend the list to ‘healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, casting out demons: freely you have received; freely give’ (Matt 10:8).⁹⁷ Theodoret remarks succinctly that this χάρισμα, for which request is often made, is instantiated ‘in depriving Elymas of his sight and the death of Ananias and Sapphira.’⁹⁸ Thomas Aquinas differentiates healings (*possit sanare infirmitatem*) from the broader *operatio virtutum* which ranges from the redemptive act of dividing the sea (Exod 14:21) or even halting the sun (Josh 10:13) to God’s working miracles through the Spirit in the church (Gal 3:5).⁹⁹ Grotius also speaks here of *potestas puniendi*....¹⁰⁰

“On close inspection of the primary patristic and medieval texts, the reason for an emphasis on powers over the powers of evil appears to emerge largely to differentiate a subcategory of gifts of effective action from the curative effects of healings. They remain linked to the plural δυνάμις in the broad sense of mighty works which also serve as signs in the Gospels and in Acts (e.g., Matt 11:21, 23; 13:58; Mark 6:2; Luke 10:13; Acts 8:13). But the Gospels also use the plural δυνάμις for the powers of heaven (Matt 24:29; par. Mark 13:25; Luke 21:26). The singular form usually denotes the effective power of God in Paul (Rom 1:4–16; 1 Cor 1:18, 24; 2:4, 5; 4:20; 6:14), but in the Gospels and in Paul the singular may denote authority or force as well as divine power (Mark 9:1; 12:24; Luke 5:17; 9:1; 1 Cor 15:24; 2 Cor 1:8; 6:3), or even serve as a circumlocution for God himself (Matt 26:64; par. Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; Acts 1:8; 6:8). Mighty works are (i) unusual and visible in their intensity and general unexpectedness; (ii) fully effective in achieving their purpose; and (iii) pointers to or signs of some greater salvific reality. Miracles, by contrast, raise issues about world views and relations to natural means concerning which δυνάμις remain more open-ended, presupposing simply the almighty sovereignty of God both over, in, and through his creation.¹⁰¹ In what these acts consist in 12:10 corresponds ‘to the wants of different situations,’ which may or may not include ‘judgments on unfaithful Christians or adversaries, such as Ananias or Elymas.’¹⁰²

“Among specific studies of ‘power’ in the modern period, C. H. Powell writes separate chapters on ‘Acts of Authority,’ ‘Dynamis and Miracle,’ and ‘Power in Cross and Resurrection,’ while developing overlapping themes entailed in δυνάμις and δυνάμις.¹⁰³ Prior to the cross, the promises of God appeared to point to ‘days of God’s power’ in the sense of portents that would visibly vindicate faith and waiting.¹⁰⁴ But in and through the cross, power, and even deeds of power, became transposed into that which made actively effective the loving and salvific purposes of the heart of God, as revealed in Christ’s acceptance of constraints and renunciation of force and spectacle in his messianic temptations. Commenting on the grain of wheat which falls to the earth and dies in order to bring life (John 12:24), Powell declares: ‘At no point is the difference between the concept of power in Old Testament and New so pronounced.’¹⁰⁵ We therefore find in 1 Cor 12:10 a dialectic between the power which is effective but cruciform in 1 Corinthians 1–4 and in most of this epistle, and some continuity with visible ‘signs’ to which δυνάμις often but not always alludes. However, we have noted above (esp. on 1 Cor 1:18–2:5) that authentic ‘signs’ indeed reflect the cross and are derived from a christological foundation.

“As an accommodation to tradition and Synoptic usage we translate *actively effective deeds of power* (i.e., mighty works); but this may already concede too much to expectations of the spec-



translation “enablings of divine expressions of power” the idea is set forth that God at various times chooses to work in unusually powerful ways in their service to the community as a whole. This has nothing to do with demonstrations of ‘raw power’ such as a magician would have his audience assume. Often God works in quiet, almost unnoticed ways to produce a divine impact upon a congregation through certain individuals who are deeply committed to Him. At the end everyone in the congregation acknowledges that God has worked powerfully through certain individuals to bless His church.

The third contrastive divine blessing is **προφητεία** which is seen in a unitary manner rather than in a diverse way as per the plural others in this listing.²⁶⁷ Al-

tacular.¹⁰⁶ Dunn recognizes the difficulty of assessing how much weight should be given to the meaning of δυνάμις in the plural in the Synoptic Gospels for an exegesis of Pauline texts, especially 1 Corinthians 12.¹⁰⁷ Anticipating Wolff, he concedes that Paul perhaps thinks here of exorcisms: ‘yet demon possession as such does not feature prominently in Paul’s thought (cf. 1 Cor. 10:20, 21; Eph. 2:2); he thinks rather of spiritual powers in heaven operating through the (personified) power of sin, law and death, and behind the pagan cults and authorities.... Liberation from their dominion comes only through the power of the Spirit.’¹⁰⁸ But freedom from such dominion is the heritage of all believers; not simply a gift for some. It is therefore essential to regain the collective and corporate framework of these gifts ‘to some ... to another.’ Specific human agents (not all) may receive a particular gift from the Spirit to advance the gospel against oppressive forces, for the benefit of all.

“Although he rightly designates such gifts as ‘visible’ in operation or effect, I see no grounds for Dunn’s assumption that they are also ‘a nonrational power.’¹⁰⁹ This would undercut much that has been observed concerning the interpretation of 12:6–10, including the discussions in footnotes. The term suprarational might be more acceptable. We must remind ourselves again that for Augustine and many of the early Fathers such gifts as λόγος σοφίας and λόγος γνώσεως constituted knowledge of things human and divine, closely connected with rational reflection on transmitted teaching. Similarly ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων concerns effective deeds which actively operate with power, whether rational or suprarational, whether to overcome spiritual or earthly forces of opposition, and whether by means of self-sacrifice and the witness of an outstanding life or by some more spectacular and (in the modern sense) “miraculous” working. The victorious Christ, who was nevertheless crucified and raised, bestows through the Spirit a gift of victory which may draw its power both from the pattern and reality of the cross (with all its constraints and ‘weakness’) and from the pattern and reality of the resurrection.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 952–956.]

²⁶⁷“The Greek for **to another, prophecy**, is ἄλλω προφητεία. What was **prophecy** in the NT? Bittlinger uses the well-known catchphrase: ‘Prophecy is not in the first instance foretelling, but rather forth-telling—light for the present.’¹¹⁰ The address to a present situation retains an expected strand of continuity with prophet and prophecy in the OT, and, as Bittlinger adds, in the NT as well as in the OT prophets may often allude to past and to future events

though widely twisted in modern times into some kind of Christian fortune teller, the blessing of προφητεία simply means that God opens up an understanding of Himself and His ways to individuals in the church so that they can deeply grasp how God works in this world. This is then articulated clearly to the community in their desire to better know God and His ways. Biblical prophecy has virtually nothing to do with chronological time. Rather, it has everything to do with bridging the great chasm between this time bound world and the world of God in heaven. The one blessed with προφητεία has been granted access into this world of God in heaven so that understanding of who God is and how He works is granted in limited fashion. The requirement of the προφήτης, **prophet**, is to articulate that understanding to God’s people. Paul in preaching the Gospel to the Corinthians is a prime example of a biblical προφήτης.

The final set is in this grouping is **διακρίσεις πνευμάτων** (v. 10b). Here is defined various skills in recognizing whether preaching and teaching the Gospel is authentic or false. It has close connections to John’s similar emphasis in 1 John 4:1-3,

1 Αγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον. 2 ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκετε τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ· πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, 3 καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστίν· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστίν ἤδη.

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world.

Again much useless speculation about details here

insofar as they shed light on the present or entail promise as a basis for present action or understanding. Rev 1:3 refers to John’s apocalyptic discourse as “this prophecy” (cf. also Rev 19:10; 22:10, 19; 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14; 2 Pet 1:19; 1 Cor 13:2). Yet much else which is claimed about NT prophecy remains too often speculative. Barrett, untypically without offering any evidence for the claim, suggests that NT prophecy, especially in 1 Cor 12:10, ‘was uttered in ordinary though probably excited, perhaps ecstatic, speech.’¹¹¹ Although he alludes to 1 Cor 14:1–5, his exegesis of these verses (or on 11:4, 5) adds little or nothing to our understanding of prophecy here.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 956.]

could fill up a library room. Some simple points need to be remembered. First, the plural noun διακρίσεις comes from διάκρισις with just 3 NT uses (Rom. 14:1; 1 Cor. 10:10; Heb. 5:14). The verb form διακρίνω is used some 23 times in the NT. Both the noun and the verb are compound forms (δια + κρίσις; δια + κρίνω) with κρίνω / κρίσις as the root forms.²⁶⁸ The etymological idea of διάκρισις and διακρίνω is to analyze something through to a conclusion.²⁶⁹ Often this means distinguishing whether something is good or bad, e.g., Heb. 5:14.²⁷⁰ Here the idea clearly is distinguishing between those preachers speaking authentic words from God and those who are projecting purely human ideas.

The plural form πνευμάτων from πνεῦμα is used three times in all of Paul's writings: 1 Cor. 12:10, πνευμάτων, *spirits*; 1 Cor. 14:32, πνεύματα προφητῶν, *spirits of prophets*; Rom. 14:32, πνεύματα δαιμονίων, *spirits of demons*. The basic sense references that which is inside a person and guiding his speaking. And it focuses on content of speaking rather than manner of speaking.

Thus the blessing of God here in διακρίσεις πνευμάτων is the insight to recognize whether what is being spoken comes from God or not.²⁷¹ One should

²⁶⁸ The wide ranging use of this word group is clear with a listing of the related forms used in the NT: κρίνω, κρίσις, κρίμα, κριτής, κριτήριον, κριτικός, ἀνακρίνω, ἀνάκρισις, ἀποκρίνω, ἀνταποκρίνομαι, ἀπόκριμα, ἀπόκρισις, διακρίνω, διάκρισις, ἀδιάκριτος, ἐγκρίνω, κατακρίνω, κατάκριμα, κατάκρισις, ἀκατάκριτος, αὐτοκατάκριτος, πρόκριμα, συγκρίνω. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:921.]

²⁶⁹ For Paul's use of the verb διακρίνω in 1 Corinthians see 4:7; 6:5; 11:29, 31; 14:29. The general sense assessing something or someone by drawing a conclusion with either good or bad traits prevails in these uses.

²⁷⁰ "Since the simple κρίνω already means 'to sunder,' 'to separate,' δια-κρίνω is originally a stronger form (cf. dis-cerno). Much used, the word took on many senses.¹ The LXX uses it for several terms, mostly for חָשַׁב and יָדַע.² In the NT it does not occur in its original spatial sense, only in the fig. 'To make a distinction between persons,' Ac. 15:9: God has made no distinction between (us) Jews and the Gentiles; also 11:12.3 'To distinguish,' 1 C. 4:7: Who has distinguished you (as compared with others)? 11:29: μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα, 'because he does not distinguish the body of the Lord (from ordinary bread).'⁴ 'To distinguish between persons' gives the further sense 'to judge between two,' 1 C. 6:5 διακρίνειν ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ⁵ (here a tt. in law),⁶ and 'to assess,' used of a thing, Mt. 16:3: τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, as well as a person, 1 C. 11:31: ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν,⁷ or without obj., 1 C. 14:29.⁸ The mid. διακρίνομαι (with pass. aor.) means 'to contend,'⁹ Jd. 9: τῷ διαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος, Ac. 11:2: διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν (Peter) οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς, or 'to doubt.' This meaning, which is not known prior to the NT, occurs at Mk. 11:23; Mt. 21:21; Jm. 1:6; 2:4; R. 4:20; 14:23; Ac. 10:20.10" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:946–947.]

²⁷¹ "All this belongs to a different world from popular appeals

note that this insight is not limited just to spoken words but also includes assessment of actions by the individuals about whether they correctly represent God or not.

The final set (v. 10c) is ἐτέρω γένη γλωσσῶν, ἄλλω δὲ ἐρμηνεία γλωσσῶν, *to another various kinds of tongues; but to the other explanation of the tongues*. Although commonly understood as referring to glossolalia, a dominate mistake is made in ignoring Paul's label here of γένη γλωσσῶν, *species of tongues*.²⁷² γένη γλωσσῶν is repeated in v. 28. In 14:10, γένη φωνῶν refers to different kinds of sounds found in the world, some with no meaning but others containing understandable meaning. The common meaning of γένος specifying descendant, family, nations etc. stresses that these variety of γλωσσῶν possess a common origin, even though distinct from one another.²⁷³

The Greco-Roman background for γένη γλωσσῶν cannot be ignored. Paul is addressing this phenomena in the context of the almost universal practice of γένη to use this gift to arbitrate in small-scale controversies between individuals in local communities, or minor variants between traditions of interpretation. Wolff concludes that whether the gift concerns *discerning* and *testing* or (with Dautzenberg and Merklein) explaining and classifying what is at issue is the *genuine effect of the Holy Spirit*, in continuity with such passages as 2 Thess 2:1–2 (not being unsettled by 'some prophecy' that the day of the Lord has already come"); and 1 John 4:1 ('do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God').¹⁸⁹ In other words, is a 'spiritual' claim one which comes from the Holy Spirit?" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 969–970.]

²⁷² "Too much literature seeks to identify glossolalia as 'one thing' when Paul specifically takes pains to refer to different species." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 970.]

²⁷³ "A cluster of generic characteristics mark off tongues from prophecy: in one context, the contrast between articulate speech and unintelligible sounds (14:2b, 5, 7–9, 11, 19); in another context the contrast between being addressed to God and being addressed to other human persons (14:2a; 14:15); in yet another context the distinction between communicative discourse in the ordinary public domain and something so exalted as to be associated with angelic utterance (13:1); in one more context capable of making some believers feel like exiles or strangers 'not at home' in the community of believers (14:23a) and repellent to unbelievers (14:23b); in other situations that which benefits the tongue-speaker and for which he or she can give thanks (14:4a, 5a, 18). Any generalizing definition will founder on semantic contrasts which constitute counterexamples. On the other hand, one or more of the above characteristics or family traits give adequate grounds for the use of tongues, provided that they are 'given' by the Holy Spirit and not self-induced." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 971.]



γλωσσῶν in the non-Christian world of Corinth.²⁷⁴ The very diverse patterns of ecstatic speech in the various religious traditions clearly provides a basis for Paul's label. And yet Paul here alludes to what he assumes is legitimate communication with the divine over against the pseudo-communications in the pagan traditions at Corinth.

What should be understood is that γλῶσσα at the figurative level of meaning as here alludes to a linguistic communication between two individuals. And for these two parties it is intelligible communication, although bystanders may or may not understand what is being said. All through Paul's world stood the idea that communicating with deity was possible. But in the Greco-Roman side, it was only possible when one could speak the language of the deity, which was a non-human language. Different deities spoke their own individual languages. In these religious traditions, only select priests and priestesses were granted the ability to communicate with their patron deity in his or her language. This functioned in gathered assemblies of worshippers in the temples as validation of the individual priest/priestess by the deity. An interpretation of this communication may or may not have been given to the assembled worshippers. When provided it normally was given by the same priest or priestess who supposedly communicated with the deity in its non-earthly language. Out of this background comes influence upon some of the Corinthian believers who felt that believers should be able to communicate with God in a non-human language.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴Certainly the main thrust of Christopher Forbes's warnings against assuming that tongues denotes ecstatic speech on the basis of overly selective and unrepresentative examples of 'inspired speech' in Graeco-Roman texts should be heeded and accepted. The instances of irrational frenzy described by Euripides concerning the Dionysiac cult in *The Bacchae* and similar phenomena concerning the frenzied antics of the Sibyl in Virgil's *Aeneid*, often familiar from classes in school should not be taken as models for an understanding of 1 Corinthians 12–14 (see above on 1 Cor 12:2).¹⁹⁵ Forbes suspects the approach of history-of-religion writers since Reitzenstein of special pleading, and his wide review of primary sources in Graeco-Roman literature entirely vindicates his scepticism.¹⁹⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 971.]

²⁷⁵I share a personal experience while pastoring in Germany. In the initial worship service in June 2008, tongues were spoken during the worship service that was being video taped. Some months later I received a copy of the DVD of the worship service and discovered what had happened. About the same time, I happened to watch a DW German broadcast centering on witchcraft practices in east Africa. When the attempts of a witch doctor to exorcise a demon of sickness from a young boy were played in the TV documentary the sounds of his incantations over the boy sounded strangely familiar. To my amazement, they corresponded almost exactly with the supposed speaking in tongues by west African in-

But communicating with God is very different than with Zeus et als. Christian prayer makes the fundamental assumption that such communication is available to all of God's people, not to just a select few religious leaders. But what language does God speak? His communication with Jesus at His baptism was via Aramaic as the synoptic gospel accounts make clear. But is this God's language, or is God merely accommodating Himself to the human language of the individual(s) He speaks to? Most certainly the latter is the case.

A related question is What is the language of Heaven? It is almost certain to not be Aramaic! Some argue that Paul's reference to the 'tongues of angels,' ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων in 13:1 is in view here with Paul's label of γλωσσῶν.²⁷⁶ But Paul's

dividuals in that initial worship service at the church in Germany. The sounds were virtually identical -- one coming from a east African pagan witch doctor and the other from a west African church member. A sound mapping software would have tracked out the two sets of sounds as virtually identical. I learned a lot about glosolalia from that.

²⁷⁶Ellis and Dautzenberg argue for this view, and Witherington and Barrett express sympathy with it. The main argument in its favor rests on whether Paul (or Corinth) was influenced by the role of angels in apocalyptic or in Qumran, most especially by the Testament of Job (first century BC) and by what weight we give to enigmatic references about 'rapture' in 2 Cor 12:1–5 (esp. 2 Cor 12:4), to 1 Cor 13:1, and to 1 Cor 14:2, 28.²⁰⁶ In Testament of Job 48:1–50:3 Job's enraptured daughters 'no longer mind the things of earth but utter a hymn in the angelic language ... to God according to the angels' psalmody ... speaking in the language of the heights.... She spoke in the language of the Cherubim ...'; cf. Jubilees 25:14; Testament of Judah 25:3; 1 Enoch 40 and 71:11; and 4 Macc 10:21. Barrett as well as Ellis and Dautzenberg alludes similarly to 1 Cor 13:1, viewing 'unintelligible' speech as heavenly.²⁰⁷ This citation of Testament of Job 48:1–50:3 and 1 Cor 13:1 is not new. Heinrich Weinel expounded this theory in 1899 (partly against Reitzenstein here) on the death of their father as one daughter sings to God 'in the hymnology of angels'; the second, in the language of the 'Archontes'; the third daughter in the speech of the cherubim.²⁰⁸

"This view is criticized by Allo, who argues that this slides more readily into the traditions of the Montanists than that of Paul and the Fathers.²⁰⁹ Turner sets out several objections to the 'tongues of angels' view, most notably that Paul would not have implied that 'they belong only to our pre-resurrection childhood.'²¹⁰ Grudem points out, also, that tongues of angels in 1 Cor 13:1 is at once correlated with human tongues in the same phrase. Quite properly, as we have argued already above, Grudem rejects Ellis's understanding of the plural πνεύματα as angelic powers. In 14:32, e.g., he rightly understands the Greek to mean not 'spirits of the prophets,' but 'manifestations of the Holy Spirit at work in prophets.'²¹¹ We may also add that the notion of angels' speech as being among that which passes away at the parousia (13:8) would be most curious. This is one of the least plausible proposals. Other reasons for the unintelligibility and transcendent, God-directed nature of tongues more readily suggest themselves, especially on the analogy of 'sighs too deep for words' (Rom 8:26)."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*:



phrase taken seriously in its context alludes to highly eloquent and persuasive speech whether coming from human or heavenly sources. The best speaking imaginable without ἀγάρτη is harsh and detestable talking. He is not alluding to glossolalia with this term.

Clearly the phenomena on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is unrelated to what Paul was dealing with at Corinth. At Pentecost, the miracle was the miracle of hearing in human languages. That is, Peter spoke to the gathered crowd in Aramaic but the sounds of Aramaic miraculously turned into a wide number of different languages when entering the ears of the listeners. No ecstatic speech²⁷⁷ of any kind was present or

A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 972–973.]

²⁷⁷The label of ecstatic speech as a label for this phenomena traces back to the church father Tertullian in his combating the influence of Montanism toward the end of the second century:

Exponents of this view often begin with Tertullian. In *Against Marcion*, 5, Tertullian takes his reader through 1 Corinthians as a whole, beginning with wisdom and the cross (5:5), moving on through issues of the Spirit and ministerial “building” (5:6), marriage, and idol foods (5:7), to women and prophecy, the Eucharist and spiritual gifts (5:8), prior to considering the resurrection (5:9, 10) and 2 Corinthians (5:11–12). Hence while it is a valid criticism to associate his comment about ecstatic utterance with his Montanist period, on the other hand Tertullian approaches the subject both as a contextual exposition and to demonstrate (against Marcion) the continuity of these themes with their roots in the OT. Thus he sees the root of all the spiritual gifts in the messianic anointing prophesied in Isa 11:1–3 and dispensed by Christ (Eph. 4:8 relates, in his view, closely to 1 Cor 12:4–11). After expounding or enumerating the gifts, Tertullian concludes with a contrast between Marcion and authentic inspiration from the Spirit of God: “Let Marcion produce a psalm, a vision, only let it be by the Spirit in an ecstasy, that is, a rapture, whenever ‘interpretation of tongues’ has come to him (Lat. dumtaxat spiritualem, in ecstasi, id est amentia, si qua linguae interpretatio accessit).”²⁶¹

It is Tertullian, therefore, not simply “the vocabulary of NT scholarship in our era,” who introduces the term *in ecstasi* and even the explanatory *id est amentia* in the context of *linguae interpretatio*. *Amentia* usually means madness (in Cicero, Ovid, and others) and can also come to mean folly (in Horace) because it also means “being out of one’s mind.”²⁶² Admittedly most of *Against Marcion* must be dated around AD 207, which marks the point at which Tertullian began to fall under the spell of Montanism. However, he did not formally join a Montanist sect until six years later: Forbes calls this still “his pre-Montanist days.”²⁶³ Yet Forbes calls attention not to Tertullian’s use of *in ecstasi* or *amentia* but to his witness to the continuing existence of glossolalia. He also alludes to Tertullian, Apology 18, where the context is “translation” of the LXX.²⁶⁴ In his Montanist period he wrote a treatise *On Ecstasy*, which has not survived.²⁶⁵

Among modern writers, those who take seriously the nature of tongues as ecstatic speech include especially J. Behm, H. Kleinknecht, S. D. Currie, N. I. J. Engelsen, H. W. House, and in modified form M. E. Boring, L. T. Johnson, as well as

used on that occasion. Something similar is the case with Cornelius (Acts 10:46) and the disciples of John at Ephesus (Acts 19:6).

What Paul asserts then with γένη γλωσσῶν (12:10) is the blessing of various individuals being able to communicate with God in non-human language expression. It does not inherently imply the necessity of being in some state of ecstasy before such communication can take place. This was the pagan model for glossolalia that Paul rejects. The experience of communicating with God like this stands apart from prayer which uses human language to communicate with a God who understands all human languages. Instead this relates to what Paul describes in Rom. 8:26–27, where the Holy Spirit is the communication channel between the believer and God when the desires etc. in the believer go beyond human language words, what Paul calls στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις.

Although some link this speaking of non-human words to liturgical words or phrases perhaps spoken in poetic or exalted musical rhythms, e.g., ἡλληλουῖα, *hallelu-yah*,²⁷⁸ one should be highly skeptical of such con-

a number of other writers. Behm does draw on arguments about common patterns between hellenistic and Christian phenomena. He writes: “Paul is aware of a similarity between Hellenism and Christianity in respect of these mystical and ecstatic phenomena.”²⁶⁶ But he does not restrict his argument to hellenism. He alludes to “the ecstatic fervor” of Hebrew prophets in 1 Sam 10:5–7; cf. 19:20–22, 1 Kings 18:29, 30; 2 Kings 9:11.²⁶⁷ On the other hand, he identifies a different tradition in Acts 2:4–13, which he regards as more “linguistic.” Behm and Kleinknecht both allude to Plato’s notion of “mantic” prophecy in *Timaeus* 71e–72a, and Kleinknecht also appeals to parallels with oracular speech at Delphi.²⁶⁸ The latter issue is taken up by Currie, while Engelsen argues that Paul was the first to conceive of a distinction between inspired ecstatic speech and inspired intelligible speech. Forbes has little difficulty in showing that the arguments of all of these writers embody a lack of precision and selectivity in the use of Graeco-Roman sources.²⁶⁹

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 981–982.

²⁷⁸“A close association of these idioms not only with poetry and liturgy, but also with music and rhythmic songs of praise belongs, for Heinrici, to the ‘various kinds of tongues’ which differ from straightforward, distinctly articulated, intelligible prose forms of traditional or ordinary language.”²⁵² The connection between rhythmic music and the language of divine worship appears in Greek literature from earliest times.²⁵³ Heinrici then quotes the kind of material in Plato and Virgil alluding to the Sibyl and the Pythia about which Forbes has recently formulated the criticisms noted above.²⁵⁴ However, he does not depend on a history-of-religions background. On the contrary, his fundamental approach is linguistic, and he is no less concerned to cite Aristotle on language and grammar to support his case.²⁵⁵ Allo commends Heinrici for avoiding the history-of-religions assumptions found in Reitzen-



nections.²⁷⁹

Paul's later discussion in chapter fourteen will through more light on the idea, although largely with a de-emphasizing of its practice in the gathered community in favor of an individual devotion to God outside of the gathered community in worship.

But as an individual communication with God, it does relate to a non-human communication with God that has legitimacy in limited circumstances.²⁸⁰ The

stein and in Weiss.²⁵⁶

"It is almost universally agreed that reference to modern Pentecostal and charismatic phenomena cannot be used as an exegetical test for proposed interpretations of Paul and Corinth. This would be to presuppose the validity of one specific tradition of interpretation in a circular fashion. However, the modern phenomena do have at least marginal relevance on the prima facie plausibility of provisional suggestions. In this context C. G. Williams's discussion of Pentecostalist phenomena is of interest. He quotes H. Horton's description within Pentecostalism of 'rising from understood words and rhythms to mystic words and rhythms.... It is marrying mystic meanings and mystic cadencies in a glorious rhapsody of adoring worship.... Words and music soar infinitely beyond the compass of mere understanding.'²⁵⁷"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 979.]

²⁷⁹"A third proposal concerns tongues as archaic or novel verbal idioms, usually with music, poetry, and rhythm (Bleek and Heinrici). This offers a halfway house between 'languages' and 'inspired utterance' in its approach. Bleek noted that Greek grammarians often used γλῶσσα, tongue, to denote archaic words or dialects, provincial idioms, or, as in the present context, probably a mixture of ancient, quasi-Semitic liturgical words or phrases, perhaps spoken in poetic or exalted rhythms.²⁴⁶ In spite of the recent work of Forbes, appeal was made to precedents in oracular speech in hellenistic religion. Bleek argues the case in detail and takes up a point of departure already noted by J. G. Herder and J. A. Ernesti." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 978.]

²⁸⁰"Gerd Theissen has produced one of the most incisive and innovative treatments of tongues available in any language in his major study *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*. He argues that tongues are 'the language of the unconscious which becomes capable of consciousness through interpretation.'²⁸² In his chapter 'Tradition Analysis' relevant to 1 Corinthians 12–14, however, he does defend certain specific ways tongues relate to ecstatic states. It is extremely disappointing that neither Forbes nor Turner sees fit to address this very important work with seriousness since Theissen also works firsthand not only with Euripides, Virgil, Plato, and Philo but also with apocalyptic and Paul as well as social psychology. Turner has pleaded for such skills.²⁸³ In Euripides, The Bacchae, e.g., 'unconscious aggressive impulses develop in the ecstatic state and overcome deeply rooted moral inhibitions' which result in the death of Pentheus at the hands of his mother.²⁸⁴ Theissen discusses the classic work of E. R. Dodds on this subject. Similarly, in Plato, *Phaedrus* 265A, ecstasy entails 'divine release from the customary habits,' while in Ion 533D–535A inspiration entails 'being put out of one's senses.'²⁸⁵ To be filled by God (en-

γένη γλωσσῶν alludes to different levels of such communication. And the ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν alludes to being granted understanding of the meaning of such communication. Thus this phrase should be interpreted in light of the later statement in 14:13, Διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύη. *Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret (them).*

Of significance is that Paul sets off ἐτέρῳ γένη γλωσσῶν, ἄλλῳ δὲ ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν in 12:10 from the preceding groupings. The others define interaction in the gathered community of believers at Corinth. Although this latter set was at the time being practiced in the gathered assemblies, Paul's discussion in chapter fourteen makes it clear that this is only barely possible and that this phenomena should be done by the individual outside the gathered assembly.²⁸¹

In summing up this emphasis (vv.4-11) in v. 11, the basic stress is placed upon the collective unity of the thusiasm) entails relinquishing one's own thoughts to make room for God (Plato, Ion 534E). Philo takes up this 'ecstatic filling' from Plato. 'The light of God shines when human light sets' and thus 'divine possession and madness fall upon us' (Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* 263–65).

"Although he notes Origen's insistence that this view is not 'Christian,' Theissen traces themes in 1 Corinthians 12–14 which allow him to see elements of both angelic tongues (Testament of Job 48:1–3; 49:2; and 50:2) and ecstatic utterance as aspects included in various species of tongues.²⁸⁶ Nevertheless, he agrees with those who regard this as no more than a starting point for further inquiry, in which radical differences between the three respective stances of Paul, Corinth, and the hellenistic world clearly emerge."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 984–985.]

²⁸¹"Glossolalia, therefore, makes 'unconscious depth dimensions of life accessible,' which may involve 'reassumption of a more primitive level of speaking' to which many at times regress as 'a return to egocentric use of language' and is likely to constitute 'socially learned behavior.'³¹⁰ Theissen appeals to 14:4, 20 (cf. 13:11; 14:21). We must postpone further comments until our exegesis of 14:2–38. However, we shall see that it lends further plausibility, over against a publicly reinforced, learned behavior which becomes a socially public habit, to Paul's triple strategy: first, to establish a hierarchy of gifts based on Christomorphic service to others and love for others; second, to 'privatize' glossolalia in the home (as both Theissen and Wire stress); and, third, to encourage prayer for the gift of articulating buried longings, yearning, and emotions. Paul does not appear to endorse a view found in some modern churches that public tongues-speech is attractive and melodious; again, assumptions of a one-to-one match between ancient and modern phenomena remain speculative. Meanwhile, Paul see tongues as a genuine gift of the Spirit which can help the individual, but subject to the three factors outlined above. Rom 8:26–27 should be kept in mind." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 988.]



community where God through His Spirit has provided the diversity of skills and gifts for the community to thrive: πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται. *All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.* The diversity of divine blessings comes out of God's choosing, not that of the members of the community. The divine intent is for each blessing to be used to build up the entire community. It has no connected with calling attention to a supposedly superior skill that a few have that elevates them to a higher level of spirituality. This attitude at Corinth has produced the divisions and elitist thinking that the apostle has consistently condemned all through the letter body.²⁸²

Lessons from the body, vv. 12-31. Paul now turns to the analogy of the human body in order to underscore his emphasis upon unity in the midst of diversity. This will subsequently be an important theme later on in the prison letter of Eph. 4:1-16, written some five to seven years after this letter to the Corinthians and with a slightly different emphasis.²⁸³

²⁸²One must not overlook both the collective rather than individualistic orientation of Paul's world. Added to this and deeply embedded in it was the intense social stratification of society. As Plato defined it in his Republic, every person has an allotted στάσις in life. Survival of society depends upon each person fulfilling that role. Add also to these layers the passionate craving for social 'networking' in that structure. Business success, one's sense of individual worth etc. all depends upon establishing formal friendships within the patronizing framework of first century society. It is no surprise that what John labels as worldliness in 1 John 2:16 was considered virtue in the secular world of Corinth: ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, *the passion for the flesh, and the passion of the eyes and the pride of life.* Paul sensed from the report by Chloe's people that too many of the Corinthians were still caught up in this worldly thinking. It was draining the spiritual life from the church and needed to be stopped.

Modern western culture often does some of the same dumb things but they come out of its individualism in which a strong emphasis upon being competitive and achieving victory over others is nourished in a highly unhealthy and culturally destructive manner. Such wrong thinking permeates virtually every aspect of modern western society. Success is defined by always coming out 'on top of the pile.' Whether sports, whether business operation, whether size and value of one's home, whether the size and salary of the church being pastored etc. -- in virtually every aspect of modern life this anti-God kind of thinking dominates society. The evidence of this in our world is the same as it was for Paul's world: strife and factions in our society, including the church.

²⁸³Few terms have undergone so many twists and turns in the history of Pauline scholarship than body and body of Christ. At first sight the logic of Paul's argument clearly develops the theme of unity-with-diversity (Lategan) or diversity-in-unity (Fee) already established in 12:4-11. The so-called 'weak' must not feel that if they happen not to have received certain gifts, they are somehow not a genuine part of the body: 'If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would

not make it any less part of the body' (12:15). Paul reassures those who are anxious about comparisons with supposedly more 'gifted' members, and underlines their role, status and welcome. On the other side, he rebukes "the strong" who seem to think that only those of similar social status and similar spiritual gifts are "real" Christians: 'The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you' ...' (12:20-21). Deluz observes, 'Having spoken to those who have an inferiority complex, Paul now turns to those who are convinced that they know best and want to get everything into their own hands.'¹ With Mitchell, this argument concerning mutuality and reciprocity is identified by J. Smit as 'the deliberative genre' with its appeal to advantage (cf. 12:7, πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον) for the whole body (see above).²

"Yet an earlier era of Pauline scholarship from A. Schweitzer to J. A. T. Robinson suggested that Paul uses far more than a metaphor or analogy. For them, μέλη πολλά and ἐν σῶμα are ὁ Χριστός (12:12). Schweitzer writes: 'In the whole literature of mysticism there is no problem comparable to this of the mystical body of Christ. How could a thinker come to produce this conception of the extension of the body of a personal being?'³ He adds: 'All attempts to distinguish in the relevant passages between the personal (historical) and mystical body of Christ are initially doomed to failure. The obscurity was intended by Paul.'⁴ On this basis a number of writers, especially in English Anglo-Catholicism from the 1920s to the 1950s, spoke frequently of the church as 'the extension of the incarnation' or of 'no Christ without the Church ... his mystical body.'⁵ J. A. T. Robinson sees the origin of Paul's identifying the Christian community with Christ's raised body in his conversion experience: 'Saul, why are you persecuting me?' (Acts 9:4-5; 22:7-8). The resurrection body of Christ is revealed 'not as an individual, but as the Christian community' (Robinson's italics).⁶ Certainly, for Robinson, the language of members must be disengaged from the modern meaning of members of a social group.

"Thus the ecclesiological-pastoral emphasis of Deluz and most of the older modern commentators became transposed into a rhetoric which depended not on analogy or metaphor with body as such, but specifically with Christology. No one must disinherit or tear away limbs of Christ, and no subgroup can claim to be 'the whole Christ.' But from 1955, with the work of E. Best, followed in 1964 and 1971 by that of D. E. H. Whiteley and others, these approaches of Schweitzer and Robinson were deemed to overpress their approach, and perhaps to fail to attend sufficiently to the context of argument in 1 Corinthians (Best) and 'to complicate' at least as much as 'illuminate' Paul's arguments (Whiteley).⁷ Not least, Robinson appealed too readily to a 'Hebraic' cast of mind and paid little attention to any Graeco-Roman background. Käsemann's later work attacks the kind of approach explored by Robinson and Schweitzer, even if his earlier work was marred by overattention to gnosticism.⁸ Best allows that Paul offers a christological foundation for his argument, but returns to a dialectic between diversity (gifts in the church) and unity (Christ).⁹ Where more recent writers associate unity with 'rhetoric,' however, Best draws on 'corporate personality' in the OT. On the other hand, recent writers continue to engage with Robinson's approach alongside that of Käsemann. Schrage, e.g., gives space to their ecclesiology.¹⁰

"We need not trace every twist and turn since Best and Whiteley. A more recent emphasis is represented most constructively and distinctively by M. M. Mitchell and D. B. Martin, who perceive this not simply as a rhetoric of belonging, harmony, and unity-in-diversity, but as a term or turn of phrase loaded with a political history.¹¹ However Paul may have wished to utilize the language for theo-



logical purposes, it would be heard by the addressees as language traditionally used to argue for unity on the basis of a hierarchical political structure. However, earlier commentators had also noted the Graeco-Roman background. Thus Heinrici (1880), e.g., cites ‘among the parallels’ the parable or allegory of Menenius Agrippa’s address to the rebel workers in Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.32; Cicero *De Officiis* 1.35; Marcus Aurelius, 4.40; 7.13; Seneca, *Epistles* 95, among Latin writers alone.¹² Best had examined such sources, together with Käsemann’s hypothesis about gnostic influences, but had concluded: ‘the presence of the metaphor in Greek culture is not the occasion of Paul’s description of the Church as ‘Body of Christ.’¹³ However, for Mitchell and Martin the history of the term as sociopolitical rhetoric is what leads them to a new appraisal of the impact of its background.

“Margaret M. Mitchell, with Collins and Wolff, traces back the use of the term body as a rhetorical appeal for harmony and interdependence in political life from the fifth and fourth centuries BC (including Plato’s *Republic*) through to the first and second centuries AD (including Dio Chrysostom’s *Orations*).¹⁴ The parallels with detailed parts of the imagery in Paul in the late first-century writers Plutarch and Epictetus are especially noteworthy. Plutarch cites the interdependence and mutual benefit of the eyes, ears, hands, and feet of the body (cf. 1 Cor 12:15, hands and feet; 12:16–17, eyes and ears).¹⁵ Epictetus speaks of the mutual advantage (τὸ συμφέρον, 1 Cor. 12:7) of the harmonious function of the whole body.¹⁶ Mitchell notes that even in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 30 BC) personifications of the parts of the body occur, as in 1 Cor 12:15–16, ‘If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not the hand, I do not belong to the body.’ ...’¹⁷ She concludes, ‘Paul’s uniformity of use of this metaphor with ancient political writers applies even to the details.’¹⁸ In 1 Corinthians, she urges, the image in 1 Corinthians 12 looks back directly to the main proposition or rhetorical thesis of the epistle, namely, what she perceives as a polemic against factionalism in 1:10. The theme of *σχίσμα* (1:10) is explicitly taken up in 12:25 as the climax of the application of the body image. This use of body is a common rhetorical topos, or a set example for the purpose. The emphasis falls on unity (with Martin and Lategan, against Fee).

“Dale B. Martin not only endorses Mitchell’s arguments, but presses them further. Both the human body and the political body are ‘a hierarchy, with different members (... classes) assigned by Nature to positions in the body and to particular roles.’¹⁹ ‘Homonoia speeches always assume that the body is hierarchically constituted and that illness or social disruption occurs when that hierarchy is disrupted.’²⁰ A locus classicus is thus the use of the body topos by Livy, who places it on the lips of the Senator Menenius to persuade the plebeians, who have gone on strike, to return to work.²¹ The active members or limbs (the workers or plebs) fail to feed the belly (patres or governing classes). But if the belly dies, the whole body dies. Hence, Martin concludes, the topos is a typical ‘high-status’ argument for each to have a proper place within a conservative system. Polybaenus (c. AD 162) likewise uses the topos for ‘ideological’ purposes.²² Martin has not yet stated his conclusions about how Paul applies this ideological rhetoric. Paul utilizes it, in a sense, to turn it upside down, just as he turns a status system upside down in 1:18–2:5.23 But this is the appropriate point of departure for an exegesis of our passage.

“An archaeological display at the museum of ancient Corinth

In this unit, three natural subunits of emphasis surface: a) vv. 12-13, an introductory assertion of the analogy of the human body to the community of believers; b) vv. 14-26, the inner dependence of the body upon all its parts; and c) vv. 27-31, the direct application of the analogy to the Corinthian community of believers. Out of this discussion comes several important spiritual principles that the Corinthians were missing due to their dependence upon worldly thinking rather than upon God’s thinking.

a) vv. 12-13, the analogy. 12 Καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἐν ἐστὶν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἐν ἐστὶν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός· 13 καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἐν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν. 12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the

γὰρ
Καθάπερ τὸ σῶμα ἐν ἐστὶν
καὶ
μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει,
δὲ
πολλὰ ὄντα
πάντα τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος...ἐν ἐστὶν σῶμα,
οὕτως
καὶ
ὁ Χριστός (ἐστὶν)·
12.13
γὰρ
καὶ
ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι
εἰς ἐν σῶμα
489
ἡμεῖς πάντες...ἐβαπτίσθημεν,
εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι
εἴτε Ἕλληνες
εἴτε δοῦλοι
εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι,
καὶ
ἐν πνεύμα
490
πάντες...ἐποτίσθημεν.

provides an unforgettable presentation of an extensive collection of terra-cotta models of disjointed, isolated parts of the human body found on the site of the Asklepios. G. G. Garner is among those who have drawn attention to the significance of this collection for our appreciation of Corinthian attention to body parts in this context, although his speculative suggestion that the Temple of Asklepios (Asclepius) might have suggested to Paul the metaphor of ‘disjointed’ parts is unlikely in view of the use of the metaphor widely in ancient literature.²⁴ Collins is on safer ground in calling attention to the collection to underline the self-awareness of ‘members of the body’ at Corinth to which the cult of Asklepios contributed.²⁵

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 990–994.]



body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

In order to drive home his point on unity in the midst of diversity, the comparison of the local community of believers to a human body gives Paul a persuasive point of emphasis. It is simple to understand; it is legitimately relevant and applicable; it creates an unforgettable mental image about the nature of the community of believers.

One should remember that the figure of a human body with stress on its various parts was commonly used in the Greco-Roman literature of Paul's time for emphasizing a unity-in-diversity theme for various social organizations, as well as human society itself. So his analogy was not new or unheard of by his first century readers. But Paul utilizes this figure of speech to stress the theme in connection to the community of believers at Corinth. The earlier modern tendency to inject into Paul's words here some kind of mythical universal body called Church utterly misses what Paul is talking about.

Paul here is continuing the emphasis on *σχίσμα* first put forth in 1:10 and then explicitly picked up in 12:25 again. The putting of value on the spiritual welfare of others in the community above one's own 'rights' due to the superior role of brotherly love undergirds and is re-enforced by his analogy of the body here. The collective life and spiritual health of the local community of believers is at stake here. One must resist any temptation to read some kind of deep theology into this text! It is simple, yet profound; commonly used, but uniquely applied to the Christian community at Corinth.

The single Greek sentence here in vv. 12-13 sets up the analogy of the body to the Christian community. As illustrated in the above diagram, the human body (#s 486-487) is then compared to the Christian community established in Christ (#s 488-490) as explicitly stated by οὕτως καὶ, *so also*. The initial γὰρ in v. 12 links this sentence to the previous one in vv. 8-11 as a justifying declaration. The second γὰρ in v. 13 links statements #s 489-490 to #488 as a justifying declaration. The one Christ has a wide diversity of differing individuals brought into His community in the pictures of immersion and drinking.

At this point the obvious theme of unity-in-diversity would not have particularly challenged the elites at Corinth. No one at Corinth had an issue with there being one Christian community with members from a widely diverse set of backgrounds. Notice how cleverly Paul sets this theme up in statement #489 especially. On top of ἡμεῖς πάντες... ἐβαπτίσθημεν is the emphasis on oneness: ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς

ἐν σῶμα, *in one Spirit into one body*. Then on the bottom side of ἡμεῖς πάντες... ἐβαπτίσθημεν comes the emphasis upon diversity: εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, *whether Jews or Gentiles whether slaves or free*. Thus Paul has his readers in agreement with his analogy at this beginning point. No one in the church there could have argued with Paul over this, since it was obvious in every one of the house church groups as they came together in meeting.

The controversy with the Corinthians is thus going to emerge in how Paul amplifies and explains the analogy as validating his principle of brotherly love over one's personal rights. His opponents would have argued that unity comes by everyone acknowledging the superior role of some over that among the rest of the members. For them, unity is a hierarchical structured unity of superiors and inferiors. This was essentially the very way the surrounding Corinthian society was organized and functioned. Therefore it should be the same inside the church. But Paul's amplification is going to take the exact opposite direction, much to their consternation. He will literally turn their culturally gained 'wisdom' on its head with the divine wisdom of how God wants His people to function. Another example of the 'foolishness' of God's wisdom.

In modern church life, this unity-in-diversity may not always be so obvious. Most modern western congregations are rather homogenous in their make-up. They are often white, middle class congregations with little or no racial diversity. Most everyone thinks similarly and lives a very similar lifestyle. Having been a part of two international Baptist churches in Germany and Costa Rica (2008-2015) has been a delightful and often challenging experience for me. These congregations are conglomerate mixtures of many races, economic backgrounds, language and culture diversity etc. Only the common, shared commitment to Christ could bring such a group into existence! No human rationale could produce such a group. This is much closer to the Christian community at Corinth. Understanding the challenges at Corinth to get the members to affirm genuinely the unity-in-diversity theme functionally and not just theoretically is much easier for me now.

b) vv. 14-26, Inner dependence of body parts. First comes the figurative jealousy between some body parts, vv. 14-16. This is followed by the illogic of one body part becoming the entire body, vv. 17-19. Finally, the emphasis on the need of every body part for the functioning of the body is stated, vv. 20-26.

i) vv. 14-16, Jealousy among the body parts, 14 Καὶ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν μέρος ἀλλὰ πολλά. 15 ἐὰν εἴπη ὁ πούς· ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ χεῖρ, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος; 16 καὶ ἐὰν εἴπη τὸ

οὐς· ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὀφθαλμός, οὐκ εἰμι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ
 παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος; 14 Indeed, the body
 does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot
 would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the
 body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16
 And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not
 belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part
 of the body.

12.14 γὰρ Καὶ
 491 τὸ σῶμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν μέλος
 ἀλλὰ
 492 πολλά (ἔστιν) .

12.15 ἐὰν εἴπη ὁ πούς·
 493 οὐ παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν
 ἐκ τοῦ σώματος;

12.16 καὶ
 ἐὰν εἴπη τὸ οὖς·
 494 οὐ παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν
 ἐκ τοῦ σώματος;

καὶ ἐὰν εἴπη τὸ οὖς· ὅτι...
 The foot claims to not be a part of the body since it is
 not the hand: οὐκ εἰμι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος.... The ear makes
 the same claim since it is not the eyes: οὐκ εἰμι ἐκ τοῦ
 σώματος.... Paul’s conclusion in the apodosis is the
 same for both illustrations: οὐ παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ
 τοῦ σώματος; That is, this claim to not belong does not
 alter the reality that both the foot and the ear are just as

much a part of the
 body as the hand
 and the eye.

For the supposed
 ‘inferior’ church
 member to assume
 that he/she is not a
 part of the church
 because of who
 they are does not
 in any way alter
 the reality of their
 being a legitimate
 part of the church.
 This also applies to
 any member who
 may view them this
 way as well. One’s
 status as a mem-
 ber of the commu-

Paul’s initial readers must have become alerted to
 something different in this analogy as he applied it to
 their church. He begins with an emphasis on diversity
 with the first statement as an introductory topic state-
 ment: Καὶ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν μέλος ἀλλὰ πολλά.
 For the body is indeed not one member but many. This is
 self-evident. A physical body has multiple parts: hands,
 arms, legs, eyes, ears etc. No intelligent person would
 or could argue this this.

But what does this imply? Vv. 15-16 contain the
 first implication of this multiplicity of parts to a body:
 15 ἐὰν εἴπη ὁ πούς· ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι χεῖρ, οὐκ εἰμι ἐκ τοῦ
 σώματος, οὐ παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος;
 16 καὶ ἐὰν εἴπη τὸ οὖς· ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὀφθαλμός, οὐκ
 εἰμι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ
 σώματος; 15 If the foot would say, “Because I am not
 a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not
 make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear
 would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to
 the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the
 body.

With a pair of parallel third class conditional
 sentences formed as rhetorical questions, Paul
 makes his first application using a personified foot
 and ear.

ἐὰν εἴπη ὁ πούς· ὅτι...

nity of believers is determined by God’s action, not by
 anyone’s own view or actions. God saved them and
 made them a part of the community of His people. Hu-
 man attitudes cannot alter that reality at all. Certainly
 not by the elites frowning down upon the others in the
 church trying to make them think they don’t belong.

Modern churches need to learn this point made by
 Paul. Too often today the homogenous nature of a con-
 gregation pushes it to seek out only certain kinds of
 folks to be a part of the church.

ii) vv. 17-19, the essential multiplicity of the
 12.17 εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα (ἔστιν) ὀφθαλμός,
 495 ποῦ (ἔστιν) ἡ ἀκοή;
 εἰ ὅλον (ἔστιν) ἀκοή,
 496 ποῦ (ἔστιν) ἡ ὄσφρησις;
 12.18 δὲ
 497 ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη,
 ἐν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν
 ἐν τῷ σώματι
 καθὼς ἠθέλησεν.
 12.19 δὲ
 498 ποῦ (ἔστιν) τὸ σῶμα;



body, 17 εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ὀφθαλμός, ποῦ ἡ ἀκοή; εἰ ὅλον ἀκοή, ποῦ ἡ ὄσφρησις; 18 νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν. 19 εἰ δὲ ἦν τὰ πάντα ἐν μέλος, ποῦ τὸ σῶμα; 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be?

The second point made by Paul with his analogy comes in vv. 17-19. It extends the logic expressed in the first point of vv. 15-16. It reflects a form of the ancient *Reductio ad absurdum* pattern of argumentation.

First, comes a pair of rhetorical questions referencing the eye and the ear:

εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ὀφθαλμός, ποῦ ἡ ἀκοή;

εἰ ὅλον ἀκοή, ποῦ ἡ ὄσφρησις;

The common point made is that for a body to be a body it cannot be reduced down to a single function. This would make it a body no longer.

Next in v. 18, Paul brings divine creation of the body into the discussion: νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν. **But now God placed the members, each one of them in the body just as He desired.** The bottom line reality is that God created the diversity of the body members according to His wishes.

This leads back to the topic sentence declaration (v. 14) in v. 19: εἰ δὲ ἦν τὰ πάντα ἐν μέλος, ποῦ τὸ σῶμα; **But if every thing were one member, where is the body?** Diversity is a creation of God in His design of the human body. Thus it cannot be denied.

Another important lesson here needs to be learned by modern churches: we must value diversity in the church as the product of God's actions. Human nature asserts that things go smoother when everybody thinks alike and functions alike. Perhaps some truth in it exists in human based organizations. But such is never to be the attitude found inside the community of believers! God doesn't create churches according to human standards but by His own plan.

iii) vv. 20-26, the essential value of every body part, 20 νῦν δὲ πολλὰ μὲν μέλη, ἐν δὲ σῶμα. 21 οὐ δύναται δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρὶ· χρεῖαν σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἢ πάλιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῖς ποσίν· χρεῖαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω· 22 ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν ἀναγκαῖά ἐστιν, 23 καὶ ἃ δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα εἶναι τοῦ σώματος τούτοις τιμὴν περισσοτέραν περιτίθεμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀσχήμονα ἡμῶν εὐσχημοσύνην περισσοτέραν ἔχει, 24 τὰ δὲ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει. ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα τῷ ὑστερουμένῳ περισσοτέραν δούσ τιμὴν, 25 ἵνα μὴ ἦ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σώματι ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσιν τὰ μέλη. 26 καὶ εἴτε πάσχει ἐν μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη· εἴτε δοξάζεται [ἐν] μέλος,

συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη. 20 As it is, there are many members, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; 24 whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, 25 that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now the emphasis shifts from diversity to unity with the image of the body still providing the figurative basis for Paul's expression. The opening statement (v. 20) signals this shift of emphasis: νῦν δὲ πολλὰ μὲν μέλη, ἐν δὲ σῶμα. **But now there are many members but one body.**

This reality suggests profound implications which Paul expresses in vv. 21-26. These are structured in three Greek sentences: vv. 21-24a, 24b-25, and 26.

First (v. 21), the supposed 'superior' body members -- eye & head -- cannot deny the importance of the supposed 'inferior' members of the hand and the foot: οὐ δύναται δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρὶ· χρεῖαν σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἢ πάλιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῖς ποσίν· χρεῖαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω· **Now the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you;" nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."**

One should note the randomness of Paul's selection of body parts for his illustrations all through this larger passage. The 'superior' and 'inferior' parts are chosen randomly, not logically. Such patterns prohibit any linkage of any body part to a particular role inside the church, e.g., the head with the pastoral leader. The problems at Corinth weren't connected to ecclesiastical organization of the house church groups. They were more profound spiritual issues.

Second (vv. 22-24a), the opposite is the reality for both the body and the church at Corinth: 22 ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν ἀναγκαῖά ἐστιν, 23 καὶ ἃ δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα εἶναι τοῦ σώματος τούτοις τιμὴν περισσοτέραν περιτίθεμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀσχήμονα ἡμῶν εὐσχημοσύνην περισσοτέραν ἔχει, 24 τὰ δὲ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει. **But much more, the seemingly weaker members of the body are indispensable, and those members we suppose to be less honorable we should be giving these abundantly more honor, and our weaker members should have greater respect and praise.**

Here is where the 'rubber hit the road' with the Corinthian elites. If a person doesn't take proper care of the so-called 'weaker' body parts, he will discover in illness just how indispensably they are to his well be-

12.20 δὲ
 νῦν
499 πολλὰ (ἐνι) μὲν μέλη,
 δὲ
500 ἐν (ἐνι) σῶμα.

12.21 δὲ
501 οὐ δύναται ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρὶ·
 χρειάν σου οὐκ ἔχω,
 ἢ
 πάλιν
502 ἡ κεφαλὴ (οὐ δύναται εἰπεῖν) τοῖς ποσίν·
 χρειάν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω·

12.22 ἀλλὰ
503 πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν ἀναγκαῖά ἐστιν,

12.23 καὶ
 ἃ δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα εἶναι τοῦ σώματος
504 τούτοις τιμὴν περισσοτέραν περιτίθεμεν,
 καὶ
505 τὰ ἀσχήμονα ἡμῶν εὐσχημοσύνην περισσοτέραν ἔχει,
 12.24 δὲ
506 τὰ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρειάν ἔχει.

ἀλλ’
507 ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα
 τῷ ὑστερουμένῳ περισσοτέραν δοῦς τιμὴν,
 12.25 ἵνα μὴ ᾖ σχίσμα
 ἐν τῷ σώματι
 ἀλλὰ
 ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων
 --- τὸ αὐτὸ...μεριμνῶσιν τὰ μέλη.

12.26 καὶ
 εἴτε πάσχει ἐν μέλος,
508 συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη·
 εἴτε δοξάζεται [ἐν] μέλος,
509 συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη.

ing. This principle for the human body applies to the life of a church equally so. Here was the heart of the Corinthian failure. Paul earlier spelled it out in the discussion of τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων (8:1ff.; note the repetition of some of that language here) with his emphasis on the superiority of brotherly love over claiming one’s rights. His use of the analogy of the body as interpreted here challenges that same elitist mentality among some in the community. The church should be paying close attention to its supposed ‘weaker’ members and giving them the respect and attention they deserve from their contributions to the life of the church. The church could not exist without them and what they contribute.

Third (vv. 24b-25), this greater attention to the weaker members stems from God’s actions toward them and thus must be copied by the members of the church: ἀλλ’ ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα τῷ ὑστερουμένῳ περισσοτέραν δοῦς τιμὴν, 25 ἵνα μὴ ᾖ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σώματι ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσιν τὰ μέλη. **But God**

has structured the body by giving greater honor to those less capable, so that no factions occur in the body but so that the members receive the same care from one another.

Contrary to human organizations with their embedded ‘pecking order’ of importance for their members, the community of God’s people is designed and intended by God to be a ‘level playing field’ where no member stands above the others. By this design the issue of σχίσμα that was plaguing the church at Corinth is resolved and even prevented. The superiority of Paul’s earlier principle ἡ γνώσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, **Knowledge puffs up but love builds up** (v. 8:1) is validated by the analogy of the human body.

What is clear is that all socially based distinctions among people must be shed at the front door of the church. And under no circumstances can the church create any new set of distinctions for those on the inside. All of these distinctions are completely contrary



to the wisdom of God. The factionalism seriously hurting the Corinthian church has but one solution: all its members must shed their worldly thinking and adopt God's way of thinking.

c) vv. 27-31, the community as a body. 27 Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. 28 Καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. 29 μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφῆται; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις; 30 μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν; 31 ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. 27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Now Paul comes to a summary and explicit application of his analogy to the Christian community at Corinth. Up to this point the amplification of the body analogy has pointed to spiritual principles for the church. But here he clearly puts the application on the table before the Corinthians. The use of the second person plural Ὑμεῖς (v. 27) and ζηλοῦτε (v. 31a) pull these statements together as a literary unit.²⁸⁴

284 “D reads ἐκ μέλους in place of ἐκ μέρους, and the Vulgate follows this, to mean member joined to member. But against κ, A, B, C, this is ‘obviously a mistake in copying or dictation.’⁹⁵

“Collins sees vv. 27–31a as a distinct epistolary unit, with vv. 27 and 31a in the second person plural.⁹⁶ The syntax of the verse fittingly combines singular and plural. Our translation adds **your-selves**, which is not strictly in the Greek (although it is emphatic) because it is difficult otherwise to signal in English that ὑμεῖς is plural. NJB’s *Christ’s body is yourselves* reverses the subject and predicate. We follow Luther, Meyer, Weiss, and Conzelmann in understanding ἐκ μέρους to mean *for his own part*, or *for his or her part*.⁹⁷ The phrase means separately, or part by part, and the usual translation *individually* (NRSV; cf. AV/KJV, in particular; RV, severally) is not wrong. However, the argument has been self-involving: what is my part/their parts in the body? Hence Weiss’s *for his own part* conveys a nuance which REB’s *each of you* does not quite capture, while NJB goes rather too far beyond the Greek with *Now Christ’s body is yourselves, each of you with a part to play in the whole*. In this respect, this verse ‘ties all the preceding pieces together.’⁹⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1012–1013.]

12.27 δέ
510 Ὑμεῖς ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους.
12.28 Καὶ
511 οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς
| ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ
πρῶτον ἀποστόλους,
δεύτερον προφήτας,
τρίτον διδασκάλους,
ἔπειτα δυνάμεις,
ἔπειτα χαρίσματα
| ἰαμάτων,
ἀντιλήψεις,
κυβερνήσεις,
γέννη γλωσσῶν.
512 12.29 μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι;
513 μὴ πάντες προφῆται;
514 μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι;
515 μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις;
516 12.30 μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων;
517 μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν;
518 μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν;
12.31 δέ
519 ζηλοῦτε τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα.
Καὶ
| ἔτι
καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν
520 ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι.

In typical fashion he first (v. 27) lays down a general principle that serves as a foundation for expanded expression: Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. **And you yourselves are Christ’s body and members individually.** Both unity and diversity are pulled together again by this statement.

The diversity aspect is then expanded with a listing of different ministry roles in the life of a church (vv. 28-30).²⁸⁵ **Several issues need sorting out in order to**

²⁸⁵“28 This verse is an exegetical and lexicographical minefield. These key questions loom large: (1) do πρῶτον ... δεύτερον ... τρίτον ... ἔπειτα ... ἔπειτα ... denote gradations of rank, importance, or indispensability, or simply ways of checking off a long list? (2) While the meaning of ἀποστόλους ... προφήτας ... δυνάμεις ... ἰαμάτων, and γένη γλωσσῶν ... has been discussed in detail above, we have yet to examine more fully διδάσκαλοι, ἀντιλήψεις, and κυβερνήσεις. (3) Why does Paul in some cases use abstract nouns denoting the various activities involved, while in other instances he appears to use adjectival titles for persons who perform specific functions or (some argue) offices? (4) Finally, how are we to understand the syntax which relates to οὓς μὲν ... when the contrastive δέ never appears and the construction

clearly understand Paul's ideas here. First, what does πρῶτον, *first*, ... δεύτερον, *second*, ... τρίτον, *third*, ... ἔπειτα, *then*, ... ἔπειτα, *then*, ... signify?²⁸⁶ To assume a priority

appears to proceed differently?" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1013.]

²⁸⁶“(1) Does the enumeration or sequence imply any kind of ‘ranking’? F. F. Bruce argues that enumeration first ... second ... third ... ‘mark these out as exercising, in Paul’s estimation, the three most important ministries. In Eph 4:11 these are also enumerated, together with evangelists, in the order (a) apostles, (b) prophets, (c) evangelists, (d) pastors and teachers, as given by the ascended Lord to equip his people ‘... for building up the body of Christ.’⁹⁹ In the same vein, Grosheide argues that prophets are second to apostles because, although both proclaim the gospel, ‘their office is not ... as universal as that of the apostles’ and hence ‘not as important.’¹⁰⁰ Robertson and Plummer perceive apostles as ‘the first order in the Church,’ since elsewhere in Paul and in Acts it is an essential qualification for the apostolate to have seen the raised Lord (1 Cor. 9:1, 2; 15:7; cf. Acts 1:8, 21–23).¹⁰¹ Dunn concedes that apostles represent in Paul a wider circle than the Twelve, but believes that they still constitute a special group of ‘founder members’ who are personally commissioned on the basis of such passages as Rom 1:5; 11:13; 1 Cor 3:5–10; 9:1, 2; 15:7–11; Gal 1:1 and 1:11, 15–17).¹⁰² The apostles are first not least in the sense that the church does not ‘raise up’ its apostles, but responds to the apostolic witness. A term like ‘church founders’ might be implied, although Paul asserts categorically that Christ alone is the foundation. Among the most recent commentators, Lange offers a similar evaluation to that of Bruce: ‘Paul begins with the three most important functions of proclamation: first of all, the apostles; second, prophets, third, teachers.’¹⁰³

“Other commentators tend to imply a ranking of some kind which is less explicit. Barrett shares with Bruce and Lange the view that ‘this threefold ministry of the word is, according to Paul, the primary Christian ministry. By it the church is founded and built up. Other activities ... can occupy only a secondary place.... The numerical sequence is pursued no further.’¹⁰⁴ Senft, however, is emphatic that the difference between the list in 12:8–10 and the structure of this list ‘is of extreme importance: it clearly sets out the specifically Pauline conception of the gifts of the Spirit (cf. vv. 4, 5)’ as against ‘the Corinthian definition of ‘pneumatic’ traits’ in 12:8–10.¹⁰⁵ As in Rom 12:6–8, when Paul looks back retrospectively to his Corinthian experience, he places the emphasis on a gradation of ‘what edifies’ the church as a whole, where service (as he will explicate in 1 Corinthians 13) becomes the touchstone of importance and ministerial character. Like Conzelmann, Senft urges that ‘the chief forms of service’ are deliberately listed first.¹⁰⁶ Finally, Allo argues that ‘the adverbs ‘firstly’, ‘secondly’, ‘thirdly’ are to be understood with all the force that they can have: that which is the first....’¹⁰⁷

“To those who know at first hand of the work of ‘the judicious Richard Hooker’ it may come as no surprise to learn that he interprets this verse in terms of a ‘middle’ position. The ‘Apostles [are] first because unto them was granted the revelation of all truth from Christ immediately.’¹⁰⁸ Prophets, he argues, had ‘some knowledge’ of the same kind, and teachers are necessary to build and to instruct. But otherwise ‘nothing is meant but sundry graces, gifts and abilities which Christ bestowed,’ and Paul does not have in general view ‘questions about degrees and offices of ecclesiastical calling.’¹⁰⁹

ranking of these ministry roles is difficult to justify, since such an assumption of priority of certain ministries reflects the views of the elites which Paul consistently denounces throughout this discussion.

The essentially twofold grouping here where ἔπειτα repeated twice sections out the last two sets of items from the first three items.

^{12.28} Καὶ
511 οὗς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεός
| ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ
πρῶτον ἀποστόλους,
δεύτερον προφήτας,
τρίτον διδασκάλους,
ἔπειτα δυνάμεις,
ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήμψεις,
κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν.²⁸⁷

“The single strong argument against an ‘order’ of priority or necessity lies in Martin’s incisive argument that Paul has used a rhetoric of political hierarchy only in order to turn it upside down. But this argues for oneness of status and for interdependency of function. Hence the more ‘egalitarian’ interpretations of Godet and of Fee have limited, although perhaps relative, value. Godet asserts: ‘All have their part to play’; all of the gifts have dignity and value.¹¹⁰ However, when Fee denies that any of these gifts or roles are ‘ranked,’ this is not strictly the case.¹¹¹ The comments of Bruce, Dunn, Senft, Hooker, and Schrage remain valid, and interestingly come from Brethren, Methodist, French-language Protestant, Anglican, and German Protestant writers respectively. But perhaps more still should be said. If Martin is correct about his ‘reversals’ (and he surely is), should we not give due weight to Chrysostom’s assertion ‘Because they thought highly of themselves in respect of the tongue, he [Paul] sets it last everywhere. For the terms ‘first’ and ‘secondly’ are not used by him at random, but in order by enumeration to point out the more honourable and the inferior.’¹¹²

“If this should be thought to reflect only a later patristic reading, we may note that in his discussion of the role of presbyters within the church (c. AD 185) Irenaeus places their ministry among that of the prophets and teachers in Paul’s list, observing that ‘God has placed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers’ because an authentic ministry of presbyters must be apostolic, i.e., founded on, and derived from, the apostles.¹¹³ For patristic writers the list is far from random in sequence, whether we consider Origen, Augustine, or others. Indeed, Augustine propounds to Pelagius the ingenious view that no single individual can possess the full range of the gifts of the Spirit (or the body rhetoric would collapse) except apostles, since we can find instances of each gift in Paul’s apostolic ministry.¹¹⁴”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1013–1015.]

²⁸⁷One should note in this same discussion the very different previous listing in 12:8–10 where the items listed are generally broader and more generalized in nature. Only minor overlapping of items between the two lists occur. This listing in 12:8–10 somewhat compares to the one in Rom. 12:6–8 which was written while Paul was in Corinth at the end of the third missionary journey. This listing in 12:28–30 corresponds in the first three items only to the later listing found in Eph. 4:11, which has also εὐαγγελιστάς, evan-



What seems to me to be Paul's intention here is to set forth in the first three items the basic ministry roles designed to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to each community of believers. The remaining items center on ministry actions to benefit the members of the community through service actions. The numbering of πρώτον, *first*, ... δεύτερον, *second*, ... τρίτον, *third*, ... highlights the importance of the communicating of the Gospel to each community of believers. Paul here underscores his consistent point all along that the church must be built exclusively upon God's way of thinking and not human wisdom. Interestingly Paul himself fulfilled all three of these roles in his ministry of proclaiming the Gospel. These items must not be understood as mutually exclusive roles of ministry. They all accent the communicating of the Gospel as the heart of God's wisdom revealed from Heaven in contrast to human wisdom used by the Corinthians and thus creating the massive problems in the church. That ἀποστόλους is listed first is completely expected since the human channel of that divine revelation came exclusively through the Twelve and Paul as apostles. The use of διδασκάλους catches special attention due to the very limited use of this word group in Paul's major writings.²⁸⁸ The functional difference in apostolic Christianity between προφήτας and διδασκάλους is very minimal, if existent at all. Only in modern Enlightenment perspective is there much difference ascribed to preacher and teacher in a religious setting.

The repeated use of ἔπειτα seems to set off somewhat δυνάμεις, *deeds of power* from the following listing of χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήμψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη gelists. Additionally, the Ephesian list combines pastor and teacher into one item: τοὺς ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους. .

²⁸⁸ "Teachers (ἔθετο ὁ θεός ... τρίτον διδασκάλους). Again, it is not entirely clear on what basis Dunn draws a firm distinction between 'charismatic' and 'spontaneous' teachers who taught 'particular teachings' (Dunn's italics, 1 Cor 14:6, 26; Rom 12:7) and a 'noncharismatic sense' of 'a body of teaching' (Rom 6:17; 16:17).¹¹⁸ The verb διδάσκω, *to teach*, occurs only five times in the four major epistles (Rom 2:21; 12:7; 1 Cor 4:17; 11:14; Gal 1:12); the noun διδαχή, *teaching*, only four times (Rom 6:17; 16:17; 1 Cor 14:6, 26, with the related διδασκαλία only in Rom 12:7 and 15:4); and finally διδάσκαλος, *teacher*, in Paul only in Rom 2:20; 1 Cor 12:28–29 (cf. also Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11; 4:3).¹¹⁹ Dunn's contrast becomes difficult to sustain in the narrow range of examples in Romans, 1 Corinthians and Galatians, and even more difficult on the basis of a wider lexicographical survey of hellenistic sources.¹²⁰ Barrett observes, 'Presumably they [teachers] were mature Christians who instructed others in the meaning and moral implications of the Christian faith (cf. Gal. 6:6); possibly (as some think) they expounded the Christian meaning of the OT.'¹²¹ Fee comments that 'all attempts to define this ministry from the Pauline perspective are less than convincing since the evidence is so meagre.'¹²²' [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1016.]

γλωσσῶν. *gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues*. The natural meaning of ἔπειτα in this kind of listing is 'next' in the sense of logical sequence. These come after what is listed first. No clear logical reason emerges for listing δυνάμεις distinct from the remaining ones, apart from the possibility that it is intended as an umbrella term covering those items subsequently listed. Some of these items have already been listed by Paul in vv. 8-10: χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων; δυνάμεις / ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων; and γένη γλωσσῶν. New on this second listing by Paul are ἀντιλήμψεις and κυβερνήσεις. The most natural sense of ἀντιλήμψεις here is defining various expressions of administrative support or help.²⁸⁹ The community of be-

²⁸⁹ There are three clear choices in the translation and meaning of the word in 12:28. Either it means (i) helpful deeds (as in BAGD and Dunn) in the most vague and general sense; or it means (ii) the help and support for those in need traditionally associated in later church history with the ministry of deacons (as in Grimm-Thayer, Chrysostom, Calvin, Meyer, Heinrici, and Lange) (but against J. N. Collins); or (iii) its context in the rhetorical function of body means support in the sense in which in modern cultures we speak of support staff, i.e., in the plural kinds of administrative support (as, in effect, Robertson and Plummer). In actual practice this was broadly (pace J. N. Collins) the work of the seven appointed to serve (διακονεῖν) in Acts 6:2–6. The Twelve express the wish to devote themselves to preaching and to prayer while the church set aside seven with Greek names to support or assist the apostles, partly (with J. N. Collins) for mission, but also (against J. N. Collins) to administer the funds set aside for the support of Aramaic-speaking and Greek-speaking widows in the earliest organizational development witnessed in Acts (on Collins, see above under 12:5 and 5–11). In our judgment this gift is coupled with κυβερνήσεις exactly because both concern practical administrative tasks essential in any concept of the body as both a sociopolitical and a theological entity. Margaret Mitchell makes this point forcefully for κυβερνήσεις.

"Dunn follows BAGD's meaning helpful deeds, but rejects administration on the grounds that it presupposes that all too soon the churches had become 'administrative structures.'¹³³ But the development of the church in Acts 6:1–6 shows how all too readily an issue about whether funds were fairly administered arises from the very first, and the apostles concede that they are too busy with 'the real work' to be sidetracked into administration (!). Even if this is treated (with Conzelmann and Haenchen) as a mere later 'reading back,' anyone familiar with the funding and management of even the smallest, most informal, most 'charismatic' group throws up questions about 'what was agreed' or how we go about 'implementing what was decided.' It is unthinkable that Corinth as a church needed no infrastructure within weeks of its coming into being, and that those who are willing and able to organize such matters fairly and efficiently are among the most necessary kinds of help which both church and leaders need and which certainly require special gifts or χαρίσματα of the Spirit. Thus Robertson and Plummer rightly urge that this gift of 'general management' belongs with the next, and Conzelmann renders 'administration.'¹³⁴

"Finally, the second meaning, advocated by Grimm-Thayer, Chrysostom, and Meyer, should certainly be included within the third, and Chrysostom provides an unexpected link with recent



lievers always needs folks skilled in organizing things.

Then comes κυβερνήσεις with its translation challenges as well.²⁹⁰ In the background of this term stands

sociological scholarship. Stating that ‘to help the weak’ is certainly a gift of God, Chrysostom instantiates the support of a patron (προστατικόν εἶναι).¹³⁵ The nouns προστάτης and προστάτις cover the range of helper, protector, patron, and patroness. Such a person, Moulton-Milligan show, is often an officeholder in many references among the papyri, and certainly combines help with patronage.¹³⁶ Perhaps Paul is here saying not only that good management skills are a gift of the Spirit, but also that those who could support people or work as patrons had a God-given task, as long as (like the other gifts, including prophets and tongues) the gift was not abused and used for self rather than for others.¹³⁷ Heinrici sums up the matter: God’s gift provides the wisdom, ability, and power to give the needed assistance.¹³⁸ Here any notion that every charisma must be ‘spontaneous’ reaches its greatest height of absurdity.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1019–1021.]

²⁹⁰“Finally, we translate κυβερνήσεις as **the ability to formulate strategies**. To be sure, κυβερνήσεις in the singular often means leadership. Collins understands the term to denote *leaders* with ‘some kind of directive activity.’¹³⁹ Hence the plural, *forms of leadership* (NRSV), is broadly acceptable on grounds of Greek lexicography and reflects AV/KJV’s and RV’s *governments*. But is this translation sufficiently context-specific, given the nuances of the word in various texts? One aspect, namely the one discussed under (f), is expressed by NIV’s *administration*, and it is useful, if not entirely adequate, to find this component underlined in the NIV. It is utterly without warrant for Fee to comment that ‘administration skills’ ... is probably a far cry from what Paul had in mind.’¹⁴⁰ Again, the more a person longs to preach and to teach, the more conscious he or she becomes of the need for others to give structural support (e.g., who will ‘follow up’ what events, and when, and has it been done?) however primitive the structures or small the community.

“Fee is entirely correct to point out, however, that the additional nuance of steersman or pilot is important (cf. Acts 27:11; Rev 18:17), with the emphasis on guidance (Prov 1:5; 11:14; 24:6, LXX).¹⁴¹ Collins calls it ‘a nautical metaphor.’¹⁴² But Margaret Mitchell calls attention to an aspect of this point which Fee leaves aside. The term, she agrees, ‘is a common metaphor for rulership in antiquity,’ but in the context of a rhetoric of concord there comes into prominence ‘the ship captain and his task to keep a ship afloat’ amid rocks and shallows of ‘factionalism.’¹⁴³ Here she draws especially on the research of E. Hilgert.¹⁴⁴ Plato appeals to the role of the pilot or helmsman alongside his body rhetoric in *The Republic* on the harmony of the city-state.¹⁴⁵ Dio Chrysostom notes that by the latter half of the first century the image of the κυβερνήτης or steersman had become a topos, or standard example in rhetoric, in appeals for unity and concord.¹⁴⁶ Dio himself uses the analogy of a failed attempt by a leader to bring about sociopolitical harmony with the work of an inept pilot (κεβερνήτης).¹⁴⁷ Mitchell compares application of κυβερνήσεις in 1 Cor 12:28 to directing ‘the ship of state’ in such a way that its ‘governance structure’ keeps it from falling apart or foundering.¹⁴⁸

“This is based on more solid research than the pejorative judgment about ‘administration’ which we have noted above. It has nothing to do with more modern individualist notions of ‘seeking personal guidance,’ and it is more specific than ‘leadership.’

the idea of a ship’s captain who possesses navigational skills sufficient to keep the ship afloat especially in stormy seas. The plural form here underscores various expressions of such guidance skills. The pair of terms ἀντιλήμψεις, κυβερνήσεις, listed together and distinctly from the other items, stresses individuals in the house church groups who possessed divine insight into organizing and leading the group through any set of difficulties that might come along. These skills are not the exclusive possession of the group leaders, the πρεσβύτεροι.

The sets of rhetorical questions in vv. 29-30 underscore the same principle of diversity as stressed in the analogy in vv. 14-19:

- 29 μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι;
μὴ πάντες προφῆται;
μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι;
μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις;
30 μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων;
μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν;
μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν;
29 Are all apostles?
Are all prophets?
Are all teachers?
Do all work miracles?
30 Do all possess gifts of healing?
Do all speak in tongues?
Do all interpret?

The inadequacy of the above NRSV translation is apparent when viewed with the Greek text. These are not open ended questions as the NRSV might imply. The use of μὴ with each question underscores the idea that **not all are ---, are they?** Paul expects his readers to agree that not all have the same grace endow-

It refers to the ability to formulate strategies which will pilot the ship of the community through the choppy waters of strife and status-seeking within, and dangers and potential persecutions without. It is a gift for strategic statesmanship to see the larger picture (the pilot’s charts) and to use pastoral sensitivity to ‘steer through’ the sins and follies which threaten shipwreck of any church community from time to time. This combines Conzelmann’s ‘administration’ with H. W. Beyer’s interpretation of the word in this verse as ‘gifts which qualify a Christian to be a helmsman to his congregation, i.e., a true director of its order and therewith of its life.... No society can exist without some order and direction.’¹⁴⁹ Weiss also speaks of ‘order,’ but the term strategy better combines piloting and leadership.¹⁵⁰ Again, there is no thought of ‘spontaneous’ guidance. As Lange observes, ‘The quality of a gift of the Spirit depends for Paul not on its coming from some ecstatic form, but on its source from God’s Spirit and grace and its function of serving.’¹⁵¹ The Spirit gives ‘practical insight’ especially for ‘the inner life of the community’ (Heinrici).¹⁵²

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1021–1022.]



ment from God. That is, great diversity in the life of the church is obviously present. Notice also some randomness in the selection of the items. Especially that ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις above are missing here, and that διερμηνεύουσιν is added here but not listed above. His emphasis on unity-in-diversity is reaffirmed, but with the idea of the uniform value of all the endowments since they all come from God to the believers.²⁹¹

One point that should be obvious in these listings is that no one item to one person is intended by Paul at all. His own ministry exemplifies the use of most of these divine endowments at different times in his own ministry. God may choose to cluster numerous items in one person, while granting just one or two to others. This is clearly Paul's underlying assumption here. His point is clear. Inside the community of believers God grants His blessings in sufficient variety to all members so that with each member contributing the work of the Gospel can advance. And even more importantly, no single item or small group of items have greater value and importance than the rest. Here was the downfall of the Corinthian community. They followed human wisdom that prioritized these items with a lot of emphasis upon the supposed superiority that came with some of the items. Paul counters with God's wisdom that places equal value upon each item and see each one as a divine endowment given by His sovereign choice. Thus the common benefit to the entire community is the important aspect.

In verse 31, Paul ends this part of the discussion with an admonition and a promise: *ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. Καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῶν*

²⁹¹“Witherington draws on Dale Martin’s helpful work to bring the chapter to a forceful conclusion. He writes: ‘It takes all kinds of parts to make up a body. To think otherwise is to criticize God, because, as v. 18 indicates, it is God who has placed the various members in the body.... No particular body member can devalue another or declare it to be of no worth.... D. B. Martin rightly concludes that Paul’s use of body imagery is at variance with the usual use.... Paul uses it to relativize the sense of importance of those of higher status, making them see the importance and necessity of the weaker, lower status Corinthian Christians ... the ‘less presentable’ members.’¹⁵⁴ But to see the point fully, we must bear in mind that in 4:1–13 it emerges clearly that for the Corinthians ‘high status’ gifts were the triumphalist ones of exultation and visible, demonstrative ‘success’; the apostles were ‘dirt,’ struggling in the arena while the Corinthians sat in seats of honor and watched their bloodied humiliation.¹⁵⁵ Is it exultation in the Spirit or humiliation with Christ which identifies Christ’s body? Is it self-edification or edification of others? Only when Paul has reflected on the meaning of love for the other (12:31–13:13) and applied it to the assembled church (14:1–40) will he then go on to show the timing and nature of true ‘spirituality’ and of triumphant victory in the Spirit (15:1–58). Even 15:58 returns to ὁ κόσμος ὑμῶν, which is οὐ κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1023–1024.

δείκνυμι. *But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.*

The admonition seems at first glance to contradict the emphasis on the equal value of each endowment from God. But rhetorically, the apostle closes with an admonition that resonated well in the ears of the Corinthian elites: *seek the greater gifts*. But his promise signals that the ‘greater gifts’ were not anything like what these elites in the church anticipated.²⁹²

Pinnacle, 13:1-13. These verses flesh out the earlier point made earlier in 8:1, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, *love builds up*. The principle of divinely given ἀγάπη stands as the criteria for using every divine endowment in the community of believers. Especially the Corinthian elites had either lost sight of this, or had never learned it in the first place. The older argument that chapter 13 doesn’t fit the theme emphasis of chapters 12 and 14 is so obviously wrong that it deserves no critique as a serious viewpoint. The older advocates made such contentions out of an exegetical agenda long since proven to be inadequate. Additionally the vast majority of modern commentators have rejected a non-Pauline source in favor of Paul having composed this material. To be sure, the literary flavor of these verses is different in noticeable ways as a block diagram of the passage visually reflects.

The very short, concise statements that dominate the expressions after the first three introductory declarations (#s 521-523), are more compacted than the usual writing pattern for First Corinthians, although a comparison of the entire document in [block diagram](#) reflects a

²⁹²“We noted above the arguments of Collins for viewing 12:27–31a as a rhetorical unit, with v. 31b beginning the argument of ch. 13. However, the most significant study of this important transitional verse is the 1993 article in NTS by J. F. M. Smit.¹⁵⁶ Although commentators traditionally link either the whole of v. 31 or at least v. 31b with ch. 13 rather than with ch. 12, I have become convinced that to do this is to deprive the verse of its integral rhetorical and logical force with the argument which Paul has steadily built up from 12:19–30 and prepared for in 12:12–18. We have seen that there was a zealous concern, even a striving, for the gifts of the Spirit that were deemed to be greatest in the sense of their supposedly constituting a mark of a high social and/or spiritual status. Once again Paul uses redefinition or ‘code switching’ (see above on Moores and Eco). Paul rejects their view of ‘high status’ gifts utterly. But, he argues, tongue-in-cheek (Smit, with ‘sharp irony’), do not stop being zealously concerned about the ‘greatest’ gifts, provided that you follow me in transposing and subverting your understanding of what counts as ‘the greatest.’¹⁵⁷ The ‘greatest’ are not those that minister to status or to self, but those which serve the good of others and build the community. I now show you that what is an even greater way still is the way of love.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1024.]



ταῖς γλώσσαις
τῶν ἀνθρώπων
13.1 Ἐὰν...λαλῶ
καὶ
τῶν ἀγγέλων,
δὲ
ἀγάπην μὴ ἔχω,
**521 γέγονα χαλκὸς ἢ ἠχῶν
ἢ
κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον.**

13.2 καὶ
ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν
καὶ
εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα
καὶ
πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν
καὶ
ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν
ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι,
δὲ
--- ἀγάπην μὴ ἔχω,
522 οὐθέν εἰμι.

13.3 κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα
τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου
καὶ
ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου
ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι,
δὲ
--- ἀγάπην μὴ ἔχω,
523 οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.

524 13.4 **Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ,
525 χρηστεύεται ἢ ἀγάπη,
526 οὐ ζηλοῖ,
527 [ἢ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται,
528 οὐ φυσιοῦται,
529** 13.5 **οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ,
530 οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς,
531 οὐ παροξύνεται,
532 οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,
533** 13.6 **οὐ χαίρει
ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ,
δὲ
534 συγχαίρει τῇ ἀληθείᾳ·
535** 13.7 **πάντα στέγει,
536 πάντα πιστεύει,**

**537 πάντα ἐλπίζει,
538 πάντα ὑπομένει.**

539 13.8 **Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει·
δὲ
εἴτε προφητεῖαι,
540 καταργηθήσονται·
εἴτε γλῶσσαι,
541 παύσονται·
εἴτε γνῶσις,
542 καταργηθήσεται.**

13.9 γὰρ
ἐκ μέρους
**543 γινώσκωμεν
καὶ
ἐκ μέρους
544 προφητεύομεν·
13.10 δὲ
ὅταν ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον,
545 τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται.**

13.11 ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος,
**546 ἐλάλουν
ὡς νήπιος,
547 ἐφρόνουν
ὡς νήπιος,
548 ἐλογιζόμην
ὡς νήπιος·
ὅτε γέγονα ἀνήρ,
549 κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου.**

13.12 γὰρ
**550 βλέπομεν
ἄρτι
δι' ἐσόπτρου
ἐν αἰνίγματι,
δὲ
τότε
551 (βλέψομεν) πρόσωπον
πρὸς πρόσωπον·
ἄρτι
552 γινώσκω
ἐκ μέρους,
δὲ
τότε
553 ἐπιγνώσομαι
καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.**

13.13 δὲ
Νυνὶ
**554 μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη,
τὰ τρία ταῦτα·
δὲ
555 μείζων τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.**

general preference for shorter, more Hebraistic thought expressions than for longer Hellenistic style expressions.²⁹³ Unanswerable is how much this is due to Paul and how much of it reflects the style of his writing secretary.

What the above diagram dramatically visualizes are the repetitive patterns inside the passage: the lengthy ἐὰν clauses with the negative apodosis in the declarations #s 521-523; the two positive affirmations (#s 524-525) followed by the series of negative affirmations (#s 526-532); the contrastive pair in #s 533-534) followed by the series of πάντα declarations (#s 535-538); the four contrastives on the strength of love (#s 539-542) followed by the series of justifying declarations introduced by γὰρ (#s 543-545); the comparison between childhood and adulthood (#s 546-549) followed by a series of justifying declarations (#s 550-553); and concluded with a return to the permanence of love (#s. 554-555). The literary craftsmanship here is outstanding.

Surely this caught the attention of the Corinthians knowledgers who felt Paul inferior to them and their understanding of spiritual reality. By demonstrating his commanding knowledge of the Greek of his day, his case for the superiority of love over personal rights gained added persuasiveness. One can deeply love God and others, and be highly intelligent at the same time!

How to properly group these sets of declarations is another challenge. The paragraphing patterns of most translations see a threefold pattern: vv. 1-3, 4-7, and 8-13. But as the block diagram illustrates, one should be very cautious about this, for the transition points are not nearly so well marked as the threefold outline might imply. For example, the first declaration of #521 functions primarily as an introductory topic sentence setting the tone for the entire passage. But the threefold use of ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω clearly links 521 to 522-523. Also the couplet expression in #s 533-534 (v. 6) both concludes the previous set and just as importantly sets up the following series (#s 535-538). The clearest thematic shift surfaces in #539 with its emphasis on the lasting quality of love in contrast to knowledge etc. But #s 539-553 represent a mixture of themes woven together rather than a single theme being developed. The bottom line is that the content of chapter thirteen will not naturally fit into a post Enlightenment kind of outline. It is first century thinking, not twenty-first century thought. How to best preserve that first century mind to a twenty-first century audience is the real dilemma here.

Let's take each distinctive grammar set one by one and see better what Paul is trying to communicate.

²⁹³A comparison of [the block diagrams](#) just of Galatians and 1-2 Thessalonians with 1 Corinthians graphically illustrates this distinctive difference in the Corinthian letter.

vv. 1-3, 1 Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον. 2 καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητεῖαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι. 3 κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι. 1 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

By using the third class condition sentence in which the protasis sets up a possible but not likely to happen scenario. Three such inner related scenarios are set up:

The protasis, pt. 1:

Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω,... If with the tongues of men I speak and of angels, but love I do not possess....

καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητεῖαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, And if I have prophesy skills and I know all mysteries and all knowledge and if I possessed faith so that I could move mountains, but love I do not possess....

κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, and if I give away all my possessions and if I give my body so that I can boast, but love I do not possess...

The three scenarios present first what seemed to be a major issue at Corinth: speaking with human eloquence as a mark of superiority and, even better, speaking with such eloquence so as to seem angelic. Whether the issue here is glossalalia or not is doubtful. Paul may possibly be hinting at such but his main focus is upon human eloquence of speaking that is taken as a indication of superiority. This is the very opposite of Paul's presentation of the Gospel at Corinth as he states in 2:1, Κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. But these kinds of supposed marks of superiority were what the elites at Corinth put greatest value on.

The second scenario is related with its emphasis upon possessing προφητεῖαν, [preaching skills](#); τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν, [knowledge of all mysteries and of all understanding](#); πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν pos-

session of faith sufficient to move mountains. Connected to extraordinary communication skills is also extraordinary insight and understanding of spiritual reality coupled with outstanding levels of commitment to God. Here is emphasized the source of understanding that provides the content for the outstanding communication.

The third scenario centers on exceptional self-sacrifice that would be the validation of the other two scenarios: *κἄν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι*, and if I give away all my possessions and if I hand over my body so that I can boast.... Here is extraordinary religious devotion within the Jewish / Christian framework of benevolence and willingness to suffer martyrdom. Such concrete actions of religious commitment would be viewed as ultimate validation of genuine devotion to God.

In these three scenarios Paul pictures the supposedly ideal believer, at least ideal in the minds of many at Corinth. Outstanding communication skills, extraordinary spiritual insight, and unselfish commitment to others and to God. What more could the community ask for in its quest to be deeply spiritual?

The protasis, pt. 2: ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω is the common contrastive aspect of each scenario. In light of the earlier axiom, ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, *knowledge puffs up but love builds up* (8:1), Paul dramatically calls attention to the one missing element that nullifies the spiritual value of all these extraordinary abilities. The problem in these three pictures is centered on the individual believer achieving recognition as being superior because of what he possesses. What is missing is genuine devotion to others and to God.

The use of ἀγάπη for love by Paul is very intentional.²⁹⁴ At its heart is an unselfish giving to benefit others.

²⁹⁴“At least two themes determine a distinctive theological emphasis which the word itself carries in 13:1–13. First, love represents ‘the power of the new age’ breaking into the present, ‘the only vital force which has a future.’⁴⁰ Love is that quality which distinctively stamps the life of heaven, where regard and respect for the other dominates the character of life with God as the communion of saints and heavenly hosts. The theologian may receive his or her redundancy notice; the prophet may have nothing to say which everyone else does not already know; but love abides as the character of heavenly, eschatological existence.

“Second, as we have noted, love (ἀγάπη) denotes above all a stance or attitude which shows itself in acts of will as regard, respect, and concern for the welfare of the other. It is therefore profoundly christological, for the cross is the paradigm case of the act of will and stance which places welfare of others above the interests of the self. Here Moltmann and Jüngel rightly relate this to the self-giving grace of the cruciform, Christomorphic God. We cannot read the Johannine ‘God is love’ onto Paul, but in fact it is already there in Paul, and the biblical exegete has no need to compromise the distinctive witness of each biblical source or tradition. It lies at the heart of Paul’s theology of grace, and hence by means of these considerations Nygren’s points carry indirect weight for

The Corinthian elites did not understand or accept the core premise of ἀγάπη. But for Paul, all of the extraordinary accomplishments defined in the three scenarios have no value for Christians when ἀγάπη doesn’t stand behind and underneath them. For pagans yes, but for believers no. The phony wisdom gained from the surrounding world had completely misled these Corinthians church members. But with profoundly eloquent words Paul seeks to correct them with true wisdom from God.

The apodosis: Each scenario (=protasis) has a conclusion labeled an apodosis.

γένονα χαλκὸς ἤχῳ ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον. *I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

οὐθέν εἰμι. *I am nothing.*

οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι. *I gain nothing.*

Each conclusion is appropriate to the thrust of the scenario, but all three reach the same essential conclusion that without ἀγάπη all the skills and accomplishments humanly possible have no value before God.

With the first scenario emphasizing extraordinary communication skills the conclusion takes on a special irony bordering on sarcasm.²⁹⁵ The language of χαλκὸς 13:1–13. Nygren’s work has particular value for the emphasis of v. 5 (see below).”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1035.]

²⁹⁵“Every word of the entire clause which makes up the apodosis of the conditional provides much interest: *γένονα χαλκὸς ἤχῳ ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον*. The general sense is clear enough: ‘No matter how exalted my gift of tongues, without love I am nothing more than a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. This value judgement is meant to be shocking.... It is not the gift of tongues that is only a resounding gong ... but I, myself’ (Carson).⁴² But each word or phrase invites detailed comment.

χαλκὸς ἤχῳ is the subject of a research article by W. Harris under the title “‘Sounding Brass’ and Hellenistic Technology.”⁴³ Harris discusses the phenomenon of acoustic resonance systems to which Vitruvius alludes in his work *On Architecture* (c. 30 BC). Material of bronze (*χαλκός*) was constructed in such a way as to amplify sound by functioning as an acoustic resonator or resonating acoustic jar, rather than as some kind of musical instrument or gong. Hence ἤχῳ means sounding in the sense of sound producing: not of pitching a sound. This matches uses of ἠχέω to mean not to pitch sound, but to transmit and to resonate sound, e.g., the roar of the sea or thunder. Paul uses the continuous present participle (Himerius, *Orations* 40; Ps 45:4, LXX; cf. the noun ἠχῶ, sound, in Wis 17:18).⁴⁴ ἠχῳ therefore does not make ἀλαλάζον redundant, but conveys the notion of endlessly continuing resonances which have no musical pitch.

“Vitruvius, Harris demonstrates, speaks of resonating jars or bronze vases, which were placed in niches around the periphery of an auditorium. Such a system seems to have operated at Corinth in the second century BC, although the Roman governor Lucius Mummius later had them removed and sold to raise public funds. Harris concludes that whether or not the Corinthians replaced ‘the



acoustic amplifying system,' Paul's readers would know of resonating acoustic jars used to project the voices of actors on stage and music.⁴⁵

"William W. Klein supports and develops Harris's view, against virtually all the standard translations and commentaries.⁴⁶ *Noisy gong* occurs in NRSV, NASB, Goodspeed, and Moffatt, while *gong* is found with a different adjective (resounding gong) in NIV, and (*gong booming*) in NJB. Neither *clanging bronze* (Barrett) nor *blaring brass* (Phillips) conveys the primary notion of resonance, although Knox's *echoing bronze* comes near, and AV/KJV's *sounding brass* (followed by Collins) is not a bad translation. Klein notes that Lenski and Grosheide view it as an instrument, and Moffatt's suggestion that it was a gong used in pagan temples, especially in the cults of Dionysius and Cybele, has attracted wide support.⁴⁷ This last suggestion, however, has been vigorously and strenuously rejected by C. Forbes, partly with reference to Klein's study.⁴⁸ Klein infers: (a) that we must relinquish the supposed temple context of pagan religious ecstasy; and (b) that tongues without love are still, however, merely 'a reverberation, an empty sound coming out of a hollow, lifeless vessel.'⁴⁹

"Klein agrees with virtually all lexicographers and commentators that κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον denotes 'a musical instrument.'⁵⁰ I can find no evidence for R. L. Laurin's assertion that it 'referred to metal castagnettes' (our modern castanets); K. L. Schmidt includes an article on it in TDNT arguing for cymbal, but the word occurs only here in 13:1 within the whole of the NT.⁵¹ It derives from κύμβη, a hollow vessel or hollow dish, and denotes a shallow, metallic rounded dish, which is struck against its partner to give out a resounding note. In the LXX it translates Heb. מצלתים (*metsiltaim*) from the verb צלל (*tsalal*) to clash, crash, clang, which verges on the onomatopoeic (mainly 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, e.g., 1 Chron 13:8). Although the AV/KJV image of a tinkling cymbal is the subject of mirth, it is just arguable that in 1 Kings 18:6 the term atypically refers to a three-cornered instrument such as a triangle, while Zech 14:20 might denote bells.⁵² For the bells of a harness might include bosses, and cymbals also could have bosses. Modern musicologists distinguish the crotal, which goes back thousands of years and is a thick metal plate, from the modern orchestral cymbal, which is of Turkish origin. The crotal had 'a definite pitch' and could be hit head-on (unlike the modern orchestral cymbal) or struck by a club or hammer.⁵³ This latter method may account for the singular a cymbal here. (If so, *clash*, NJB, is questionable.)

"Paul couples with κύμβαλον the adjective ἀλαλάζον. This also is onomatopoeic from the tradition of wailing loudly in lament. Like ἤχων it is technically a present participle of continuous action rather than an adjective. The verb ἀλαλάζω means to wail loudly in its only other occurrence in the NT (Mark 5:38). A lexicographical search reveals that, according to the occasion (and the agents?), loud noise and the action of continuous reverberating can be either majestic and splendiferous (Ps 145:4, 5, LXX), bringing together τύμπανον, probably kettle drum, and κύμβαλον, crotal or (broadly) cymbal, with ἀλαλαγμοῦ, sonorous or intrusive, invasive and self-important (BAGD interpret the verbal form τυμπανίζω to mean 'to torture with the τύμπανον').⁵⁴

"This issue becomes controversial in a further recent study by T. K. Sanders, which seeks to reevaluate all previous interpretations of this verse, on the basis of the meaning of ἀλαλάζον and the work of Klein. Sanders argues that the Greek participle ἤ, (translated above and elsewhere as or) means rather than. He proposes the meaning: I have become only a resonating acoustic jar rather than a flourish of cymbals.⁵⁵ Sanders accepts and defends the empty,

ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον clearly alluded to the ecstatic speech of the temple priests and priestesses in their supposed taking with deity in the language of the deity. These musical instruments and sounds were

noisy, negative character of mere resonating acoustic jar. But he rejects the view that ἀλαλάζω refers in most cases to a loud wailing: 'the interpretation of κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον as discordant cacophony is inconsistent with the discriminating tastes of antiquity.'⁵⁶ He therefore turns his attention away from the two pairs of adjectives and nouns to explore ἢ as 'a particle denoting comparison,' which is 'equivalent to the English 'than.'⁵⁷ He concedes that either *or* or *than* is in theory a possible translation, but concludes that since κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον is more likely to denote 'a sound which was pleasant to Paul's readers,' than is the obvious 'solution' to speculations about χαλκός and ἀλαλάζον.⁵⁸ The cry ἀλαλαί, he urges, appears in the LXX as one of joy and enthusiasm (e.g., when the walls of Jericho fall, Josh 6:20; when David triumphs, 1 Kings 17:24; cf. Ps 42:2; 65:1; 80:2; 97:4, 6). This accounts for the translation proposed by Collins: I have become sounding brass rather than a resounding cymbal, with the latter viewed as a metaphor 'for harmonious sound.'⁵⁹

"The argument of Todd Sanders is innovative and ingenious and deserves respect. He uses Hatch-Redpath, Josephus, other sources, and works on music in the ancient world.⁶⁰ But his thesis fails to take adequate account of three factors and a fourth consideration. First, the Graeco-Roman converts who prized 'wisdom,' 'speech,' 'rhetoric,' and social position, even though many spoke with tongues and all were exposed to the OT as the church's scripture, would be unlikely to regard the crash of cymbals as the height of their ambition. To be sure, they are triumphalist (4:8), but to build the rhetorical focus of a carefully designed didactic poem on an introductory contrast between acoustic bronze and reverberating cymbals, even celebratory, festal, 'good' cymbals, hardly accords with the rhetorical and lyric weight of all the other images and contrasts. Second, what is majestic and impressive in one context (especially, as we noted above, the louder cymbals and kettle drums) becomes, as the lexicographers rightly have it, 'torture' in another context. When the Queen opens the Church of England General Synod in Westminster Abbey, one's spirit may soar with the decibels of the organ's thunder, while the same level of decibels would for some be sheer torture coming from a local amateur music group. To identify 'good' contexts does not mean that noise is always good. Third, to interpose a logical disjunction of a reflective nature in one line of this rhythmic stanza places too much cognitive weight on a supposed pause in the flow.

"The alternative proposed by Harris and Klein leaves no difficulty. For the fourth factor is that to which D. A. Carson drew our attention (noted above).⁶¹ Paul is not simply saying that if love is absent, tongues are hollow and mere noise. He is suggesting that in cases where a tongues speaker might be without love in his or her lifestyle, the persons themselves would have become merely a resonating jar or a reverberating cymbal.⁶² The perfect tense γέγονεν in place of an expected future suggests: 'look at what such a person would have become.' Empty, noisy reverberations go on and on. In Yorkshire idiom in the north of England, they are 'now't but wind and rattle.'"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1035–1039.]



an integral part of this ritual in virtually every temple in Corinth. What to the pagan worshipper was a good sound is for the believer a Christian practice covering over paganism at its core. This is the case with extraordinary eloquence in communication whether in human languages -- Paul's main point here -- or whether the phony claim to communicating with God in non-human language.

The second apodosis in v. 2, οὐθέν εἰμι, **I am nothing**, stands in contrast to these extraordinary possessions of knowledge and faith. To have such skills without ἀγάπη nullifies all of these skills.

The third apodosis in v. 3, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι, **I gain nothing**, appropriately nullifies both the extreme benevolence and self-sacrifice of the individual when such actions are not motivated by and founded on ἀγάπη.

Thus with brilliant eloquence Paul challenges profoundly the worldly wisdom of the Corinthian elites who left ἀγάπη out of their Christian life.

Vv. 4-5. 4 Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, [ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται, 5 οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν, 4 **Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant** 5 **or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;**

524	^{13.4} Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ,
525	χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη,
526	οὐ ζηλοῖ,
527	[ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται,
528	οὐ φυσιοῦται,
529	^{13.5} οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ,
530	οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς,
531	οὐ παροξύνεται,
532	οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,

Even though vv. 4-7 is comprised of a single Greek sentence, this compound sentence has several groupings internally. The organization of the first two sets is visible via a block diagram:

Declarations 524-525 are positive while 526-532 are uniformly negative. The textual evidence for including [ἡ ἀγάπη] in # 527 is only slightly compelling with strong mss evidence for omitting it; thus the [] to indicate uncertainty.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶Evidence for omitting: B 33. 104. 629. 1175. 2464 lat sa boms; Cl Ambst

The pair of positive affirmations about ἀγάπη stress its enduring and compassionate aspects. One should note that the qualities set forth here are done as action verbs in the Greek but mostly translated as passive adjectival traits. Important meaning is lost in this way of translating the original text.

Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ means simply **Love endures**. That is, ἀγάπη stands over the long picture. It is not momentary, spasmodic, or hit and miss. χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη means **Love shows kindness**. It's action in expression rather than just an attitude. Also notice the literary device for bundling these two qualities together as a unit:

Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ,
χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη,

The next series lists off things that love does not do. These are not listed in any particular sequence or order.

οὐ ζηλοῖ, Love does not express envy or jealousy. That is, it is sincerely interested in others.

[ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται, Love does not go about bragging and boasting of its own importance and accomplishment.

οὐ φυσιοῦται, Love does not puff itself up with an exaggerated claim of personal importance. This figurative expression gets at the idea of arrogance.

οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, Love does not behave itself unseemly. Positively speaking, it minds its manners. It never 'pushes the envelope' just to show that it can. The English translation "rude" is only a part of the idea.

οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, Love does not center its attention on itself and what it can do. This has some connection to the first item, οὐ ζηλοῖ, via the linkage of the two verbs ζηλώω and ζητέω.

οὐ παροξύνεται, Love does not allow itself to be provoked or irritated by others. It remains calm and under control.

οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν, Love does not keep count of evil actions done against it, looking for an opportunity to get revenge.

Both the positive and the negative qualities of ἀγάπη address huge failures of the Corinthians. The factions, the elitest attitudes etc. addressed by Paul in the church reflect a gross failure to understand the true nature of ἀγάπη. The pagan wisdom which some in the church were still working off of considered most of these qualities to be signs of weakness and inferiority rather than strength and superiority. But their worldly wisdom had deceived them severely.

Evidence for including: (P⁴⁶) ⋈ A C D F G K L Ψ 048. 0243. 81. 365. 630. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881 *M* sy

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 543.]

Vv. 6-7. 6 οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· 7 πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει. 6 *it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.* 7 *It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

This latter part of the sentence continues the general thrust of the first part. But Paul does something here in v. 6 that has parallelism with other transition points in the passage, namely v. 4, 8, 11.

Here this antithetical pair in v. 6 close out the negatives and set up another set of positives:

First, οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, finishes out the negatives with *Love does not rejoice at evil actions.* It finds no pleasure with evil actions taking place. Second, the opposite typifies ἀγάπη: συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, *Instead Love rejoices together with Truth.*

Here one must remember the biblical definition of truth in contradiction to the modern idea with its Aristotelian roots. The pagan idea of ἀλήθεια is first of all an abstraction which sees consistency between ideas A and B. This consistency constitutes truth. Biblically, however, ἀλήθεια is God and what flows from His being and actions, as Jhn 14:6 clearly sets forth. Human actions that match those of God are true. If they don't match, then they are false and constitute ἀμαρτία. Thus ἀλήθεια in the wisdom of God is dynamical, interactional, and personal.

Thus Paul uses συγχαίρει denoting shared rejoicing between two individuals. Now what actions etc. can God and the believer with ἀγάπη rejoice together over? The four qualities in v. 7 provide a listing of shared rejoicing:

πάντα στέγει, Love endures all things. Both God and the believer in ἀγάπη put up with all kinds of nonsense and hostility. Love in its endurance reflects God's love.

πάντα πιστεύει, Love shows confidence in others. Both God and the believer in ἀγάπη express a basic confidence in others. Here again ἀγάπη at work in the believer reflects God's ἀγάπη by seeing the 'glass half full' rather than 'half empty' in the lives of others. It in no way implies naivety, but instead denotes a fundamental respect for the worth and value of others.

πάντα ἐλπίζει, Love is completely confident. The idea of ἐλπίζω is confidence in things to come. Both God and the believer in ἀγάπη possess complete confidence in things to come, since all things lay under God's control and are planned out in advance.

πάντα ὑπομένει. Love holds up under the load of all things. The idea of ὑπομένω and στέγω at the beginning is very close. This serves to make the first and last traits something of book ends to the listing. Both God and the believer in ἀγάπη possess the strength to endure the weight of all things that put pressure upon us.

Quite marvelously then in ἀγάπη we can rejoice together with God in all things that are encountered in life on this planet. And this divine quality about ἀγάπη lays the foundation for the affirmations that follow.

Vv. 8-10. 8 Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει· εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλῶσσαι, παύσονται· εἴτε γνώσις, καταργηθήσεται. 9 ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν· 10 ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται. 8 *Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.* 9 *For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; 10 but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.*

539 ^{13.8} Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει·

δὲ

εἴτε προφητεῖαι,

540 καταργηθήσονται·

εἴτε γλῶσσαι,

541 παύσονται·

εἴτε γνώσις,

542 καταργηθήσεται·

Again, in v. 8 Paul somewhat follows the pattern of v. 6 with a positive followed by negatives:

The contrast is between the permanency of ἀγάπη in distinction to the temporary nature of the three other items: προφητεῖαι, γλῶσσαι, and γνώσις. All three are limited to earth bound experience and have no role to play in Heaven through eternity. This stands in stark contrast to ἀγάπη which stands in place throughout eternity. Notice in the diagram the clever way that special emphasis is placed on the limitations of προφητεῖαι, γλῶσσαι, and γνώσις (#s 540-542) over against ἀγάπη (#539) by the unusual grammar structure used by Paul here.

The idea of πίπτει is literally to fall down. Figuratively, the derivative idea which is the use here, carries the idea of failing and collapsing in weakness and lack of substance. Thus ἀγάπη as a dynamic presence of God shaping our posture toward others will stand up and last as long as God does! This point is underscored with the emphatic negative οὐδέποτε with the English language force of 'never ever.'

In dramatic contrast, however, stand the three items of προφητεῖαι, γλῶσσαι, and γνώσις. προφητεῖαι καταργηθήσονται, *prophecies will come to nothing.* That is, they will become completely irrelevant and of no value. Why? First, because προφητεῖαι are a glimpse not into the future but into the heavenly order and provide morals with glimpses of who God is and what He does. When we move into the eternal order at the end of time, such glimpses will be replaced with face to face encounter with God. No need then for προφητεῖαι!

In the same manner γλῶσσαι, παύσονται, *tongues*

will cease. In the eternal order, all those in Heaven will speak God’s language in communicating with Him directly, rather than through revelation from Him to those on earth.²⁹⁷ No need for English, Spanish, German, Chinese et als. in Heaven.²⁹⁸ We will be outfitted in the resurrection body with the language of God in Heaven which all believers in Heaven will possess. Just one language in Heaven, which completely reverses the tower of Babel experience in Gen. 11:1-9. Notice especially v. 1, “Now the whole earth had one language and the same words,” and v. 7, “Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.”

Just as knowledge, the lack thereof, in Gen. 1:7 was an issue in this early period, the need of experiential

²⁹⁷“Tongues will evaporate as readily as tears when a resurrection σώμα allows the believer to come face to face with God without the limitations and hidden conflicts of the mode of this present life in its earthly σώμα. There is no need for them to be brought to an end; their cause will have disappeared. Interpersonal communication represented by the term language (singular) in contrast to either languages (plural) or glossolalia is not said to cease at the eschaton.¹⁸¹” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1061–1062.]

²⁹⁸“Reformation, post-Reformation, and modern theology have tended to obscure the major thrust of Paul’s concern by imposing two questions onto Paul’s agenda which he did not envisage. Calvin discusses the difficulty caused by some writers in the medieval Western tradition who attempt to appeal to this verse to legitimize the notion that the departed saints pray for the present living.¹⁸² If love is permanent and eschatological, they argue, the concern of those who have died for those who follow them remains active. But huge assumptions about the logic of time and postmortal consciousness prior to the resurrection and last judgment are to be made if this inference is to be drawn, as Calvin implies. In particular I have endeavored elsewhere to develop Gilbert Ryle’s distinction between the logic of the participant (first-person logic) and the logic of the observer (third-person logic) in ways which apply to this issue.¹⁸³ In first-person terms Paul states elsewhere that to be with Christ is the believer’s ‘next’ experience after death (Phil 1:23); but in terms of third-person ‘observer’ logic, i.e., in terms of cosmic, not existential, description, the dead achieve raised awareness when, like a sleeping army, they are awakened by the last trumpet (1 Cor 15:52). The sleeping army is raised to its feet. The permanence of love hardly addresses the issues of prayers by or for the departed.

“Similarly, if it be tongues, these will cease hardly addresses the debate between Reformed and neo-Pentecostalist writers about ‘tongues will cease’ after the close of the canon or at a given stage of individual or historical maturity. Here Paul states that, like prophetic preaching and ‘knowledge,’ they will become redundant at the last day. As Carson observes, too much discussion of this issue directs us away from Paul’s main point.¹⁸⁴ This issue must be determined on other grounds than exegetical discussions of this verse.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1062.]

based understanding about God will come to an end as well: γνώσις καταργηθήσεται. We will be directly in His presence with no limitations on our understanding of Him imposed by the former earth bound existence.

In vv. 9-10 a rationale (γὰρ) for these declarations is given by Paul.

	13.9	γὰρ	
		ἐκ μέρους	
543		γινώσκομεν	
		καὶ	
		ἐκ μέρους	
544		προφητεύομεν ·	
	13.10	δὲ	
			ὅταν ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον,
545		τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται .	

Notice the 1-2-3 sequence and that γλώσσαί, considered less important, is omitted by Paul. The omission also comes due to the illogic of ἐκ μέρους, in part, being applied to γλώσσαί, as opposed to a clear logical connection to both γινώσκομεν / γνώσις and προφητεύομεν / προφητεία. Additionally the first and the last of the previous declarations are governed by καταργηθήσεται, the same verb used in v. 10.

In the first two declarations (# 543-544), the limitation of knowing God and receiving revelations from Him in this earthly life are given as the basis for their coming to an end. When that terminus point is reached is defined by the indefinite temporal clause ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, but whenever the end may come. Clearly he is talking about the end of human history and the ushering in of the eternal order of things. Note that he doesn’t speculate about when this may happen. Putting a date on it is irrelevant. Knowing with certainty that it is going to happen in God’s timing is the critical point. Thus when that moment occurs, προφητεία, γλώσσαί, and γνώσις will become irrelevant and no more be needed by God’s people.

Vv. 11-12. 11 ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου. 12 βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι’ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Again the literary structure of declaration (v. 11) followed by a justifying statement (v. 12; γὰρ) follows the same literary pattern as in vv. 8-10.

The initial declaration is set up differently, however.

^{13.11} ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος,
546 ἐλάλουν
 ὡς νήπιος,
547 ἐφρόνουν
 ὡς νήπιος,
548 ἐλογιζόμην
 ὡς νήπιος·
 ὅτε γέγονα ἀνήρ,
549 κατήρηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου.

^{13.12} γὰρ
550 βλέπομεν
 ἄρτι
 δι' ἐσόπτρου
 ἐν αἰνίγματι,
 δὲ
 τότε
551 (βλέψομεν) πρόσωπον
 πρὸς πρόσωπον·
 ἄρτι
552 γινώσκω
 ἐκ μέρους,
 δὲ
 τότε
553 ἐπιγνώσομαι
 καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.

er. The compound sentence introduces a contrast between childhood and adulthood with two definite temporal clauses:

ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, *when I was a child* (v. 11)

ὅτε γέγονα ἀνήρ, *when I became an adult* (v. 12).

At this point Paul reaches back to the earlier criticism of the Corinthians in 3:1ff., *Κἀγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ' ὡς σαρκίνοις, ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ. And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.* By this point in time they should have moved beyond spiritual infancy into spiritual mature living. But they hadn't and thus the explosion of all of the problems in the community of believers at Corinth. Central to their 'stunted' growth spiritually was their failure to grasp and apply the principle of ἀγάπη. The continued reliance on the worldly thinking and values rather than switching over to the θεοῦ σοφία had blinded them to the critical importance of ἀγάπη.

Thus Paul turns in vv. 11-12 to the personal *testimonium* using the first person frame of reference to describe what every rational human being would clearly recognize about normal human life. In early childhood, which νήπιος designates, child like patterns prevailed:

ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, *I was speaking like a child*

ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, *I was thinking like a child*

ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος, *I was reasoning like a child*

Such is entirely normal for a pre-school youngster. Nothing is wrong, except that the natural focus in that stage is inward and on one's own self. During that stage ἀγάπη plays very little role. At least, there is very

minimal comprehension of what it is.

But in adulthood, with ἀνήρ alluding to a male at least in their middle to late twenties in the Greco-Roman world of Corinth and at least 30 years in Paul's Jewish heritage, to continue to function as a νήπιος would signal serious developmental problems for the individual. Thus Paul's point becomes ὅτε γέγονα ἀνήρ, κατήρηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου, *when I became a man I put an end to these childlike ways.* Speaking, thinking, and reasoning now must be done at an adult level.

Clearly implied in this *testimonium* is that many in the Corinthian church were still trapped in spiritual childhood level, even after three or four years of opportunity for growing into spiritual maturity. Serious problems in the church were the product of this failure to grow, as Paul has repeatedly affirmed in the various issues treated in the letter body. In the Proem of 1:4-9, Paul eloquently put before the Corinthians what was possible through spiritual growth as God intends. But it all depended upon their learning to think and function in θεοῦ σοφία, *God's wisdom.* Absolutely critical was learning the divine wisdom in the principle of ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, *knowledge puffs up but love builds up* (8:1). This had not yet happened widely among the members of the Christian community. The mildly accusatory tone of this *testimonium* would hopefully nudge them toward making this transition from σοφία τοῦ κόσμου, *worldly wisdom*, to θεοῦ σοφία, *God's wisdom.*

In the justifying (γὰρ) declarations of v. 12, the shift is made over to the first plural that becomes more inclusive of his readers: βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην, *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

^{13.12} γὰρ
550 βλέπομεν
 ἄρτι
 δι' ἐσόπτρου
 ἐν αἰνίγματι,
 δὲ
 τότε
551 (βλέψομεν) πρόσωπον
 πρὸς πρόσωπον·
 ἄρτι
552 γινώσκω
 ἐκ μέρους,
 δὲ
 τότε
553 ἐπιγνώσομαι
 καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.

The rationale here for the statements in v. 11 in par-



ticular, and in general for vv. 8-10, amplify the contrast between the ‘partial’ now (ἄρτι) and the ‘complete’ then (τότε). This was first explicitly introduced in v. 10 with ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, *but whenever the end may come*. To a large extent v. 12 explains the meaning of τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται, *the partial will come to an end*, in v. 10b. Very important to note is the inner connectedness of Paul’s thought not just through chapter thirteen, but with everything said in the letter leading up to this emphasis on ἀγάπη.²⁹⁹

First is the first person plural assertion, and then following comes the first person singular assertion. Both sections in this compound sentence with four main clauses in the Greek plays of the temporal ἄρτι, now / τότε, then distinctions.

The dual theme of seeing (βλέπομεν) and knowing (γινώσκω / ἐπιγνώσομαι) reach back to the core emphases of προφητεῖαι, γλῶσσαι, and γνῶσις in v. 8ff. In this life we see and know spiritual reality only partially. Note that the βλέπομεν relates to both προφητεῖαι especially and γλῶσσαι also, as visionary revelation from God. This statement in particular picks up the partial emphasis on γινώσκομεν and προφητεύομεν in v. 9.

The ἐκ μέρους in v. 9 now becomes δι’ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, *through a mirror in dimness*. The precise reference is not entirely certain in its referencing of a mirror.³⁰⁰ *although the application of the figure of speech in*

²⁹⁹If Paul was using a piece of ‘pre-formed Christian tradition’ here in chapter thirteen as several commentators maintain, then he substantially customizes it to fit the situation at Corinth. He has clearly ‘made it his own’ with how the chapter is shaped.

³⁰⁰Corinth was well known for the production of good quality bronze mirrors, by the standards of the day. Although Robertson and Plummer correctly observe that the custom of frequently producing concave or convex mirrors led to ‘somewhat distorted reflexion,’ nevertheless to describe the resulting image as puzzling, obscure, or enigmatic would be to overstate their relative inadequacy by modern standards.²¹² Polished bronze can offer quite reasonable images, even if, as the AV/KJV’s **darkly** suggests, a deterioration of brightness is entailed. But this does not express Paul’s main point, as Héring, Senft and Fee argue.²¹³ At best it would allow the translation indistinctly, which BAGD regard as possible.²¹⁴

“Tertullian believes that ἔσοπρον can denote a semitransparent, translucent pane of horn through which vague shapes on the other side can be perceived.²¹⁵ But ἔσοπρον normally means mirror in hellenistic Greek, and its material is polished metal, ideally polished bronze. If these mirrors yielded only puzzling reflections, it is difficult to understand why there was a lively trade for the purpose of ‘looking at one’s face in a mirror’ (Jas 1:23; cf. Josephus, Antiquities 12.81; Philo, De Migratione Abrahami 98).²¹⁶ On the other hand, BAGD’s inclusion of indistinct means ‘soft focus.’ Barrett, Conzelmann, and others, however, retain the notion of obscure or enigmatic knowledge not on the basis of the properties of Corinthian bronze mirrors, but on that of a probable allusion to Num 12:8 in which God speaks clearly to Moses (LXX, ἐν εἴδει) but to others through riddles, or through obscure or enigmatic words (δι’ αἰνιγμάτων).²¹⁷ Conzelmann, Spicq, and Fishbane go further, detecting a wordplay in the Hebrew behind the Greek where the same form מראה (*mar’ah*) can be read to mean either clearly

this context is very clear. All that we know in this world about God and His ways is indirect knowledge given to us via revelation. As such it is always limited and never complete understanding.

Ironically Paul plays off the dominate Greco-Roman figurative idea of a mirror to refer to indirect knowledge. The knowledgers (8:1) at Corinth assumed a superior

or mirror. Even if this does not provide evidence of a background, Conzelmann concludes, the notion of obscurity stands in contrast to face-to-face knowledge.

“Michael Fishbane develops these allusions to the Hebrew with reference also to Ezek 43 under the punning title “Through the Looking Glass: Reflections on Ezek 43:3, Num 12:8 and 1 Cor 13:12” (1986).²¹⁸ He identifies a triple wordplay on מראה (*m-r-’h*) where Ezek 43:3 uses *mar’eh* and *mar’ot*, while Numbers 12 involves a pun on *mareh*, vision, and *mar’ah*, mirror. 1 Cor 13:12 is then a midrash on Num 12:8. This compounds the problem of whether διὰ means through, by means of, or (as in Greek syntax) both! Yet alongside this suggestion other backgrounds have been proposed. Since one usually views only oneself in a mirror, whereas Paul speaks of viewing reality or images of reality, Héring believes that he refers to the ‘magic’ mirrors used by sorcerers for ‘conjuring up in a mirror persons or scenes distant in space or time.’²¹⁹ Spicq believes that the connection with prophecy and the participation of children as a ‘medium’ render this just possible, but such a background seems insufficiently prominent to be introduced or presupposed without further explanation. Far more common in Graeco-Roman first-century thought is the use of mirror as a metaphor for indirect knowledge.

“Although only philosophical thinkers should be called ‘Platonists’ in the strict sense, and although even among philosophers Epicurean and Stoic philosophies were no less widespread than Platonism, Plato’s contrast between the indirect perception of an image and direct apprehension of Ideas lay behind much Graeco-Roman thought, however tacitly. Plato speaks of ‘a mirror which receives impressions and provides visible images’ (Plato, Timaeus 71B; cf. Philo, De Decalogo 105). Fee correctly perceives Paul’s use of the mirror metaphor to indicate indirect knowledge.²²⁰ Here the limitations, fallibility, and ‘interests’ of the observation and inference can lead to mistaken judgments and opinions. Senft sums up succinctly three conclusive arguments for this view: (i) the metaphor of a mirror more often denotes clarity than obscurity in ancient literature of the period (e.g., Cicero, De Finibus 5.22.61); (ii) mirrors are usually envisaged as instruments of self-knowledge (e.g., Philo, De Iosepho 16); and (iii) in the Platonic tradition ‘the mirror symbolizes indirect vision, which perceives only a reality which is derived, i.e., the image.’²²¹ Thus Philo, in particular, argues that we can compare and evaluate only ‘representations’ concerning which we can make mistakes (Philo, De Specialibus Legibus 1.2). Senft concludes: ‘It is evidently to this tradition that Paul’s text refers.’²²² However, he adds, Paul is not offering a theory of knowledge as such; Paul simply uses the imagery from this universe of discourse to underline the difference between present fallible understanding and future face-to-face knowing and being known. The metaphor, like all metaphors, is limited to making a particular point and should not be pressed.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1068–1069.]

knowledge to that of the apostolic Gospel preached by Paul while ignoring the severe limitations on the idea of knowledge imposed by their Greek wisdom. Their reasoning then was illogical and subject to mistakes when measured against the standards of pagan wisdom in that day. Thus a biting tone permeates v. 12a. Paul's referencing of this Greek metaphor should signal something important to these elitists in the church.

Now Paul shifts to the 'then' side with the declaration of τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον, *but then face to face*. This figure of speech stresses knowledge derived from looking straight into the face of the other person up very close. It underscores the complete understanding of God that becomes available in Heaven to His people. Thus it is the opposite of the metaphor δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, *through a mirror in dimness*. All through the Bible the emphasis is repeatedly that our knowledge of Almighty God is very limited in this life. We only know about Him as He chooses to reveal Himself. But in the direct encounter with God in Heaven, our understanding of Him will be dramatically greater than is possible now.

Note how Paul puts all this together:

- 1) **βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον.**
- 2) ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.
- 1) **For we see now through a mirror in dimness, but then face to face;**
- 2) **now I know in part but then I will know fully even as also I am known**

The shift to the singular in part 2) preserve the same 'now' and 'then' contrast but centers on knowing as a personal *testimonium*. Such a literary strategy as this always carried a mild rebuke to its readers for the speaker/writer is alluding primarily to his audience rather than to himself. In the close linkage of the two sections of 1) and 2) this becomes even clearer through the parallelism.

Thus Paul asserts dramatically the limited knowledge of God that anyone in this life can make is a rather pointed criticism of the knowledgers claim to a superior knowledge derived out of pagan wisdom rather than through divine revelation. But in eternity the extent of what we know about God will be measured by how well God knows us. This means we will know a whole lot more about God in Heaven than we can ever know in this life. The play on γινώσκω and ἐπιγνώσομαι especially makes this contrast.

V. 13. νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα· μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη. *But at present remains faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love.*

In his summarizing conclusion Paul turns to the

13.13 δὲ
 Νυνὶ
 554 μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη,
 τὰ τρία ταῦτα·
 δὲ
 555 μείζων τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.

present experiences of spiritual life on this earth. But very abruptly, he introduces a comparison of these three items πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη. The first two have not been a part of his discussion on ἀγάπη at all in this chapter. And the comparison stresses the eternal permanency of all three (μένει), while making the point as to ἀγάπη being the most important one of the three. As might be expected this has prompted all kinds of interpretive discussion over the centuries.³⁰¹

The combination of Νυνὶ with the present tense verb μένει underscores the eternal duration of these traits.³⁰² But verse thirteen clearly has the thrust also of a summarizing statement. As such, then how is it summarizing vv. 1-12? Especially when the contrast in

³⁰¹“13 This verse presents the notorious difficulty that Paul has spent the entire chapter expounding the eschatological permanence of love alone, only to conclude, apparently, that faith and hope also last forever. It would be easy to justify the theology of such a proposition. Just as love will never become obsolete, so where God is the living God his presence continues always to invite trust and confidence, as well as forward-looking hope in the living, ever-ongoing God who does new things, even in the perfection of heaven. But does such a thought, even if it coheres with Paul's theology (which it does), also cohere with the immediate context (which is doubtful)?” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1071.]

³⁰²“Before we list the standard explanations, we may note what is at issue in the translation. NRSV uncompromisingly translates νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη as *And now faith, hope and love abide*. REB is even more explicit: *There are three things that last for ever: faith, hope and love.* (AV/KJV and RV are similar to NRSV.) But NJB and NIV allow for a different understanding: As it is, *these remain: faith, hope, and love* (NJB; NIV is virtually the same, *beginning And now ...*). We also propose (with Collins) there remain, since Paul's syntax allows for two possible meanings. (i) One meaning is that of an eschatological assertion: these three abide or remain. (ii) The other is that of a logical summary providing the stage setting for v. 13b (as Parry urges): *So now (logical use) there remain, out of all the gifts and experiences compared and considered, faith, hope and love.* These are still on the table. But the greatest of these (for reasons which include, among other things, its eschatological permanence) is love.²³⁰ For translation, it is essential not to pre-judge by exclusion which of these two meanings Paul wishes to convey. Hence **remain** is preferable to *abide*, since without comment it allows for either or both meanings as the Greek μένει does. The singular of μένει may also suggest the list as a collective agenda.²³¹” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1071.]

these verses has been of love to tongues (v. 1), prophecy (v. 2) and benevolence (v. 3). Do faith and hope somehow connect to these three items? Clearly πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη in v. 13 transcend the temporal limitations of ταῖς γλώσσαις, προφητείαν, ψωμίσω etc. in vv. 1-3. Whatever possible connection between these two sets of traits and commitments that may have existed in Paul's mind, it is very difficult to discern any legitimate link. Yet, it is not possible to ignore the summarizing nature of v. 13.

One possible partial solution to this dilemma is that *Paul*, with this declaration in v. 13, *underscores the eternal perspective*, i.e., the eschatological view of God, *in order to remind his readers that fussing over the prioritizing of the traits in vv. 1-3 ultimately loses sight of the eternal nature of values and things important*. These final items of πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, from an eternal view, have tremendous relevancy to the present in the life of the believer. Yet they alone continue to be relevant throughout eternity. And in that way of thinking, it is ἀγάπη that emerges as the most important of these three, since it alone reflects God's posture, while πίστις and ἐλπίς as *commitment to* and *confidence in* God continue to reflect the believer's posture not only in this life but throughout eternity as well. This way of interpreting Paul's statement in v. 13 serves to underscore and re-enforce the major point of chapter 13, which is identical to what he declared earlier in 8:1: ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, *knowledge puffs up but love builds up*. In their elitism the 'knowledgers' at Corinth not only missed this eternal evaluation of ἀγάπη but reflect a serious failure of their claimed γνῶσις. Why? Their dependence on thinking out of their Greek culture (σοφία τοῦ κόσμου) rather than switching over to God's way of thinking, i.e., θεοῦ σοφία (1:18-25) has blinded them to the eternal value of things.

Partitio 2, 14: 1-5. 14 Διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε. 2 ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλῶσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει, πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια· 3 ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν. 4 ὁ λαλῶν γλῶσση ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ· ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ. 5 θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μείζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύη, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομὴν λάβῃ.

14 Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy. 2 For those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 Those who speak in a tongue build up them-

selves, but those who prophesy build up the church. 5 Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

556 ^{14.1} Διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην,
δὲ
557 ζηλοῦτε τὰ πνευματικά,
δὲ
μᾶλλον
558 (ζηλοῦτε τὰ πνευματικά)
ἵνα προφητεύητε.

^{14.2}
γὰρ
559 ὁ λαλῶν γλῶσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ
ἀλλὰ
560 - - - - - θεῷ - - - - - .

γὰρ
561 οὐδεὶς ἀκούει,
δὲ
562 πνεύματι λαλεῖ μυστήρια·

^{14.3}
δὲ
563 ὁ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ
οἰκοδομὴν
καὶ
παρακλήσιν
καὶ
παραμυθίαν.

564 ^{14.4} ὁ λαλῶν γλῶσση ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ·
δὲ
565 ὁ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ.

^{14.5}
δὲ
566 θέλω πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις,
δὲ
567 (θέλω) μᾶλλον ἵνα προφητεύητε·
δὲ
568 μείζων (ἐστὶν) ὁ προφητεύων
ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις
ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύη,
/-----|
ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομὴν λάβῃ.

Just chapter twelve leads to the pinnacle of chapter thirteen, so also chapter fourteen now builds off that pinnacle to address the elitists' prioritizing of speaking a heavenly language as a sign of spiritual superiority:

Confirmatio / 12:7-30 / 14:6-33a
Partitio / 12:4-6 / 14:1-5

These three chapters are closely linked together rhetorically and in content emphasis. To treat them as discon-

nected produces substantially false interpretations.³⁰³

The framework of chapter fourteen moves in the threefold pattern outlined as

- a) Patitio 14:1-5
- b) Confirmation 14:6-33a
- c) Conclusion 14:33b-40

Each section builds off the previous one while advancing the core idea a step further.³⁰⁴ Central to this chap-

³⁰³“The key to an accurate understanding of Paul’s arguments and declarations in this chapter [chap. 14] depends on a full appreciation of two factors initially. (a) vv. 1–25 relate integrally to what Paul has said about love in 13:1–13; (b) vv. 26–40 reflect the concerns about differentiation and ordering which Paul has expounded in 12:4–31. The first section concerns respect for the needs of others; the second half explicates the differentiation and order which characterize the activity of God himself as one God, one Lord, and one Spirit (12:4–6).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1074.]

³⁰⁴“Each stage of argument in 14:1–25 focuses on the building up of the other. This not only reflects back on 13:1–13 but also on concern for ‘the brother or sister for whom Christ died’ in 8:7–13, as Gardner has rightly stressed. Love of this kind tests what Gardner terms ‘The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian.’¹ Hence the stages of argument turn on: (i) vv. 1–5: the use of ‘spiritual gifts,’ or perhaps in a worship context ‘the gifts of authentic utterance inspired by the Spirit’ (τὰ πνευματικά, 14:1) as given for the service of others, not for self-affirmation (ἐαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ ... ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ, v. 4a and v. 4b). (ii) vv. 6–12: the profitless nature of unintelligible noises as far as a fellow Christian (‘the other’) is concerned. Far from a coherent building up, a disintegrating barrier which makes one appear as an outsider or foreigner (βάρβαρος, v. 11) is set up, which jars like a discordant note (vv. 7, 8). (iii) vv. 13–19: Intelligible communication remains essential in the context of the worshipping community, which necessarily entails the use of the mind (τῷ πνεύματι ... καὶ τῷ νοῖ, v. 15). It is not a sign of love to exclude those who cannot share enough to say ‘Amen’ to the utterance (v. 16), even if Paul himself knows what it is to allow his inner self to well up ‘in tongues’ in private devotions (v. 18).

“(iv) A fourth stage of argument, vv. 20–25, is sometimes placed with (b) vv. 25–40 in this chapter, but most interpreters, rightly, understand it as a corroboration and reinforcement of vv. 1–19. Paul takes up the emphasis on using the mind as a sign not only of concern for others in love (with 8:7–13 and 13:1–13), but also of personal maturity. This neatly places some at Corinth in a dilemma. If D. B. Martin is correct in perceiving ‘tongues’ at least in part as a supposed ‘status indicator’ at Corinth, how does this square with their simultaneous insistence that the rhetoric of polished speech (λόγος, or even speech καθ’ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου, 2:1) could or should be a sign of mature, sophisticated, ‘professional’ leaders? Paul urges that they replace naïve passivity of the mind (μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε, v. 20a) with energetic thought on behalf of others. To be sure, this is not a use of the mind for competitive ‘cleverness’ or ‘one upmanship’ (τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε, v. 20b), but for mature adulthood (τέλειοι γίνεσθε, v. 20c) which appreciates how self-indulgent uses of unintelligible noises make even believers (as well as any unbeliever present) feel as if they did not belong, or as if they stood under judgment. For ‘unintelligible speech’ or ‘strange tongues’ in the scriptures represent a sign of judgment up-

ter is the theme of orderly worship as opposed to chaotic ‘spontaneity.’ Orderliness in public worship centers on understandable communication of the Gospel to the assembled group. Thus the primary role of προφητεία as Gospel proclamation takes precedence over the self-glorifying γλώσση, *speaking in some unintelligible heavenly language*. Thus Paul bluntly condemns the importing of the pagan background into Christian worship that the Corinthian elitists were doing.

The internal structure of vv. 1-5 is made clearer by the block diagram:

Notice the succession of γὰρ conjunctions which provides justifying statements to what precedes. The rhetorical structure is a pair of admonitions (#s 556-558) followed by a series of justifying declarations to defend the core position of Paul primarily in the elliptical #558 of the superiority of prophecy over tongues. Statements 559 - 568 provide the rationale for Paul’s preference of prophecy/preaching over tongues. These are set forth in two sets of statements: a) #s 559-560 and b) #s 561-568. Both make the same case of the superiority of preaching over tongues but in unique ways.

i) Admonitions, v. 1 Διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε. *Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy.*

Importantly, note the different verbs used here. For the most important blessing from God Paul says Διώκετε with the very intense meaning of going after love as the most important blessing from God. But for τὰ πνευματικά he uses ζηλοῦτε which has less intensity than Διώκετε.³⁰⁵

on Israel in exile for their unbelief (vv. 21 [citing Isa 28:11–12, LXX] and 22). Believers will experience a misplaced sense of ‘being foreign’ when they should feel that they belong, while unbelievers will witness what appears to them to be bizarre religious phenomena, not a clear declaration of the gospel (vv. 23–24). They will never become ‘converted’ that way (v. 25)!”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1074–1075.]

³⁰⁵“The verb διώκετε means **pursue** here (NRSV) as in 1 Thess 5:15, as in the case of a hunter chasing after prey. The present tense, Allo argues, ‘Signifies the continuing of an action already begun.’¹⁰ REB, NJB, *make love your aim*, is less forceful and dynamic, while KJV/AV, NIV, *follow or follow after*, conveys less urgency. Similarly, ζηλοῦτε denotes cultivating a stance of eagerness. **Be eager** for permits a corporate concern for the well-being of the community, i.e., that these gifts may operate in the church, which is Paul’s horizon of concern. By contrast, NIV’s *eagerly desire* suggests a more individualist concern which Paul does not encourage, while NRSV’s *strive for* positively conflicts with Paul’s insistence that these are ‘gifts of grace’ (as in 12:31, χαρίσματα) which God chooses to give or to withhold in his sovereign freedom to ‘order’ the church as he wills (12:18). To read *strive for* can be



Some tie v. 12a to the end of chapter 13, but this falsely distances the declaration from what follows by ignoring the single sentence structure in v. 12. To be more accurate, Διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην links chapter 13 to the content of chapter 14 very tightly. It does sum up a major point of the apostle but one permeating the entire letter as his final exhortation in 16:14 underscores: πάντα ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ γινέσθω, *Let everything of yours be done in love.*

The second and third admonitions in v. 12 return to the topic of τὰ πνευματικά which was first introduced by Περί δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν in 12:1. The established meaning in 12:1 of Spirit endowed blessings holds true here in 14:1 as well. This is more than ‘gifts’ as is falsely conveyed by many English translations here.

In picking up the theme of τὰ πνευματικά here in 14:1 Paul limits his discussion to a contrast of two of these divine blessings: ταῖς γλώσσαις and προφητεία while speaking to the setting of the gathered meetings of the house church groups in the city. The foundational principle of ἀγάπη in the community setting dictates that what emerges as most important is what benefits the collective group rather than any individual. For the apostle that is exclusively προφητεία and not γλώσσαί. It alone is what builds up the community: ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ (8:1).

Thus his admonition ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, *and seek the Spirit endowed blessings*, is modified by the elliptical μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε, *and especially so that you may preach*. This adverbial purpose clause ἵνα προφητεύητε actually points all seeking of τὰ πνευματικά toward the single objective of communication clearly the Gospel to others. The building up of others produced by ἀγάπη finds its realization in the communicating of the Gospel to both the community and to outsiders, as Paul will affirm further into the discussion (cf. v. 6).

ii) Reasons for them, vv. 2-5 2 ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλώσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει, πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια· 3 ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν. 4 ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ· ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ. 5 θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μεῖζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύῃ, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομὴν λάβῃ. **2 For those who speak in a** pastorally misleading and theologically doubtful. Collins reserves *strive for* for διώκετε in v. 1a, which he views as the last clause of the previous unit (cf. v. 13), and *avidly desire* for ζηλοῦτε.¹¹ But striving for love suggests as oxymoron not entirely consonant with the tone of 13:4–7. Smit’s rhetorical analysis retains v. 1a as part of the argument of ch. 14, of which vv. 1–5 constitute the partitio: zeal for love in relation to the gifts.¹²⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1082–1083.]

tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church. 5 Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

As outline above, vv. 2-5 contain sets of justifying statements for the admonitions of v. 1. These are arranged in two groups: a) v. 2a and b) vv. 2b-5. Plus, the second group grows out of the first group.

a) First justification, v. 2a: ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλώσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ· *For the one speaking in a tongue not to men is speaking but to God.* Several aspects of this assertion need attention. First, it is an individual making oral sounds in **a tongue**, not in tongues (cf. 13:1). Note that the singular γλώσση (vv. 2, 4, 14, 27); τῆς γλώσσης (v. 9); γλώσσαν (v. 26), while the plural γλώσσαις is used in vv. 5 (2x), 6, 19; [αἱ γλώσσαι, v. 22], 23, 39). Clearly here with the singular by γλώσση / γλώσσης / γλώσσαν, Paul alludes to the Corinthian practice of ecstatic speech.³⁰⁶ The precise nature of the Corinthian practice represents a mixture of the pagan practice of the languages of the gods commonly practiced in Corinth in virtually all of the temples with the later Pauline depiction of a cry of “Abba” turned into ecstasy (cf. Rom. 8:26-27).³⁰⁷ Remember that Paul was in Corinth when Romans was written some three or so years later. The Corinthian practice might be legitimate, but just as easily could represent paganism creeping

³⁰⁶By contrast, ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ (i.e., to the fragile, vulnerable fellow human beings who need to be built up and encouraged) ἀλλὰ θεῷ. **To speak in a tongue** in this chapter almost always denotes an upwelling of praise or prayer or praising, joyful acclamation to God (see above on 12:10 for an extensive discussion; also 14:14–16, 28). We may recall Theissen’s comparison with the ‘Abba’ cry of Rom 8:26–27, which ‘permits the conjecture that unconscious contents break through in ecstasy,’ even if a measure of ‘social learning’ through environmental factors in a congregation cannot be excluded.²⁴⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1085.]

³⁰⁷**Rom. 8:26-27.** 26 Ἰσασάτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν· τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξώμεθα καθὼς δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντογγάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις· 27 ὁ δὲ ἐραυνῶν τὰς καρδίας οἶδεν τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅτι κατὰ θεὸν ἐντογγάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων.

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but **that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words**. 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirits intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

into the Christian community. The initial impetus for the practice clearly originated in the pagan background of the Corinthian Christians. Paul does not evaluate its legitimacy, that is, whether the one speaking is actually communicating with God or not. Rather, he lays down strict rules for its use which then signal that anything outside these rules represents paganism and is a fraud.

The plural uses come largely out of the earlier depiction of γένη γλωσσῶν, *varieties of tongues* (12:10). Contextually in chapter fourteen, the plural specifies multiple people speaking in individually distinct ecstatic speech or the different sounds made during ecstatic speech moments, with this latter view more closely aligned to the 12:10 reference of γένη γλωσσῶν given to a single person, the ἑτέρω.

Second, Paul, by how he structures the expression, emphatically stresses that such ecstatic expression is directed not to others present but exclusively to God. By definition ecstatic speech is not intended to benefit the gathered group, and thus the love principle severely limits, if not outright prohibits, the practice in assembled Christian worship. It is strictly an individual experience for one's private devotions to God. Here Paul hits hard the elitists' practice as a public demonstration of their superiority to the rest of the congregation. Their practice, in line with the pagan practices in the city, were calling attention to themselves, and God was not involved in the experience. Thus the phoniness of what they were doing was evident.

b) Second justification groups, vv. 2b-5. These are arranged as 1) vv. 2b-3; 2) v.4; 3) v. 5. They serve to amplify in greater detail the essential point of the first justification in v. 2a.

First the practical observation: οὐδεις γὰρ ἀκούει, πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια· ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν. *for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.*

When ecstatic speech takes place in the assembled group, no one else has a clue about what is being said. By its very definition, ecstatic speech is speaking a non-human language. Supposedly meaning is present, but only the divine deity to whom it is addressed can understand it. As Paul will later say, this meaning may not be understood even by the speaker. This was the universal understanding of such practice in Paul's world, whether Christian, Jewish, or pagan.

Thus ecstatic speech in no way builds up the group. Why? If it is legitimate ecstatic speech (as per Rom. 12:26-27 which πνεύματι here references), it λαλεῖ μυστήρια, *speaks mysteries*.³⁰⁸ That is, it centers on

³⁰⁸“In spite of Gundry's arguments about the regular use of γλῶσσα to denote communicative languages which are not nec-

knowable things by the rest of the group.³⁰⁹ Therefore no benefit comes to them from hearing these unintelligible sounds of ecstatic speech. The principle of edifying love is thus violated, as was the case with the

essarily linked with exalted or ecstatic states of consciousness, 'It is highly unlikely that tongues signify known languages in these contexts [i.e., 13:1 or 14:2].'²⁹ Without any contextual indicator, γλῶσσα may denote simply an organ of speech. However, the context of chs. 12–14 provides 'antithetical parallelism' between tongues and prophecy in which 'the most obvious characteristic of tongues is its unintelligibility,' which becomes elaborated in the analogy of reverberating musical instruments as against those with differential pitch, rhythm, and tempo (vv. 7–8).³⁰ Although Chrysostom interprets mysteries more positively, Calvin more convincingly perceives the term to denote that which is 'unintelligible, baffling, enigmatic, ... as if Paul had written, 'Nobody understands a word he says.'³¹ Some modern commentators understand πνεύματι to refer to the human spirit, largely on the basis of the occurrence of this meaning in vv. 14 and 32.³² Many commentators before the 1950s were unduly influenced by a view of human personhood dominated by idealist or Cartesian dualism, and πνεῦμα as human spirit plays a very minor role in Paul. Almost always it denotes the Holy Spirit, except in those specific contexts (14:14 and 32) where semantic contrasts clearly indicate otherwise. As in 15:44, to confuse human 'spirituality,' let alone 'immateriality,' with that which is characterized by the agency of the Spirit of God is to invite serious misunderstanding of Paul's theology. NRSV, REB, and NJB (against NIV, AV/KJV) rightly translate the **Spirit**.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1086.]

³⁰⁹“The nature of the unintelligibility and of the related term μυστήρια, here translated **mysteries** (with NRSV, REB, NIV, KJV/AV; cf. NJB, *the meaning is hidden*), remains controversial. Elsewhere Paul often uses this Greek word to denote what was once hidden but has now been disclosed in the era of eschatological fulfillment (cf. 2:1, 7; 4:1; 15:51). However, every writer uses terminology in context-dependent ways that may modify a more usual meaning, and Paul's usual meaning cannot make sense here without undermining his own argument. Dautzenberg needlessly complicates the issue by arguing that since this utterance to God is in the Spirit the content hardly differs from that of prophecy, except for its status as the eschatological language of angels.²⁵ However, if prophecy entails building, encouragement, promise, or a declaration of the deeds of God in a pastoral context, it seems inappropriate to think of this as 'spoken back to God' in these verses, if at all.²⁶ It is highly significant that Gordon Fee, who acknowledges a Pentecostalist background of personal spirituality, agrees that the utterance not only 'lies outside the understanding' but also constitutes 'communing with God' in contrast to the notion 'quite common in Pentecostal groups' of referring 'to a 'message in tongues' [for which] there seems to be no evidence in Paul.'²⁷ In a more recent work Fee reasserts: 'At no point in 1 Corinthians 14 does Paul suggest that tongues is speech directed toward people; three times he indicates that it is speech directed toward God (14:2, 14–16, 28).'²⁸” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1085–1086.]



Corinthian elitists in their practice.

But, on the other hand, preaching the Gospel in intelligible human language can and should edify the group.³¹⁰ Important to notice is the clear antithetical contrast between

ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ... (v. 2)

ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ... (v. 3)

Paul intentionally contrasts the two actions rather than the status of each individual.³¹¹ Tongues do not target

³¹⁰Paul urges his addressees to strive for prophecy. His choice of vocabulary is important. In the Greco-Roman world ‘prophecy’ was a highly esteemed mantic experience characterized by trances and other ecstatic phenomena. Paul, however, carefully distinguishes prophecy from the gift of tongues. He may have done so in order to distinguish Christian prophecy from the ecstatic speech forms known throughout the Hellenistic world (cf. 14:22–24), where what Paul describes as speaking in tongues would have been subsumed within the category of prophecy.

“For Paul prophecy is a gift of the Spirit that is integral to the life of the church (12:28). It is the only gift that is cited in all four of his lists of charisms (12:10, 28, 29; Rom 12:6). It is the only gift of the Spirit that is cited in 1 Thess 5:19–20. In Paul’s enumerated list of charisms (12:28) prophecy is found in second place, after the apostolate and before teaching. Prophecy seems to be a gift without which the church cannot exist (cf. 14:22).

“Prophecy is a gift that Paul himself possessed (14:6). He frequently describes himself in terms that recall the biblical prophets. Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah seem to have particularly shaped his articulated vision of himself, as the allusions to Isa 52:15 in Rom 15:21; to Isa 49:1 in Gal 1:15; and to Jer 11:20 in 1 Thess 2:4 seem clearly to indicate. In the development of his ethos argument in 1 Corinthians Paul does not particularly exploit the model of the biblical prophets. In this letter Paul prefers to use cultural models and his exposition of what it means to be an apostle when he makes an argument based on his own prestige. It may be that scriptural allusions would not have been a particularly effective device to illustrate the stature of the apostle for a community that was largely Hellenistic.

“Prophecy, as the etymology indicates, is a matter of speaking on behalf of God, functioning in a sense as God’s spokesperson. In 14:3 Paul emphatically identifies exhortation as the characteristic function of prophecy. Two virtual synonyms, ‘exhortation’ and ‘encouragement,’ have in Greek an initial ‘p’ sound that links them to one another and to ‘prophecy.’ Paul speaks about exhortation and encouragement as the way in which the community is built up. In writing to the Thessalonians he had previously linked exhortation to the building up of the community (1 Thess 5:11; cf. 1 Thess 4:18). In 14:3 he identifies the building up of the community as the purpose to which prophecy is directed. Prophesying builds up the community insofar as the members of the community are ‘edified,’ that is, exhorted and encouraged. Paul returns to this idea in 14:31–32 when he urges prophets to speak in turn and listen to one another.”

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 490–491.]

³¹¹“The Greek participle with the definite article ὁ δὲ προφητεύων may be translated **the person who prophesies**, which would preserve the parallel with the person who speaks in a tongue (v. 2a). However, Paul is setting in contrast the role of one who speaks in tongues with the effects of prophesying as a dynamic

others with intended spiritual benefit, while preaching does. The Corinthian elites were centering attention on the superior status of the tongues speaker, which completely missed the foundational point of edifying love.

Paul lists three positive benefits of preaching over ecstatic expression: οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν, **upbuilding and encouragement and consolation**. Most commentators correctly note that οἰκοδομὴν is the inclusive label, i.e., Leitmotif, that encompasses καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν. Also note the commonality of π with both these terms and also with προφητεύων. This literary device served to link all three terms closely together. Preaching (προφητεύων) should edify (οἰκοδομὴν) through encouraging (παράκλησιν) and comforting (παραμυθίαν) the others in the assembled group.³¹²

communicative activity, and this invites an emphasis on the action in question rather than on the status or role of any specific person, in accordance with Paul’s concerns and his use of the verb. The use of the definite article with the present participle may convey either habituation (*the person who prophesies*; cf. NRSV, NIV, NJB) or a temporal-conditional contingent clause (*when or if a person prophesies*, as REB). The latter also paves the way more readily for the proleptic accusatives οἰκοδομὴν, παράκλησιν, and παραμυθίαν as reflected in the Vulgate construction *ad aedificationem*.³³ “What is *in effect*’ is the meaning” (Robertson and Plummer’s italics).³⁴ Our use of thereby functions to make this point. Other exegetical issues in v. 3 are covered in the following note, especially under b1, 2, and 3. Meanwhile, ‘the noun οἰκοδομή functions as a Leitmotif in what follows and in v. 26.’³⁵ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1086–1087.]

³¹²(a) *Building up* (noun, οἰκοδομή, 14:3, 5, 12, 26; cf. 3:9; verb οἰκοδομέω, 14:4, 17; also 8:1; 10:1, 23, ἐποικοδομέω, 3:10, 12, 14). In Paul but outside 1 Corinthians, cf. Rom 14:19; 15:2, 20; 2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Gal 2:18; 1 Thess 5:11 (Eph 4:12, 16, 29). We consistently urge that 8:1–13 and 13:1–13 remain fundamental for understanding 12:1–14:40, and under 8:1 we noted Kitzberger’s central semantic contrast between the solidity and ordered permanence of building up by ἀγάπη, and the illusory and superficial hollowness of φυσιώω, to inflate through γνῶσις without love.³⁶ The major study of Vielhauer briefly occupied our attention under 14:1, where we noted his convincing contrast between building up as a cohesive activity for the benefit of others and a negative sense of affirming mere self-esteem, which we consider further under 14:4.³⁷ Vielhauer and more recently Sandnes further associate the commission to **build up** with Paul’s own personal apostolic commission with which Paul explicitly compares Jeremiah’s prophetic call to build up (Gal 1:15–16; Jer 1:5, ‘before birth’; Jer 1:10, ‘to build and to plant’; cf. 1 Cor 3:6, 10, ‘I planted... I laid a foundation like a skilled master builder ...’).³⁸ Citing further arguments to this effect from Schütz, Gillespie concludes: ‘Essential is the notion that οἰκοδομεῖν and the proclamation of the gospel are both functionally and materially related’ (his italics).³⁹ In 14:26 ‘prophesying, as a cultic event, is subject to this norm.’⁴⁰

“(b) *Encouraging or exhorting/challenging* (παράκλησις). It is essential to recover the multiform character of παράκλησις if we are to understand the nature of prophecy and prophetic preaching



in Pauline theology. It is not the bland communication of information as such, but a varied range of illocutionary speech-acts which plead, exhort, encourage, challenge, brace, console, or provide comfort on the basis of ‘institutional facts’ (in the sense used by philosophers of language), e.g., covenant promises mediated by human agents called and gifted by God for this task through the Holy Spirit. Ulrich Müller rightly understands it as a correlate of gospel preaching in judgment and grace, just as Grabner-Haider rightly calls attention to its active role as exhortation.⁴¹ On the other hand, those who regard ‘prophecy’ as a rare phenomenon in the churches largely perhaps restricted to the NT era and Pentecostal traditions in the modern era might note that the verb and noun occur some 109 times: ‘On the basis of statistics alone παρακαλέω/παρακλήσις are among the most important terms for speaking and influencing in the NT.’⁴² Although not every example of *paraklēsis* is prophesying, sufficient functional overlap occurs to warrant Fitzmyer’s comment that in the gifts listed in Rom 12:6 ‘the first gift [προφητεία] is inspired Christian preaching, as in 1 Cor 12:10, 28; 13:2; 14:1, 3–6, 24, 39; 1 Tim 4:14.... It denotes one who speaks in God’s name and probes the secrets of hearts (1 Cor 14:24–25).’⁴³

‘The pastoral dimension is underlined not only by the contextual particularity which distinguishes prophesying from teaching (which may be more doctrinal or general), but the careful arguments put forward by Bjerkelund that παρακαλέω frequently rests on a personal relationship between the speaker and addressees (see under 1:10).⁴⁴ The everyday sense of being a ‘helper’ through this activity picks up the overtones of ‘helping the other’ from συμφέρει in 6:12; 10:23 and from concern to sustain the other in 8:7–13. Sometimes, however, it requires honest exposure, challenge, or bracing exhortation ‘to help’ in long-term rather than short-term ways.⁴⁵ When the source of address is the Holy Spirit, judgment may become an avenue for the appropriation of grace. Hence the varied nuances of encouragement and exhortation or challenge are not in the least contradictory. The opposite of love is not correction but indifference. ‘Paul’s use of *parakalein* and *oikodomein* in 1 Thess 5:11 suggests that exhortation connotes a sense parallel with gospel proclamation. Evidence of this is provided by 1 Thess 2:2–3, where Paul reminds the community of his initial gospel preaching.’⁴⁶ Gillespie clearly shows that the term includes gospel preaching, ethical instruction, and applied theology in Paul’s letters.⁴⁷

‘(c) *Bringing comfort* (παραμυθία). The noun in this form occurs only here in the NT (and in variant form in Phil 2:1), but the verbal form appears in 1 Thess 2:11 and 5:14 (also of comforting the bereaved sisters of Lazarus in John 11:19, 31). Comfort is adopted by NIV and KJV/AV (consolation, NRSV); encourage, REB; reassurance, NJB. The six NT uses of the cognate forms suggest the bracing, strengthening, supportive activity of the older English which reflects the Latin components com-fort. Malherbe identifies the term closely with the attitude and activity of pastoral care.⁴⁸ He addresses in particular 1 Thess 5:14–15 in the light of concern for the weak in the better moral philosophy of the Graeco-Roman world of the day. Seneca, Plutarch, and Philodemus, e.g., caution that while exhortation and persuasion would not be swept aside, sensitivity to the variety of individual personal circumstances for which support is required must be addressed by a close personal understanding of these varied and specific situations.⁴⁹ The everyday life of the church at Thessalonica, Malherbe concludes, ‘required comfort ... from the earliest days of the church’s existence,’ and the complementary activities of warning and comforting form part of the pastoral process of ‘nurturing communal relationships.’⁵⁰ Paul always παραμυθεῖσθαι or its cognates in conjunction with

Second the inherent difference between the two, v.

4: ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ· ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ. *Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church.* Here, while assuming legitimate ecstatic speech, Paul delineates the fundamental difference between ecstatic speech and preaching. The first ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ, *builds himself up*, and the second ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ, *builds up the church*. Here the core principle of edifying love means that preaching takes higher priority than ecstatic speech. Thus Paul’s modified admonition μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε, *and especially that you may preach* (v. 1b). Additionally, it points to the private use of ecstatic speech rather than the public role.

Third, a summarizing personal view from Paul, v.

5: θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μεῖζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύη, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομήν λάβῃ. *Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.*

Paul in v. 5a expresses the positive desire that all of the Corinthians would reach a level of private devotional experience marked by the Rom. 12:26–27 standards of prayer so deep that it goes beyond human language words. Thus he does not forbid the ecstatic language experience when it is legitimate and not a counterfeit version from pagan religious experience. Clearly he sees this overwhelmingly as a private devotional experience.

But his greater desire for the Corinthians comes out of the edifying love principle: μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· *but more importantly that you may preach.* His intense

some form of παρακλήσις (5:14; 1 Cor 14:3; Phil 2:1),’ and this gives his pastoral preaching and pastoral care a distinctive touch not exhausted by either term alone, although the dual emphasis also occurs in moral philosophy in the Graeco-Roman world.⁵¹

‘Such a pastoral concern brings together the OT tradition of prophetic contextual application to particular circumstances and claims by Hill and others that prophesying has pastoral preaching at its center. ‘Preaching,’ however, is to be understood not as a flat homily of information or instruction alone, but as a multioperational speech-action of building up, encouraging and challenging, and bringing comfort alongside exhortation. Indeed, the opening of what is probably the most outstanding ‘model’ pastoral sermon in the NT (Heb 1:1–4) brings encouragement and comfort to its addressees by performing multiple acts of acclamation, biblical exposition, promise, doctrinal confession or creedal affirmation, and joyful celebration all through the same multilayered language.⁵² As in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ‘One who prophesies speaks ... encouragement to people’ (1 Cor 14:3).’⁵³’

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1087–1090.]



preference for preaching is stressed both by the use of μάλλον along with the ellipsis using the indirect command structure of ἵνα προφητεύητε rather than the substantial object infinitive λαλεῖν. *Christian discipleship and spiritual maturity are not the deepening of one's own religious life. To the contrary, they are centered on and acquired by Christian ministry to others.*³¹³ It is by serving others that we become more like Christ. Any so-called teaching on discipleship that centers on the individual rather than on the group is inherently false and heretical. It will produce the mess that Paul tried to clean up at Corinth!

In v. 5b, the justifying declaration for this preference on preaching is given: μείζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύη, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομήν λάβῃ. *One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.* This sums up Paul's discussion in vv. 1-5 with preaching having a higher priority than ecstatic speech. Although in the pagan background of the majority of the Corinthian Christians, not much distinction was given between προφητεύων and λαλῶν γλώσσαις since both were linked to manic, ecstatic experience by the priests and priestesses in a moment of highly charged 'worship' rived up with loud χαλκὸς ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον, noisy gong or clanging cymbal (13:1), Paul drew a sharp line of distinction between these two practices inside Christianity.³¹⁴ For the pagans προφητεύων emerged out of λαλῶν γλώσσαις

³¹³“The last clause of v. 1 begins this demonstration or argument. If the readers will pay particular attention (μάλλον) to the activity of prophesying (in contrast to speaking with tongues, v. 2), this will serve the good of others, since Paul will show that the aim and effect of authentic prophesying is (i) to build up the whole community (vv. 4, 5, 17; cf. 8:1, 10; 10:23); (ii) to exhort or to comfort (vv. 3 and 31; cf. 4:13, 16; 16:12, 15); and (iii) to console or to encourage (v. 3; cf. 1 Thess 2:11; see introduction to 14:1–40, above). We noted above Vielhauer's contrast between building up the community into a cohesive, dynamic whole, and the self-sufficient indulgent religiosity which provides mainly individual satisfaction.¹⁷ In these verses Paul insists that to prophesy is to perform intelligible, articulate, communicative acts of speech which have a positive effect on others and, in turn, on the whole community.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1083–1084.]

³¹⁴“Paul urges his addressees to strive for prophecy. His choice of vocabulary is important. In the Greco-Roman world ‘prophecy’ was a highly esteemed mantic experience characterized by trances and other ecstatic phenomena. Paul, however, carefully distinguishes prophecy from the gift of tongues. He may have done so in order to distinguish Christian prophecy from the ecstatic speech forms known throughout the Hellenistic world (cf. 14:22–24), where what Paul describes as speaking in tongues would have been subsumed within the category of prophecy.” [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 490.]

as the application in human language of the supposed conversation between the spiritual leader and Zeus etc. that took place in the god's language, i.e., γλώσσαις,

The rare exception (ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ) to ecstatic speech being confined to a private moment is when a legitimate interpreter is present. From all indications in Paul's depiction of the situation at Corinth, the elitists practicing ecstatic speech were not concerned with some interpretation in human language. Their interest was in demonstrating their superiority by the use of ecstatic speech in the assembled gathering, not in edifying the assembled group spiritually. Dazzle the crowd was their goal! In the pagan background of this practice at Corinth in the various temples, the one speaking in non-human language usually followed up by making his own interpretation, usually labeled in Greek as προφητεία. But the elitists evidently were not even doing this.

But Paul mandates that any ecstatic speech **MUST BE** accompanied by an *edifying* interpretation. But careful analysis of the Greek text signals that the ‘tongues speaker’ must put into human words what he has just mumbled in unintelligible sounds.³¹⁵ V. 5c does

³¹⁵“We have not yet exhausted the issues of controversy in v. 5. Substantial issues hang on how we understand the clause εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύη in this context of argument. NRSV's *unless someone interprets* is, in our view, disastrously misleading. The Greek does not mention any agent other than the one who speaks in tongues, who remains the subject of the verb. The insertion of someone rests on a particular understanding of ἐρμηνεία γλωσσῶν (12:10; see above on this verse) and the significance of ἄλλω δέ in conjunction with this phrase in 12:10, as if a special agent was ‘an interpreter’ who ‘interpreted’ tongues. However, as I argued in 1979, frequent occurrences of ἐρμηνεύω and διερμηνεύω can be found in which these verbs mean not to *interpret* but to **put into words**, i.e., to render in articulate intelligible speech, what is difficult to express.¹⁰² I argued that 14:13 similarly refers to the person who speaks in tongues: ‘He who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to produce articulate speech.’¹⁰³

“An illuminating parallel occurs when Josephus is trying to convey to his Roman or Graeco-Roman readers the wonders of Herod's palace. These are ‘beyond words’ (παντὸς λόγου κρείσσων, Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 5.176). The walls, towers, and banqueting hall defy description (ἀδιήγητος, 5.178). When he moves on to the cloisters, gardens, and lavish decorations he exclaims: ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐθ' ἐρμηνεύσαι δυνατὸν ξίως τὰ βασίλεια (5.182: it is impossible to put it into words adequately!). Here to interpret or to translate simply does not fit.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, when he reflects on Moses' request that Aaron should be his ‘mouth’ (στόμα), Philo observes that what Moses required was someone who could put into words of intelligible, articulate communication what Moses felt himself unable to express adequately.¹⁰⁵ Aaron's role is to produce articulate speech (ἐρμηνεύω, Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat, 15), with a view to putting into words (πρὸς ἐρμηνείαν, loc. cit. 39) what Moses found overwhelming or difficult. For Aaron to be his “mouth” (στόμα) is also to be his “mouthpiece” (ἐρμηνεία, loc. cit. 39). The evidence for humans' becoming capable of reason-



ing, Philo urges, can be found in their use of syntax of nouns and verbs to put things into words that are intelligible and articulate (ἐρμηνεύς εἶνθαι, Philo, Legum Allegoriae 1.10). What is at issue is the intelligible expression of ideas (Leg. Alleg. 1.74). Philo is all too familiar with “writer’s block”: thoughts start to flow, but then one cannot get hold of the next idea to put it into words (De Migratione Abrahami 21, 35).

Why do we need to appeal to those other and different uses of ἐρμηνεύω and its compound form διερμηνεύω, which denote translation or interpretation when the meaning identified here utterly coheres with Paul’s argument? There is no “interpreter” standing by. Paul declares that the person who prophesies is of greater importance than the one who speaks in tongues unless some specific condition is fulfilled: the tongue speaker who is overwhelmed with the presence and love of God to the extent that praise and prayer flow forth in inarticulate sounds uttered by the tongue (γλωσσα) finds that, after all, he or she can put into words the ground of praise, prayer, joy, or longing, and thereby the church community as a whole can similarly receive (λάβη) this public ministry of building up (τίνα ἢ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομῆν λάβη).

This understanding of these verses has recently been attacked by Christopher Forbes.¹⁰⁶ Forbes concedes that the meaning to put into words occurs in “a reasonable number of cases,” and indeed the 1979 article cites numerous examples where translate will not fit, and where interpret misses the point. Yet in a way reminiscent of approaches before the 1961 work of James Barr, Forbes appeals to Dunn’s view that “to explain,” “to translate,” or “to interpret” is “the basic meaning of the word.”¹⁰⁷ He then argues that even if, as I claim, up to three-quarters of the uses of διερμηνεύω in Philo mean to put into words, if we survey uses of ἐρμηνεύω without the διά prefix, the proportion is reversed. However, (i) Paul shows that he is using ἐρμηνεύω with a nuance that is synonymous with διερμηνεύω in these verses (cf. 14:5, 13, 27, 28, διερμηνεύω and διερμηνευτής); and (ii) it is only necessary for our argument to conclude that both English meanings may in principle apply, and that contextual considerations in the light of the Corinthian situation and Paul’s argument become decisive for a judgment between them.

On the exegetical issues Forbes acknowledges that we cannot allow the controversial interpretations of Acts 2 to determine our interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12–14. Quite apart from issues about the perspectives of Luke and Paul, since virtually all the diaspora Jews present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost would know Greek renders problematic what kind of “translation” is at issue, and in any case it is presented not as miraculous speech (the speakers were perceived to be under the influence of alcohol) but as miraculous hearing or understanding. However, he fails to address the issue of how speaking in tongues relates to “translation” if it is addressed to God as praise and prayer, and not as a “message” to be decoded and transmitted. He also fails to explain why such a precious gift of “translation” did not play a wider role among those wrestling with missionary proclamation to other cultures, or (if we are permitted to cite claims made in our own era) the gift of tongues (if it were to involve “translation”) is withheld from seminary students learning Greek. The traditional understanding, represented in extreme form in NRSV’s unless someone interprets, imposes onto the epistle an ecclesial tradition of assumptions which does not allow Paul to speak for himself. The very insertion of someone into the Greek indicates the lengths to which some will go to sustain a specific interpretative tradition.

On speaking in tongues as a welling up of pre-conscious yearnings of praise, glory, joy or longing, see Notes in detail above

not allude to a separate person doing interpretation. This wrong understanding of this text is widely circulated in today’s world but is flat wrong in its view of this statement of Paul here. See v. 13 for a confirmation of this understanding, and note that v. 27 properly translated and interpreted also confirm this view.

The words of the ‘interpreter’ then become ‘prophecy’ and are to be treated as such. As Paul will reflect further down, in early Christianity when someone claimed to have a spiritual truth to share with the group, the mere claim of being inspired by God gave no validation to what was shared at all. Every claim to express something from God was to be evaluated by members of the group in oral critiquing of the speaker, and especially by those considered wiser in the ways of God (cf. Gal. 6:1-3 for allusion to these folks).

This pattern merely reflects universal patterns in the first century societies including both Greco-Roman and Jewish. Young school boys were taught to always question the teachings of their teachers. It was through the oral give and take between speaker and audience that true learning took place. Paul experience on Mars Hill in Athens before first arriving at Corinth in the beginning 50s illustrates how this worked in that society (cf. Acts 17:22-34). Learning was not passive, as is typical in modern western hemispheric educational patterns. But intelligible communication of ideas between speaker and audience stood as the foundation of such learning. Ecstatic speech with no interpretation of its

under 12:10, with particular reference to the work of Stendahl and Theissen. This experience of release and liberation is valued by Paul as a gift of the Spirit. However, its association with the transmission of encoded messages is at the very least not demanded by the text. The one point which Forbes makes with validity in this section of an otherwise helpful study is that it is possible to combine the meaning proposed here with the lexicographical sense of explaining. For, as long as we note that most typically tongues are addressed to God, the REB rendering unless indeed he can explain its meaning, and so help to build up the community retains close affinities with our own proposals. The use of interprets, by contrast (NIV, NJB, KJV/AV), generates a signal which has become tied in modern thought to the overly specific exegesis which seduces the NRSV. We may conclude these reflections by noting that recently Gordon Fee, writing from an explicitly Pentecostal perspective, openly and courageously acknowledges that whether “tongues” constitute an actual earthly language “is a moot point, but the overall evidence suggests no,” and that whether today’s “charismatic phenomena” replicate those of the Pauline churches is also “moot and probably irrelevant. There is simply no way to know.”¹⁰⁸ Certainly, he concludes, tongues are directed to God, and Paul holds their private use in high regard.¹⁰⁹ In our earlier Note we allude to some movement of emphasis among certain Pentecostal writers themselves, not least on “Pentecostal hermeneutics.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1098–1100.]



meaning in human language does an ‘end around’ on the learning experience. It only dazzles the audience with performance by the speaker. Paul forbids such in Christian gatherings. The bottom line is always ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομηθῇ, **so that the church may be built up**. Thus the Corinthian practice by the elitists immediately becomes suspect as having pagan orientation -- and a poor copy at best -- rather than legitimate Christian orientation.

Confirmatio 2, 14:6-33a. Here the parallelism in chapter 14 with chapter twelve becomes even clearer, as reflected in the chart below:

Confirmatio /	12:7-30 /	14:6-33a
Partitio /	12:4-6 /	14:1-5

The second section, *confirmatio*, builds off the foundation laid in the *partitio* which has put forth the issue(s) at hand. But Paul approach to defending his depiction of the general issue of τῶν πνευματικῶν in 12:7-30 is some quite the same strategy of defense in 14:6-33a. Each approach is appropriate for the nature of the issue presented: in 12:4-6 it was the general topic of τῶν πνευματικῶν, while in 14:1-5 it is the two speech grace blessings of preaching and ecstatic speech. In the first *partitio* he is defending the foundational principle of unity in diversity. But in this second *partitio*, it is the defense of the priority of preaching over ecstatic speech.

How he goes about making this defense is quite fascinating and follows first century Pauline reasoning rather than any sort of modern western reasoning.³¹⁶ This must not be ignored, if we are to understand what the apostle is doing here. There is no Cartesian box that one can put vv. 6-33a into! The patterns of dividing out Paul’s thoughts into paragraphs provides very limited help and more importantly reflects the limitations of grouping his expressions into subunits of material. This simple fact that should be easily self-evident but is so often overlooked: the apostle just did not reason like a modern western thinker. Commentators and Bible translators feel compelled to ‘westernize’ Paul’s thinking in how they orga-

³¹⁶The use of paragraphing represents a subtle way of ‘boxing’ Paul’s ideas here, but careful analysis of the paragraphing patterns reflects the limitation of such efforts. Internally none of these paragraphs contains one central point. Instead a variety of disconnected ideas will be found inside each of the paragraphs:

N-A 28th	NRSV	NIV	ESV
6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12
13-19	13-19	13-17	13-19
		18-19	
20-25	20-25	20-21	20-25
		22-25	
26-33a	26-33a	26-28	26-33a
		29-33	

nize their translations and their commentary notes. But heavy dependence on such inevitably will distort Paul’s thinking to the modern reader.

Why this is so becomes clear from a block diagram of just vv. 6-9; see diagram on following page. Two initial rhetorical questions (#s 569-570) are defended (γὰρ) by a second pair of rhetorical questions (#s 571-572), which in turn is defended (γὰρ) by a declarative statement (# 573). All of it revolves around comparing ecstatic speech to the musical instruments of the flute, harp, and the bugle. The block diagram of the remaining verses (vv. 10-33a) are very similar in their non-modern language way of presenting ideas.

Vv. 6-12 actually present several ideas in succession that are not much connected to one another. The lead sentence in v. 13 does not provide a clear launch pad into the personal illustration of vv. 14-19. But in these verses Paul also jumps back and forth between “I” and “you all.” Similar patterns likewise surface in vv. 20-33a. This is not modern, coherent logical thinking from a western mindset.

But on the positive side, the one common thread through this myriad of disconnected arguments is his initial premise that preaching is superior to ecstatic speech, which was just the opposite of what the Corinthian elitists were contending. When taken together, these varied arguments overwhelmingly make Paul’s point. He has demolished the elitists’ position with a barrage of different arguments.

In order to better get Paul’s ideas on the table, we should take the small, natural units in succession without attempting to group them into a westernized outline. The single question to ask each time is “How does this prove Paul’s point of the superiority of preaching?”

v. 6, Nullified ministry from Paul if in ecstatic speech:

^{14.6} δέ,
 Nῦν
 ἀδελφοί,
 ἐὰν ἔλθω
 πρὸς ὑμᾶς
 γλώσσαις λαλῶν,
τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελήσω
 ἐὰν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω
 ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει
 ἢ ἐν γνώσει
 ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ
 ἢ [ἐν] διδασκαλίᾳ;

Nῦν δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς γλώσσαις λαλῶν, τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελήσω ἐὰν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει ἢ ἐν γνώσει ἢ ἐν προφητεία ἢ [ἐν] διδασκαλίᾳ; **Now, brothers,1 if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?**

14.6 δέ,
 Νῦν
 ἀδελφοί,
 ἐὰν ἔλθω
 πρὸς ὑμᾶς
 γλώσσαις λαλῶν,
569 τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελήσω
 ἐὰν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω
 ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει
 ἢ ἐν γνώσει
 ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ
 ἢ [ἐν] διδασχῆ;

14.7 ὁμως
 |
 |
 |
 ἐὰν διαστολὴν τοῖς φθόγγοις μὴ δῶ,
570 πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ ἀύλούμενον
 ἢ
τὸ κιθαριζόμενον;

14.8 γὰρ
 καὶ ἐὰν ἀδηλον σάλπιγξ φωνὴν δῶ,
571 τίς παρασκευάζεται
 εἰς πόλεμον;

14.9 οὕτως
 καὶ
 διὰ τῆς γλώσσης
 ὑμεῖς... ἐὰν μὴ εὐσημον λόγον δῶτε,
572 πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ λαλούμενον;

γὰρ
573 ἔσεσθε εἰς ἄερα λαλοῦντες.

ic speech before the various house church groups, no one would benefit spiritually from such a ministry. They can only profit (ὕμᾶς ὠφελήσω) from a personal ministry of Paul in their midst if he speaks in a human language that they can understand. In 13:3, Paul made the declaration οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι, I gain nothing, if his ministry wasn't shaped and motivated by ἀγάπη. That same principle is now repeated in the deliberative question of how could he possibly benefit the Corinthians by using ecstatic language with them. The clear implication is that no benefit would come to the Corinthians. Clearly implicit here is that the Corinthian elitists are producing zero benefit to the church in their ecstatic speech.

Paul begins his defense with a personal illustration.³¹⁷ Should he come to Corinth and only use ecstat-

³¹⁷“The translation of νῦν δέ as Well now reflects Héring’s careful comment that the phrase is neither adversative nor used in a conclusive sense but to mean ‘well now’, i.e., ‘let us look at the facts and take a concrete example.’”¹¹³ Paul’s examples are entirely hypothetical scenarios which remain unfulfilled: ἐὰν ἔλθω is an example of the aorist subjunctive used as ‘third class condition, supposable case.’¹¹⁴ This is well captured by REB’s **Suppose, my friends, that when I come to you ...**, which we have adopted on grounds of grammar, syntax, and meaning. In terms of conveys the adverbial mode denoted by ἐν: ‘The ἐν expresses the form in which the λαλεῖν takes place.’¹¹⁵ **What shall I profit you** (τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελήσω) takes a double accusative, which is by no means rare. ἀποκάλυψις has already been discussed with reference to the disclosure or revealing of the Lord at the last day (see under 1:7). Although in politics and in the media the term which most closely reflects the Greek, namely *unveiling*, has once again come into vogue, this use is more usually applied to announcements of governmental, political, or commercial strategy. Conversely, we have avoided *revelation* because it now carries a dead weight of theological and philosophical controversy. *Disclosure* seems to combine the force and relative innocence which the word would carry at Corinth, leaving entirely open whether it also carries some ‘technical’ sense in the context of worship, which remains open

to question (see below on 14:26; 14:30). 14:26 is the only other occurrence of the noun in our epistle together with 1:7 and 14:6 (the verb occurs at 2:10, 13 and 14:30).

“We have already discussed the force of γνῶσις extensively (see under 1:5; 8:1, 7, 10, 11; 12:8; 13:2, 8). These nine occurrences, together with six in 2 Corinthians (2:14; 4:6; 6:6; 8:7; 10:5; 11:6) compare with only three in Romans, one in Philippians, none in Galatians, and one in Colossians, i.e., this term mattered greatly at Corinth. Hence Paul’s insistence that inarticulate sounds could not convey γνῶσις would have been especially sharp and poignant to these addressees. In this context the term denotes cognitive knowledge, so prized in 8:1–11 by ‘the strong’ at Corinth, and REB’s *looser enlightenment* conveys the cultural flavor. On prophetic speech or prophecy see the Extended Note above at 14:3. The inclusion of teaching (διδασχῆ) confirms the point that one spiritual gift cannot be permitted to militate against others which are ‘for the common good’ (12:7–11; see on 28–30, where teachers [v. 28] follow apostles and prophets). Paul’s first example (a supposed visit for a purpose) now leads to a second.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1101–1102.]

He gives four types of pastoral ministry typical in his efforts to spiritually minister to a group of believers: ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει ἢ ἐν γνώσει ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ ἢ [ἐν] διδαχῇ; a spiritual disclosure or some understanding or some spiritual insight into God or some Christian teaching. As Thiselton points out, several of these terms have a sharp tone of rebuttal to the ecstatic speech orientation of the Corinthian elitists.

v. 7, Comparison to musical instruments:

ὁμως³¹⁸ τὰ ἄψυχα φωνὴν διδόντα, εἴτε αὐλὸς εἴτε κιθάρα, ἐὰν διαστολὴν τοῖς φθόγγοις μὴ δῶ, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ αὐλούμενον ἢ τὸ κιθαριζόμενον; *If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played?*

14.7 ὁμως
|
|
|
ἐὰν διαστολὴν τοῖς φθόγγοις μὴ δῶ,
570 πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ αὐλούμενον
ἢ
τὸ κιθαριζόμενον;

In his second justifying point he appeals to musical the musical instruments of a flute and a harp, one wind and one stringed. The scenario is posed of these wind and stringed instruments playing διαστολὴν τοῖς φθόγγοις, *incoherent sounds for the notes*. This is not playing inappropriate music for the setting, such as a funeral dirge at a joyous festival. The Greek text clearly means that the musicians cannot make coherent notes to a musical piece with out of tune instruments. Thus ecstatic speech is compared to playing an out of tune musical instrument. Nothing pleasant or correct come out. Consequently the listeners have no idea what the piece of music being played is. It is simply an irritating, meaningless combination of noises. The strong blunt force of this comparison to ecstatic speech hit the elitists hard.

v. 8, Comparison to a misplayed bugle.

καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ἄδηλον σάλπιγξ φωνὴν δῶ, τίς παρασκευάζεται εἰς

³¹⁸“We follow BAGD, BDF, Jeremias, Héring, and Fee (against Weiss, Edwards, Allo, and several others) in understanding ὁμως (which in non-Pauline texts means *nevertheless* or *all the same*) to represent ὁμοῶς, **similarly**.¹¹⁶ BDF point out that Paul uses this word only twice (here and in Gal 3:15) where οὕτως also follows suggesting ‘the earlier ὁμοῶς ‘equally,’ and it is therefore to be translated ... ‘likewise.’¹¹⁷ As Héring reminds us, accents would occur neither in Pauline texts nor in such early uncials as P⁴⁶ and A, and even if ὁμοῶς is of an earlier date, the consistency of the two rare uses in Paul suggest that his employment of the adverb remains distinctive, equivalent to ὁμοίως.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1102.]

πόλεμον; *If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played?*

The γὰρ adds another justifying declaration both

14.8 γὰρ
καὶ ἐὰν ἄδηλον σάλπιγξ φωνὴν δῶ,
571 τίς παρασκευάζεται
εἰς πόλεμον;

reenforcing the previous one and also giving additional foundation to the premise statements in vv. 1-5.³¹⁹ Here the bugle in a military setting fails by giving τὰ ἄψυχα φωνὴν, *ambivalent signals* which cannot be understood. Thus the army doesn’t know whether to march forward or retreat. They are left in crippling uncertainty by the failure of the bugle to give a clear signal. Thus the Corinthians were put in the same crippling uncertainty by the elitists’ use of ecstatic speech.

v. 9, Direct application to the Corinthians.

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς γλώσσης ἐὰν μὴ εὖσημον λόγον δῶτε, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ λαλούμενον; ἔσεσθε γὰρ εἰς ἀέρα λαλοῦντες. *So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air.*

Here Paul moves from examples to direct accusa-

14.9 οὕτως
καὶ
ὑμεῖς... ἐὰν μὴ εὖσημον λόγον δῶτε,
572 πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ λαλούμενον;
γὰρ
573 ἔσεσθε εἰς ἀέρα λαλοῦντες.
διὰ τῆς γλώσσης

tion of the Corinthian elitists. The introductory οὕτως καὶ, so also, links this statement to the preceding ones

³¹⁹“Paul now provides a third example. Again, the issue is not that the *sound of the trumpet* (REB, NJB) or the *bugle* (NRSV; σάλπιγξ) is simply **unclear** (ἄδηλον) in the sense of being faint or below high performance, but that without differentiations of pitch, rhythm, or length of note the sound is mere noise rather than a communicative signal to prepare for battle. Our translation of ἄδηλον ... φωνὴν as **a sound which is ambivalent as a signal** is an accurate translation based on lexicographical research, not a paraphrase or gloss. For Grimm-Thayer’s 4th ed.’s rendering of ἄδηλος as *obscure* (also indistinct) reflects the alpha-privative of δηλός, *clear, evident*, which in turn belongs to the cognate verb δηλόω, which means not only to make manifest, but also, more frequently, as in 1 Cor 1:11, ‘to give one to understand, to indicate, signify’ (cf. Col 1:8; Heb 12:27; 2 Pet 1:14), or to point to (1 Pet 1:11), i.e., to serve as a communicative act or signal.¹²⁹”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1104.

very strongly. The third class conditional protasis, ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς γλώσσης ἐὰν μὴ εὔσημον λόγον δῶτε, mediates somewhat the severity of the accusation. But the prominent positioning of ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς γλώσσης in front of the conditional conjunction ἐὰν highlights powerfully focus on the elitists and their wrong use of their tongue.

What they do is to **speak an unintelligible word**, μὴ εὔσημον λόγον δῶτε.³²⁰ Their meaningless babbling in ecstatic speech was self-serving rather than giving spiritual benefit to the assembled group. Paul makes the very pointed accusation that they ἔσεσθε εἰς ἀέρα λαλοῦντες, **will be into the air speaking**. Their gibberish is fruitless and pointless! Additionally in light of the preceding examples it is spiritually harmful to the congregation and must be stopped.

vv. 10-11, making outsiders uncomfortable.

10 τοσαῦτα εἰ τύχοι γένη φωνῶν εἰσιν ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ οὐδὲν ἄφωνον· 11 ἐὰν οὖν μὴ εἰδῶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς φωνῆς, ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος. 10 **There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, 11 but if I do not know the**

	14.10	εἰ	τύχοι
574		τοσαῦτα...γένη φωνῶν εἰσιν	ἐν κόσμῳ
		καὶ	
575		οὐδὲν (ἐστὶν) ἄφωνον·	
	14.11	οὖν	
576		ἐὰν μὴ εἰδῶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς φωνῆς,	
		ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος	
		καὶ	
577		ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος·	

³²⁰“The key word is εὔσημος, **readily intelligible**. Our translation is supported by BAGD, who propose *easily recognizable* or *clear* as the routine meaning but recognize that 14:9 denotes intelligible speech.¹³⁶ The compound adjective εὖ, *well, readily*, with σῆμα, *sign*, which belongs to the word group σημαίνω, *to communicate, to signify*, and σημειῖον, *sign, distinguishing mark* (by which something is known), σημειόω, *to mark, to note down*, vividly uses what semanticists call a ‘transparent’ term to indicate the communicative or semiotic principle.¹³⁷ Communicative acts of speech entail a transactive engagement between speaker, writer or ‘sender,’ and addressee, hearer, or ‘receiver.’ If the receiver cannot comprehend (γινώσκω) the content of what is being said (τὸ λαλούμενον), communication does not occur. Paul incisively sums up modern communicative and hermeneutical theory in a terse, succinct aphorism, ahead of his time. In such a case, the sender is merely **speaking into empty air** (εἰς ἀέρα). The speech-event is fruitless and pointless, except as self-affirmation or as a benefit to the speaker at the expense of generating negative effects for others (vv. 4a and 11).¹³⁸ Fee compares the idiom to ‘talking to the wind.’¹³⁹ To be comprehended or recognized and understood, ‘vocables [must be] ordered, articulate, and conformed to usage. Now this is what the Corinthian Glossolalia was not’ (Findlay’s italics).¹⁴⁰ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1105.]

meaning of the language, I will be ca. foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.

Now Paul turns to a broader issue of human language in order to make another blunt criticism of the ecstatic speech of the Corinthian elitists. This is readily understandable to every modern person who has lived in a foreign country without knowing the native language. The uncomfortableness of such experience is hard to describe. But when experienced the individual knows full well what Paul is getting at here.

The initial reference of τοσαῦτα...γένη φωνῶν underscores the existence of a huge diversity of human languages, more than Paul could count, εἰ τύχοι. And his central point in this myriad of human languages is οὐδὲν ἄφωνον, **not one is without meaning**. That is, they all are designed to communicate intelligible ideas to the listeners.

Next he introduces an important scenario in a third class conditional protasis: ἐὰν μὴ εἰδῶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς φωνῆς, **If I do not know the meaning of the sound**. This is closely linked to the preceding statement as an implicit implication, i.e., by οὖν. Every human language is designed to communicate meaning, but for that to happen the hearer must understand the language. And if he doesn’t know the language, what is the consequence of a person speaking something to him in that language?

ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος. **I will be to the one speaking a foreigner and the one speaking will be a foreigner to me**. Paul employs a severely biting pun here with the use of βάρβαρος, **barbarian**. The Greek people divided up all of humanity into two categories: we wise Greeks and you dumb, idiot barbarians. Interestingly when writing Romans at Corinth a few years later Paul will employ this contrast with defining references in Rom. 1:14: “Ἐλλήσιν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, **both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, that is, to the wise and to the mindless I am obligated**. Arrogant elitism was deeply embedded in ancient Greek culture. And this provided Paul with a good analogy of comparison to the ecstatic speech practicing Corinthian elitists.

If someone speaks to me in a foreign language that I do not know, the impact is that both of us appear to be ignorant, mindless individuals, i.e., a βάρβαρος, to each other. That is, the inability to communicate meaningfully with one another fosters an attitude of elitism that looks down on the other person.³²¹ With this bit-

³²¹That this elitist attitude is mutual is experientially very correct, even though not necessarily logical. If you have ever lived outside the US and have observed a huge percentage of US visitors to that foreign country, the truth of Paul’s mutual elitism point is driven home dramatically. Most people in the US are monolingual and when traveling abroad automatically expect the rest of the

ing comparison Paul takes down the elitism of the Corinthian ecstatic speakers as reflecting nothing more than a pagan Greek cultural mindset that stands as the very opposite of Christian edifying love. Their ecstatic speaking then represented paganism creeping into the Christian assembly.

v. 12, summing up the thesis.

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ἐπεὶ ζηλωταὶ ἐστε πνευμάτων, πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ζητεῖτε ἵνα περισσεύητε.

So with yourselves; since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church.

14.12 οὕτως
καὶ
ὑμεῖς, ἐπεὶ ζηλωταὶ ἐστε πνευμάτων,
πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας
578 **ζητεῖτε**
ἵνα περισσεύητε.

Here Paul reproduces the identical syntactical pattern as in v. 9. Application language directly applies the preceding justifying statements to the Corinthians. The literary pattern is forceful:

Justifying statements: vv. 6-8 10-11
Application statement: v. 9 v. 12

He follows the same emphatic structure of placing the subject ὑμεῖς prior to the initial conjunction ἐπεὶ which is uncommon in ancient Greek but possible when extra strong emphasis is given to the verb subject, here ἐστε. The beginning οὕτως καὶ, *so also*, establishes a very close link of v. 12 with v. 11.

Paul stresses the keen interest in spiritual matters with the cause dependent clause ὑμεῖς, ἐπεὶ ζηλωταὶ ἐστε πνευμάτων, *since you indeed are seekers of spiritual things*. Although not the same word as τῶν πνευματικῶν, in 12:1, or τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα in 12:31, or τὰ πνευματικά in 14:1, the common verb ζηλοῦτε in these uses with its noun equivalent ζηλωταὶ and the closely related verb ζητεῖτε, both in 14:10, establish a common link of these admonitions together with each other. Again, Paul acknowledges the eager interest of the Corinthians, even the elitists, in spiritual matters.

But he admonishes them again to focus on edifying the group, πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, rather than pursuing self-glorifying actions such as ecstatic speech. The objective of this striving for the edification of the church is so that each person in the group may prosper, ἵνα περισσεύητε, along with the group itself. The repeated principle of edifying love takes precedence over individually beneficial actions. Once more the wrongness of focusing on ecstatic speech comes to

world to speak English, and often become quite frustrated when they don't. "Why can't these dumb locals speak English, like every human being should?" All the while the local is thinking, "O heck, here's another stupid American who is too dumb to learn my language."

the surface in a more subtle but clear manner.

Verses 13-19 somewhat stand together as a unit but with diverse elements woven together in a uniquely Pauline manner. In an established manner, he begins with an admonition, v. 13. This is followed by a personal illustration in vv. 14-15 that at first doesn't seem very related to the admonition. Then in vv. 16-17, he turns to the group but with an individualized framework as reflected in the second singular verb λέγεις, and the singular pronoun σὺ in v. 17. The focus here is on ecstatic speech by one of the members in effect discriminating against ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου, *one filling the place of an outsider*, who doesn't know what the speaker is saying. In closing in vv. 18-19, Paul returns to the personal illustration with his declaration of desiring to speak five words in preaching over 10,000 words in ecstatic speech.

The over arching semantic structure of vv. 13-19 is an admonition backed up by a series of justifying declarations. But again, Paul uses a 'shotgun' approach rather than a 'rifle' approach in his defense arguments. It is the collective force of this bundle of arguments that validate his admonition, rather than each individual argument.

v. 13, pray for understanding skills. Διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ. *Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret.*

14.13 Διὸ
579 ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω
ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ.

This second use of Διὸ (other use in 12:3) conveys the idea of an intensified inference over the similar conjunction οὖν (cf. v. 11). So in light of the preceding emphasis in vv. 6-12, the ecstatic speech speaker should ask God for help in putting into human, understandable language, his sighs and groanings uttered verbally in ecstatic speaking. Although God knows the meaning of these sounds not even the ecstatic speaker can know them apart from God showing him/her the meaning.³²²

³²² **13-14** Collins rightly stresses the strong force of διό, wherefore, or hence, as gathering up the point of the previous examples about intelligible communication.¹⁵⁰ In order to avoid repetition, on διερμηνεύω meaning to **put into words** see above in 14:5. In spite of the insistence of many on trying to force τις, *someone*, into the text at 14:5 (e.g., Héring, against the proper judgment of Heinrici and others that no second party is involved), *all the main English VSS appear to ascribe the act of putting into words, or in most VSS interpreting (AV/KJV, NRSV, REB, NJB), to the one who prays in a tongue.*¹⁵¹ Here Paul uses the singular γλώσση, but he seems to oscillate between singular and plural without any clear difference of nuance. (We normally reproduce in translation the number used in the Greek.) **Should pray** is the idiomatic way of conveying the force of the Greek third person present imperative προσευχέσθω. This verse reinforces that even when this is

Here the focus, especially as signaled by the personal illustration that follows, is on ecstatic speech in private devotions rather than the public practice of the Corinthian elitists. This is also partly signaled by the use of the singular γλώσση (v. 13) in contrast to the plural γλώσσαις at the beginning of the previous unit in v. 6.

Unquestionably this verse links understanding of and ecstatic speaking to the same person, not two separate individuals. To assume a separate interpreter here is a huge misunderstanding of Paul's words, and Paul's statement in v. 27 doesn't contradict this when properly understood from the Greek text.

14-15, Paul's personal illustration. 14 ἐὰν [γὰρ] προσεύχωμαι γλώσση, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν. 15 τί οὖν ἐστιν; προσεύξομαι τῷ πνεύματι, προσεύξομαι δὲ καὶ τῷ νοί· ψαλῶ τῷ πνεύματι, ψαλῶ δὲ καὶ τῷ νοί. **14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive. 15 What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also.**

	14.14 [γὰρ]	ἐὰν προσεύχωμαι γλώσση,
580		τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται,
		δὲ
581		ὁ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν.
	14.15 οὖν	
582		τί ἐστιν;
583		προσεύξομαι τῷ πνεύματι,
		δὲ
584		προσεύξομαι καὶ τῷ νοί·
585		ψαλῶ τῷ πνεύματι,
		δὲ
586		ψαλῶ καὶ τῷ νοί·

Clearly this point made by the series of declarations in vv. 14-15 stands as a justifying statement for the admonition given in v. 13. The subsequent manuscript copyists were, however, divided over whether this needed a direct indication by the inclusion or omission of the causal conjunction γὰρ at the beginning of v. 14.³²³ This is in part due to the absence of γὰρ at v.

(mis)understood as assuming some second act by an 'interpreter' of tongues, this is not a 'message to the congregation' but an act of praying to God. The present subjunctive after ἵνα 'often serves as a periphrasis for the infinitive' but may perhaps include a hint of a possible potential on the part of the subject or agent of the verb.^{152*} [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1107-1108.]

³²³14 ° P⁴⁶ B F G O 243. 1739. 1881 b sa; Ambst

| txt & A D* K L P Ψ 048. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505.

6 to introduce a series of justifying statements for the premise in vv. 1-5. The inclusion of γὰρ simply makes explicit what is clearly implicit without it.

So how does the illustration justify the need for the ecstatic speaker to pray for God's help in putting his thoughts into intelligible words for his own benefit spiritually? As Paul develops the illustration the link becomes very clear, even though at first we may wonder.

Notice how Paul contrasts praying from two angles. If one's prayer is done as ecstatic speech, then only τὸ πνεῦμά μου, *my spirit*, is engaged and ὁ νοῦς μου, *my thinking*, remains on hold as ἄκαρπός, *unfruitful*. What does Paul mean by πνεῦμά and νοῦς with them set in contrast to each other?³²⁴ These two anthropologi-

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[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 545.]

^{324*}Paul neither criticizes nor questions the authenticity of speaking in tongues (especially in the sense of v. 5 above and vv. 18-19). However, he requests either of two conditions: either (a) 'private' use (see exegesis of vv. 16-23), i.e., outside the context of public worship; or (b) effective prayer that the speaker will be able to express in articulate communicative speech the wondrous perception of God or the gospel which is otherwise 'too deep for words.' No 'second' agent is envisaged; a second 'gift' is indeed needed, i.e., the gift of being able to put it into words.

"The first part of Käsemann's claim seems to cohere with 14:13. However, neither Rom 8:15-16, 26-27 nor 1 Cor 14:5, 13 explicitly describes 'a heavenly language'; only that a genuine insight which generates praise exceeds cognitive or conceptual expression. The tongue-speaker may need to step back and reflect, and with the Spirit's grace could benefit the whole community by findings words which, even if they remain inadequate, at least allow the corporate expression of praise which the insight or experience generates, since this fulfills the purpose of a corporate 'coming together' for common worship (κοινωνία). Käsemann is on stronger ground when he argues that 'the context of glossolalic prayer' precisely explains the specific sense in which believers 'do not know' how to pray in Romans 8. The urge, yearning, and direction is there, but as yet it cannot be formulated cognitively. This, we conclude, is why some have the gift of tongues (which liberate and release innermost sighs to God), and others have a further gift of enabling which allows them to reflect and to put the content of the experience which had generated the inarticulate sign of the Spirit at work into an articulate communicative signal from which all could benefit. Presumably only those who were not content to use tongues only in private were those whom Paul specifically enjoined to pray for this further gift, or otherwise to remain self-disciplined in public worship. Either course of action would help others, but not the current practice which Paul addresses. Thus the theme of the regulation of worship begins to emerge from here on.¹⁵⁸

"The history of Western philosophical and Christian theological tradition makes it misleading to translate τὸ πνεῦμά μου as *my spirit*, although in abstraction from cultural traditions this reflects Paul's choice of expression. As Robert Jewett points out, already in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and in Galatians Paul had opposed νοῦς/νοουθετώ terminology, i.e., terms to do with the use of the mind

cal terms used by Paul here are almost impossible to translate into modern western languages because of the massive accumulation of psychological and theological baggage attached to the available modern terms.

In a first century world, the terms are shaped by Paul's perspective out of his Jewish heritage with additional Christian insight added. To pray γλώσση signifying that only one's πνεῦμά is engaged actively means, against the backdrop of Rom. 8:26-27, to pray using non-intelligible sounds the στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις, [sighs](#)

in a polemical context where he felt impelled to rectify a lack of common sense brought about by 'pneumatic enthusiasts.'¹⁵⁹ A lack of cognitive reflection had led to 'the enthusiasts' claim that the parousia had already come; this had shaken them from a right mind (ἀπὸ τοῦ νοός, 2 Thess 2:2).¹⁶⁰ 1 Thess 5:14 is linked with this theme, while excesses of zeal or antinomianism among the Galatians led Paul to address them as ἀνόητοι, not using their minds (Gal 3:1).¹⁶¹ In such contexts τὸ πνεῦμα, *spirit*, does service as standing in semantic opposition to νοῦς, *mind*. Nevertheless, today it is agreed widely, perhaps almost universally, that τὸ πνεῦμα in the major Paul epistles carries a largely negative role of being distinguished from some 'other' when it is used as a human capacity. Paul prefers to reserve τὸ πνεῦμα for the Spirit of God, and to use πνευματικός for that which appertains to the Holy Spirit. Even 1 Cor 2:11 serves to distinguish an immanent Stoic view of 'spirit' from the transcendent Holy Spirit who proceeds ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, *from God*.

As Jewett demonstrates, in its strictly human sense, the history of research into the meaning of the human spirit in Paul has become entangled in philosophical idealism, which has elevated it as a 'point of contact' with God's Spirit in un-Pauline ways and with existentialist approaches which have imported an alien individualism into Paul.¹⁶² We need a term which is readily recognized to denote a sphere or mode of human personhood which may be associated with the deepest work and activity of God as Holy Spirit but also stands in contrast to mind. In an earlier draft I translated *heart*, but since Paul does use καρδιά elsewhere, and not here, this seems overly bold, although it conveys the mood and the issue. All in all, the best compromise may be my **innermost spiritual being**. This risks a misunderstanding in the direction of Plato or of Idealist or Cartesian dualism, but takes up Paul's word and seeks to protect it with appropriately qualifying indicators of Paul's meaning.

"Paul's use of ἄκαρπος precisely clinches his point. However, many translations spoil it with such renderings as *my mind is barren* (REB), *my mind is unfruitful* (NIV) or *my mind derives no fruit from it* (NJB). As Käsemann insists, Paul's point is not that the tongue-speaker misses out, but that the church community misses out.¹⁶³ Of the major translations NRSV's **my mind is unproductive** is best at this point since produce can serve others. The same might be said of Collins's translation **useless**. However, it may perhaps still more clearly convey Paul's logic to translate **but my mind produces no fruit from it**, i.e., means by which to benefit others. Käsemann concludes concerning Paul's correction of the individualism that marked assumptions about tongues at Corinth, 'It is impossible to demythologize the theologia gloriae [of Corinth] into the *theologia viatorum* [of Paul] more thoroughly.'¹⁶⁴

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1109–1111.]

[too deep for words](#). But this means that reflective analysis of such words, i.e., the disengagement of one's νοῦς, the opposite of ἀλαλήτοις in Rom. 12:26, does not produce fruit for either the prayer or especially for the group hearing the ecstatic mumbling being spoken: ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν. This for Paul is wrong and counterproductive.

What then is the solution to this dilemma?, Paul asks with τί οὖν ἐστιν; (v. 15).³²⁵ He answers his own question with two sets of declarations:

προσεύξομαι τῷ πνεύματι,
προσεύξομαι δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῖ·
ψαλῶ τῷ πνεύματι,
ψαλῶ δὲ καὶ τῷ νοῖ.

[I will pray with the spirit,](#)
[but I will pray with the mind also;](#)
[I will sing praise with the spirit,](#)
[but I will sing praise with the mind also.](#)

Prayer and praise of God must reach down into the deepest part of who we are spiritually, i.e., τὸ πνεῦμά μου. But it **MUST ALSO** be expressed out of clear reflective meaning in intelligible words that everyone can understand, i.e., ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου. Thus both τῷ πνεύματι and τῷ νοῖ have to be brought together for authentic prayer and praise of God. With this personal illustration Paul has taken square aim at the phony ecstatic speech of the Corinthian elitists. Paul has rejected their false assumption from pagan religion heritage that ecstatic speech signals the individual can reach beyond his/her humanity and communicate with a deity in the god's language. No, a million times over!

The correct assessment is that believers must always reach out to God from the depths of their inner being in intelligible words reflecting spiritual insight that can give meaning to both their prayers and praise for both themselves and for the people around them. Thus prayer and praise focuses on God and communicating

³²⁵“Paul argues equally against uncritical ‘enthusiasm,’ uncritical ‘renewal’ traditions, or uncritical mysticism on one side and against gnostics, theological theorists, or any who seek to intellectualize Christian faith into a mere belief system on the other. Christians are confronted not by *an either ... or ... but by a both ... and* — **my deepest spiritual being** (τῷ πνεύματι, repeated twice, taking up its further use in v. 14) but also (προσεύξομαι δὲ καὶ ...) **my mind** (τῷ νοῖ). The connecting phrase τί οὖν ἐστιν; links the logic with the previous verse, almost certainly with the sense of *So what follows?* (Cf. Conzelmann, *What is the conclusion from this?*)¹⁶⁵ Strictly, however, the Greek allows a less specifically consequential force, i.e., *what does this amount to?* REB's and NJB's *What then?* seems too abrupt; while NRSV's and NIV's *What should I do then?* tends to go beyond the Greek in attempting to explicate one aspect of the question.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1111.]

with Him, not on a self-glorifying action that enhances the status of the individual before the assembled group. The Corinthians elitists with their claim to superior ἡ γνώσις have become puffed up, φυσιοῖ, with pride and arrogance (cf. 8:1-3). In the process, they completely ignore or are totally ignorant of the superiority of ἀγάπη, the edifying love that builds everyone up, οἰκοδομεῖ.

vv. 16-17, discrimination against the outsider.

16 ἔπει ἐὰν εὐλογῆς³²⁶ [ἐν] πνεύματι, ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀμήν ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστία; ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν· 17 σὺ μὲν γὰρ καλῶς εὐχαριστεῖς ἀλλ’ ὁ ἕτερος οὐκ οἰκοδομεῖται. 16 *Otherwise, if you say a blessing with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since the outsider does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may give thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up.*

14.16 ἔπει
ἐὰν εὐλογῆς [ἐν] πνεύματι,
ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου
587 πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀμήν
ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστία;

ἐπειδὴ
588 τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν·

14.17 γὰρ
589 σὺ μὲν καλῶς εὐχαριστεῖς
ἀλλ’
590 ὁ ἕτερος οὐκ οἰκοδομεῖται.

Paul now turns pointedly to the Corinthian elitists individually with the shift to the second person singular frame of reference.

The scenario stated in the protasis, ἐὰν εὐλογῆς [ἐν] πνεύματι, is of one of the Corinthian ecstatic speakers mumbling an εὐχαριστία while speaking [ἐν] πνεύματι, i.e., in ecstatic expression that is meaningless sounds. The setting here is of public assembly in one of the house church groups.

The response of the individual present hearing this meaningless sound is the apodosis and result main clause: ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀμήν ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστία; The one filling the place of the idiots, how will he say “Amen” to your blessing? With this

³²⁶“The aorist subjunctive εὐλογῆσης is read by P⁴⁶, F, G, K, and L, with Textus Receptus (cf. KJV/AV, *when thou shalt bless*) as against the widespread reading of the present subjunctive εὐλογῆς. As Fee observes, however, changes to the aorist in such constructions do occur, and the present is virtually certain.¹⁸² The UBS 3rd and 4th ed. Greek New Testaments adopt the present without serious question.¹⁸³” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1114.]

rather creative label Paul identifies both fellow believers and non-Christians present in the group assembly to hear such mumbling. The phrase ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου gets close to the earlier Greek βάρβαρος (v. 11), but covers everyone not understanding meaning from the ecstatic mumbling. It takes a clear shot at the arrogant elitism of these ecstatic speakers in the Corinthian church, and reflects the superiority attitude toward everyone else by these elitists.

The ἰδιώτης, the source of the English word ‘idiot,’ is used five times in the NT with three uses here in chapter fourteen: 14:16, 23, 24 (+ 2 Cor. 11:6; Acts 4:13). The term in ancient Greek often served as the designation of the opposite to someone educated, powerful, in leadership etc. Although commentators speculate over its meaning here, the context clearly specifies a non-ecstatic speaker who is present in the assembled group. Consequently he/she is looked

down up by the elitists as being inferior because of the ‘lack of the ecstatic speech skill.’ Paul alludes to such people being present in the house church group. They could be fellow believers who don’t practice such mumbo jumbo, prospective individuals interested in Christianity, or simply visitors to the group as non-believers. The term is not synonymous with ὁ ἄπιστος, *unbeliever*, referenced often in 1 Cor: 6:6; 7:12, 13, 14, 15; 10:27; 14:22, 23, 24. An ἄπιστος would be an ἰδιώτης, but ἰδιώτης covers more than just ἄπιστος. In its ancient Greek usage ἰδιώτης always designates the opposite contextually of some individual or group perceived as exceptional or unique. Thus its meaning highly depends

on the context of its usage. In vv. 23 - 24, Paul will use the phrase τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης, *some unbeliever or outsider*, to designate not just a non ecstatic speaker but a prospective member to the group who may be either non-Christian or a believing non-member of this group. In either instance the individual doesn’t use ecstatic speech and is rather puzzled if not frightened by it (cf. v. 23).

When such an individual, whoever he or she may precisely be, is present and listening to someone mumbling in ecstatic speech, this individual is completely excluded from participating in the worship experience since they are unable intelligently to say “Amen” to what was being mumbled: πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀμήν ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστία; ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν, *how can he say “Amen” to your blessing? Since he does not know what you are saying.*

Significant is πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀμήν, *how can he say “Amen”?*³²⁷ The amen is a signal of active participation

³²⁷“In the NT and the surrounding Christian world the Heb. [אָמֵן] is usually taken over as it stands. It is used in three ways.

“1. It is a liturgical acclamation in Christian worship (1 C.



14:16). As in the heavenly worship of Rev. 5:14 the four beasts respond to the praise of all creation with their Amen, so the congregation acclaims the εὐχαί and εὐχαριστία of the president with theirs (Just. Ap., 65, 3).⁶ The Amen thus retains its character of response, since it is to another that the people (the ἰδιῶται of 1 C. 14:16) reply with their ἀμὴν (Did., 10, 6; Act. Thom., 29 to the apostle; Act. Phil., 146 to the heavenly voice; Act. Joh., 94 to the Christ-Logos). To say Amen is the right of the baptised λαός (Act. Phil., 147). And the Amen first makes the προσφορά perfect (Act. Phil., 143). Sometimes the president himself joins in this Amen (M. Pol., 15, 1; Act. Phil., 117 f.).

“2. Christian prayers⁷ and doxologies themselves mostly end with Amen. Cf. for prayers M. Pol., 14, 3; 1 Cl., 45, 8; 61, 3; 64; Mart. Ptr., 10; Act. Joh., 77; for doxologies R. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Gl. 1:5; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tm. 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tm. 4:18; Hb. 13:21; 1 Pt. 4:11; 5:11; Jd. 25; 1 Cl., 20, 12 etc.; 2 Cl., 20, 5; M. Pol., 21, 1; 22, 3; Dg., 12, 9 etc. This does not mean, however, the self-confirmation of the one who prays. It expresses the fact that in divine service prayer and doxology have their place before the people whose response they evoke or anticipate. We are to understand the ἀμὴν in the same way when it comes at the end of a prophetic word (Rev. 1:7) or an epistle or book (R. 15:33; Gl. 6:18; Rev. 22:20). The last instances shows how a liturgical use can be turned to literary account. From the use of ἀμὴν at the end of a doxology, in which it becomes part of the doxology or prayer, we can understand how it can come to have a place at the beginning as well, especially when it forms the link between a preceding doxology and that which follows (Rev. 7:12; Mart. Mt., 29). The combination with ἀλληλουϊά (Rev. 19:4; Mart. Mt., 26) may be explained by the acclamatory character of both terms and the tendency of acclamations to become more extensive.⁸

“That this Christian Amen has retained its original inward meaning may be seen from three passages in the NT. In Rev. 1:7 it occurs in close proximity to ναί = Yes. But Rev. 22:20 shows that it is the answer of the ἐκκλησία to the divine Yes. The Yes does not here introduce the eschatological petition but acknowledges the divine promise which is the basis on which the petition can be made. The Amen of the community makes the divine Yes valid for it. The Amen of 2 C. 1:20 is to be seen in the same light. Because the ναί of God, the fulfilment of His promises, is declared in Christ, by Him (= by the ἐκκλησία) there is uttered the Amen or response of the community to the divine Yes, so that the divine Yes forms a sure foundation for them (βεβαίων, v. 21). In the same way, in reminiscence of Is. 65:16, Christ Himself can be called ὁ Ἀμὴν in Rev. 3:14, and the meaning of this ὁ Ἀμὴν is brought out by the addition: ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ. He Himself is the response to the divine Yes in Him. And to the extent that in Himself He acknowledges and obediently responds to the divine Yes which is Himself, He is the reliable and true Witness of God.

“3. If, however, this meaning of Amen is retained in the Christian community, it is best preserved in the ἀμὴν which Jesus places before His sayings in the Synoptic Gospels⁹ (30 times in Mt., 13 in Mk. and 6 in Lk., though the latter also uses ἀληθῶς at 9:27; 12:44; 21:3 and ἐπ’ ἀληθείας at 4:25), and also in John’s Gospel (25 times, liturgically doubled). That Jesus’ command not to swear played any part in its use¹⁰ is nowhere indicated. For אָמֵן or אָמֵן might also have been adopted. The point of the Amen before Jesus’ own sayings is rather to show that as such they are reliable and true, and that they are so as and because Jesus Himself in His Amen acknowledges them to be His own sayings and thus makes them valid. These sayings are of varied individual content, but they

in the worship experience of the assembled group. And it is based on understanding of what each speaker is saying. When something positive and spiritually correct is said in human language, the listeners can and should respond in affirmation of the truth being spoken.³²⁸ This signals the listeners’ commitment to the spiritual truths being spoken.

But in the case of ecstatic speaking, the listeners cannot respond positively with τὸ ἀμὴν. They indeed should never naively respond thusly without clearly understanding and agreeing with what is spoken. Here Paul defines the content of the ecstatic mumbling as an intended εὐχαριστία by the speaker. That is, he supposedly was expressing thanksgiving to God in his ecstatic speech.

As the justifying amplification (γὰρ) in v. 17 expresses, the speaker supposedly speaks a good expression of thanksgiving: σὺ μὲν γὰρ καλῶς εὐχαριστεῖς. But the ὁ ἕτερος, other person, alluded to as ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου in the preceding declaration, is not built up, οὐκ οἰκοδομεῖται, i.e., made stronger spiritually. Thus the first and most important principle of edifying love is violated, and therefore invalidates what the speaker supposedly said.

It is important to note the intense distance between the ecstatic speaker and the listener set up here by Paul. First, the contrast is heightened by the μὲν... ἀλλ’ structure that is very intense. Second, the listener is referenced as ὁ ἕτερος rather than the milder ὁ ἄλλος, furthering stressing the difference between the two. Third, Paul does not allow for personal benefit by the ecstatic speaker in this action. Rather, he frames it as σὺ μὲν καλῶς εὐχαριστεῖς with the sense of ‘you said your blessing correctly’ in that speech directed toward

all have to do with the history of the kingdom of God bound up with His person. Thus in the ἀμὴν preceding the λέγω ὑμῖν of Jesus we have the whole of Christology in nuce. The one who accepts His word as true and certain is also the one who acknowledges and affirms it in his own life and thus causes it, as fulfilled by him, to become a demand to others.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:336–338.]

³²⁸What is interesting is the radical difference in the mid-first century Corinthian practice of using τὸ ἀμὴν and the dominant way it is used in modern western Protestant worship today. For Paul, τὸ ἀμὴν comes out of rational reflection and recognition of something truthful being, spoken ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν. But in modern practice the saying of “Amen” is most often associated with an emotional response to something said by the speaker which may or may not be rationally understood. Typically the more emotional and less rational a worship experience is the more frequently listeners will say amen. Paul’s teaching here reflects clearly the ancient Jewish practice in temple worship where the congregation responded in unison with τὸ ἀμὴν, or more precisely with the Hebrew equivalent, אָמֵן



God should always denote thanksgiving. What the ecstatic got out of his action was the attention of the group in a supposed demonstration of spiritual superiority.

Over and over Paul makes the point of the supreme priority of every action by an assembled group of believers for benefiting others present in the group: cf. the six uses of the verb οἰκοδομέω in 8:1, 10; 10:23; 14:4 (2x), 17, and the five uses of the noun οἰκοδομή in 3:9; 14:3, 5, 12, 26. The failure of οἰκοδομή happening with ecstatic speech invalidates such speech in public assembly: ἀλλ' ὁ ἕτερος οὐκ οἰκοδομεῖται.

vv. 18-19, Paul's preference for preaching.

18 Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ, πάντων ὑμῶν μᾶλλον γλώσσαις λαλῶ· 19 ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ θέλω πέντε λόγους τῷ νοῦ μου λαλῆσαι, ἵνα καὶ ἄλλους κατηχήσω, ἢ μυρίους λόγους ἐν γλώσσει. 18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; 19 nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

591 ^{14.18} Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ,
^{14.19} πάντων ὑμῶν μᾶλλον γλώσσαις λαλῶ·
 ἀλλ'
 ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ
 592 θέλω πέντε λόγους τῷ νοῦ μου λαλῆσαι,
 ἵνα καὶ ἄλλους κατηχήσω,
 ἢ μυρίους λόγους ἐν γλώσσει.

Now Paul returns (cf. vv. 14-15) to the personal illustration as a further proof of his thesis in vv. 1-5 and especially in v. 6.

Some basic observations must be noted for proper interpretation to happen. From the diagram notice the pivotal role of ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, *in church*.³²⁹ The strong contrast is between what Paul does privately (v. 18) and what he does publicly in the assembly of believers (v. 19). He never uses ecstatic speaking personally in a public setting; it is always a private action away from an assembled group of believers.

Paul does make use of ecstatic language privately in the sense defined in Rom. 12:26-27. As an apostle

³²⁹“Virtually all commentators appear to agree that ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ has the force of **in the assembled congregation**.¹⁹⁷ Hence it is astonishing that the contrast between the respective contexts of public worship and private devotion seem so often to be neglected when it is asked in crude terms whether or not Paul is ‘in favor of’ tongues, or, more surprisingly, that he inconsistently criticizes what he values. It is transparently clear that Paul expresses thanks for a gift given ‘for private use’ (*privat Gebrauch*; cf. v. 28b).¹⁹⁸ In public the use of this gift may do more harm than good, constituting a distracting and intrusive self-advertisement (or group advertisement) into ‘public worship,’ i.e., the intelligible communication of doxology, prayer, scripture, probably creed, and proclamation of the word of God.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1117.]

divinely called by God, quite naturally he would reach out to God in his prayers quite a lot more than the typical believer in the Corinthian church: cf. Gal. 1:1, 15-17. His relationship with God through Christ was in large measure defined by his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles. To him came unique divine revelation detailing the content of the Gospel that he was to preach and teach in the Diaspora world outside Palestine.

Thus his declaration in v. 18, Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ, πάντων ὑμῶν μᾶλλον γλώσσαις λαλῶ, *I am grateful to God that I speak in ecstatic language more than all of you*. This is not bragging. Rather, it is asserting that his experience with God went deeper and was more profound than that of all the Corinthians collectively. Indeed, he was no ἰδιώτης (v. 16) because he refused to use ecstatic speaking in public assembly. Rather, he was one of the chosen apostles of Christ! In this declaration is a sharp critique of the invalidity of the Corinthian elites’ practice of ecstatic speech. They ‘performed’ publicly

in order to dazzle the others present. This represented the importing of the pagan religious practices of ecstatic speech into the life of the Corinthian church. In spite of using “correct” ecstatic mumbling as a εὐχαριστία (vv. 16-17), no benefit was derived either to them or to the congregation. Just the opposite. It was injecting a phony sense of elitism into the life of the congregation that contributed then to the divisions and other messes in the church.

Thus Paul opts for the principle of edifying love when speaking to an assembled group of believers (v. 19). The strong contrastive conjunction ἀλλ' highlights this preference. His expressed desire to speak just five profitable prophetic words to the group over 10,000 unprofitable ecstatic mumbling dramatically highlights this principle of edifying love.³³⁰

³³⁰“The numbers **five** (πέντε) in **five words** (NRSV, NJB) or **five intelligible words** (REB, NIV) and **ten thousand** (μυρίους λόγους ἐν γλώσσει, NRSV, NIV, NJB) are not numerical quantifiers (see also above on μᾶλλον as **more gifted**). **Five** is ‘a round number for ‘several’ ‘ (Luke 12:6; 14:9).¹⁹⁹ Similarly, μύριοι denotes ten thousand as a noun in statistical contexts, but the adjective μυρίους (here in accusative plural form in apposition to λόγους) means *countless, innumerable* (as in 1 Cor 4:15, 1 Clement 34:6, Philo, *De Legatione ad Gaium* 54), or *myriad*.²⁰⁰ It is an extravagant term for the highest number conceivable: today, *billions to the power of billions*; REB, *thousands*; our translation **thousands upon thousands in a tongue**. The Revelation of John uses μυριάς in the plural in μυριάδες μυριάδων (Rev 5:11; 9:16), where any statistical interpretation misses the point and destroys the vision of innumerable millions of redeemed and worshipping people of God.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000),

The point of the contrast is not statistical but rather quantitative in the sense of 'a few' in contrast to 'thousands upon thousands.' Also note that the preaching words are spoken τῷ νοῦ μου, *with my mind*, in contrast to the ecstatic language (cf. v. 15). That is, these 'few words' come out of reflective understanding of God's thinking and are cast in intelligible human language so as to benefit others.

This personal illustration sets forth in no uncertain terms Paul's condemnation of the Corinthian elitists' practice of ecstatic speaking in public assembly. Their self-glorifying use of γλώσσαις was utterly false and pagan in its orientation. How anyone could try to justify public use of tongues speaking is impossible to understand in light of Paul's repeated and adamant condemnation of such.

vv. 20-25, the proper roles of αἱ γλώσσαις and ἡ προφητεία based on sacred scripture.

20 Ἀδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσὶν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε, ταῖς δὲ φρεσὶν τέλειοι γίνεσθε. 21 ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις καὶ ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἐτέρων λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ καὶ οὐδ' οὕτως εἰσακούσονται μου, λέγει κύριος.

22 ὥστε αἱ γλώσσαις εἰς σημεῖόν εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ἡ δὲ προφητεία οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. 23 Ἐὰν οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις, εἰσέλθωσιν δὲ ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι, οὐκ ἐροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε; 24 ἐὰν δὲ πάντες προφητεύωσιν, εἰσέλθῃ δὲ τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης, ἐλέγχεται ὑπὸ πάντων, ἀνακρίνεται ὑπὸ πάντων, 25 τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερὰ γίνεται, καὶ οὕτως πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον προσκυνήσῃ τῷ θεῷ ἀπαγγέλλων ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν.

20 Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking; rather, be infants in evil, but in thinking be adults. 21 In the law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people; yet even then they will not listen to me," says the Lord.

22 Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are

14.20 Ἀδελφοί,
593 μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε
ταῖς φρεσὶν
ἀλλὰ
τῇ κακίᾳ
594 νηπιάζετε,
δὲ
ταῖς φρεσὶν
595 τέλειοι γίνεσθε.

14.21 ἐν τῷ νόμῳ
596 γέγραπται
ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις
καὶ
ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἐτέρων
ὅτι...λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ
καὶ
οὐδ' οὕτως εἰσακούσονται μου,
λέγει κύριος.

14.22 ὥστε
597 αἱ γλώσσαις εἰς σημεῖόν εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν
ἀλλὰ
598 -- ----- τοῖς ἀπίστοις,
δὲ
599 ἡ προφητεία οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις
ἀλλὰ
600 - ----- τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

14.23 οὖν
Ἐὰν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη
ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ
καὶ
--- πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις,
δὲ
--- εἰσέλθωσιν ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι,
601 οὐκ ἐροῦσιν
ὅτι μαίνεσθε;

14.24 δὲ
ἐὰν πάντες προφητεύωσιν,
δὲ
--- εἰσέλθῃ τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης,
602 ἐλέγχεται
ὑπὸ πάντων,

603 ἀνακρίνεται
ὑπὸ πάντων,

14.25 **604 τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερὰ γίνεται,**
καὶ
οὕτως
πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον
605 προσκυνήσῃ τῷ θεῷ
ἀπαγγέλλων
ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν.

out of your mind? 24 But if all prophesy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reproved by all and called to account by all. 25 After the secrets of the unbeliever's heart are disclosed, that person will bow down before God and worship him, declaring, "God is really among you."

In this inner connected unit, Paul gives an ancient Jewish scribal midrashic treatment of Isaiah 28:11-12 in applying this OT text to the Corinthian situation.³³¹ He was well trained as a student of Gamaliel the Pharisee for handling the Hebrew Bible this way (cf. Acts 22:3). He does not pull detailed meaning out of the Isaiah text but rather draws upon its essential thrust.³³² This was that even though God Himself spoke to the Hebrew leaders directly, they would not listen to Him. In this pronouncement of doom upon His people even using corrupt rulers, priests and prophets in Israel with chapter 28, the prophet Isaiah pronounced severe judgment on the ancient Israel in very harsh terms. Paul picks up on the communication vehicle God used labeled in the LXX as φαυλισμὸν χειλέων διὰ γλώσσης ἐτέρας, *stammering lips through another tongue*.³³³ The ideas of incoherent speech from someone drunk and a foreign language, probably Aramaic, are at the heart of this.³³⁴

³³¹Isaiah 28:11-12 LXX. 11 διὰ φαυλισμὸν χειλέων διὰ γλώσσης ἐτέρας, ὅτι λαλήσουσιν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ† 12 λέγοντες αὐτῷ Τοῦτο τὸ ἀνάπαυμα τῷ πεινῶντι καὶ τοῦτο τὸ σύντριμμα, καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν ἀκούειν.†

11 Truly, with stammering lip and with alien tongue he will speak to this people, 12 to whom he has said, "This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose"; yet they would not hear.

כִּי בִלְעָגִי שִׁפְיָהּ וּבִלְשׁוֹן אֲחֵרֶת יְדַבֵּר אֶל־הָעַם הַזֶּה׃
אֲשֶׁרוּ אָמַר אֲלֵיהֶם זָאת הַמְנוּחָה לְעַיְיף וְזָאת׃ וְחִינָה
הַמְרַגְעָה וְלֹא אָבוּא שְׂמֹעֵ׃

³³²44In both its biblical setting and its use by Paul Isa 28:11–12 is an oracle of judgment. Speaking to the people in a foreign tongue will not lead them to fidelity, says the Lord. The speech may come from the Lord but it does not build up the people as God's own people. In Isaiah these words were addressed to the ruling classes in Jerusalem. In Paul they are addressed to glossolalists that pride themselves in the gift that is theirs." [Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 505.]

³³³44The respondent insists that God continued to speak to his people, even through such a 'stammering lip.' 'With another tongue' is understood (Wildberger, 1060) to refer to the Assyrians. Isa 33:19 speaks of 'the people of speech too obscure to hear, a stammering tongue,' while 36:11 tells of the Assyrians being asked to use their usual tongue, Aramaic. God spoke to that age even if it had to be through drunken prophets/priests and through the Assyrian invaders." [John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Revised Edition., vol. 24, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2005), 430.]

³³⁴44לע' comes from a root meaning 'mock, deride, stammer.' It is sometimes used of foreigners (33:19; 37:22). BDB (541) suggests the noun, used only here in this sense, means 'stammerings.' KB thinks this refers to the people of stammering lips. CHALOT refers it to the stammering itself, 'by stammering lips'." [John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, vol. 24, Word Biblical Commentary (Dal-

The original meaning of the OT text is rather clear: God tried all kinds of ways to warn Israel of His intolerance of their sinful ways but none of them worked.

But how did Paul use this OT text to point to the significance of both ecstatic speech and preaching? Here is a real challenge, since the apostle did not use any sort of modern western reasoning to link up the text to his issues at hand.³³⁵ Although very clear is that Paul is alluding to this passage in Isaiah, but he makes several significant modifications of the OT text as he reproduces his version of it.³³⁶

Foundational is solving the question of how Paul linked up as parallel situations the issue of God with the sinful Israelites, i.e., Ephraim as addressed by Isaiah, and the Corinthian struggle over ecstatic speech.

Proper understanding of the historical setting for the Isaiah 28 statement helps throw some light on this issue.³³⁷ Thus Paul quote portrays himself in the role

las: Word, Incorporated, 1998).]

³³⁵44The quotation, however, reflects precisely neither the LXX nor the Hebrew. C. D. Stanley observes in his specialist study: 'Determining the precise relationship between the wording of 1 Cor 14:21 and the text of the LXX is one of the greatest challenges in the entire corpus of Pauline citations.'²⁰⁸ Whereas some variants in the LXX tradition often account for some changes, Paul's quotation, according to Stanley, cannot be explained so easily. It remains distinct from both the LXX and from the Hebrew MT. However, (i) Origen does claim to have encountered the Pauline wording in *Aquila's* version (Philocalia, 9); (ii) if this remains uncertain, we argue that Paul combines exegesis and application in a way which addresses the differences identified in the next paragraph." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1120.]

³³⁶44The main differences include (1) Paul's choice of ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις καὶ ἐν χειλεσιν ἐτέρων for the LXX's διὰ φαυλισμὸν χειλέων διὰ γλώσσης ἐτέρας, (2) a shift to the first person singular λαλήσω, (3) Paul's omission of LXX's λέγοντες ... σύντριμμα ..., (4) the shift to the future tense of εἰσακούω, (5) the addition of λέγει κύριος as if it were part of the text, and (6) the substitution of οὐδ' οὕτως for οὐκ. Some tortuous explanations have been offered for such a variety of minor alterations, other than the use of memory or versions no longer extant. Dietrich-Alex Koch's is perhaps the most complex.²⁰⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1120.]

³³⁷44The technical issues assume due proportion only in the light of understanding how Paul superimposes the parallel situations of Corinth and Isaiah 28 onto one another with the effect that the genuine force of OT scripture speaks creatively to a new situation. Ronald Clements explains the situation which Isaiah addressed. 'Isaiah found himself in conflict with certain priests and prophets of Jerusalem': their self-indulgence in festivities and drink had confused their speech and their thinking, and led them to mock the serious declarations of Isaiah about divine action.²¹⁰ Isaiah turns back their mockeries on their own head by warning of the way God himself will punish them (v. 11) ... [with] the coming of

of the prophet Isaiah whose warnings of coming judgment were ridiculed by the corrupt leaders, priests, and prophets of Israel. These leaders saw themselves as wise and the prophet of God, Isaiah, as dumb. So they dismissed his message in favor of their 'superior wisdom' to opened the door for continued pagan influences into the lives of the Israelites. God resorted to a wide array of means to try to get this message across, but the people would not listen.

Now the connection of Isaiah to the Corinthian situation becomes clearer. The Corinthian elitists in their pagan wisdom felt themselves far superior in wisdom to the apostle Paul and were unlikely to heed his message to the church. This in spite of an assortment of unusual ways used by God to communicate His warning to them.

The application, vv. 22-25, expressed with ὥστε in v. 22 becomes clear. So also does the initial admonition in v. 20: Ἀδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσὶν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε, ταῖς δὲ φρεσὶν τέλειοι γίνεσθε. **Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking; rather, be infants in evil, but in thinking be adults.**

Paul begins this section with a twin negative/positive admonition. Don't think like small kids; think like mature adults. This has some echo with the earlier criticism in 3:1-3.³³⁸ He desires greatly to speak in wisdom with them as he mentioned in 2:6.³³⁹ But he recognizes in regard to the Corinthians what he has already stat-

the Assyrians.²¹¹ 'Whom will he teach knowledge?' (28:9) alludes to Isaiah's wasting his time because the scoffers are too drunk, confused, and self-confident to care. The Hebrew of 28:10 suggests 'onomatopoeic ... representation of the din made by the revellers' who found Isaiah's rebuke 'foolish and childish,' while in 28:11 'the reference is clearly to the harsh-sounding Assyrian language which ... 'this people' would soon be hearing.... [These foreigners] would soon be teaching them a lesson....'²¹² Bruce, Kistemaker, Allo, and Schrage paint a similar background.²¹³ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1120-1121.]

³³⁸ **1 Cor 3:1-3.** 1 Κἀγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοὶ ἀλλ' ὡς σαρκῖνοι, ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ. 2 γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρῶμα· οὐπω γὰρ ἐδύνασθε. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἔτι νῦν δύνασθε, 3 ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε. ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε;

1 And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?

³³⁹ **1 Cor. 2:6.** Σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, σοφίαν δὲ οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων·

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish.

ed about them in 2:14-15.³⁴⁰ If they are going to get his point here in v. 20, they are going to have to think like mature adults and not like infants. And his point is taken from the divine revelation given by God to the prophet Isaiah and is very relevant to their situation in Corinth as divine truth as well: God has little tolerance for His people not obeying Him completely. And He is trying a variety of ways to get this message across to them, just like He did to the Israelites centuries earlier.

Interestingly, both ecstatic speech and apostolic preaching are being used by God for this purpose at Corinth, as vv. 22-25 describe. Thus is of ὥστε as a coordinate conjunction in v. 22a signals the application of the Isaiah text to the Corinthian situation.

Verse 22 makes the core application in a rather interesting manner, that can be charted out as follows:

αἱ γλῶσσαι	=	σημεῖον	
εἰσιν		οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν	___
		ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις,	___
ἡ δὲ προφητεία	=	(σημεῖόν)	
(εἰσιν)		οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις	___
		ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν	___

Both ecstatic speech and preaching function as a σημεῖον but for two different groups in light of the divine revelation given to Isaiah. That is, αἱ γλῶσσαι are εἰς σημεῖον τοῖς ἀπίστοις, while ἡ προφητεία is εἰς σημεῖον τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. What is meant here turns completely on the meaning of σημεῖόν in this context. The question is how this Isaiah text points both to σημεῖόν and προφητεία? Here we see ancient Jewish scribal midrashic application at work, which is different than what one finds in the modern western world.

In this usage, σημεῖόν specifies a signal of application linkage. Thus the unbeliever should be alerted by hearing αἱ γλῶσσαι that God is and has an awesome judgment awaiting sinners. This was what Isaiah sought to deliver to the corrupt elitists among the Israelites through ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις καὶ ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἐτέρων, **people speaking in strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners.** Paul understood Isaiah to be declaring that God was trying to communicate to His people through the Babylonians speaking their form of Aramaic which the Israelites would have had a difficult time understanding at this point in their history. To be sure, it was

³⁴⁰ **1 Cor. 2:14-15.** 13 ἃ καὶ λαλοῦμεν οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος, πνευματικοῖς συγκρίνοντες. 14 ψυχικός δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ· μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ δύναται γνῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται.

14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

an unusual and a somewhat strange way for God to get His message through, as Isaiah asserts. The unbelievers hearing ecstatic speech as being practiced by the Corinthians should signal to them the existence of God and a foreboding sense of the awesome power of this God these Corinthians were supposedly communicating with in ecstatic speech.

But on the other side, the prophet Isaiah both orally and in written expression did deliver this προφητεία to the Israelite people so that they could understand God's displeasure with their sinning. This becomes for Paul the σημεῖόν for believers in the church to hear his message in this letter as God's warning of His displeasure over what they were doing. Thus his letter as προφητεία should be heard and carefully obeyed. It came in very understandable speech.

What is fascinating in Paul's interpretive approach is that the elitist ecstatic speakers at Corinth are represented as the pagan Babylonians speaking, while he and those speaking the truth of God in the church represent the prophet Isaiah faithfully delivering God's message in very clear language to His people.

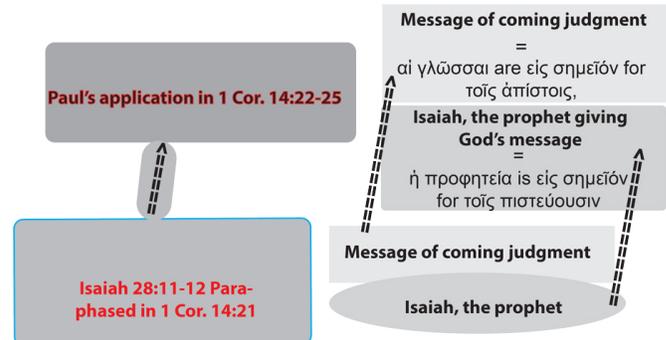
Thus εἰς σημεῖόν means 'this is equal to that' in building a bridge from Isaiah to the situation at Corinth. Although somewhat unusual in its application approach to moderns, it stands as a good example of how Jewish scribes in the beginning Christian era made contemporary applications of OT texts given to people centuries earlier.

The introductory admonition in v. 20, then becomes a 'heads up' alert that the Corinthians needed to 'put their thinking caps' on in order to follow him. Those out of a Jewish background in the church most likely would have understood clearly what Paul was doing, since in their Jewish heritage this was a standard way to understand the OT. It probably was more challenging for the non-Jews in the church to stay with Paul here in his treatment of Isaiah 28. But Paul clearly expects the mature thinkers in the congregation to understand him: ταῖς δὲ φρεσὶν τέλειοι γίνεσθε, v. 20b.

In verses 23-25, Paul amplifies the core application made in v. 22: 23 Ἐὰν οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις, εἰσέλθωσιν δὲ ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι, οὐκ ἐροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε; 24 ἐὰν δὲ πάντες προφητεύωσιν, εἰσέλθῃ δὲ τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης, ἐλέγχεται ὑπὸ πάντων, ἀνακρίνεται ὑπὸ πάντων, 25 τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερὰ γίνεται, καὶ οὕτως πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον προσκυνήσει τῷ θεῷ ἄπαγγέλλων ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν. 23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24 But if all prophesy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reproved by all and called to account by all. 25 After the secrets of the unbeliever's heart are disclosed, that person

1 Corinthians 14:20-25

Paul sees the message of coming doom by Isaiah as a signal, σημεῖόν, to unbelievers in the message of Isaiah equating hearing ecstatic speech as it signals that God exists and judges. But he sees the prophet Isaiah delivering this προφητεία to the people as the σημεῖόν of him giving προφητεία to the Corinthians for edification of believers. This is consistent with his amplification of the application in v. 22 through the explanation in vv. 23-25. Thus the Isaiah 28 oracle of doom has a double thrust to the Corinthian situation.



will bow down before God and worship him, declaring, "God is really among you."

The inferential conjunction οὖν defines this link as making explicit in the following statements what is considered to be implicit in the previous statement. He does this by two third class conditional declarations which can be charted out in the Greek as follows:

Protasis 1: λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις

Ἐὰν οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις, εἰσέλθωσιν δὲ ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι,

Apodosis 1:

οὐκ ἐροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε;

Protasis 2: πάντες προφητεύωσιν

ἐὰν δὲ πάντες προφητεύωσιν, εἰσέλθῃ δὲ τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης,

Apodosis 2:

ἐλέγχεται ὑπὸ πάντων, ἀνακρίνεται ὑπὸ πάντων, τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερὰ γίνεται, καὶ οὕτως πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον προσκυνήσει τῷ θεῷ ἄπαγγέλλων ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν.

The two conditional sentences play λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις against προφητεύωσιν as negative then positive. The common setting is a gathered assembly of one of the house church groups with ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι / τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης present in the gathering. In the first negative scene the 'outsiders' or unbelievers observe the ecstatic speaking going on and conclude that the group is made up of morons: οὐκ ἐροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε will they not say that you are crazy?

On the positive side with the opposite scene of preaching taking place τις ἄπιστος ἢ ἰδιώτης, some unbeliever or outsider, who comes into the meeting will

a) come under conviction by hearing the preaching, ἐλέγχεται ὑπὸ πάντων;

b) will be called to account for his living, ἀνακρίνεται ὑπὸ πάντων;

c) the secrets down inside him will become clear, τὰ κρυπτά τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερά γίνεται;

and d) he will fall down in worship declaring, “God truly is in your midst.”

One should not conclude from the apodosis statements listed above that Paul is here outlining a process of conversion. Instead, he is describing in idealized terms the potential impact of the working of the Holy Spirit upon the person who hears the Gospel message through προφητεία. Note carefully what the outsider/unbeliever exclaims. It is not a faith commitment to God of conversion. Instead, it is an acknowledgement that he has powerfully experienced the presence of the true God in this group. Hopefully for the ἄπιστος, this will lead then to an open faith commitment to Christ. For the ἰδιώτης, understood as a non-member believer visiting the group, the similar reaction becomes an affirmation of the sincere integrity of this house church group of believers, and thus he/she will be inclined to join the group. Thus only where the Gospel is communicated in clear, understandable human language is where the true presence of God can be experienced.

It is how Paul takes the Isaiah passage to new boundaries of application to the situation at Corinth that is very interesting. He sees καὶ οὐδ’ οὕτως εἰσακούσονται μου, λέγει κύριος, **yet even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord**, in his understanding of the Isaiah text as negating the value of the use of strange languages in order to successfully communicate the Lord’s warning. Thus even though αἱ γλώσσαι are a σημεῖόν for unbelievers, they fail to communicate successfully the message of God through the Gospel. Thus the unbeliever upon hearing all these mumbling going on in an assembled group of believers comes to the conclusion that Christians are crazy people. For some unbelievers the conclusion may have very well flowed along the lines of these Christians being worse than most all of the pagan temple deity followers. In them, at least it was only the priests and/or priestesses doing the mumbo-jumbo stuff, in contrast to most all the Christian group (πάντες λαῶσιν γλώσσαις, v. 23).

vv. 26-33a, how to approach orderly worship at Corinth.³⁴¹ 26 Τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; ὅταν συνέρχησθε,

³⁴¹“The term ‘controlled speech’ constitutes a recurrent refrain in William R. Baker’s recent volume on personal speech-ethics.²⁶⁶ Baker discusses the significance of ‘controlled speech’ as an ethical issue in Wisdom literature, the OT, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, rabbinic literature, Graeco-Roman texts, Philo, and parts of the NT, all of which provide a background for the issue in James.²⁶⁷ The Babylonian Counsels of Wisdom perceive ‘order’ as dependent on such axioms as ‘let your mouth be controlled and your speech guarded.’²⁶⁸ In OT Wisdom literature ‘A person of knowledge uses words with restraint’ (Prov 17:27), while unethical, wicked people are characterized by ‘a loose mouth’ (cf. Ps

ἐκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἐρμηνείαν ἔχει· πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω. 27 εἴτε γλῶσση τις λαλεῖ, κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος, καὶ εἷς διερμηνευέτω· 28 ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἑαυτῷ δὲ λαλείτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ. 29 προφήτῃ δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείτωσαν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν· 30 ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένῳ, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω. 31 δύνασθε γὰρ καθ’ ἓνα πάντες προφητεύειν, ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται. 32 καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται, 33 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ’ εἰρήνης. 26 **What should be done then, my friends?c When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, 33 for God is a God not of disorder but of peace.**

As the block diagram on the next page will illustrate visually, the arrangement of this material is relatively

50:19; 59:7; Prov 25:28). Josephus observes that the Essenes stress the importance of controlled speech for order and mutual respect: ‘let there be no shouting ... allow each to speak in turn’ (Josephus, Wars 2.8.6). Revealed knowledge especially merits control in the Qumran writings; this is to be communicated only ‘with discretion’ (IQS 10:24) and ‘within a firm boundary’ (10:25). Plato compares the ethics of speech with the kind of control that ‘runs in’ (ἀναλαμβάνω) utterances as one would a spirited horse (Plato, Laws 701C). Plutarch appeals to the symbolic ‘fence of teeth in front of the tongue’ as a guard for the ethics of speech.²⁶⁹ Philo sees the control of the tongue as a paradigm case of self-discipline (De Specialibus Legibus 2.195). Without this ‘chaos and confusion enter everything’ (Philo, De Abrahamo 21.29, cf. De Vita Mosis 2.198).

“Whereas some perceive Paul as merely imposing an authoritarian hierarchy or a paternalist polemic against the freedom of ‘enthusiasm,’ more attention should be paid to the background of an ethic of **controlled speech in traditions of speech-ethics** from the OT to hellenistic Judaism and Philo as a corollary of ‘order.’ Together with this, Paul’s earlier emphasis expounds an **ordered dialectic between unity and differentiation** as in 12:4–31 (see introduction to 14:1–40, above). As we have noted, the role of **love** (8:7–13; 13:1–13) also plays an important part. Just arguably the dialectic of oneness and differentiation implies a trinitarian perspective in 12:3–6, and at the very least it is grounded in the character and will of God.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1131–1132.]



14.26	οὖν	
606	τί ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί;	
		ὅταν συνέρχησθε,
607	ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει,	
608	διδαχὴν ἔχει,	
609	ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει,	
610	γλῶσσαν ἔχει,	
611	ἐρμηνεῖαν ἔχει·	
		πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν
612	πάντα... γινέσθω.	
14.27	εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ,	
613	(ἔστω)	
	κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς	
	καὶ	
614	(ἔστω)	
	ἀνὰ μέρος,	
	καὶ	
615	εἷς διερμηνευέτω·	
14.28	δὲ	
	ἐὰν μὴ ᾗ διερμηνευτής,	
616	σιγάτω	
	ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ,	
	δὲ	
617	ἐαυτῷ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ.	
14.29	δὲ	
618	προφητῆται δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλεῖτωσαν	
	καὶ	
619	οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν·	
14.30	δὲ	
	ἐὰν ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῆ καθημένω,	
620	ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω.	
14.31	γὰρ	
	καθ' ἓνα	
621	δύνασθε... πάντες προφητεύειν,	
	ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν	
	καὶ	
	--- πάντες παρακαλῶνται.	
14.32	καὶ	
622	πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται,	
14.33	γὰρ	
623	οὐ ἐστίν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς	
	ἄλλ'	
624	----- εἰρήνης - ----.	

easy to uncover. **First**, Paul raises a typical rhetorical question: in light of what I've just said, what is the proper thing to do? (v. 26a). **Second**, the first part of the answer in v. 26b is a summarizing statement of basic principle concluded with the foundational principle of everything being done for mutual edification of the group. **Third**, he lays down very limited use of ecstatic speech in public assembly (vv. 27-28) the restricts such to no more than three individuals who must also provide an intelligible interpretation of what they have

just muttered. Otherwise, no ecstatic speech is permissible. **Fourth**, in vv. 29-33a he lays down guidelines for the use of προφητεία, preaching for the congregation. Thus the over arching structure is a rhetorical question posed and followed by a three part answer.

First in v. 26a (# 606) comes the rhetorical question: τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; *What then is the situation, brothers?*³⁴² The inferential conjunction οὖν signals that what follows makes explicit something implicit in the previous expression. It follows the earlier expression τί οὖν ἐστίν; in v. 15a. Both instances link two sections together via drawing an inference from the first statement and expressing it directly in the second.

Therefore what Paul put on the table especially in vv. 20-25 carries with it implications for conducting a gathering of a house church properly, rather than chaotically, which is displeasing to God.

Second, in v. 26b (#s 607-612) comes a summarizing set of principles using an unusual grammar pattern. In this compound sentence form, the first half is composed of a set of statements (#s 607-611) built around the proposed scenario introduced by the indefinite temporal dependent conjunction ὅταν, *whenever*, followed by the present tense subjunctive mood verb συνέρχησθε rather than the much more common aorist subjunctive verb form. The shift to the present tense emphasizes repetitiveness of occurrence rather than a one time instance. This becomes almost impossible to preserve in English translation. As the diagram above illustrates, this temporal dependent clause covers the following five main clauses (#s 607-611).

The depicted scenario ὅταν συνέρχησθε presents a typical gathering of the house church groups across the city.³⁴³ How often and at what

³⁴²“Virtually all commentators and VSS agree that τί οὖν ἐστίν (v. 26) carries some such sense as ‘What does this imply?: a question inserted in diatribe style to quicken the interest, as in v. 15: anaphora’ (cf. NRSV, *What should be done, then, my friends?* REB, *To sum up, my friends?*; NJB, *Then what should it be like?*).²⁷¹ Once again we vary the rendering of ἀδελφοί in the search for a gender-inclusive equivalent, which escapes precise translation by any single English word or phrase.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1132–1133.]

³⁴³“NJB uses **suppose** for ἐάν with the aorist subjunctive in 14:6 and 23, but arguably the present subjunctive here with ὅταν signifies repetition: whenever you assemble together.²⁷² Dunn believes that this verse provides ‘the description of a typical gather-



ὅταν συνέρχησθε,

607 ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει,
608 διδαχὴν ἔχει,
609 ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει,
610 γλῶσσαν ἔχει,
611 ἑρμηνείαν ἔχει.

πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν

612 πάντα... γινέσθω.

times these meetings occurred could have easily varied from one group to the other. This is built into the indefinite temporal nature of the conjunction ὅταν and then reinforced by the use of the subjunctive verb συνέρχησθε. But the fascinating aspect is the window that this provides into what took place when believers met together in the house churches in Corinth. Whether this should be understood as a universal pattern in the Pauline churches or not is unclear. The listing of five items should be taken as a random sampling of actions rather than as an inclusive listing of what happened at each gathering. To be sure, Paul presents this in idealized form of what could happen possibly, rather as a precise historical description.

The contrast to modern patterns of worship ‘at church’ could not be greater. Two key terms need clarification for proper understanding: ἕκαστος and ἔχει. The pronoun ἕκαστος normally designates one person in distinction from others. Does the syntax of the Greek mean that one person possesses the five items listed as direct objects of the verb ἔχει? Although theoretically possible with the Greek syntax, it is not likely that Paul intended this meaning. The most natural sense of Paul’s statement is that an individual claims to have

ing for worship’ (my italics).²⁷³ However, while the ἕκαστος ἔχει clauses represent possible scenarios, or, in the language of Heidegger and Ricoeur, projections of ‘possible worlds,’ the repetitive reiterative function of ὅταν συνέρχησθε falls not upon the hypothetical scenarios but on the main axiom, that ‘the overriding aim is to build up the congregation.’²⁷⁴ This purpose of building up the community has cumulatively become a refrain or axiom in 14:3, 5, 12, and 26 (where v. 12 not only uses the identical phrase πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν but also adds the implicit τῆς ἐκκλησίας, which 1 Cor 3:9 made explicit by describing the congregation as θεοῦ οἰκοδομή). The use of the verb οἰκοδομέω in 8:1, 10; 10:23; 14:4, 17 confirms this point (see above). Lietzmann is so convinced of the importance of understanding where the relationship between the indefinite hypothesis and the definite principle engages the force of the sentence that in effect he changes the strict syntax of the Greek: ἕκαστος ἔχει signifies a projected thought world serving as “surely an indirect expression of the wish ‘so should it be’.” Alternatively the sentence is downright clumsy in stylistic formulation and intends to say (will sagen): ‘Everyone who presents a psalm or a piece of instruction ... should do it for the purpose of building people up.’²⁷⁵ Lietzmann’s diagnosis of the problem is right, even if he overpresses it into a change of syntax.²⁷⁶ ‘Edification must once more be insisted on as the true aim of them all.’²⁷⁷

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1133.]

one or more of the speech ‘gifts’ ready to present to the congregation. And this should not be taken to imply that ever person present has something to say to the group.³⁴⁴

The idea inherent in ἔχει is the opposite of spontaneous. Instead, the individuals come to the assembly prepared to offer some assumed insight to the group. In the dialogue between the speaker and the members of the group, a determination will be made collectively on whether or not what is presented is viewed as coming from God.

What are these five items that could function as a part of the assembly of the house church groups?

1) ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, One has a psalm. Although the term could include some Christian poetic composition, the most natural meaning is the sharing of a poetic expression found in one of Hebrew psalms. Not chanting it but simply saying it, probably in the LXX Greek version rather than the original Hebrew. This would especially be likely from the Jewish Christians present in the group.

2) διδαχὴν ἔχει, one has a teaching. Someone in the group comes to the meeting prepared to share a reflection on some aspect of the Gospel with those present. Whatever the source of the idea, the individual feels that it would enhance the spiritual life of the group and thus desires to share it in the meeting.

3) ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, one has something disclosed. Here the idea is very similar to the previous reference. Since the last meeting the individual either in personal meditation or reflection has come to a spiritual conclusion of some sort and thus comes prepared to share it.

One should note that these first three items relate closely to Paul’s category of προφητεία which is elaborated in detail in the following verses of 29-33a. Thus a sharp distinction between ψαλμὸν, διδαχὴν,

³⁴⁴“We have already discussed the impressionist (as against numerical) understanding of πάντες λαῶσιν in v. 23 (see above). As Conzelmann urges, followed by Senft (but against Fee), in the same way ἕκαστος ‘naturally must not be pressed to the effect that every single individual has one of the gifts mentioned, but means: one has this—another has that.’²⁷⁹ The hypothetical εἴτε γλῶσση in the very next verse confirms this. The meaning of ἔχει is difficult to determine. At first glance, *has* seems obvious (NRSV, NIV, KJV/AV, Barrett, Collins, Luther [*hat*]). However, Lietzmann uses *vortragen*, which means either presents or performs, while NJB renders it *brings*; REB, *contributing* (followed here by Phillips and the NT in Modern English by Montgomery). *Has* reveals how much is pre-judged by Weymouth’s explication *there is not one of you who is not ready either with...* Do the worshipers *bring* a pre-chosen, pre-prepared choice of psalm or hymn (either or both properly translate ψαλμὸν), their item of teaching (διδαχὴν), or something disclosed (ἀποκάλυψιν)?” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1134.]



and ἀποκάλυψιν since all three are expressions of προφητεία.

The standard use of chiasmus at an informal level gives structure to how Paul presents this material:

- A προφητεία items in v. 26b,c,d.
- B γλώσση items in v. 26 e, f
- C foundational principle for all:
πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω, v. 26g
- B' γλώσση limits imposed in vv. 27-28
- A' προφητεία limits in vv. 29-33a

Clearly the most important principle is that every action in the meeting of the assembly should build up the entire group. Paul has repeated this theme over and over again: 14:3, 5,12, 26. These repetitions build off 3:9 and are further reenforced by the use of the verb οἰκοδομέω in 8:1, 10; 10:23; 14:4, 17. If all those present are not helped spiritually, then the action -- speaking etc. -- must not be permitted to happen in the meeting. And as the apostle has made abundantly clear, only oral communication in human based language has the possibility of benefitting the group. Ideas MUST be presented so that the mind can grasp and learn from it.

4) **γλώσσαν ἔχει, One has tongues.** One comes to the meeting to share something he has experienced in his private devotions during the week. The use of the singular γλώσσαν and γλώσση in v. 27, rather than the plural αἱ γλώσσαι (v. 27), underscores the private devotional experience of communicating with God. He may or may not repeat the στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις (Rom 8:26) experience earlier. But he has discovered something important to share with the group.

5) **ἐρμηνείαν ἔχει, one has an explanation.** Just as the first three items are inner connected under προφητεία, so items 4 & 5 are inner connected under γλώσσα. In light of the statement Διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ, **Thus let the one speaking in ecstatic expression be praying that he may be able to explain it** (v. 13), the contextual assumption is that the one wanting to share his γλώσση experience in private devotions must also be able to explain its meaning in clear human based language to the group. In the detailed explanation that follows, this point is made absolutely clear to his Corinthian readers.

Third, vv. 27-28, strict limits are imposed on ecstatic language use. 27 εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ, κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος, καὶ εἷς διερμηνευέτω· 28 εἰ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἑαυτῷ δὲ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ. 27 **If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret.** 28 **But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God.**

After the more summarizing statements in v. 26,

	14.27	εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ,
613	(ἔστω)	κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς
		καὶ
614	(ἔστω)	ἀνὰ μέρος,
		καὶ
615	εἷς διερμηνευέτω·	
	14.28	δὲ
		εἰ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής,
616	σιγάτω	ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ,
		δὲ
617	ἑαυτῷ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ.	

Paul now turns to the two central speech categories seen as blessings of the Holy Spirit, γλώσση and προφητεύειν, and then lays down strict guidelines on how both must be utilized in the gathered assembly of each house church group.

Here it is clear both grammatically and contextually that the τις in v. 27a is the same person as the εἷς in v. 27c. Unfortunately most English translations do not make that clear in the way they handle these two references. The ecstatic speaker can only share what he has gained in personal devotional experience of ecstatic speech if he can share it through human language expression to the group.

Also Paul limits such sharing absolutely to no more than three individuals in the duration of the meeting. In contrast to what was happening at Corinth as per πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις in v. 23, only one person at a time can share his experience with the group: κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος. Finally, if one person can't explain what he has experienced earlier in his devotional time, then he must keep his mouth shut and not speak in the group: εἰ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (v. 28a).

On his on outside the meeting he is free to practice this as he wishes, but he should remember that authentic speech is a communication between himself and God (v. 28b; cf. v. 2 also). Whatever he seeks to do in this regard had better be real rather than faked. This fakery was the current practice among the elitists in the assembled meetings and Paul absolutely calls a total halt to this. It reflects even a deviant practice from the pagans in the local temples. I can just imagine there being few 'amens' from the elitists as this letter was read to each of the house church groups at Corinth. It is understandable that a segment of the church became infuriated with Paul as 2 Cor. 10-13 describes.

Fourth, vv. 29-33a, strict limits are imposed on προφητῶν. 29 προφηῆται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλεῖτωσαν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν· 30 εἰ μὴ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ

καθημένω, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω. 31 δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἓνα πάντες προφητεύειν, ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται. 32 καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται, 33 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ' εἰρήνης. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, 33 for God is a God not of disorder but of peace.

14.29 δὲ
618 προφήται δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείτωσαν
καὶ
619 οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν.
14.30 δὲ
ἐὰν ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένω,
620 ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω.
14.31 γὰρ
καθ' ἓνα
621 δύνασθε...πάντες προφητεύειν,
ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν
καὶ
--- πάντες παρακαλῶνται.
14.32 καὶ
622 πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται,
14.33 γὰρ
623 οὐ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς
ἀλλ'
624 ----- εἰρήνης - ----.

Paul now returns to the προφητεῖα category alluded to in the first three items of the initial listing in v. 26. There must be order and structure in what they do as well.

He slaps a limit of no more than three individuals sharing with the group as well: προφήται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείτωσαν. Thus in every meeting a maximum total of six individuals are allowed to share some spiritual understanding with the group. His phraseology for both categories clearly indicates his preference for less than six individuals to speak.

Part of the reason for this is expressed in the second declaration: καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν. All the others in the group are to engage in a critical dialogue with each speaker. The objective here is to come to a conclusion about whether what is spoken is authentically from God or not. This kind of 'hashing out' the truth, although very normative in both Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures,³⁴⁵ meant that should disagreements arise

³⁴⁵Those members of the church with a Jewish heritage would have well understood what Paul says here. The Friday evening synagogue gathering in the mid first century would have centered on vigorous debate and discussion of the pre-scribed readings of the Hebrew Bible. After the opening prayers, the scripture text would

over the legitimacy of something being said, the discussion could continue on quite some time. The typical custom in Paul's world was to keep on discussing an idea until some kind of consensus was reached by the group regarding its authenticity. The imperative verb διακρινέτωσαν means to thoroughly discuss in critical evaluation, and can include very heated debate. The present imperative form of the verb understands this as a continuing process that goes on rather than one that momentarily happens.

One side note: 'church' in Paul's world was not passive at all but a lively engaging of ideas by the members of the group. Modern worship practice seldom ever is this 'free wheeling.' Sometimes Bible study groups approach the ancient pattern with dialogue between the teacher and the group. But this is not the norm. I suspect less nonsense would take place in the modern setting if some of this ancient dynamic were injected into the modern practice.³⁴⁶ To be sure, some real cultural shifts would be absolutely essential. At the center of this shift would be realization that challenging what one says in no way is a challenge to the credibility and integrity of the individual himself/herself. The debate is about ideas, not people who express ideas.

In v. 30, Paul lays out another guideline to be followed: ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένω, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω, and if another seated person has been given some disclosure, let the first person be silent. That is, everyone must take turns with no individual 'hogging' the meeting. Respect for the other person here reflects the edifying love principle. No single individual has a monopoly on possible divine revelation.

Thus the rationale for this (γὰρ) is given in v. 31: δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἓνα πάντες προφητεύειν, ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται, for you all are able to preach one by one, so that all may learn and all may be encouraged. Within the limits of the maximum three speakers (v. 29), all of them must have their turn to

be read, and then the men in the assembly would be expected to discuss not only its meaning but also how it should apply to their present life and situation. Somewhat similar patterns existed all throughout the Greco-Roman society in the various social groups that functioned in gatherings either in some temple or in private homes.

³⁴⁶My European friends reading this will understand the dynamic far better than those in the western hemisphere. Especially will this be true for those who experienced the older, more traditional German and French educational patterns in secondary school and university studies. My first encounter with this tradition in 1980 in Freiburg Germany was something of a shock. But I learned to fit in and came to enjoy this pattern immensely as by far the best way to come at the truth of some issue.

speak. Hopefully what each one says will be helpful and encouraging to the entire group. The discussion and debating of each one of the three speakers' statements opens this possibility up much more effectively.

The second rationale in v. 32 is broader in principle expression: καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται, *And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets*. When one is speaking to the assembled group of believers he/she absolutely must lose a sense of awareness of what is going on in the group. The tendency for the speaker is to get so caught up in what is being spoken that all awareness of everything else vanishes. Paul demands that such no thing happen in a Christian gathering. Behind this 'loss of control' stands the powerful temptation toward egotism and the false thinking of the speaker that he is the only one with worthwhile ideas. Now Paul is clearly alluding to the Corinthian elitists' practice, and demanding that it be stopped. And not just with ecstatic speech but with all expressions to the group.

Why? The final statement in v. 33a introduced with γάρ answers this question: οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ' εἰρήνης, *for God is a God not of disorder but of peace*. Probably a slightly better translation would take into full consideration the genitive of advantage functions of ἀκαταστασίας and εἰρήνης. Thus: *for God is not for chaos; instead, He is for harmony and productivity*.

Critical here is understanding both ἀκαταστασίας and εἰρήνης, since they have been greatly distorted in the interpretive history of this statement.³⁴⁷ Paul is not

³⁴⁷Our translation follows Moffatt and NJB, which is also that of NRSV, REB, and NIV except for the word order of the negative (*God is not a God of disorder ...*). We have searched in vain for a stronger, more colorful word than **disorder** for the negated intensive compound word ἀκαταστασία. KJV/AV renders it *confusion*, which is acceptable lexicographically and reflects the Corinthian situation. Similarly, BAGD and other lexicons offer *disturbance, commotion, and unruliness* alongside *disorder*; which would cohere with the theme of God's sovereign rule and the semantic contrast with **peace**.³³¹ However, chs. 12–15 portray the ordered nature of God's purposive action in apportioning gifts and in creation and in resurrection, and Paul's larger point is that this order in the nature of the God who acts coherently, faithfully, and without self-contradiction should be reflected in the lifestyle and worship of the people of God. Thus a gift given by the Holy Spirit to benefit everyone (vv. 28–32) would be undermined in a self-contradictory and chaotic way if the Spirit himself 'fell upon' this or that individual in such a way that responsible processes of ministry were disrupted and confused, and some missed out on part of what the Holy Spirit was communicating through responsible human agents.

"This perspective is confirmed with reference to the close affinity of the Greek words in a parallel expression of thought in Jas 3:16–17. The competitive jealousy and strife (ζήλος καὶ ἔρις) which bedeviled church life at Corinth and rendered it self-centered ('fleshly,' σαρκικοί, 3:3; cf. 1:11 [ἔριδες], 12) are paralleled by the jealousy and strife (ζήλος καὶ ἐριθεία) which bring unruliness or disorder (ἀκαταστασία) in Jas 3:16. James sets this in contrast to the wisdom which comes from God (ἡ δὲ ἄνωθεν σοφία),

contrasting the modern liturgical and charismatic styles of worship here. Such didn't exist in Paul's world. This should be abundantly clear by this point in the exegesis of chapter fourteen. The content of the first century house church gathering was free flowing with a rice variety of elements possible surfacing in the process of each meeting.

It was not controlled by an ecclesiastical leader. Note that the standard leaders of house churches, the πρεσβύτεροι and διάκονοι, are never mentioned directly in all of this discussion. The πρεσβύτεροι normally would have presided over the gatherings but would not have been obligated to deliver a sermon etc. Mostly he/she would have provided a place of meeting and made arrangements for the meeting to take place. Very basic and limited leadership to the group would have come from them. Of course, they could -- and most likely often did - contribute to what was said. But the content of the meeting originated from those accepted to speak to the group. Usually these individuals came from inside the group. But on occasion when a recognized Christian leader attended the meeting, this person would be invited to speak. The pattern was modeled after that in the Jewish synagogue, as Luke describes in Acts 13:15-16a. The presiding πρεσβύτεροι in the Christian assembly functioned much the same way as the οἱ

which brings peace (εἰρηνική, v. 17). In his book on the ethics of controlled speech in James and in the biblical, Jewish, and hellenistic background, W. R. Baker notes how the reciprocity of controlled speech and openness to listen and to learn in meekness and in modesty reflect the wisdom which characterizes the providence of God and God's dealings with the world in divine wisdom: 'A mature Christian knows how and when to deliver this powerful word for God's good purposes.... James 3:18 bears witness to the integral part that peace and actions which promote it [including silence and refraining from speech] play in James' hopes for the Christian community and even society at large.'³³² The source of this 'wisdom,' however, is God himself: it is 'the perfect gift from God (1:17), whose nature such controlled order expresses and reflects.'³³³

"Yet the aspect of disturbance and commotion is not lost from view. 'The God who gives the inspiration is not on the side of disorder and turbulence, but on that of peace. He cannot be the promoter of tumult, and therefore cannot inspire two people to speak simultaneously to the same audience. Inspiration is no excuse for conflict and confusion, and jealousies and dissensions are not signs of the presence of God (v. 25).'³³⁴ It is far more important to read ch. 14 in the light of the earlier chapters and of chs. 12–13 than to impose upon it a lens forged out of modern controversies surrounding charismatic renewal and theologies of church order as 'ecclesiologies.' Paul insists on 'order' not as self-contained 'doctrine of the church,' but because the church must reflect the nature of God and respect for 'the other'."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1145–1146.]

ἀρχισυνάγωγοι did in the synagogue.

Paul most likely did not bring them directly into the discussion because the elitist mentality had infected many of the πρεσβύτεροι and διάκονοι of many of the house church groups as well as other members. His instructions were targeting the entire group and not making the leadership primarily responsible for cleaning up the messes plaguing many of the house church groups. Their function solely in ministering to the group gave them no ecclesiastical authority over the group.³⁴⁸ Any influence they had over a group came from their godly example as 1 Peter 5:1-5 makes very clear.

Thus, 'orderly' worship was to be a reflection of God and His way of doing things. Enthusiasm in worshipping God was not excluded but everything being done out of careful reflection and understanding of God's ways was mandated. The present pattern at Corinth, that Paul criticizes, reflected ἀκαταστασίας and produced observations that Christians were crazy people as v. 23 asserts. The opposite of ἀκαταστασίας here is εἰρήνης. The modern word 'peace' is woefully inadequate here since it normally defines as situation where war is absent. But biblically εἰρήνης references everything positive from God's blessings. The idealized picture of εἰρήνης is both the Garden of Eden before Adam and Eve's sinning, along with the picture of Heaven in Rev. 22. The gatherings of God's people in assembly on earth should move as close to this ideal as possible.

But how could it when discussion and debate over the ideas being spoken is a central part of the meeting? For western hemisphere Christians and others in different parts of the world, such is hard to conceptualize. But European cultural traditions make such an understanding of a meeting with intense discussion being εἰρήνης is rather easy to conceptualize. Edifying love in Paul's mind in no way meant naive acceptance of what the other person said. Instead, it meant great respect for him and a willingness to challenge his thinking, especially if it was perceived to be wrong. The Truth that is God would only come to the surface in this kind of atmosphere, and acquiring this truth was at the heart of the assembly.

Conclusio, 14:33b-40.

In reality, the *conclusio* summation of this discussion of Paul is contained only in vv. 37-40. The pericope on women in vv. 33b-36 seems to be dropped

³⁴⁸The modern Christian mindset with authoritative ecclesiastical leaders stands about as opposite of mid first century Christian practice as possible. It was only with the corruption of this first century apostolic model beginning in the second century that specific individuals claimed authority over everyone else in the congregation. And this perversion now is so embedded in Christian thinking that it is hard to conceptualize a church without authoritative leaders of some sort.

into the text very arbitrarily as an interruption to the thought flow on the priority of preaching over ecstatic language.³⁴⁹ The diversity of viewpoint on these verses is massive.³⁵⁰ On one end of the spectrum is a com-

³⁴⁹“The translation and exegesis is immensely complex. Contextual factors are vital, including presuppositions about what the addressees were assumed to understand by language of which we know only Paul's part of the dialogue. Nevertheless, the main themes of 'controlled speech' and 'order' (14:24-40) continue. We also note below the problems caused by issues of whether parts of these verses are un-Pauline, either by interpolation or by allusive quotation.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1146.]

³⁵⁰Allison, R. W., “‘Let the Women Be Silent in the Churches’ (1 Cor 14:33b-36): What Did Paul Really Say, and What Did It Mean?” *JSNT* 32 (1988): 27-60.

Barton, S. C., “Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth,” *NTS* 32 (1986): 225-46.

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plete denial of the Pauline origin of this pericope.³⁵¹ To

Ross, J. M., "Floating Words: Their Significance for Textual Criticism," *NTS* 38 (1992): 153–56.

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[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1146–1147.]

³⁵¹ "An Interpolation? For more than a century various scholars have been convinced that 1 Cor 14:33b–36 has been interpolated into Paul's text by someone other than Paul at a relatively early stage in the history of the tradition of the manuscript. On this view the verses are an expression of the social and ecclesial discipline represented by such NT passages as Eph 5:22–24; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:11–15; and 1 Pet 3:1–6.

"Scholars who favor the interpolation theory include Christian Holsten (1880), Daniel Völter (1889), Alfred Loisy (1922), Walter Schmithals (1956), Robert Jewett (1978), Gerhard Sellin (1987), Eduardo de la Serna (1991), Jouette Bassler (1992), J. H. Petzer (1993), Richard Hays (1997) and, especially, Winsome Munro. In a series of articles (1973, 1988, 1990) Munro claimed that the interpolation consists of a somewhat larger segment containing vv. 32–38. In the NRSV and some other recent translations of 1 Corinthians vv. 33b–36 are printed in parentheses or brackets, an editorial procedure that betrays the editors' hesitancy as to the authenticity of the verses.

"Those who doubt the authenticity of these verses argue that they break Paul's line of thought. The other side of this argument is that v. 37 seems easily to follow v. 33a. In addition, some of the language is non-Pauline, especially the phrase 'the law says,' used as a cipher for a substantive argument in a discussion. Paul generally expresses a somewhat negative view of the law (*ho nomos*; cf. 15:56). When he wants to develop a scriptural argument he cites the pertinent passages of Scripture (cf. 9:9; 14:21), rather than making a merely general reference under the rubric of 'the law.' A final argument in favor of the inauthentic character of vv. 33b–35 is that the silence of women in the Christian assembly conflicts with 11:5. That verse establishes a kind of dress code for women who pray and prophesy during the assembly. To these various internal arguments against the authenticity of 14:33b–36 one can add that the idea of the subjection of women expressed in 14:34 goes contrary to Paul's view of women as his coworkers (14:19, see note; Phil 4:2–3; Rom 16:1–5) and Paul's idea that the Christian is not enslaved to anyone (cf. 6:12).

"That some majuscules (D, F, G) and some Western witnesses to the Latin text type (including some Old Latin manuscripts and Ambrosiaster) place the verses at the end of ch. 14 (after 14:40) adds an external argument in favor of the hypothesis of interpolation. Such 'movement' of a passage from one location to another within text is often an indication of the weak hold that it has on the claim that it belongs to the text. The phenomenon is not un-

be sure, the text did bother some copyists enough that its location was shifted from following v. 33a to after v. 40.³⁵² But the shift reflects uncertainty over its location rather than over its authenticity.³⁵³ The majority of known in the history of the manuscript tradition of the NT (cf. John 7:53–8:11), but instances of it in the Pauline corpus are relatively rare. P. B. Payne (1995, 1998) introduced into the discussion of the state of the text the evidence of a Latin manuscript (Codex Fulden-sis, 546 or 547 C.E.) and the scribal sigla in B. He cites Bishop Victor of Capua, under whose authority the Codex Fulden-sis was produced, as an ancient witness to the idea that the passage is an interpolation.

"There are, indeed, various reasons to consider vv. 33b–36 as a later interpolation into Paul's text. The arguments are, however, not weighty. The manuscripts where the passage wanders to the end of ch. 14 are few in number and closely related. They belong almost entirely to the Western type of text. The oldest manuscripts (P⁴⁶, κ , A, B) along with Ψ and the Byzantine tradition read the letter with the problematic verses in their canonical location."

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 515–516.]

³⁵² Verses 34–35 following 14.40 D F G it^{ar, b, d, f, g} vg^{ms} Ambrosi-aster Sedulius-Scottus

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

³⁵³ "The UBS 4th ed. Greek New Testament classifies vv. 34–35 as 'B,' i.e., 'the text is almost certain,' although the UBS 3d ed. also used 'B' but in that earlier edition this classification indicated 'some degree of doubt.' The basic facts are that the Western, D, E, F, G, the later 88*, and fourth-century Ambrosiaster displace vv. 34–35 to after v. 40. However, the very early P⁴⁶ (Chester Beatty, c. AD 200, together with κ , B, A, 33, 88 mg, Vulgate, Old Syriac, and most other MSS) read these verses in their normal, accepted place. Many writers (including Weiss, Conzelmann, Klauck, and Senft) use this displacement in the Western text as part of an argument for the view that these verses are an interpolation, but *we must keep our textual judgments distinct from arguments of other kinds*. Surprisingly, Fee is one of those who place most weight on the textual variants, indicating 'a very early marginal gloss that was subsequently placed in the text at two different places,' and that these verses were 'not part of the original.'³⁵⁶ This variant displacement 'may not be shunted aside.'³⁵⁷

"While others agree that vv. 34–35 (or vv. 33b–36) are an interpolation, few place the weight that Fee does on a textual variant which Wire, with meticulous scholarship, shows to rest on a single MS tradition (see below). Metzger and Zuntz in fact find it entirely understandable that an early copyist should move vv. 34–35 to the end of the chapter for any of several reasons.³⁵⁸ Fee's claims about the paucity of evidence for this type of displacement in the NT where the displacement is artificial seems to be answered by the range of evidence put forward by J. M. Ross.³⁵⁹ A thorough assessment is offered by A. C. Wire. She points out that every 'displacement' MS is either a Greek-Latin bilingual or a Latin text, that E is a direct copy of D, and that F and G are so close to each other that it is widely agreed that they copied the same edited text. In practice only D and G remain as two witnesses, which in turn almost certainly come from 'a single common archetype.'³⁴⁰ This distinctive Western text gives rise only to the appearance of a variety of Latin



the manuscript evidence, however, favors its inclusion after v. 33a, even though the wording in them varies

text-types, since these depend on the same single tradition. Wire further explains why the anomalous twelfth-century 88* reading is not a survival of earlier pre-Latin texts, but reflects a reactive scribal activity. Finally, in contrast to Fee, and with Metzger, she offers several possible reasons why the D tradition should have displaced the original authentic sequence which occurs in our texts (UBS 3d and 4th eds.). One relates to errors in copying (e.g., haplography) and their correction; a second, to an attempt to ‘improve’ the text; a third, to ideological interests on the part of a corrector: ‘it is not scientific to exclude a priori the possibility of a translator’s or scribe’s ideological decision to displace or omit a passage silencing women.’³⁴¹ She cites the period of Montanism and Tertullian as a possible background for such changes.

“The debate has become intensified by two highly detailed and meticulous studies by Philip Payne (1995) and by Curt Niccum (1997), each of which reaches different and opposing conclusions: Payne argues on the basis of the Vaticanus ‘bar umlaut and/or umlaut text-critical sigla ... of the textual variations’ that new textual and internal evidence ‘strengthens an already strong case that 1 Cor 14:34–35 is an interpolation’; Niccum reviews every aspect of the debate (including Wire and Payne), and concludes, ‘No extant MS offers evidence for an original omission of 1 Cor 14:34–35.... No other reading has claim to being ‘original’ other than that of preserving the traditional sequence of verses.’³⁴² Payne urges that Metzger overlooked the textual evidence of Codex Fuldensis as an important witness to the omission of the verses. Niccum attacks Payne’s appeal to ‘bar umlauts’ marks as at best confused and as postdating the fourteenth century. The earliest known witness to a transposition of sequence in the passage is Ambrosiaster (late fourth century). He cites good reasons for a later reapplication of ‘in all the churches.’ Niccum’s pages are packed with powerful and succinct arguments which prove convincing.

“Further arguments concerning the strictly textual issue are urged by others mainly in the same direction as Wire (anticipating Niccum) but sometimes with Fee. Horrell defends Fee’s position, arguing that Wire has failed to address the issues fully.³⁴³ Earle Ellis argues that vv. 34–35 constitute a marginal note added by Paul himself after reading through the draft of 1 Corinthians.³⁴⁴ Stephen Barton accepts and develops this idea further.³⁴⁵ On the other side, however, even Conzelmann, who believes that the verses are an interpolation on internal grounds (i.e., exegetical and theological, not textual), concedes that the Western readings are themselves ‘no argument for the assumption of an interpolation.’³⁴⁶ Witherington expresses strong scepticism about the weight of the textual arguments: ‘Displacement is no argument for interpolation. Probably these verses were displaced by scribes who assumed that they were about household order, not order in worship, scribes working at a time when there were church buildings separate from private homes.’³⁴⁷ (The earliest Western text witness is around AD 375.) Again, many of Fee’s points seem to be amply addressed by J. M. Ross, who categorizes different types of displaced or ‘floating’ texts within the NT. He argues that if the verses were an interpolation, this would be ‘very early, almost before any copies had been made, certainly before the writing of 1 Tim 2:11–13.... We are bound to accept the unanimous testimony of the manuscripts, however deeply we may regret that Paul expressed this opinion.’³⁴⁸”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1148–1150.]

somewhat.³⁵⁴ Internally with the wording, phraseology etc., compelling reasons exist to suggest that the pericope has a Pauline origin.³⁵⁵ The best conclusion is that they do belong here in Paul’s letter.

Next, the challenge is how to properly understand them.³⁵⁶ This is especially complex in light of the chapter seven discussion of proper appearance for women when preaching and praying in a leadership role in the Christian assembly. Yet the thrust of this pericope seems to move along somewhat similar lines to 1 Tim. 2: 11-13.³⁵⁷ 2 Tim. 3:6-7 makes it clear, however, that

³⁵⁴34-35 {B} include verse 34-35 here (with minor variants) P⁴⁶ ⋈ A B Ψ 0150 0243 6 33 81 104 256 263 365 424 436 459 1175 1241 1319 1573 1739 1852 1881 1912 1962 2127 2200 2464 Byz [K L] Lect it^o vg syr^{p, h, pal} cop^{sa, bo, fay} arm eth geo slav Origen Chrysostom Theodoret; Pelagius [Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).

³⁵⁵“There are, moreover, substantial internal arguments that confirm the Pauline character of the text. These bear principally upon its vocabulary and syntax. The disputed passage’s references to speaking, being silent, being subject, and the assembly link these verses to what Paul has said in the immediately preceding paragraph. It may be argued that Paul’s vocabulary is somewhat unusual, but six key expressions occur in 1 Corinthians in an immediately adjacent or similar context: ‘to be silent’ (sigaō) in 14:28, 30; ‘to be subject’ (hypotassō) in 14:32 (cf. 15:27–28 [6x]; 16:16); ‘the law says’ (ho nomos legei) in 9:8; ‘to learn’ (manthanō) in 14:31 (cf. 4:6); ‘their own husbands’ (idioi andres) in 7:2 (in the singular); ‘shameful’ (aischros) in 11:6. Verses 33b–36 are, moreover, structured in a way that is similar to Paul’s exhortations to prophets and those speaking in tongues. In each instance the instruction is followed by a conditional clause and with regard to women and to prophets there is a final motivation (vv. 34b; 35b).

“To the extent that some of the phraseology and some of the content of 14:33b–35 has a non-Pauline sense this may be due to Paul’s summarizing not his own thought, but the argument of another. In any case the argument for 14:33b–36 as an interpolation into Paul’s text does not have sufficient merit. These verses belong to the letter and must be explained in context. Verses 33b–36 represent a conservative argument that Paul rebuts by means of the double rhetorical question in v. 36. To demand the silence of women in the Christian assembly is to claim for oneself a monopoly on the word of God. Such a monopoly no one can claim.”

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 516–517.]

³⁵⁶“All this is further compounded by the fact that many view these verses (or some verses) as a non-Pauline interpolation by a copyist; others view them as a quotation of a Corinthian view which Paul rejects; yet others perceive them as a pre-Pauline tradition which Paul accepts and adapts.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1147.]

³⁵⁷1 Tim. 2:11-15. 11 Γυνή ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μαθησθήτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ· 12 διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ’ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. 13 Ἀδὰμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη,



at Ephesus false teachers found the women in the church to be easy prey for their heretical teachings.³⁵⁸ He accuses them of having some of the traits that the apostle criticizes among the Corinthian elitists. First Corinthians was written from Ephesus some eight to ten years earlier. Does the issue of young wives out of control at Ephesus play a role in the issue of lack of controlled speech at Corinth as well?³⁵⁹ One must

ἔτα Εὐα. 14 καὶ Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν· 15 σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, ἐὰν μείνωσιν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἀγιασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης·

11 Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

³⁵⁸2 Tim. 3:6-7. 6 Ἐκ τούτων γάρ εἰσιν οἱ ἐνδύνοντες εἰς τὰς οἰκίας καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες γυναῖκάρια σεσωρευμένα ἀμαρτίαις, ἀγόμενα ἐπιθυμίαις ποικίλαις, 7 πάντοτε μανθάνοντα καὶ μηδέποτε εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἔλθειν δυνάμενα.

6 For among them are those who make their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desires, 7 who are always being instructed and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

³⁵⁹Christian assemblies took place on a rather small scale. They occurred in the homes of Christians. At home, and particularly in Greco-Roman society, women took a more active role than they did in public civic life. Some commentators (Stephen Barton, Caroline Vander Stichele, etc.) suggest that there may have been some blurring of the distinction between domestic and community roles among the Christian women of Corinth, women assuming a role in the assembly that was normally theirs as wife and mother simply because the assembly took place at home. If this were the situation, Paul would be reminding the Christians at Corinth that their gathering really enjoyed the character of a public assembly. Roles that were appropriate at home should not be indiscriminately brought into a Christian assembly, exception always to be made for the kind of privileged communication between God and human, and vice-versa, that can be appropriately called prophecy and prayer as in 11:5. What is appropriate at home is not necessarily appropriate in a Christian assembly (cf. 11:22).

“On another reading of the sub-unit on women’s role in the assembly the situation Paul had in mind was disorderly chattering (*lalein*), perhaps under the guise of prophecy or speaking in tongues. Some women may have been speaking in a frenzied fashion similar to that experienced in the cult of Dionysus. Since Paul focuses on their questions in v. 35 it might be that he had in mind women raising questions in the assembly or, following a Delphic model, female prophets responding to questions, often about one’s personal life, that other people had asked. Other commentators suggest that the situation might be that of an early Gnostic woman’s liberation movement in which some women wanted to speak their mind in the presence of the Christian assembly. Paul would have considered such interventions as these as being ‘out of order.’ One difficulty with this line of reasoning is that Paul’s ‘rule’ seems to be general and not specific to the situation at Corinth (see, however, note on v. 33b).

“Since v. 35 speaks about women getting information from their husbands at home some commentators (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, etc.) are of the opinion that Paul is not talking about

never forget the social situation in the mid first century world. The vast majority of the wives in the church were teenagers and the percentage would diminish with the number of older women. The huge majority of them were illiterate and could neither read nor write. Greco-Roman education was for boys and girls were to be trained by their mothers on being good mothers and wives. Some of this emphasis shows up inside the NT, e.g., Titus 2:3-5.³⁶⁰ Only in isolated instances did girls receive any kind of formal education remotely like their brothers did.

With vv. 33b-36 placed in between two strong emphases on self control and worldliness in the assembly (vv. 26-33a, and 37-40), the context argues strongly that lack of control by at least some of the women in the assemblies was a part of the problem at Corinth as well as at Ephesus. To be sure, Phoebe who led a house church group at Cenchreae some few kilometers south of Corinth served as an excellent model (cf. Rom. 16:1). At the beginning, the church in Corinth had the example of Christian leadership given by Priscilla (Acts 18:1-4, 18).

Another way of viewing vv. 33b-36 has gained increasing accepts across the scholarly world over the past fifty or so years.³⁶¹ This way of viewing the text women in general, but only about married women. It would have been on married women that the injunction to be silent falls. As a sign of their subordination they should remain silent in the assembly. If they need to know something they should speak to their husbands at home. To this one could object that 11:2–16 speaks of the appearance of women who pray and prophecy in the assembly, presumably married women as well (cf. 11:3). For Antoinette Wire the discussion on women’s appearance in 11:2–16 is a concession on the part of the apostle. His real goal is to obtain the silence of women in the Christian assembly. As such Paul would be urging a kind of social conservatism that would anticipate the discipline of the churches of later generations (1 Tim 2:11–12; cf. Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:1). Paul has, however, such favorable things to say about women, many of whom he looks upon as his coworkers (1:11; 16:19; Rom 16:1–16; Phil 4:2–3; Phlm 2; cf. Acts 16:11–40; 17:34; 18:2–26; Col 4:15; 2 Tim 4:21), that Wire’s opinion seems quite implausible.”

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 513–514.]

³⁶⁰Titus 2:3-5. 3 πρεσβύτιδας ὡσαύτως ἐν καταστήματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς, μὴ διαβόλους μὴ οἶνω πολλῷ δεδουλωμένας, καλοδιδασκάλους, 4 ἵνα σωφρονίζωσιν τὰς νέας φιλάνδρους εἶναι, φιλοτέκνους 5 σώφρονας ἀγνάς οἰκουργοὺς ἀγαθὰς, ὑποτασσομένας τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημηται.

3 Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

³⁶¹It may be that Paul is not at all encouraging women to be



answers most of the questions that the text raises in a satisfactory manner. Yet unresolved tensions between chapters eleven and fourteen do remain. This approach sees vv. 33b-35 as reflecting a sexist stance against women in the church that is intended to maintain male dominance. Vv. 36-40 then become his rebuke of this Corinthian elitist position. But criticisms of this approach have been put forth with serious analysis that make it somewhat less likely to be what Paul is doing here.³⁶²

silent in the assembly, at least no more than he enjoined men to be silent. It may be that in vv. 33b-36 Paul is dealing with men who wanted to maintain their own patriarchal status and so require women to be silent in public and subservient to their husbands at home. The argument of these men took the form of an appeal to accepted *halakah* and the practice of the synagogue (vv. 33b-34). To this would have been added an argument from shame (v. 35b), so important in the social circumstances of first-century Mediterranean culture. For women to speak in an assembly dishonors, these people might have claimed, the women themselves as well as their husbands. On this view vv. 33b-35 represent the position of some people at Corinth, much in the fashion of the 'slogans' summarizing positions with which Paul was constrained to take issue. Some of these slogans appear to have been buzzwords circulating among the Corinthians (6:12, 13; 7:1; 10:23), but others may have been Paul's own formulation (1:12), as could be the case here.

"Having summarized their argument in this casuistic section of this letter, the apostle rejects it out of hand. His double rhetorical question is a quick dismissal. To those who would appeal to traditional *halakah* in an effort to silence female prophets Paul offers a blunt reminder that the word of God did not originate from them; neither do they enjoy some sort of an exclusive claim on the word of God. If the Spirit wills (12:11), the gift of prophecy can be allotted to women. Gender is not a qualification for the gift of prophecy, which is given for the benefit of the whole community (see 14:29). To prevent a woman who was so endowed from speaking within the assembly is an obstacle to God's working within the community."

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 514-515.]

³⁶²D. W. Odell-Scott is perhaps most widely associated with this view, both in an article of 1983 and a further response to Jerome Murphy-O'Connor in 1987.³⁵² However, Manus, Flanagan and Snyder, and Allison all offer variants of this view also (see below). Odell-Scott regards the key particle ἢ, *Or*, at the beginning of v. 36, as offering a resounding rhetorical rejoinder to the conservative patriarchal rule expressed by a group at Corinth in the words of vv. 34-35: *Or was it from you that the word of God went out?* (v. 36). According to Odell-Scott, since this can be understood as a strong rebuttal of vv. 34-35, the passage emphatically endorses the authority of women to speak in the public congregation.

"This view also finds expression in slightly different terms in C. Ukachukwu Manus. He understands it as Paul's rebuttal of a male sexist group at Corinth who insisted on a strong subordination of women especially here within marriage.³⁵³ This approach, however, develops a view which was formulated more tentatively in 1981 by N. M. Flanagan and E. H. Snyder.³⁵⁴ More recently in 1988 R. W. Allison provided perhaps the most detailed development of this same approach. He regards vv. 33b-36 as coming from an earlier letter from Paul to Corinth, in which vv. 34-35

But is there an alternative understanding that is better? A number of scholars have proposed another understanding of the text that gives substantial consideration to cultural standards -- especially [honor/shame](#) principles -- as well as to the precise meaning of four key terms contextually: λαλέω (repeatedly from 14:14 to 32), σιγάω (14:28, 30, 34), ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ (14:28, 35; cf. 34); and ὑποτάσσω (14:32, 34).³⁶³ Standing in the background may very well have been the notorious frenzied speech and public behavior traditions of the priestesses especially of the cult of [Dionysus](#). A lot of this was also associated with the cult of [Aphrodite](#), which had one of its major temples in Corinth. Clearly Paul is concerned to put as much distance between Christianity and paganism as is possible. Very possibly the behavior of many of the women, especially the married ones, in the meetings would have blunted greatly that distinction to an outsider visiting the group. These women mostly in their teens and twenties would have been a real distraction.

Again the social background in mid first century Corinth stands some of the women, mostly married, who are not necessarily into the ecstatic speech thing. Instead, in the dialogue exchange after a member's sharing of some spiritual insight, they vigorously join

represent the hierarchical view of a conservative group at Corinth, v. 33b is an editorial link, and v. 36 introduces Paul's indignant rhetorical questions following the disjunctive particle ἢ.³⁵⁵ He suggests an original setting in which Paul argued for eschatological freedom. 'Paul's rhetorical questions are his sarcastic rebuttal of his opponents' position.'³⁵⁶

"Horrell finds the view of Odell-Scott and Allison 'implausible' not least because, as Conzelmann also notes, v. 36, which attacks the self-important claims of some at Corinth to be 'different,' then leaves v. 33b either as part of the Corinthian slogan, which would not cohere with our knowledge of Corinth, or as simply hanging without continuation until after an overly long quotation, or as belonging to vv. 26-33a, which, apart from Barrett, KJV/AV, RV, Alford, and Phillips, is widely accepted as belonging with vv. 34-37 (as UBS 4th ed., NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB, Conzelmann, and most writers).³⁵⁷ 'The point about the particle ... makes most sense when v. 36 is linked with v. 33.'³⁵⁸ Witherington offers stronger and more detailed arguments why the hypothesis of Odell-Scott and Flanagan and Snyder are open to doubt. In sum, because of such phrases as *as in all the churches of God's holy people*, and because 6:12; 10:23; 7:1 et al. represent not 'rebuttals' but circumstantial qualifications 'they raise more questions than they answer.'³⁵⁹ With a deft turn, he adds: 'In all probability Paul is anticipating the response he expected to get (v. 36) when the Corinthians read his argument (vv. 34-35).'³⁶⁰ The decisive objection, however, arises under the next heading."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1151-1152.]

³⁶³Here I will summarize the view of Thiselton, NIGTC, who has the most detailed and best articulated depiction.

in the discussion, often disagreeing with husbands and most others in the group.³⁶⁴ In their passionate questioning of the legitimacy of what was spoken as a προφητεία, they severely ruffle the feathers of most everyone else in the group. Very critical here is the critically important social custom of [honor/shame](#) in that world. A woman's public contradiction of a man's publicly stated view was considered a hugely shameful action that produced shame not just on the woman, but also the man. And if he was her husband, then shame came down hard on the entire household by her action.³⁶⁵

ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἀγίων
|-----|

625 14.34 αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν ·
γάρ

626 οὐ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν,
ἀλλ’

627 ὑποτασσέσθωσαν,
καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει.

14.35 δέ

εἰ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν,
ἐν οἴκῳ

628 τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτᾶτωσαν ·
γάρ

629 αἰσχρὸν ἐστὶν γυναικὶ
λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

14.36 ἢ

ἀφ’ ὑμῶν

630 ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξηλθεν,
ἢ
εἰς ὑμᾶς
μόνους

631 κατήντησεν;

This social principle -- both Greco-Roman and especially Jewish -- seems to stand behind Paul's statement αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, [for it is shameful for a woman / a wife to so speak in church](#) (v. 35b). If the confrontation came from a woman with little or no education and especially without formal education in rhetoric that was central in the boys' training, then Paul's words are more understandable. The disagreeing would quickly disintegrate into mere shouting without rational reflection, which Paul demanded of every speaker (cf. v. 32).

The sense of order in the meeting asserted by Paul in both vv. 33a (οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ’ εἰρήνης) and 40 (πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω) requires decorum and proper respect being shown in the meeting. Anyone violating this must stop speaking in the group, the contextual sense of σιγάτωσαν in v. 34, and also in vv. 28 and 30. This is further signaled by ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτᾶτωσαν in v. 35, where the sense is [‘let her interrogate her husband at home’](#) rather than publicly before the group public meeting. The demand in v. 34b, ἀλλ’ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει moves along the Jewish need for propriety especially in public for a husband, with the wife showing proper respect to her husband. Paul bases this on the Jewish Torah with the scribal introductory formula καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει, [just as the Law also says](#). This includes also the οὐ γάρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, [for there exists no permission](#).³⁶⁶ Here the public image of the Christian group is at stake and wives bickering with their husbands especially

over the legitimacy of a spoken προφητεία, that perhaps the husband had shared with the group.³⁶⁷ would task was to represent in an honorable way their family or constituency. The main role of women was to protect the family from shame, in particular from sexual shame.” [“Honor and Shame and the Apostolic Life,” [The Bible and Culture](#) online.]

³⁶⁶“Against the argument that the use of οὐ γάρ ἐπιτρέπεται, *there exists no permission*, is not Pauline, several writers refer with approval to S. Aalen’s argument that the key word is drawn here by Paul from a rabbinic formula used in the context of biblical texts, especially in the Pentateuch, which express a principle often introduced with ὁ νόμος λέγει, the law indicates.³⁶³ BAGD, Moulton-Milligan et al. and Grimm-Thayer provide instances of the verb in the sense of *it is permitted* (sometimes with the perfect stative sense, there exists permission) in the papyri, Josephus, and other first-century sources.³⁶⁴” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1152.]

³⁶⁷“Most of the fundamental exegetical issues have already been discussed above. In different ways Stephen Barton and An-

³⁶⁴“With Witherington, we believe that the speaking in question denotes the activity of **sifting** or weighing the words of prophets, especially by asking probing questions about the prophet’s theology or even the prophet’s lifestyle in public.³⁹¹ This would become especially sensitive and problematic if wives were cross-examining their husbands about the speech and conduct which supported or undermined the authenticity of a claim to utter a prophetic message, and would readily introduce Paul’s allusion to reserving questions of a certain kind for home. The women would in this case (i) be acting as judges over their husbands in public; (ii) risk turning worship into an extended discussion session with perhaps private interests; (iii) militate against the ethics of controlled and restrained speech in the context of which the congregation should be silently listening to God rather than eager to address one another; and (iv) disrupt the sense of respect for the orderliness of God’s agency in creation and in the world as against the confusion which preexisted the creative activity of God’s Spirit.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1158.]

³⁶⁵“In the Roman world honor was bound up with public life and was largely an issue for males in a patriarchal culture. Men represented the public face of a family or kinship group, and their

toilette Wire clarify the importance of boundaries between public and private space in relation to the issues under discussion. In Wire's view Paul wishes to disempower the women by confining their "place" to the home.³⁹³ For Paul, however, the concern is not to disempower women, but (i) to reflect in life and worship the dialectic of creativity and order which reflects God's own nature and his governance of the world; (ii) to keep in view the missionary vision of how any Christian activity, whether corporate or individual, is perceived in the world still to be reached by the gospel (cf. 9:19–23; 14:23–25); and (iii) to avoid a merely localized or brazenly unilateral self-regulation which nurtures the false sense of corporate self-sufficiency of what Calvin calls here 'a church ... turned in on itself, to the neglect of others.'³⁹⁴ This verse thus comes in between the allusions in vv. 33b–34 to all the churches of God's holy people (v. 33) and when congregations meet in public (v. 34), and in v. 36 to the apostolic origin and shared currency of the word of God.

"If, as we believe, Witherington is right in asserting that the context of discourse refers most particularly to the **sifting**, weighing, testing, or discerning of prophetic speech, it has even been the case that 'a prophet is not without honour except in his own homeland and in his own home' (ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, Matt 13:57); or still further in Mark 6:4, 5: 'a prophet is not without honour (ἄτιμος) except in his own homeland and among his relatives (καὶ ἐν τοῖς συγγενεῦσιν αὐτοῦ) and in his home (καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ) and he could do no work of power there.'³⁹⁵ The fact that this saying occurs in all four Gospels (cf. Luke 4:24; John 4:44), and that a version of the axiom seems to occur also in the Gospel of Thomas 31, suggests that an early authentic saying of Jesus may have become virtually a proverb in the early church as the experience of the fate of Jesus was replicated for early Christian preachers.³⁹⁶ On Matthew, Hagner comments: 'Jesus was widely held to be a prophet (cf. 21:11, 46). The people of his own home town, however, and even his own household or family (cf. Mark 3:21) were outraged and indignant at the pretensions of one who was to them so familiar and hence thought to be ordinary ... (with wider scope ... John 1:11).'³⁹⁷ We have only to recall the debates at Corinth about the status of 'people of the Spirit' as against those who were deemed 'ordinary' to understand the immense piquancy and sensitivity when a person uttered prophetic speech, and as it was sifted, or even perhaps to initiate a 'sifting,' a wife or close relation might interrogate the speaker in public about how the prophets matched their spiritual state or their lifestyle in daily situations as part of the 'testing.' If even the intimate family of Jesus found his implicit status a cause of stumbling and affront (σκάνδαλον, Mark 6:3; 1 Cor 1:23), we need not find any difficulty in envisaging the same affront caused by the implication that an irritating husband might be regarded as 'spiritual' in this context. Does his life really suggest that the Holy Spirit of God prompts what he says? This calls for sifting indeed!

"We therefore suggest that ἐπερωτάωσαν means something more than *let them ask their* (own) husbands (NRSV, REB, NJB). In Mark 14:60–61 the high priest cross-examined or interrogated Jesus (ἐπηρώτησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν) while in v. 61 the same verb moves from judicial investigation to virtual accusation.³⁹⁸ In hellenistic literature the word may be used of questioning the gods sometimes in the LXX sense of inquiring into God's will.³⁹⁹ Even in examples concerning asking questions in everyday life. Grimm-Thayer note the mood of interrogation which can still apply in their first entry: to accord one with an enquiry, to put a question to ... to interrogate.⁴⁰⁰ They convincingly explain the compound ἐπί as having a directive force, which governs an accusative (here in v. 35 τοὺς

have done as much damage to the image of the church

ἰδίους ἄνδρα). They cite the quasi-legal context of cross-examination in Mark 11:29, where Jesus interrogates 'the chief priests and the scribes' about the basis on which they simultaneously reject his authority while purporting to accept the authority of John the Baptist. If anywhere the Marcan narrative has to do with sifting authoritative speech, it is surely here. Thus the noun ἐπερωτήματα oscillates between inquiry and demand, with overtones of earnest intensity. By contrast, without the directive compound, the simple verb ἐρωτάω means more generally to ask, in an "open" sense.⁴⁰¹

"In contrast to the honor which Jesus associated with the recognition of a prophet (see above), the embarrassing and humiliating cross-examination or interrogation of a prophet by a close relative (especially in Jewish or Jewish and Roman cultural context by a wife or close relative who is a woman) brings not honor but humiliation and disgrace. The importance of the honor-shame universe of discourse for first-century Corinth (in contrast to the purity-guilt contrast of the post-Augustan West) stands in the foreground here.⁴⁰² J. K. Chance asserts the importance of the honor/shame contrast especially in contexts of kinship or gender, both in the biblical writings and in anthropological research.⁴⁰³ Gender and kinship raise the stakes to 'highly emotional' levels, where what is 'local' (not merely general) intensifies and personalizes issues.⁴⁰⁴ Over the centuries, however, shame has become almost merged into guilt, in contrast to more public or intersubjective aspects of the respect, approval, or disapproval of others, especially in the family, community, or state. The best equivalent in modern English is to win approval or disgrace. If we restructure the adjective αἰσχρός, *shameful, disgraceful, dishonorable, unbecoming*, the force of Paul's words may be most accurately conveyed by to speak thus in public worship (ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ stands in semantic contrast to ἐν οἴκῳ) brings disgrace. Paul emphasizes disgrace by placing αἰσχρόν as the first word of v. 35b; English achieves the same effect by placing it last in the sentence.

"We may note in passing that whether or not the allusions to silence and to disgrace in Titus 1:11 consciously look back to our verses, those who are enjoined to be silent in Titus 1:11–13 are the broader category of the leaders rather than the women, even if the issue of disruption and disgrace remains the same. *A loud mouth and insistent, polarized argumentation confound the force of the gospel and undermine mutual respect when what is required is a lifestyle which respects the need for self-control in the ethics of speech.* Once again, I have elaborated this point with reference to Titus 1:12 and 13 or elsewhere, since the role of these verses in relation to the argument of the epistle is often misunderstood.⁴⁰⁵ Kierkegaard comments on these verses to extol the virtue of silence in just such a broader context: 'Silence is just what is needed so that the Word of God may work its work in us.... We can only hear the word of God in silence.'⁴⁰⁶ Witherington also broadens the issue to all people: 'The Corinthians should know that the OT speaks about a respectful silence when a word of counsel is spoken (Job 29:21).'⁴⁰⁷ However, the context constrains the scope of the meaning and application when the issue is more specifically that of women and silence. An early example of decontextualization in the posthistory of the text can be found in Tertullian. In his work *On Baptism* Tertullian contrasts Paul with the pseudonymous Paul of the apocryphal Paul and Thecla. Paul himself, he argues, gives no license for women to teach or to baptize, and cites 1 Cor 14:35 in support of this.⁴⁰⁸ We must keep in mind, however, our introduction on 'controlled speech' in biblical traditions (see above)."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Bible Commentary, Page 216

as the outsider's assessment of mania upon observing lots of people using ecstatic speech at the same time in a meeting (cf. v. 23).³⁶⁸

The sharp rebuke in v. 36 takes aim at the Corinthian elitists, along with those women who were disrupting the meetings with their behavior: ἡ ἀφ' ὑμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν, ἢ εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους κατήνησεν; **Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?** The ἀφ' ὑμῶν / εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους is Paul's sharpest rebuke at elitism in the church thus far in this letter. The ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, **Word of God**, is the Gospel of Christ delivered by apostolic messengers, and not the property of the Corinthian elitists. But in their assumed 'superior wisdom' they felt that they had a monopoly control over it that excluded Paul and others representing the apostles.

vv. 37-40, concluding warning. 37 Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός, ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή· 38 εἰ δέ τις ἀγνοεῖ, ἀγνοεῖται. 39 Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί [μου], ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεῦειν καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις· 40 πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω. **37 Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. 38 Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. 39 So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; 40 but all things should be done decently and in order.**

The organizational structure of this unit is very clear. Paul begins with a likely scenario in the Corinthian church (# 632) in the first class conditional structure. He then moves to a second likely scenario at Corinth (#633) with a first class conditional structure. He then draws three consequences in #s 634, 635, and 636, as admonitions. In all of the main clauses, the apodosis, of these five declaration the imperative form of the verb is used, with the one possible exception of # 633. And considerable uncertainty over the spelling of the verb ἀγνοεῶ exists in the manuscript copies.³⁶⁹ Probably the tament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1158–1161.]

³⁶⁸Remember that in the Jewish synagogues in Corinth -- and elsewhere -- women were not permitted to even be in the same room with the men, much less say anything in the Friday evening gatherings. The participation of women in Christian gatherings (chap. 7) even as leaders represented a radical departure from the Jewish heritage. But for this to be abused with out of control women would have shifted the image of Christianity from being liberating of women to that of uncontrolled women as typically found in the pagan temples of Corinth. Early Christianity was having to thread its way through a very delicate balance between the two religious extremes that dominated the first century world.

³⁶⁹Some textual variants assume particular importance, not least because this is one of Käsemann's four most celebrated examples of 'sentences of Holy Law in the NT,' which favors the reading of the indicative ἀγνοεῖται, *he/she is not recognized* (κ*, prob-

14.37 Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός,
ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν
ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή·
14.38 δέ
εἰ τις ἀγνοεῖ,
ἀγνοεῖται.
14.39 Ὡστε,
ἀδελφοί [μου],
ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεῦειν
καὶ
τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις·
14.40 δὲ
εὐσχημόνως
καὶ
κατὰ τάξιν
636 πάντα . . . γινέσθω.

indicative passive voice spelling ἀγνοεῖται is original, and the issue becomes exegetical: Who is not recognizing him? The church or God? Probably the latter is the intended meaning.

The two protasis clauses set up opposite scenarios in the Corinthian church that Paul assumes will actually happen upon the reading of this letter, as noted in the charting out:

Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός,

Since someone assumes himself to be a preacher or led by the Spirit,

εἰ δέ τις ἀγνοεῖ,

And since some will not acknowledge (this),

That the Corinthian Christian community already had numerous individuals claiming one or the other, or both abilities, the first scenario is a given. The second trait πνευματικός does not inherently allude to γλώσσαις, although it does exclude it either. What Paul always means by πνευματικός is a person under the leader-

ably A*, D*, G, 33, 1739, it^d, Syriac, Coptic VSS, Vg, Origen's Greek text, and Ambrose), as against the third person imperative ἀγνοεῖτω, *he/she is to be recognized or let him be ignorant* (early P⁴⁶, B, D^{b,c} [A²], most later MSS).⁴¹⁸ Many modern VSS and some textual specialists are divided. Thus Metzger, NIV, and NJB favor the passive indicative, Zuntz, NRSV (but not RSV), REB, ASV, and KJV/AV favor the imperative.⁴¹⁹ However, the overwhelming majority of modern commentators support the reading of the indicative (including, e.g., Conzelmann, Barrett, Bruce, Grosheide, Fee, Lange, Klauck, and Hays).⁴²⁰ Although the imperative has earlier and stronger MS support, exegetical considerations in the light of parallels in Paul suggest an early correction by P⁴⁶ of a reading deemed to be 'difficult' in the sense of unduly harsh, especially if the passive indicative is taken to mean *not recognized by God; not known by God.*" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1162–1163.]

ship of the Holy Spirit. The English translation ‘spiritual’ is very misleading since it loads up the English word with centuries is ‘baggage’ not found inside the NT.

The second protasis, v. 38, assumes that not all the Corinthians will acknowledge Paul as the apostolic teaching giving them the message of Christ. The apostle functioned out of realism and not idealism. He well understood that the entrenched position of the Corinthian elitists would not melt away just with the words of this letter. The church at Corinth would have to take action itself in order to clean up these dirty messes that were plaguing them. As the [intensive interaction](#) between himself and the church through visits, letters, and contacts from associates illustrates, an all out effort was launched to help the church recover.

It is interesting how he frames this scenario. He does not use more common Greek verbs for acknowledging the correctness of something. Instead, through the use of ἀγνοέω, the idea is literally ‘to remain ignorant of the correctness of this.’ Sometimes ἀγνοέω references an unintentional ignorance of something, e.g., Rom. 2:4. But here it is a very intentional ignorance that is chosen by some in the Corinthian church, as is asserted of pagans in Rom. 10:3. They will not accept Paul as the source of divine revelation from Christ since their own sense of having a superior wisdom would be demolished.

The two apodosis define Paul’s expectation and hopes for the right outcome of each scenario.

ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή
let him fully understand that what I write to you
is divine commandment from the Lord.

ἀγνοεῖται.

he is not acknowledged (by God).

The first apodosis in v. 37 expects everyone with spiritual insights to fully grasp (ἐπιγινωσκέτω) the divine origin of this letter from Paul. Paul’s teachings, especially in chapters twelve through fourteen, did not originate just in Paul’s mind. Rather, what is being given to them has the full backing of the Lord. Here Paul’s role as an apostle comes to the forefront. He is the vehicle of divine revelation, not the originator of it. Contained in this very clearly is the accusation of the Corinthian elitists considering themselves as originators of divine truth. This has already been put on the table in places like 2:6-16; 3:18-23; 4:14-21 et als. Now Paul pressures them to accept his teachings as being from God, which implies the chunking of their thinking that comes out of pagan ways of thinking.

If these elitists reject Paul’s teaching, then the second apodosis asserts primarily that such rejection reveals that they do not know God and have never come to saving knowledge of Him. The divine passive voice indicative mood ἀγνοεῖται carries a similar tone to what

Paul will later on write while at Corinth to the Romans that God has ‘given up’ on the pagans who persist in rejecting Him, cf. Rom. 1:18-32. The play on ἀγνοέω in both the protasis and apodosis here follows the pattern in 8:1-3 with γινώσκω about knowing God.³⁷⁰ It is not unreasonable also to see in ἀγνοεῖται the additional sense of “he is not to be acknowledged (by the church).” This would be the natural secondary implication of the divine passive voice understanding. But what is very unlikely is the alternative reading ἀγνοεῖτω with the sense of “Let him stay ignorant.” The Pauline intention here is that such shock treatment might wake these elitists up to their very dangerous spiritual condition of falsely assuming relationship with God.

What does all this imply? The result conjunction Ὡστε introduces three statements that come out of the above two scenarios. The pastoral touch, ἀδελφοί [μου], *my brothers*, enhances the appeal of the apostle to his Corinthian readers.³⁷¹ Paul uses ἀδελφοί some 37 times in First Corinthians in reaching out to the Corinthians in a pastoral manner, and often with the pronoun μου, *my*, attached.

The three declarations in the form of admonitions gather up the discussion in chapter 14 into basic axioms. They also function as an ending inclusio to the introductory axioms in vv. 1-5.

First, ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεῦν, be seeking to preach.

The present imperative ζηλοῦτε stresses a continuous pursuit of the speaking of helpful insights to the community.³⁷² In Paul’s unique expression τὸ προφητεῦν,

³⁷⁰It may well be correct that such examples as 1 Cor 5:3-5 do entail a ‘harsh’ judgment, although I have argued elsewhere that judgment in this case is to lead to salvation.⁴²⁵ In 1 Cor 3:17 and 14:38, however, internal logic is entailed: one cannot simultaneously destroy the church, claim to be of the church, and fail to destroy oneself (3:17). One cannot dismiss apostolic disclosure as not of the Spirit of Christ (to whom apostleship by its nature points) and claim simultaneously to be ‘of the Spirit’ (πνευματικῶς) without exposing self-contradictions before God. Lange prefers to translate ἀγνοεῖται as *is not known* on the basis of the close parallel with 8:1-3: ‘If a ‘pneumatic’ does not know—as Paul expresses it in the form of a word-play, then he shows *thereby* that he is not known by God, i.e., that the Spirit of God does not dwell in him’ (*my italics*).⁴²⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1164.]

³⁷¹Yet again ἀδελφοί is almost impossible to translate into modern idiomatic English. As we note above, we vary our translation to indicate this, here **my dear friends**.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1166.]

³⁷²More controversial is our translation of the present imperative ζηλοῦτε, usually translated as *be eager to* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB; cf. KJV/AV, *covet to*). We considered the meaning of this term in 12:31 as ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μεῖζονα. For our



the emphasis falls upon the individual speaking something helpful to the community as detailed in v. 26. No emphasis at all is given to being in the role of a prophet. Clearly this is the heart of the activities to legitimately take place in the house church meetings.

Second, καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις, and the speaking in tongues do not prevent.

Once again the unusual grammar expression τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις enables Paul to de-emphasize the role of γλώσσαις. As clearly lined out in vv. 2, 4-5, 18-19 etc. ecstatic speech is not an activity for group gatherings. Rather, it has possible legitimacy in private devotions, but again only when expressed as Paul defines in Rom. 8:26-27 as στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις unintelligible sighs during our prayers to God. This sets Christian ecstatic speech distinctly apart from the pagan practices in the Corinthian temples which the elitists in the church were importing into the Christian assemblies. In rare instances, genuine ecstatic speech may occur in the assembly but ONLY when the one speaking then turns to the group with a clear, intelligible explanation of what was just mumbled to God. But consistently (added to vv. 2, 4-5, 18-19 are vv. 13-17, 20-23) Paul down plays such action in the assembled group knowing that the pagan practice will capture the group actions and bring down the wrath of God.

Third, πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω. But let all things be done decently and in order.

He concludes with an emphasis similar to οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ' εἰρήνης, for God does not promote anarchy but peace (v. 33) as the basis for the 'spirit of the prophets' always being under the control of the prophets: καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται (v. 32).

The Christian gathering must reflect first εὐσχημόνως.³⁷³ The core sense of the adverb comes

detailed arguments that the most accurate rendering in the parallel verse (and hence also here) is **continue to be zealously concerned about**, see under 12:31, and also the supporting research article by Smit.⁴³⁸ (We also argue there for the continuous force of the present imperative.) The accusative χαρίσματα in 12:31 is replaced by the accusative articular infinitive τὸ προφητεῦεν in v. 39a, which leads, in turn, to a second articular infinitive construction in v. 39b, τὸ λαλεῖν. The emphasis thus falls not on 'being a prophet' but on the speech-act of prophetic speech. Similarly, the emphasis falls not on 'tongues' but on speaking in this mode, i.e., their use. Paul is summarizing all of the arguments of ch. 14 (or at least 14:26–38). Hence these directions are to be understood and applied with all the constraints and encouragements with which Paul has already qualified them. Thus continue to be zealously concerned about prophetic speech almost certainly includes not only the production of prophetic speech or discourse but also its sifting and its use in an ordered manner." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1166–1167.]

³⁷³44 The punch line of much of the chapter is expressed in

from the noun built off the same stem: εὐσχημῶν meaning 'elegant,' 'decent,' and 'noble.'³⁷⁴ Its opposite

the adverb εὐσχημόνως and the adverbial phrase κατὰ τάξιν. The adverb is rendered *decently* or *becomingly* by BAGD, who then propose *properly* for this verse.⁴⁴¹ *Properly* would be excellent if idiomatic English still used proper in its more classic sense of with *due decorum*. The cognate noun εὐσχημοσύνη clearly means *propriety, decorum*, what is presentable in public, and we do not doubt that Paul has in mind both reverence and dignity appropriate to address to and from God, and a missionary or evangelistic rather than strictly aesthetic dimension. The adjective εὐσχημῶν means **what is fitting** in 1 Cor 7:25, and **what is publicly presentable** in 1 Cor 12:24.⁴⁴² In other contemporary writers the term also means *reputable*.⁴⁴³ If we take full account of both the lexicographical evidence for Paul's period, Paul's own uses of this and related terms, and contextual factors, **fittingly** perhaps best conveys the Greek.

"The prepositional phrase κατὰ τάξιν is a metaphor drawn from a military universe of discourse. The cognate noun τάγμα means that which is, *ordered*, especially in literal terms of a body of troops drawn up in ordered ranks.⁴⁴⁴ Notably Clement of Rome, who addresses his letter from Rome to Corinth around AD 95 to correct partisanship and (again) disunity, presses into his service the metaphor or image of fighting God's enemies (cf. Heb 1:13) in God's army 'serving our leaders (or generals, ἡγουμένους) in a good order (εὐτάκτως) ... being subject to control (ὑποταγμένως)... Not all are prefects nor tribunes nor centurions ... but each in his own rank (ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι ...).'⁴⁴⁵ Paul uses τάγμα of the purposive and ordered manner of the resurrection as the action of God and of the Spirit of God (1 Cor 15:23–24). The abstract noun τάξις is then used to denote fixed succession or order, while the prepositional phrase κατὰ τάξιν means in an orderly manner.⁴⁴⁶ 1 Clement moves on from Clement's argument about military order to follow the themes of 1 Corinthians in terms of mutual help and communal benefit (1 Clem. 38:1–4); creative order and wisdom (39:1–9); and corporate worship in which we ought to do everything in an ordered manner (πάντα τάξει ποιεῖν ὀφείλομεν) ... at ordered times (κατὰ καιροὺς τεταγμένους, 1 Clem. 40:1).⁴⁴⁷ Clement's next chapter considers diversity, but again, each in his or her own 'order' (ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι).⁴⁴⁸ **Fittingly** and **in an ordered manner** well expresses the climax of ch. 14, especially in relation to 12:3–6, 12–18, 28–31; 13:1, 9–10; 14:1–33 (see above)."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1167–1169.]

³⁷⁴2360 εὐσχημονέω (euschēmoneō): vb.—behave with decorum or dignity (1Co 13:5 v.r.); not in LN

2361 εὐσχημόνως (euschēmōnōs): adv.; = Str 2156—1. LN 88.50 with propriety, fittingly, decently, becoming in manner (Ro 13:13; 1Th 4:12+); 2. LN 66.4 properly, with an implication of pleasing (1Co 14:40+)

2362 εὐσχημοσύνη (euschēmosynē), ης (ēs), ἡ (hē): n.fem.; = Str 2157—LN 79.13 attractiveness, presentability (NJB), modesty (NIV, NKJV), seemliness (NASB), comeliness (KJV, ASV), respect (NRSV, REB), propriety (NAB), honour (NEB), (1Co 12:23+)

2363 εὐσχημῶν (euschēmōn), ον (on): adj.; = Str 2158; TD-NT 2.770—1. LN 79.15 attractive, presentable, proper, a good ordered way (1Co 7:35; 12:24+); 2. LN 87.33 honored, prominent, of high standing (Mk 15:43; Ac 13:50; 17:12+; Ac 17:34 v.r. NA26)



ἀσχημοσύνη denotes that which is shameful, indecent, and utterly improper especially in public display.³⁷⁵ In the contextual background stands the worship patterns of the pagan temples with their frenzied patterns of ecstatic speech etc. Christian gatherings in no way should resemble this pagan meetings. Everyone must 'behave themselves' in worship with proper decorum and dignity. Here Paul especially targets the Corinthian elitists who through their pagan thinking were bringing pagan ways into the Christian gatherings. Such HAD TO STOP in the church! But it also includes lifestyle and not just worship as illustrated in Paul's use of εὐσημόνως in Rom. 13:13-14.³⁷⁶ Christians must be different both in how they worship God and in how they live!

Their meetings must also be conducted κατὰ τάξιν, in order. The rich military background of this Greek idiom of an army marching in strict formation provides a dramatic picture for Paul's readers. But what does such a picture mean in church practice? The prepositional phrase used here κατὰ τάξιν connotes the idea of everything being conducted in an orderly manner. This especially alludes to the expressions κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἄνὰ μέρος, only two or at most three, and by turns (v. 27) and δύο ἢ τρεῖς, only two or three (v. 29). Additionally anyone using ecstatic speech must immediately provide an interpretation (εἰς διερμηνεύτω, v. 27) and those preaching must not 'hog the platform' but give way to the next one desiring to speak (ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένω, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω, v. 30). Plus after each shares something with the group, there must be critical evaluation of it by the group, before the next person shares (καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν, v. 29). When Paul states that everything must be done κατὰ τάξιν, he unquestionably includes these guidelines for church meetings. But the scope of κατὰ τάξιν includes πάντα and thus goes well beyond just these guidelines. These

[James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).]

³⁷⁵ ἀσχημοσύνη G859 (*aschēmosynē*), ungracefulness, indecency, shameful act; ἀσχημονέω G858 (*aschēmoneō*), to behave disgracefully; ἀσχήμων G860 (*aschēmōn*), shameful, subst. pl. the unrepresentable parts, genitalia; εὐσημοσύνη G2362 (*euschēmosunē*), gracefulness, decorum, respectability; εὐσημίμων G2363 (*euschēmōn*), elegant, decent, noble; εὐσημόνως G2361 (*euschēmōnōs*), decently, properly" [Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 1:434.]

³⁷⁶ Rom. 13:13-14. 13 ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κόμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ, 14 ἀλλ' ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιήσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας.

13 let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

principle simply illustrate what is to be universal in the meetings. Christianity had the burden of demonstrating to the world around it in Corinth that they were not a bunch of maniacs as asserted in v. 23, οὐκ ἐροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε; When the ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι (v. 23) visited the meetings they should see decorum and orderliness in the meetings. This would hopefully lead to the declaration "Ὁντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν, Indeed God is in your midst!" (v. 25c).

One should also note along with Thiselton, "Fittingly and in an ordered manner well expresses the climax of ch. 14, especially in relation to 12:3-6, 12-18, 28-31; 13:1, 9-10; 14:1-33."³⁷⁷

NOTE ON APPLICATION TO MODERN WORLD

How then does Paul's description in chapters twelve through fourteen relate to a modern church setting? No simple answers can be adequate here! Let me summarize the essence of what Paul said so that it will be clear on how to move from the 'then' to the 'now' meaning of this very important text.

1) What Paul describes as taking place at Corinth inside the Christian community is unique to Corinth even in the first century. No other Christian community alluded to in any of Paul's other letters, the other general epistles, or Acts comes close to the situation being dealt with at Corinth. Thus extreme caution must be exercised in making generalized statements of principle from these chapters. Only where Paul gives signals of basic religious principles can the modern interpreter draw certain conclusions of contemporary application.

The uniqueness of the Corinthian situation applies both to the dynamics inside the various house church groups in the city and also many of the social dynamics that would not have been found outside Corinth usually either at all, or else to the extent that they were present in Corinth. Having these distinctions clearly in view is absolutely essential to proper interpretation of these three chapters. Failure to achieve this stands behind much of the obvious failures to understand what Paul is saying that one finds in so many of the commentaries.

What are some of those distinctives? Although stated in generalized ways as "Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν, the Greeks seek wisdom (1:22), what happened at Corinth among the elitists in the church was a wholesale adoption of it that combined with the traditional Greek feeling of being superior to all others. The irony here is that at the middle of the first century AD, Roman influence over the city was greater than the Greek. Greek cultural

³⁷⁷ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1168.

domination of the city pre-dated the Roman sacking of it in 44 BCE and did not return until well into the second century AD. This may well suggest something about the background of the elitists inside the church at this time.

The result was the importation of Greek thinking into the life of the church that unleashed a Pandora's Box of evils. Virtually every mess that Paul treats throughout the entire letter body can be traced back to some aspect of Greek philosophy and cultural practice. Among the ancient cities of the Roman empire, and especially of the two Greek culturally oriented provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, Corinth was legendary for its corruption and perversion.³⁷⁸ It represented the absolute worst side of Greek culture and thinking run amuck in the first century world. After the Roman sacking of the city around 44 BCE, it was repopulated by the Romans mainly with *aporoí*, freed slaves from other parts of the empire.³⁷⁹ Thus the background of most of the residents in Paul's time clearly did not come from the upper realms of either Roman or Greek societies. Paul alludes to this in 1:26.

It should not be surprising to see such problems surface in a Christian community sitting in the middle of the worst forms of it. The religious life of the city reflected this as well.³⁸⁰ The corrupting influences of both

³⁷⁸“Corinth’s control of the harbors of Lechaicum and Cenchreae, and of the road across the 6 km-wide isthmus, enabled it to levy taxes on both north-south and east-west trade (Strabo, Geogr. 8.6.20). Thus from the time of Homer (Il. 2.570) the adjective inevitably applied to Corinth was ‘wealthy’ (Dio Chrysostom, Or. 37.36). A vast plain, proverbial for its agricultural richness, stretched out to the west. As host to the biennial Isthmian Games, the economy of Corinth benefited from the great influx of spectators.” [Jerome Murphy-o’Connor, “Corinth,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 1:733.]

³⁷⁹“Strabo’s assertion that the new settlers were for the most part freed slaves (8.136) harmonizes with Appian’s view that they were *aporoí* (Hist. 8.136), provided that this adjective is understood to apply to those who felt themselves locked into a certain socioeconomic level through lack of opportunity. Thus they were not Romans but had been brought originally from Greece, Syria, Judea, and Egypt (Gordon 1924: 94–95). In a new colony they had everything to gain. Distance would have made their ties to former masters meaningless, and their children would be free. As a group they had the technical, financial, and administrative skills to make the project work. Their enterprise and industry are attested by the fact that, though they had to begin by robbing graves, they quickly found a lucrative market in Rome for the bronze vessels and terra-cotta reliefs that they discovered (Strabo 8.6.23). The great demand for the former prompted some of the wilier colonists to recommence the production of bronze (Stillwell, Scranton, and Freeman 1941: 273), and other traditional industries were soon reestablished.” [J. Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinth (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1136.]

³⁸⁰“The religious and ethnic diversity of the population of Corinth is graphically attested by excavated remains. The imperial

the traditional deities as well as the influence of the newer mystery cults into the city was substantial. One can gain some sense of the atmosphere from Apuleius’ rather sordid tale of a woman copulating with a donkey (*Metamorphoses* 10:19–23, also known as [The Golden Ass](#)).³⁸¹

The composition of the population, the recent history of the city dating back to the re-colonization in 44 BCE, the strategic commercial location of the city etc. all came together to give Corinth a distinct image in the Roman empire. Planting a Christian community there offered strategic opportunity for spreading the Gospel elsewhere in the region. But it also ran the huge risk of the powerfully corrupting influence of the local culture there to overwhelm the Christian community. First Corinthians stands as a major effort by Paul to prevent this from happening. How successful Paul was is not clear, since Clement of Rome wrote a long letter, [First Clement](#), to this same Christian community about half a century later around 96 AD and touches on a whole host of problems still plaguing the church.

2) *The occasional nature of Paul’s letters means that these chapters primarily are addressing a local issue at Corinth and not attempting to lay down universal principles.* This urges great caution in making applications from the Corinthian problems with τῶν πνευματικῶν, the general topic of chapters 12–14.

Thus the mentioning of a variety of ‘grace gifts’ in chapter twelve should never be taken as normative or inclusive for all churches. The wide variety of different items in different lists elsewhere in Roman, Ephesians, Colossians et als makes this abundantly clear.

cult is attested by a temple just off the forum (Stillwell, Scranton, and Freeman 1941: 168–79), but also by additions to the Isthmian Games. A series of competitions known as the Caesarea and run on a quadrennial basis was added under Augustus, and the imperial contests appear under Tiberius (Kent 1966: 28). Numerous shrines dedicated to Apollo, Athena, Aphrodite, Asclepius, Demeter and Kore, Palaimon, and Sisyphus witness to the continuity of Greek cults (detailed references in 2 Corinthians 32A, 15–18). Egyptian influence is documented by the worship of Isis and Sarapis (Smith 1977). The physical evidence for a Jewish community is late (possibly 4th–5th century A.D.) and meager, only a marble impost inscribed with three menorahs separated by lulab and etrog (Scranton 1957: 26, 116) and a cornice stone reused as a lintel and bearing the lettering [syna]gōgē hebr[aiōn] (West 1931: 78–79).” [J. Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinth (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:1138.]

³⁸¹“The mildly erotic tale of a young man in the toils of a vampire (Philostratus, V.A. 4.25), all that remains is Apuleius’ salacious tale of a woman copulating with a donkey (Met. 10.19–23), an act that others considered suitable for the theater (10.34–35).” [J. Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinth (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1138.]

Thus making accurate comparisons of the 'tongues' issue at Corinth to the modern charismatic movement is very difficult. In chapter fourteen Paul does lay down basic guidelines that have a universal thrust.

i) Ecstatic speech is for personal private devotion rather than for public assembly of the Christian community.

ii) The principle of edifying love overrides all other concerns. Everything said or done in meeting must benefit the entire group, or else it must not be allowed.

iii) The automatically gives priority to προφητεία over γλώσσα. Paul defines προφητεία in 14:26 as meaning edifying sharing of spiritual insight with the entire group in understandable human based language.

iv) Thus if ecstatic speech surfaces in the gathered assembly, the speaker must immediately provide an intelligible explanation to the group of what was just spoken to God.

v) Every idea shared with the group must be critically evaluated by the group to determine whether it comes from God or not.

vi) In these guidelines Paul clearly distinguishes what the Corinthian elitists were doing with γλώσσαις from authentic ecstatic speech as defined in Rom. 8:26-27 as στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις prompted by the Holy Spirit in individual, private prayer to God. What the Corinthians were doing was merely importing the pagan γλώσσαις practices of the local temples into Christian meetings in order to dazzle the rest with their religious superiority. Paul makes it clear that if they refuse to accept his teaching on this, they stand rejected by God: εἰ δέ τις ἀγνοεῖ, ἀγνοεῖται, v. 38.

What most commentators fail to do in treating this passage is to recognize the legitimate and illegitimate practice of γλώσσα in Paul's discussion. Instead, the dominant tendency of modern commentators is to assume a modern charismatic scenario taking place at Corinth and then proceed either to condemn or justify the modern practice from chapter fourteen. A key in this failure is ignorance of the social dynamics both culturally and religiously in mid first century Corinth. Increasingly the more technical scholars, especially on the European side, are very sensitive to this essential factor in interpreting especially chapter fourteen.

How can one properly compare the situation at Corinth to the modern charismatic movement? In my judgment, the only legitimate way is to take the guidelines laid down by Paul for how the Corinthians were to function and see whether the modern practice compares. If it measures up to Paul's guidelines, it has legitimacy. But if not, then it should be considered as pagan intrusion into Christianity as Paul considered most of what was happening at Corinth to be. If there is stubborn refusal to acknowledge Paul's teachings as coming from the Lord, then the legitimacy of the individual's claim to being Christian is seriously in doubt.

Chapters 12-14 stand as a major section of First Corinthians. But the background social / religious dynamics in the mid first century city of Corinth become even more crucial to correct understanding of Paul's words. Chapter 13 stands as the stack pole around which chapters 12 and 14 revolve. And chapter 13 is but an elaboration of Paul's earlier axiom in 8:1, ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, **knowledge puff up but love builds up**. This sums up these three chapters as well as any other statement. The principle of edifying love takes priority over everything else. For Christianity to be genuine it MUST ALWAYS look beyond the tip of its nose.

10) The Gospel of the Resurrection, 15:1-58.

With the language of introducing a subtopic, Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, **And I want to let you know, brothers, the Gospel which I proclaimed to you....**, the apostle Paul now turns to a detailed explanation of his Gospel message, after the blunt warning in 14:37-40 over rejecting his message as apostolic declaration of divine revelation. Very important then is to see a close link of chapter 15 to chapters 12-14. In no way does he arbitrarily jump to a new theme with no connections to previous emphases. In 1:18-31 Paul had labeled the Gospel as Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζόμενοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν. **For the message of the cross to those perishing on the one hand is foolishness, but to those of us being saved it is God's power** (v. 18). The falsely assumed superiority of the wisdom of the Corinthian elitists did not grasp this perspective because they did not understand the centrality of the resurrection of either Christ or of believers, as well as what resurrection means. Their false Greek wisdom ridiculed the idea of actual resurrection since every thinking Greek knows that the ψυχή, **soul**, and the σῶμα, **body**, are completely incompatible with one another due to the σῶμα being irretrievably corrupt and evil. This universally embedded Greek dualism in the world of Corinth then necessitated some 'creative' twisting of the Gospel declaration of resurrection as necessary to the eternal order of things. In his discussion in chapter fifteen, Paul rips to shreds this phony thinking against the framework of his contentions about the Gospel in chapter one.

The way that Paul organizes his ideas about resurrection in chapter fifteen is a masterful blending of both Greek and scribal Jewish patterns of argumentation.³⁸²

³⁸²The use of Greek deliberative rhetorical structures by Paul follows the pattern of:

Narratio, vv. 1-11

Refutatio one, vv. 12-19

Conformatio one, vv. 20-34



The Greek aspect points to the Greek based reasoning of the Corinthian elitists, while the Jewish style argumentation centers on affirmations of resurrection experience both of Christ and of believers, which was utterly foreign to Greeks. The analysis below will point out these features. A mere glancing at [the block diagram](#) of chapter fifteen visually illustrates these patterns very clearly.

How is the material then put together? The following represents an assessment based on the syntactical diagram of the entire chapter.

The **core theme** is introduced in verses one and two with extensive expansion elements:

Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

This beginning declaration asserts the apostle's intention to elaborate on the apostolic Gospel that lay at the very heart of the Christian commitment of true followers of Christ.

He then proceeds in this beginning sentence of the chapter to offer several explanatory amplifications of the meaning of this τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. These five relative clauses modify the word for Gospel and expand its meaning in a way appropriate to the situation at Corinth:

ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν,
 ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε,
 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε,
 δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε,
 τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν
 εἰ κατέχετε,
 ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπίστεύσατε.

which I proclaimed to you,
 which also you received
 in which you have also taken a stand
 through which you also are experiencing salvation
 by a specific message I 'gospelized' you,
 since you hold fast to it
 except if you have believed in vain.

This final dependent clause ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπίστεύσατε primarily serves to set up a lengthy **justifying statement** (γάρ) contained in the one sentence found in vv. 3-8. This is then followed by a second justifying statement (γάρ) in vv. 9-10 centering on Paul's ministry at Corinth initially. The implications (οὕτως) of both justifying statements is then drawn in v. 11 in the declaration: οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπίστεύσατε, **thus we preach and thus you believed.**

With this combined theological and historical foundation laid concerning his Gospel, then Paul moves toward establishing **the nature of this message in regard to the issue of resurrection**, both of Christ and of believers, vv. 12-58.

The necessity for this discussion is seen in the introductory topic sentence in v. 12: Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; **Now since Christ is being preached that He was raised from the dead, how are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

Now we see why Paul treated this topic. Some professing believers in the Corinthian Christian community were denying the possibility of anyone being raised from the dead. The pure Greek paganism out of Platonic dualism that Paul had earlier encountered in Athens on the second missionary journey, Acts 17:32, has crept into the thinking of some inside the church at Corinth. And Paul is countering it very straightforward.

He first (vv. 13-19) poses a scenario assumed to be the thinking of some in the church: εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν..., Now since you assume there is no resurrection of the dead (v. 13a), and εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, for assuming that the dead are not being raised.... (v. 16a). These two ways of describing the same hypothetical situation -- but assumed to be the thinking of some in the church via the 1st class protasis for both -- are linked together via the causal γὰρ with the second protasis asserting what would be the spiritual reality if such an assumption were actually correct. One important connecting link is the central principle of Christ's resurrection and that of believers being totally dependent upon Christ's resurrection. Additional 'if clauses' emerge off of this central scenario. See the conjunction εἰ in vv. 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19.

Second in vv. 20-28, Paul shifts from the false but existing thinking in the church that questioned the resurrection over to the opposite view of the resurrection of both Christ and believers being reality. Most of what Paul says is justification of the initial declaration in v. 20: Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων. **But in fact Christ was raised from the dead, a first fruit of those sleeping (in death).** See the repeated use of the causal conjunction γὰρ in vv. 21, 22, 25, 27.

Third, in vv. 29-34, Paul continues his defense of the claim of Christ having been raised from the dead with a series of rhetorical questions, some of which use Greek axioms of denial of resurrection etc. Verse 34 with its central admonition signals a shift away from a very Greek way of arguing a point.

In v. 35 the Greek diatribe structure is used to introduce a new aspect on the nature of the resurrection body: Ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις, **But someone objects....** But **Paul's own answer to this objection in vv. 36-59** has a very Jewish scribal tone of argumentation with short pointed statements, rather than the more com-

Refutation two, vv. 35-49

Conformation two, vv. 50-57

Peroratio, v. 58

plex syntax that has dominated the first 34 verses. OT references about death surface in this answer as an important foundation for Paul's explanation of the nature of the resurrection body.

His answer in vv. 36-58 goes in a variety of directions to the objection in v. 35b: Πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; **How are the dead being raised? And in what kind of body do they come?** Here the apostle seems to be trying to accomplish two objectives. First, he points out to the Corinthian elitist deniers what a resurrection body, ποίῳ σώματι, is as far as can be explained with human, earth bound language. Second, this explanation provides important insight to the majority of the Corinthian believers who had not accepted the denial of these elitists, thus fortifying them against the arguments of the deniers. The language of comparison is central to his explanation. Sources come out of the natural world of sowing and germination (σπείρεται / ἐγείρεται), divine creation of different kinds of bodies with resulting effect in appearance and fundament nature etc. The discussion is closed in vv. 56-58 with celebration (vv. 56-57) and admonition (v. 58).

Now, let's take a closer look at each of these segments.

a) Core topic, vv. 1-2. Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε, 2 δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν εἰ κατέχετε, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε. **And I want you to know, brothers, the Gospel which I proclaimed to you, which you received, in which you also have taken a stand, through which also you are being saved, by this word I preached to you since you hold it fast, unless you have believed in vain.**

15.1 δὲ
637 Γνωρίζω ὑμῖν,
ἀδελφοί,
τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν,
ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε,
ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε,
15.2 δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε,
τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν
εἰ κατέχετε,
ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε.

Paul's core expression Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, **And I want to make known to you the Gospel,** doesn't signal that this is the first time that his message has been explained to them. The verb Γνωρίζω does at times serve as a new topic indicator in Paul's writings but the other use of it in First Corinthians (12:3) is only partially in such a role. Here it denotes mostly a switch in direction but also a continuation of some of the emphases already put before the readers.³⁸³

³⁸³The older commentary view that chapter fifteen is a self-contained unit of material developed independently of the rest

Central to the apostle's concern is to amplify τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, **the Gospel which I proclaimed to you.** The Corinthians had heard him many times elaborate on the heart of this message of salvation. Some of them evidently did not grasp the implications of this message regarding the issue of resurrection. Those failing to understand were the Corinthian elitists whose adoption of Greek ways of thinking over God's ways excluded the idea of a bodily resurrection after physical death. Exactly what they were arguing in place of the apostolic Gospel is not totally clear from Paul's words. The closest Paul gets to defining their viewpoint comes in v. 12 with the assertion ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, **that there is no resurrection of the dead.** But this doesn't provide as much clue as might be assumed. It seems to point to a denial of a bodily resurrection after death, but such is not entirely clear by the statement.³⁸⁴ **One has to be extremely careful to not** of First Corinthians has long since been shown to be utterly false and a failed attempt at eisegesis. Much of this comes out of Martin Luther's praise of the chapter as the high point of the entire letter. Chapter fifteen does indeed display unique literary qualities not found to any great extent elsewhere in the letter, but this is due to the theme of resurrection and Paul's creative way of making his point through an ingenious combining of both Greek and scribal Jewish patterns of argumentation.

"Luther and Calvin were no less certain that the resurrection chapter addresses issues central to the gospel and to the whole epistle. If a person does not believe in the resurrection, Luther asserts, 'he must deny in a lump the Gospel and everything that is proclaimed of Christ and of God. For all of this is linked together like a chain.... Whoever denies this article must simultaneously deny far more ...', in brief, *that God is God*' (my italics).⁵ What could be more central to this epistle than that God is God? Paul is concerned 'about the kind

of God God is, but mostly [also] with what God does.'⁶ Barth speaks of 'this 'of God' ' (cf. 1 Cor 4:5) as 'the secret nerve' of the whole epistle."⁷

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek*

Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1169–1170.]

³⁸⁴Before we set forth the rhetorical and logical structure of Paul's argument in this chapter, is there any reasonable consensus about the precise nature of the problem over the resurrection of the dead which Paul addresses? The first eleven verses do not seem to take the form of a 'reply' introduced by identifying a topic, although the problem becomes more clearly identified in 15:12 with reference to a group or groups within the church at Corinth (ἐν ὑμῖν τινες, v. 12, not outsiders) who λέγουσιν ... ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν. Several theories overlap and crisscross once writers try



inject either consciously or otherwise the accumulated philosophical baggage attached to the theme of resurrection over the past almost two years of speculation and debate.

Historically and contextually the segment of the church at Corinth that expressed their denial did so out of the context of contemporary Greek dualistic thinking that dominated the thinking of the first century world. Some other influences coming out of alternative ways of thinking from various non-Greek cultures that were represented in the population of the city in the mid first century may have played some role in formulating the alternative view or views to the apostolic Gospel. But all of these are very difficult to sort out and to pin down with substantial documentation from primary ancient sources.

One must first acknowledge that views of some form of after life were far less common in the first century world than usually assumed. Among the Greeks the Epicureans adamantly argued that one's existence ended with physical death. Interestingly, this overlapped to some extent with the Jewish Sadducean denial of life after death.³⁸⁵ But it is indeed hard to imagine a 'Sadducean' type Christian view emerging in the church at Corinth. To be sure, Paul does use the pessimistic Epicurean maxim in v. 32b, but the manner of to be more specific than state that 'some' at Corinth denied the reality or possibility of the resurrection of the dead. In broad terms, surveys of the reconstructions follow the same identification of different possibilities in monographs or essays by Wilson (1968), Spörlein (1971), Plank (1981), Sellin (1986), Wedderburn (1987), M. C. de Boer (1988), G. Barth (1992), my own discussion (1995), Joost Holleman (1996), and A. Eriksson (1998, followed in outline by Collins, 1999).²²⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1172.]

³⁸⁵Over the centuries patristic, Reformation, nineteenth-century, and more recent writers have compared the philosophy of the Epicureans in the Graeco-Roman world with the traditions of the Sadducees even within Judaism, and have emphasized that belief in life after death was less widespread in the first century than is often supposed. Appeal has been made to several classical specialists for this view.²³ This view was held by G. Estius (1613), H. Grotius (1645), and subsequently especially by W. M. L. de Wette (1845) and more recently W. Schmithals (Eng. trans. 1970).²⁴ Calvin and Heinrici are often credited with this view, but Calvin concludes that in the end he is 'undecided,' and Heinrici also combines more than one approach.²⁵ Such writers regularly appeal to Paul's use of the Epicurean maxim 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' (15:32b) and to the notion that for those who deny the belief in question faith is empty or futile (15:17); if in this life only they have hope, they deserve only pity and are still in their sins (15:17, 19). Spörlein believes that this view of 1 Corinthians 15 typified the period of F. C. Baur, de Wette, and the 1840s, although Schmithals and others have also urged it more recently.²⁶⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1172–1173.]

his usage doesn't imply that this elitist Corinthian group was adopting it. Neither can any of Paul's statements be understood to imply that this group denied any future life after death. What seems to be the issue is what kind of future life awaits the believer, not whether or not one exists. The traditional Greek dualism from Plato also asserted that at the death of the physical body the ψυχή, *soul*, which is eternal in nature simply returns to a static eternity and reunites with the eternal Ψυχή which it already belonged to. The idea of a conscious existence in an afterlife was not a part of the Greek philosophical teaching, although primitive versions of such did exist among many of the Greco-Roman religions, especially the so-called mystery religions. Given the pagan religious influence on the elitists at other points such as the tongues issue, it is more likely that influences from these sources helped shape the thinking of this Christian section of the Corinthian church.

Another aspect of this challenge is whether Paul is addressing a single unified alternative view or whether, as is more likely, he is addressing alternative versions to the apostolic Gospel. His approach to defending the apostolic Gospel lends itself easily to being a critique of a fluid alternative approach that had numerous versions from house church to house church. This helps explain a significant difficulty to being able to pin down the precise nature of the issue over resurrection in the church. Thus Paul's defense centers on a positive affirmation of the Gospel teaching, far more than on a negative critique of the alternative views held by the Corinthian elitists. As an example, most of the apodoses in the conditional sentence rhetorical questions thus go in a variety of directions rather than point to one central view being condemned by Paul. The apostle is far more interested in establishing the correctness of the Gospel teaching on resurrection, than he is on proving the wrongness of the alternative thinking going on at Corinth, however it may have taken shape.³⁸⁶

The relative clause qualifications in vv. 1-2 attached to τὸ εὐαγγέλιον serve to define the direction that Paul desires to go in affirming the role of resurrection in his Gospel message.

First comes ὁ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, which I proclaimed to you. Paul uses the noun τὸ εὐαγγέλιον eight times in First Corinthians -- 4:15; 9:12, 14 (2x), 18 (2x), 23; 15:1 -- to define his message as an apostle of Christ. This connection between τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and his being an apostle is especially prominent in chapter nine. But he also uses the verb εὐαγγελίζω that comes from the

³⁸⁶There are some important application insights here. A Gospel witness is an affirmation of the correctness of the Gospel. We never get very far by just pointing out the wrongness of the alternative views to the Gospel. Showing that others are wrong in their thinking does nothing to establish the correctness of our thinking.



same root stem some six times in First Corinthians: 1:17; 9:16 (2x), 18; 15:1, 2. The verb εὐαγγελίζω simply means to orally communicate the understood content of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. The assertion made in 1:17 lays out the basics in simple expression: οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστευμέν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλ' εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῆ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. **For Christ did not commission me to baptize but to proclaim the Gospel so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.** As Paul continued to assert in 1:18-2:5 this message of the cross was infused with the divine power to transform lives through forgiveness of sins and recreation of new life inside the individual believer. The aorist verb εὐηγγελισάμην points back to the initial proclamation of that message when in the city on the second missionary journey (cf. Acts 18:1-18). Luke's emphasis centers on his summarizing statement in v. 5: Ὡς δὲ κατήλθον ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας ὃ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, συνείχeto τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος διαμαρτυρούμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις **εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.** **When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.** The cross and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ clearly were central to that proclamation as 1 Cor. 1:18-25 assert. But in the meanwhile some in the Corinthian church have decided on a different understanding than the one Paul presented to them.

The second, third, and fourth qualifiers center on the initial acceptance of this message proclaimed by Paul: ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε, δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, **which you also received, in which you also have taken a stance, through which also you are being saved.** One should note the formal language of transmitting a set of ideas introduced by παρελάβετε (v. 1) and παρέδωκα (v. 2). This does not justify the creedal interpretation often given by modern commentators coming out of a modern creedal oriented church heritage. But what it does assert clearly is that in Paul's view there was a genuine, official acceptance of his message and action taken in commitment to Christ as presented by Paul to the Corinthians. This would have been formally expressed by believer's baptism initially as a public commitment to obey the risen Christ in their living. As Paul earlier made clear in 1:13-17 it is the commitment to Christ rather than the formal ceremony of baptism that is central. But this does not diminish the need for baptism as the public expression of a genuine commitment to Him.

Not only did the Corinthians accept this message from Paul (ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε), their baptism expressed taking a public stance of commitment to Christ as the foundation of a new spiritual existence: ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε. Thus it is through this risen Christ that they are continuing to receive God's saving deliverance

since that beginning point: δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε. Their entire religious experience as Christians is then centered in the risen Christ as their Savior, Lord, and hope for eternity.

The fifth qualifier, τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν εἰ κατέχετε, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε, comes back to repeat the first qualifier, ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, but with more precise terms, e.g., τίνι λόγῳ, **by a certain message.** The apostle now begins to zero in on to the apostolic Gospel alone as the vehicle of this conversion. This excludes the emerging alternative views happening among some of the Corinthians. Some basic affinity exists with Paul's denial of the Judaizing version of the Gospel in Gal. 1:6-7, ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο, another Gospel which is not actually another. But the Corinthian alternative was not adding Judaism on to faith commitment to Christ as was true in Galatia. Instead, it was a Greek philosophical based twisting of the idea of Jesus as the risen Christ. Being more subtle it needed different counter arguments in order to demonstrate its spiritual dangers to one's eternal relationship with God through Christ. But to be clear Paul soundly rejects the validity of both approaches to tampering with the authentic apostolic Gospel.

The first class protasis εἰ κατέχετε assumes a continuing commitment to this apostolic Gospel. Such steadfastness of commitment demonstrates sincere initial commitment rather than a shallow or phony profession. By so structuring this restatement Paul opens the door for questioning the genuineness of the commitment of some of the Corinthians, who have wavered and moved toward the alternative views of the elitists.

The final qualifier ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε points also to the same direction of a shallow or insincere initial commitment.³⁸⁷ The idiomatic nature coupled with the double negative structure signals this lack of sincere commitment as a real possibility by some of the Corinthians. Thus the burden of failure in authentic faith commitment rests upon these Corinthians and not upon any failure by Paul to present the correct form of

³⁸⁷To translate εἰκῆ as *in vain* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB, AV/KJV, Collins) causes needless difficulties and forces Paul into an aggressive irony that undermines his seeking common ground by appealing to the shared tradition, calling the readers ἀδελφοί and establishing the previous points. There is firm lexicographical evidence for the meaning *without due consideration*, or *in a haphazard manner* (e.g., Epictetus, Dissertations 1.28.28; 6.7) or thoughtlessly or at random (1 Clement 40:2).⁷⁷ Here Paul envisages the possibility of such a superficial or confused appropriation of the gospel in which no coherent grasp of its logical or practical entailments for eschatology or for practical discipleship had been reached. Incoherent belief is different from believing in vain." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1186.]



the Gospel to them. The two sets of justifying statements that follow in vv. 3-11 make this abundantly clear.

b) Justification of the idea of resurrection, vv. 3-11.

First in vv. 3-8 Paul asserts his faithfulness in communicating this divinely revealed Gospel to them. Then in vv. 9-11, he affirms his sense of indebtedness to God to be chosen for such a marvelous task.

First, faithful transmission of the Gospel, vv. 3-8.

3 παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς 4 καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς 5 καὶ ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα· 6 ἔπειτα ὤφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ, ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἕως ἄρτι, τινὲς δὲ ἐκοιμήθησαν· 7 ἔπειτα ὤφθη Ἰακώβῳ εἶτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν· 8 ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὤφθη κάμοι.

3 For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

This sentence in vv. 3-8 constitutes the first of

638 παρέδωκα ὑμῖν
 15.3 γὰρ
 ἐν πρώτοις,
 ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον,
 ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν
 ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν
 κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς
 15.4 καὶ
 ὅτι ἐτάφη
 καὶ
 ὅτι ἐγήγερται
 τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ
 κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς
 15.5 καὶ
 ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ
 εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα·
 15.6 ἔπειτα ὤφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς
 ἐφάπαξ,
 ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν
 /-----|
 ἕως ἄρτι,
 δὲ
 τινὲς ἐκοιμήθησαν·
 15.7 ἔπειτα ὤφθη Ἰακώβῳ
 εἶτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν·
 15.8 δὲ
 ἔσχατον πάντων
 ὡσπερὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι
 ὤφθη κάμοι.

two sets of justifying statements given as a basis for the declaration in vv. 1-2. The core assertion as is illustrated by the diagram is παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, for I passed on to you what I also received. Again the technical language of transmitting tradition is used by Paul in order to assert that his Gospel message was not dreamed up by himself out of his own thinking, in contrast to that of the Corinthian elitists. The object functioning relative clause ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον defines τὸ εὐαγγέλιον mentioned in verse one. The main clause παρέδωκα ὑμῖν defines ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν in verse one. Thus Paul now describes his preaching of the apostolic Gospel to the Corinthians in terms of passing on a message already established and set inside Christian tradition. Again, this stood in stark contrast to the new version created by the Corinthian elitists which had no established background or widely recognized legitimacy.

As the above diagram visually illustrates, a series of ὅτι clauses then are set forth in apposition linkage to ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον. These define specific content of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον the Gospel which Paul had preached to the Corinthians. The prepositional phrase ἐν πρώτοις attached to the main clause verb παρέδωκα specify these aspects of the Gospel as having high priority.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁸REB's **first and foremost** well captures the logical rather than temporal force of ἐν πρώτοις in this context, i.e., of first im-

That is, these ὅτι clauses spell out a critically important center of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον as a message of salvation. Yet, the emphasis made by Paul is customized to the situation at Corinth, thus signaling some hints at what was going on in the alternative views among the elitists in the church.³⁸⁹ From all indication, he does draw upon pre-existing Christian tradition, but it would be a serious mistake to see Paul as merely quoting from it. He puts his own distinctive stamp largely because he is speaking to a unique situation at Corinth, not espousing some kind of systematic theology.

portance (as NRSV, NIV).⁷⁸ NJB's *handed on to you in the first place* too readily suggests sequence, but does have the advantage of retaining the double meaning which the word first can convey in both Greek and English, depending on its context. REB explicates the relative pronoun ὃ by Eng. the tradition, which was indeed implied by the two verbs (see above and on 11:23), but in view of the mistakenly negative overtones generated by the notion of tradition by those who have not yet been liberated from the worst aspects of Enlightenment rationalism it may be better not to import the word unnecessarily here. Paul does, however, refer to a continuity of handing on and receiving which constitutes, in effect, an early creed which declares the absolute fundamentals of Christian faith and on which Christian identity (and the experience of salvation) is built." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1186.]

³⁸⁹To be sure, key elements of what Paul says to the Corinthians surface elsewhere both in his writings and in some other NT writers as well.

The number of studies on Paul and tradition are too many to list. Among influential works in the earlier part of the second half of the twentieth century, Oscar Cullmann (French 1953, English 1956) states in relation to this verse, 'The very essence of tradition is that it forms a chain.... It is sometimes Paul, sometimes the Church which 'received'. The word καί must be particularly noticed, for it certainly belongs to the formula derived from the paradosis terminology ... in 11:23 and ... in 15:3, but also in 1 Cor 15:1.... 'I received the tradition in the same way as I handed it on to you—by mediation' (Cullmann's italics, last quotation cited from E.-B. Allo).⁷⁹ The relation between 'fragments of Creeds' in 1 Corinthians 15 and elsewhere in Paul and the steady development of early Christian creeds is traced by Hans von Campenhausen and also by J. N. D. Kelly. Kelly argues that 1 Cor 15:3–6 is 'manifestly a summary drawn up for catechetical purposes or for preaching: it gives the gist of the Christian message in a concentrated form.'⁸⁰ As Kelly observes, we should not assume that 1 Cor 11:23–25 and 15:3–5 provide the only such examples from Paul. From 1 Corinthians, we noted Eriksson's identification of pre-Pauline tradition in 8:6; 8:11b; 10:16; 12:3; 13 (and also 16:22); Kelly also compares Rom 1:3–4; 4:24; 8:34; Gal 1:4; 1 Thess 4:14; 5:9; and from later material 1 Pet 3:18–20 and 1 Tim 2:5–6, 8 and 6:13–14. The juxtaposition of confession in the saving efficacy of the cross and the divine vindication or glorification of Christ in the resurrection feature in virtually all of these passages as an emergent core pattern of the earliest Christian confessions or creeds within the pages of the New Testament.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1186–1187.]

Central to the issue is both the death and the resurrection of Christ. The four ὅτι clauses define this twin affirmation with first assertion then evidence. That is, Christ died as evidenced by His burial, and He was raised back to life as evidenced by the listing of different groups and individuals who saw Him personally. The major stress here is upon the latter since the issue of resurrection is what Paul is speaking to in the Corinthian situation.

i) ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, *that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures*. This emphasis goes back to Ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ, *the message of the cross*, in 1:18 (cf. 1:18-31). The phrase ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, *died for our sins*, most likely is grounded in Isa. 53, esp. vv. 5-6 or 11-12. Thus Paul's κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, *according to scriptures*, alludes especially to this OT text.³⁹⁰ But the generalized nature of κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς is more inclusive than of just a single OT passage. Central to the affirmation is that Christ's death is an atoning, sacrificial death on the cross to cover the guilt of human sinfulness. As he said earlier in Gal. 1:4, this death of Christ targets the objective of rescuing repenting sinners: κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, *of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself from our sins so that He might rescue us out of this present age of*

³⁹⁰“The phrase ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν may perhaps reflect an allusion to the LXX of Isaiah 53 (perhaps 53:5–6, or vv. 11–12).⁹⁹ However, in view of the generality of the principle expressed by the phrase κατὰ τῆς γραφᾶς it is neither convincing nor necessary to isolate any single specific biblical reference, still less to speculate about an allusion to a Targumic VS of Isa 53:5.¹⁰⁰ Stanley, e.g., makes no reference to this passage in his work *Paul and the Language of Scripture* other than a passing mention in the course of his discussion of Gal 3:13.¹⁰¹ What is at issue is the affirmation ‘that this atoning death fulfilled the scriptures’ of which one instantiation among others is ‘the classic passage ... Isa 53, the great description of the redemptive suffering of the servant of the Lord,’ although ‘Psalm 22 ... has a number of details appropriate to a notable victim of public rejection,’ while the promise of Deut 18:15, 18 and the sorrow of Lam 1:12, 18 cannot be excluded as irrelevant.¹⁰² The key points in the phrase according to the scriptures, as Barrett observes, are (1) the continuity of the cross of Christ with the history of the saving purposes of God as revealed in the Old Testament, which find their climax and fulfillment in the saving work of Christ; and (2) understanding the meaning of the saving role of the death of Christ by means of ‘interpretation in OT categories—for example, of sacrifice ... atonement ... sufferings ... the good time to come.’¹⁰³ The work of C. H. Dodd in this area remains of permanent value.¹⁰⁴ Blomberg comments that ‘the first Christian writers saw all of the Scripture pointing to Christ.’¹⁰⁵” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1190–1191.]



the Evil One according to the will of God even our Father.

The evidence of actual death by Christ is seen in Him being buried: καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη. If some of the elitists were troubled by a physical death of Christ due to their pagan background reasoning, the actual burial of Jesus dismisses such thinking completely. It would be hard to deduce here a later Gnostic view of Jesus not being a real human being and only a 'ghost' with human form.³⁹¹ But it is possible, given the triumphalist tendency of these elitists, that they were troubled by the reality of Christ actually dying.

ii) καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς καὶ ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα, and that He was raised on the third day according to scriptures and that He was seen by Peter then by the Twelve. The second assertion centers on the resurrection of Jesus with evidence attached. Paul's language here is deliberate and intentional. The passive voice ἐγήγερται, He was raised, underscores God's role as the agent of raising of Christ.³⁹² He uses ἐγείρω here rather than ἀνίστημι

³⁹¹“Significantly even by the time of the epistles of Ignatius (around AD 108), Ignatius alludes to those who claim that Christ's sufferings were merely ‘apparent,’ ‘seeming,’ or ‘in semblance’ (λέγουσιν τὸ δοκεῖν αὐτὸν πεπονθέναι).¹¹⁴ This tendency to docetism was a threat, then, from virtually the first century, and against it Ignatius declared that Christ suffered ‘for us’ (δι’ ἡμᾶς) ... truly (ἀληθῶς ἔπαθεν) just as he truly (ἀληθῶς) underwent resurrection.¹¹⁵ In his attack on gnostic dissociation between ‘Jesus’ the man and the exalted heavenly ‘Christ’ Irenaeus quotes the Pauline and pre-Pauline tradition exactly as it stands here, including the claim he was buried.¹¹⁶ Docetic Christology is ascribed to Cerinthus c. AD 120–30. Tertullian gives us several examples of an emphasis on Paul's words he was buried, in some contexts to underline the reality of death; in others, to stress the reality of the resurrection.¹¹⁷ The Epistle to Rheginus (or the treatise De Resurrectione, from Nag Hammadi) appears to dissociate ‘the psychic preaching which he shares with the other apostles’ from a more ‘spiritual’ Pauline ‘gnostic’ understanding.¹¹⁸” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1192.]

³⁹²“M. E. Dahl is utterly and entirely right to insist that we take the passive force of the verb seriously.¹²² Dahl notes (also anticipating Barrett and Ortkemper). ‘God is practically always the subject of ‘resurrection’ verbs in the NT. The only instances of explicit statements that Christ (not his resurrection) causes our resurrection are John 6:39, 40, 54. These could mean that Christ as the divine Logos is the Cause.... The vast majority of texts containing ἐγείρω and ἀνίστημι ... in a transitive, active sense have God as subject and Christ or man as object (Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 37; Rom 4:21; 8:11 [bis]; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:15 [bis]; 2 Cor 4:14a; Gal 1:1; Col 2:12; 1 Thess 1:10.... In nearly all other cases the verb is in the passive—or middle—voice.’¹²³ The effectively single counterexample has to do with a distinctive issue in Johannine Christology and belongs to a different soteriological logic from Paul's normal formulation. Dahl's linguistic tables confirm the data.¹²⁴ Rom 8:11 summarizes the Pauline logic formulated more fully in 1 Corinthians 15: ‘if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then the God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies

because it makes a stronger point about coming back to life, even though both verbs contain the idea.

The qualifiers τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, on the third day according to the scriptures, further underscores the divine plan being carried out according to schedule. The time reference to the third day reflects the ancient approach of counting on a part of a day as a day. Jesus was actually in the tomb less than 36 hours from late Friday afternoon until before sun up on Sunday morning. The reference to scriptures again is general in scope rather than limited to one or two OT passages.³⁹³

The evidence of the resurrection of Jesus provided by Paul begins with a reference to Peter and the Twelve and is defined four times as ὤφθη, He was seen.

The precise meaning of ὤφθη has occasioned considerable discussion over the centuries. This in part because this aorist passive voice form of the verb has an idiomatic usage out of the LXX translation of the Hebrew Bible that denotes a divine manifestation often through the vehicle of a vision or trance. It as a passive voice verb is then often translated as ‘He became visible’ or ‘He appeared.’ Thus does Paul's use of it here denote something beyond a physical sighting of Christ as a risen person?

Of the five uses of ὁράω in First Corinthians only through his indwelling Spirit (REB, my italics). God will raise the in-Christ corporeity who are identified with Christ in the event in which God raised Christ.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1193–1194.]

³⁹³“This paves the way for our understanding the particular nuance of the phrase according to the scriptures when it is applied as a context for understanding the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (a) First, it does indeed relate this divine act of vindication and sovereign action to the theme of promise. Its occurrence rests not only on divine power and divine grace, but also on divine faithfulness to vindicate his obedient messianic agent. (b) Second, therefore, it would amount to unintended reductionism and constraint if we seek to isolate some specific individual text (e.g., Ps 2:7; 16:9, 10; or Hos 6:2) rather than understanding the resurrection of Christ as the witness to a climactic fulfillment of a cumulative tradition of God's promised eschatological act of sovereignty and vindication in grace. In this respect the phrase operates in precise parallel with its use in relation to Christ's death for our sins in v. 3.135 (c) Third, it bears witness to the character of God whom the scriptures portray as a giving and gracious as well as a sovereign, faithful creator. If creation itself is God's gift, the new creation which begins with Christ's resurrection and promises the resurrection of believers is no less so. That is why it serves to sharpen all that Paul has said about grace (1:4, 26–31; 3:5, 22; 4:7; 6:20; 8:13; 9:13; 10:16; 11:24; 12:4; 15:8–10). 15:8–10 especially will take up this theme.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1195.]

9:1 contains an active voice form: οὐχὶ ἴησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα; *Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?* The other four uses are found in chapter fifteen as the passive voice ὤφθη: vv. 5, 6, 7, 8. Does Paul's rhetorical question in 9:1 imply that the apostle saw Jesus with his physical eyes? Of course, this alludes to the Damascus road experience described by Luke in Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11; 26:12-18. Luke stresses Paul's hearing the voice of Jesus and only seeing a blinding light. Interestingly in 26:19, Paul, in Luke's words, describes his experience as τῆ οὐρανίῳ ὄπτασίᾳ, *Heavenly vision*. Yet the four gospels consistently depict Jesus' resurrection appearances clearly as physical sightings, occasionally with a strong emphasis upon physical contact with Jesus and/or Him eating food etc.

The debate in First Corinthians centers on whether Paul is intending to describe the resurrection appearances of Jesus as a vision or as a physical sighting. Then growing out of this is whether Jesus was raised in bodily resurrection or in some kind of spiritual body, that is, does ὤφθη a spiritual mode of resurrection over against a bodily mode of resurrection? But the discussion misses the point of Paul's use of ὤφθη.

By describing the resurrection appearance with ὤφθη, Paul seeks to emphasize the visibility of Christ in His resurrection body. Christ clearly presented Himself to these various groups and individuals as being alive and functioning rather than still a corpse in the tomb. The subsequent discussion of resurrection in vv. 12-58 attempts to define both Christ's existence and the believers' experience of resurrection existence -- no small task since Christ is the only one who has been alive on earth in such an existence. Thus resurrection existence has both continuity and discontinuity with physical existence.

Thus Paul's approach here must be correctly understood as (sacrificial) death evidenced by burial, and coming back to life as evidenced by His presenting Himself to various individuals. The repeated use of the idiomatic ὤφθη stresses these appearances as divine manifestations confirming His claim to be God's Son. The Corinthian elitists' view was somehow missing this point due to the short sightedness of their pagan Greek reasoning.

Another part of the debates here centers on both inclusion and exclusion of the resurrection appearances of Jesus. In Mark 16:9 and John 20:2-18, Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus. Did Paul deliberately leave out this appearance because it was to a woman? But Paul has no desire to describe every one of the appearances. It's not the number of appearances that gives credibility to Jesus' resurrection.

What Paul intends by his selection of individuals and groups in his account is the clear affirmation that

God affirmed the reality of Jesus' resurrection in the way they took place. And that these appearances came to a variety of individuals, both leaders and others, as a motivation to increased faith commitment to the risen Christ. He had no interest in a modern style 'objective' validation of the resurrection of Jesus, which would require appearances to non-believers as well. Peter and James are signaled out due to their leadership roles of the apostles and of the pastoral leaders in the church at Jerusalem.

Further, the need of postulating a pre-existing creedal structure for Paul's expression here is a completely false trail. When Paul visited Peter and James in Jerusalem, as Acts records after his conversion on more than one occasion, it is ludicrous to assume that they did not talk about their individual experience of Jesus as the risen Christ, and thus Paul depended on existing creed for his expression here. To the contrary, these conversations centered on Christ and His impact on their lives. This may say more about the experience of Jesus by modern scholars than it says about the first century situation.

As [the above diagram](#) illustrates, Paul lists six groups / individuals to whom Jesus presented Himself. Note the sequential pattern here:

- (1) Peter
- (2) the Twelve
- (3) the 500 brothers
- (4) James
- (5) all the apostles
- (6) Paul



Paul uses the Aramaic Κηφᾶς from ܚܦܝܘܿܢ meaning 'rock' rather than the Greek Πέτρος, meaning 'rock.' Jhn 1:42 is the only non-Pauline use of Κηφᾶς out of the nine times it is used in the NT. The use of τοῖς δώδεκα, *the Twelve*, for τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν, *all the apostles*, is unique to this one instance in Paul's writings, although very common in the four gospels and Acts. Very likely ὤφθη Κηφᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα, *he was seen by Cephas and then by the Twelve*, is used to avoid giving particular affirmation to the so-called Peter group (cf. 1:12) in the Corinthian church. The appearances to the 500 and to James³⁹⁴ are only found here in the NT, while the others are cited elsewhere in the NT. The statement πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ, ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἕως ἄρτι, τινὲς δὲ ἐκοιμήθησαν, *to 500 brothers at once, of whom most are still living though some have died*, calls

³⁹⁴“A tradition from Josephus suggests that James probably died in AD 62.²²² Jerome alludes to an account of the appearance of the post resurrection Jesus Christ to James in the apocryphal *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*.²²³” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1208.]

attention to many first hand witnesses still living in Judea / Galilee at the mid first century. This appearance should not be equated to the Mt. 28:16-20 Galilean appearance to the eleven apostles. The use of both εἶτα and ἔπειτα as 'then' is stylistic to avoid excessive repetition of one or the other sequential adverbs.

The final reference is set off from the others in v. 8: ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὡφθη κάμοι, but last of all as to one born premature He appeared also to me. Paul sees himself as an object for Jesus' appearance coming out of the natural progression (see above listing). In all likelihood, this is one way of affirming that Paul was not involved in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus as were the others mentioned. Thus Jesus' appearance to him on the Damascus road was different in certain respects from the other appearances. Yet it stands as a commissioning appearance along side the others.

Second, Paul's indebtedness to God, vv. 9-11.

9 Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμι ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ· 10 χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι, καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἢ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἢ] σὺν ἐμοί. 11 εἴτε οὖν ἐγὼ εἴτε ἐκεῖνοι, οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

In this second set of justifying statements (vv. 9-10), Paul amplifies his position as one to whom Jesus made an individual appearance but as distinct from the other appearances. Then in v. 11, he draws the inference (οὖν) that both he and the others are preaching the same risen Christ that the Corinthians placed faith in at conversion. That proclamation comes out of the same eye-witness encounter with the risen Christ.

Paul's depiction becomes necessary from the dif-

15.9	γάρ	Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμι ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ·
15.10	δὲ χάριτι θεοῦ καὶ	εἰμι ὃ εἰμι, ἢ χάρις αὐτοῦ...οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἢ εἰς ἐμὲ ἀλλὰ περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, δὲ οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἢ] σὺν ἐμοί.
15.11	οὖν	εἴτε ἐγὼ εἴτε ἐκεῖνοι, οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε.

ferent nature of his resurrection encounter (v. 8) with Jesus from those described in vv. 4-7. It could well have been the case that the Corinthians elitists were using that difference to depreciate the merits of Paul's claim to apostleship, and to represent the apostolic Gospel.

What does ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι, but last of all as one untimely born, (v. 8) mean? Paul's approach to defending himself illustrates what he earlier said about the attitude of outsiders in 1:18, Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Every action of God toward the apostle was in no way based upon his superior achievements. Just the opposite, the grace of God shines forth most brightly because humanly speaking in regard to Paul he stood as a persecutor of both Christ and His church. Note how he emphasizes this in statement #639 above. That everything come out of God's grace and has nothing to do with humanly achieved merit or superiority had been missed by the Corinthian elitists. Their Greek reasoning glorified individual achievement through personal self-disciplined training. Their false sense of superiority was propped up by tongues speaking etc. (cf. chaps. 1-14 for detailed listing) and reflected their pagan ways being incorporated into their view of Christianity.

But such is not the way of God working out of grace through the Gospel. This Paul had learned some

twenty years earlier out of his encounter with the risen Christ. His Pharicism had put him on a somewhat similar path of elitism for entirely different reasons than for these Corinthian elitists. But out of his meeting the risen Christ had come the realization that everything centers on God's grace and this divine dynamic that transforms and changes one's life: χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι, *And by God's grace I am what I am* (v. 10a).

What Paul had become in God's grace is affirmed passionately in v. 10b: καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσώτερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί. *and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*

Captured here is the heart of the meaning of God's grace, ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ.³⁹⁵ In no way is it something we earn or merit. Instead, it is given by God as an implanted divine dynamic: ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, *As such it will put us to working hard in service and commitment to Christ: ἀλλὰ περισσώτερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, Yet this hard work does not represent our actions but rather the enabling powerful presence of God in our lives that guides and strengthens these activities: οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί.* Here Paul captures the essence of his foundational view of the believer being ἐν Χριστῷ, *in Christ*, (cf. Rom. 3:24; 6:11; 8:1, 2 etc. totalling 84 uses, including 13 uses in First Corinthians). This is both the essence and the mystery of the Gospel. Authentic Christianity means to be in spiritual union with Christ as the risen Lord.

What does all this imply in regard to the Corinthians? The inferential conjunction οὖν meaning therefore sets up this concluding declaration as making explicit something clearly implied in what Paul has said in vv. 1-10: εἴτε οὖν ἐγὼ εἴτε ἐκεῖνοι, οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε, *Whether then it was I or they, so we*

³⁹⁵ “Undeserved, unmerited **grace** (χάρις) which springs from the free, sovereign love of God alone and becomes operative in human life not only determines Paul's life and apostolic vocation but also characterizes all Christian existence, not least the promise of resurrection and the reality of the activity of Christ as Lord. “The double εἰμί is firmly assertive—‘I am what I am’ is the favour, utterly undeserved, that summoned Saul of Tarsus ... (Gal 1:13ff).”²⁴⁴ The gist of Paul's point is twofold: (i) God has made him what he is as sheer gift; (ii) in addition to being operative toward or on him, this grace has also been operative through him in making him an apostolic agent for the benefit of others. The usual meaning of κενός is *without content, without substance, or empty*. However, BAGD show (with examples) that it also means *without result, without effect, to no purpose* (as indeed in 15:58).²⁴⁵ Hence with Robertson and Plummer and with Conzelmann (against Findlay) we translate **fruitless**.²⁴⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1211–1212.]

proclaim and so you have come to believe. This in no way signals a return to the main topic with vv. 8-10 as some kind of digression, as has been falsely suggested.³⁹⁶

Instead, Paul applies the principle of divine grace as it applies to all the individuals who received an appearance from the risen Christ. This τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is preached as the verb κηρύσσομεν asserts with virtually identical meaning to εὐηγγελισάμην used at the beginning. The independent phrase εἴτε ἐγὼ εἴτε ἐκεῖνοι, *whether I or those*, makes clear the inclusiveness of Paul's expression as covered by the first person plural verb κηρύσσομεν. The adverb of manner οὕτως repeated before both verbs contextually alludes not so much to how τὸ εὐαγγέλιον was proclaimed and believed as it does to the content of what was preached and believed.³⁹⁷ The use of the present tense verb

³⁹⁶“Paul is not ‘returning from a digression,’ since his combined emphasis on resurrection, witness, and grace was all of a piece and he did not digress to “defend” his apostleship (see above).²⁵¹ Conzelmann identifies the central connection of thought. In the light of grace (vv. 8–10) ‘Paul relativizes the *human* differences in favor of the essential thing, proclamation and faith’ (his italics).²⁵² In other words, whether we are talking about how God's grace became operative through other apostles (e.g., Peter or the Twelve) or we are considering Paul as an example of one who received grace and witnessed Christ's appearance, the apostolic kerygma retains the common basis to which the common tradition (vv. 3b–5; corroborated by vv. 6–7, and further instantiated by vv. 8–10) bears united witness. This clearly looks back to 1:10–12, 18–25, and forward to 15:12–58. There is no **is** in the Greek: the implied verb is one of logic, not of past description.²⁵³ NJB's rendering of the connective οὖν as **anyway** admirably picks up the resumptive force of the logical consequence.²⁵⁴ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1212–1213.]

³⁹⁷“The Gk. οὕτως is emphatic, which we try to convey by **it is this that we proclaim**. Although the Greek is strictly adverbial (*thus, in this manner*), NIV, REB, and NJB render it as a demonstrative pronoun: *this is what we all proclaim* (REB); *this is what we preach* (NJB), although NRSV leaves the construction open to an adverbial understanding: *so we proclaim and so you have come to believe*. The context suggests that the context of the kerygma, not its mode of communication, is what is at issue. **This** is therefore entirely appropriate not least because οὕτως may in any case be used as an adjective.²⁵⁵ On the other hand, although this is more probable for **that you came to believe**, an adverbial *thus*, in this way would be no less possible as a translation (with AV/KJV). The change from the present **we proclaim** to the aorist **you came to believe** need not of itself imply ‘that the Corinthians were beginning to waver somewhat in their belief.’²⁵⁶ It is probably an ingressive aorist which, as Wolff notes, looks back at the end of this unit (vv. 1–11) to vv. 1–2.²⁵⁷ Paul concludes this first foundational section of the resurrection chapter by asserting, This is what matters: whether you are proclaiming the gospel or responding to it as a Christian believer. Margaret Mitchell is right to stress both the unifying dimension of these verses and, no less, that the basis for such common faith remains the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: ‘Paul emphasizes the importance of the things all Christians

κηρύσσομεν, we are proclaiming, emphasizes the continual preaching of the same essential Gospel by all those representing an apostolic witness to Jesus' resurrection. But the shift to the aorist verb ἐπιστεύσατε in the ingressive function of the aorist tense, [you came to faith commitment](#), matches the aorist παρελάβετε, [you received](#), in v. 1 with both as a reference to the conversion commitment of the Corinthians to Christ through the preaching of the apostolic Gospel.

Thus in magnificent fashion the apostle has laid the foundation for his discussion of resurrection in the remainder of the chapter. Proper understanding of it can only come out of understanding the Gospel and the significant role that resurrection plays in that message. Gospel then provides the only legitimate framework for comprehending the idea of resurrection. Here is where the elitists missed the boat. The inadequacy of their pagan Greek reasoning prevents them from grasping the true meaning of resurrection.

c) Addressing the denial in the church, vv. 12-58.

The way Paul addresses the topic of resurrection is determined by the nature of the issue in the Corinthian church, not by an attempt at systematic presentation of the topic. Paul's interest centered on challenging the wrong headed thinking at Corinth and, if possible, persuading the elitists to adopt God's way of thinking in abandonment of their pagan Greek thinking. His beginning strategy is to defend and define the idea of resurrection, vv. 12-34. Then he focuses on defining and describing the resurrection body in vv. 35-58.

The challenges here are huge since he is describing something no human being outside of Christ has ever experience while existing on earth. Thus extensive use of analogous language becomes necessary. But one must always remember that the earthly comparisons used by Paul only touch on a small portion of the larger spiritual reality being described. The topic under consideration imposes these limitations, and means that only partial understanding is possible. Resurrection must be experience in order to be understood fully.

i) The denial of resurrection in the church, vv. 12-19.

12 Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; 13 εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 14 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καί] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν· 15 εὕρισκόμεθα

δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν εἴπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται. 16 εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 17 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, 18 ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. 19 εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἠλπικότες ἐσμέν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν.

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. 19 If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

As [the diagram](#) below illustrates, the introductory verse occupies a pivotal role not just in introducing vv. 13-58 but in bringing to a climax vv. 1-11. The first class conditional sentence nature of this rhetorical question posed by Paul pulls the two sections closely together with the protasis pointing back to vv. 1-11 while the apodosis points forward to vv. 13-18. The assumption is made that Christ as the risen One is being preached as the apostle asserted pointedly in v. 11.

Rhetorical question, v. 12. Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; **And since Christ is being preached that He has risen from the dead, how are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

Although comments were made at the beginning regarding this verse, a closer examination is now merited in order to set the statement in clearer focus. The rhetorical question that forms the sentence is set up in the first class structure of assumed reality in the dependent clause labeled the *protasis*: Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται, **And since Christ is being proclaimed as having been raised from the dead.** In this depicted scenario, Paul assumes the affirmations made in vv. 1-11 about Christ's resurrection. Literally this links vv. 1-11 to this pivotal statement in v. 12. The inclusive nature of the passive voice κηρύσσεται, **is being preached**, not only references the various individuals to whom Christ presented Himself (vv. 6-10) including the apostle himself, but extends to those in the Corinthian church who have remained true to the apostolic Gospel in contrast to the Corinthian elitists. The closing greetings in chapter sixteen clearly suggests some of the faithful people, as

share: a common faith in the same received παράδοσις.²⁵⁸ 'Eccumenicity' is not the lowest common denominator in a miscellany of individual experiences. For Paul it is defined by the common kerygma of a shared, transmitted gospel tradition, anchored in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as ἐν πρώτοις (15:3)." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1213.]

15.12	δὲ	Εἰ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται	ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται,
647	πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες		ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν;
15.13	δὲ	εἰ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν,	
648	οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται·		
15.14	δὲ	εἰ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται,	
649	(ἐστὶν) κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν,		
650	(ἐστὶν) κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν·		
15.15	δὲ	εὕρισκόμεθα καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ,	
651	ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν _____	κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ	ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν,
			ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν
		εἶπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται.	
15.16	γὰρ	εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,	
652	οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται·		
15.17	δὲ	εἰ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται,	
653	(ἐστὶν) ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν,		
654	ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,		
15.18	ἄρα	καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο.	
654			
15.19			ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ
			ἐν Χριστῷ
655	ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν.		εἰ...ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον,

illustrates.³⁹⁹

The main clause, labeled the apodosis or conclusion, sets up the discussion to follow: πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; How are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Those denying the idea of resurrection are in direct conflict with those preaching the resurrection of Christ. Several aspects of Paul's statement merit comment.

Most important is to not overlook ἐν ὑμῖν τινες, some among you. Paul does not see this issue as dominating the larger Christian community. Perhaps a few leaders of a small number of house churches had taken the denial stance, but not the majority of the lead-

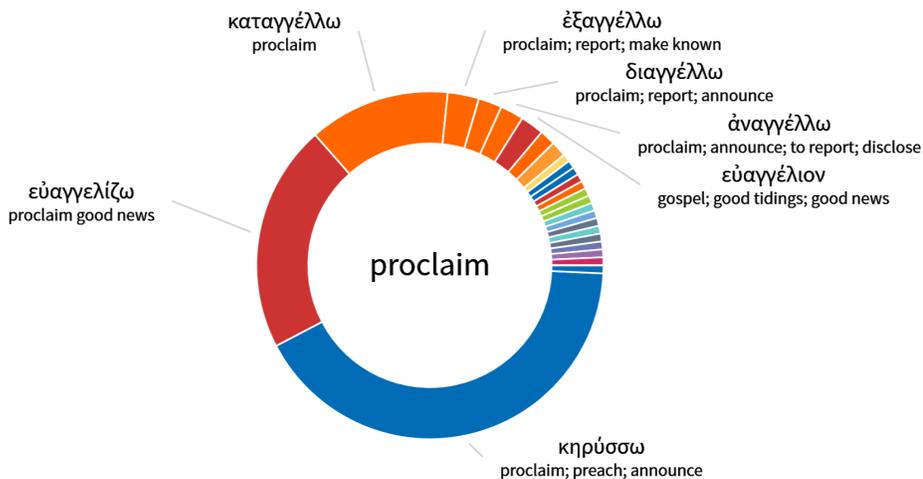
well as the structuring of the main clause in v. 12 referencing only some at Corinth denying the resurrection.

The use of the verb κηρύσσεται from κηρύσσω is used four times in First Corinthians: 1:23; 9:27; 15:11, 12. The use here of κηρύσσω is most likely influenced by its use in the immediately preceding verse. This serves as a scribal Jewish 'header' link between the two units of text material.³⁹⁸ No real distinction in meaning from εὐηγγελισάμην from εὐαγγελίζω in vv. 1-2. The cognitive meaning is essentially the same, while the tone of 'heralding' the Gospel or "goodnewsizing" the Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) is the only difference in meaning. The same action is intended by both verbs. These are but two of numerous Greek verbs used in the NT to proclaim orally the message of the Gospel, as the chart

³⁹⁸Such headers served as links between two units of text via a repetitive word, phrase etc. being placed in the beginning sentence prefield of what follows the first unit of text, as happens in the protasis here in v. 12. This was a often used device among Jewish scribes in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in this period of time. .

ers nor of the house churches in the city.

³⁹⁹"The first *refutatio* now addresses what in the language of deliberative rhetoric would be called the 'disadvantages' (or, for Paul, dire, unacceptable consequences) of any attempt to deny the possibility or applicability of resurrection as a reality or concept in principle. Such a denial would entail the unimaginable claim that Jesus Christ himself had not been raised from the dead. If the *universal principle* has no currency, by deductive logic a *particular instance* of it has no currency either. Any possible sense of confusion for the modern reader arises because the resurrection of Christ is also regarded (in vv. 20–34) as the paradigm case of resurrection in reality. Hence it may appear that Paul is turning an anticipated argument upside down. In practice, however, these two approaches represent different and complementary arguments: there is no contradiction of logic between vv. 12–19 and 20–34, providing that we keep in mind their different methods and aims." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1214–1215.]



The verb λέγουσιν in the present tense pictures the issue as currently active at the time of the writing of this letter some several years after the founding of the church by the apostle on the second missionary journey. It wasn't in the church at the beginning but had surfaced later and continued to assert itself. Paul knew that it needed to be corrected and thus devotes a major section of the letter body to countering this view point.

Exactly what does ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, *that there is no resurrection of the dead*, mean?⁴⁰⁰ As I concluded in the earlier discussion of this point above, the wording of the Greek text precludes precise identification and allows for a plurality of viewpoints floating around the community in Corinth. The way Paul defends the apostolic understand of resurrection in vv. 13-58 certainly lends itself to a variety of perspectives that were all built off the Greek negative view of the material and the physical. I wouldn't be a bit surprised to learn that among the elitists who held this general denial were individual efforts to 'out Greek' the others

⁴⁰⁰“We discussed the precise form which the claim **there is no resurrection of the dead** (v. 12) may have taken at Corinth in some considerable detail in our introduction to 15:1–58. (To avoid undue replication, see above.) We alluded to the useful surveys of possible views in Wilson, Spörlein, Sellin, Wedderburn, de Boer, G. Barth, and Holleman.³ In summary we distinguished between four broad diagnoses of the problem which **some at Corinth** (τινες ἐν ὑμῖν) experienced: (i) a lack of belief in any form of postmortal existence, perhaps similar to certain Epicurean attitudes (W. M. L. de Wette, W. Schmithals, and [on the basis of Paul's misunderstanding their problem] Bultmann); (ii) belief that the resurrection was 'inner' or 'spiritual' and had already occurred in the case of "spiritual" believers (Heinrici, Schniewind, Wilckens); (iii) specific doubts about the possibility of 'bodily' resurrection, whether because of the nature of 'body' or because of a confusion with the immortality of a continuing 'soul' (Weiss, Sellin, Dale Martin); and (iv) the view that **some** may represent one problem, and **some** another (Mitchell, Saw, Erickson, Luther). The strengths and weaknesses of these theories are discussed above (see the introduction to 15:1–58).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1216.]

in spinning their theories. Culturally this would have been the norm, and the variety of ways Paul defends the idea of resurrection clearly lends itself to such an understanding.

The central point of Paul's statement ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν is the assertion than none of these alternative views measured up to the apostolic view and thus are false. And may very well signal deeper spiritual issues in the life of those holding to one of them.

Defense, part one, vv. 13-14. 13

εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 14 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καί] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν· 13 *If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.* Here Paul utilizes two first class conditional statements to make his point:

εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, protasis
οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· apodosis

εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, protasis
κενὸν ἄρα [καί] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, apodosis
κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν· apodosis

The first scenario, εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, adopts the language of the ὅτι clause in verse 12: ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν. Paul presents this as a view currently existing among some in the church. What does this mean should it be correct? The apodosis draws the conclusion οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται, *Christ has absolutely not been raised* (from the dead)! Perhaps some were seeking to distance Christ's experience from the general principle of resurrection. Paul will have none of this. Christ's resurrection depends upon the general principle of resurrection being true. The two cannot be disconnected from one another.

The second scenario εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται assumes the inseparable link of Christ's resurrection and the principle of resurrection. So if there is no resurrection either generally or more specifically of Christ, not only does this deny Christ's resurrection, but it has profound impact on Christian proclamation and faith: κενὸν ἄρα [καί] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν.⁴⁰¹ The addition of ἄρα heightens the importance

⁴⁰¹“Most MSS (e.g., 8, A, D², F, G, Syriac, Coptic, et al., with UBS 4th ed.) read ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, **your faith**, at the end of v. 14, but B, D*, and 33 read ἡμῶν, *our faith*. This could easily be an assimilation to the previous ἡμῶν, as Metzger notes, and the UBS editors classify the text presupposed in our translation as 'B,' i.e.,

of these two conclusions drawn by Paul. Plus the use of καὶ with both conclusions links them closely together.

Two items then are labeled as κενὸν / κενή: τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, *our Gospel message*, and ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, *your faith*. The adjectives κενὸν (neuter sing) / κενή (femine sing) denotes that which is empty of any content and thus worthless. A preaching and a faith without being based upon the resurrection of Christ is not just false. More significantly, they are an empty shell with nothing of spiritual value inside them. The preacher and the believer are committed to nothing of value. Here stands a sharp critique of the elitists' denial of resurrection, as well as their twisting of the idea of Christ's resurrection.

Paul links a legitimate πίστις to the apostolic κήρυγμα. The risen Christ is the One to whom we commit ourselves in salvational faith. And no one else! In verse 11, Paul had affirmed this for the Corinthians in their conversion. Experientially, then the Corinthians should realize this critical link between faith and the risen Christ as presented in the apostolic Gospel.

Defense two, v. 15. εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν εἴπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται. *We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ — whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.* Paul personalizes the principles just stated. The first person plural includes not just himself but the others mentioned in vv. 4-7. The entire apostolic witness would be in jeopardy if the denial of the resurrection were correct.⁴⁰² For Paul -- and for all believers -- the sense of accountability be-

'almost certain.' This is confirmed by the undisputed reading of v. 17.¹²⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1218.]

⁴⁰²“In accordance with the aim of a rhetorical refutatio Paul pushes the opposing axiom to its further disastrous ('disadvantageous' in deliberative rhetoric) consequences: the apostles became **exposed as liars** (the practical force of Gk εὐρισκόμεθα, *we shall be found*, i.e., *discovered to be, revealed to be, ψευδομάρτυρες, false witnesses*, i.e., **liars in what we witness concerning God**).¹⁶ The objective genitive for τοῦ θεοῦ, **concerning God**, seems to fit the context better than a subjective genitive (*in God's service*).¹⁷ ὅτι has causal or explanatory force: **because we gave testimony against God (κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ) that he raised Christ when if, as they say, it were the case...** Barrett (with Edwards) explains the otherwise difficult syntax: *as they say* represents a classical use of ἄρα (BDF sect. 454).¹⁸ The preposition κατὰ with the genitive retains its proper meaning **against** and cannot be reduced to περί, *concerning*.¹⁹ Paul traces a downward spiral of devastating consequences. Those who accept the counterproposition or opposing axiom to that of the kerygma find themselves in open opposition to God by denying the veracity of his vindication of Christ and initiation of new creation in Christ's resurrection.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1219.]

fore Almighty God should always stand as a part of our commitment to God since Judgment Day will demonstrate just how thoroughly accountable every human being is before God. The final judgment is clearly implied in the use of εὐρισκόμεθα even though it is present tense. But the exposure as false witnesses would not be limited just to Judgment Day.

Defense three, summary, vv. 16-18. 16 εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· 17 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, 18 ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. *16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have died in Christ have perished.* Paul offers two more first class conditional statements as justifying (γὰρ) declarations of the previous statements in vv. 13-15.

εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, protasis
οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται· apodosis

εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, protasis
ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, apodosis 1
ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, apodosis 2
ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. “ 3

The two above protases essential repeat the earlier sequence of general resurrection and Christ's resurrection in vv. 13-14. Also the first apodosis, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται, repeats the apodosis in v. 13. Again the first class conditional protasis here assumes the reality of the resurrection denial by some of the Corinthians (v. 12). If their thinking should be correct, what would also be correct?

	εἰ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται,
653	(ἐστὶν) ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν,
654	ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,
	^{15.18} ἄρα
654	καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο.

The three fold apodosis in vv. 17-18 represent summarizing assessment with new wording. Not only is the Corinthians faith worthless -- κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, v. 14b -- it also is ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, i.e., *no better than pagan idolatry*. The more severe ματαία than κενὴ raises the condemnation a notch. This adjective in the NT follows the LXX usage of referring to the worthless of pagan idolatry. Unquestionably asserted here is that the elitists' denial of resurrection signals no conversion to Christianity by them. Even though claiming to be Christian, they are no where closer to God than when they were practicing pagans. This is a stinging rebuke of them by Paul.

Second, with their worthless faith ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς

ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, **you are still in your sins**. Without resurrection, there is no divine forgiveness of sins. The simple logic is that faith is what triggers divine forgiveness and thus without a legitimate faith the possibility of divine forgiveness doesn't exist.

Third, without resurrection, those who die claiming Christ do not go to Heaven, v. 18: ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο. **Then also those having fallen asleep in Christ have perished**. Note the special emphasis placed on this third consequence of a no resurrection scenario (#654).

The use of ἄρα with καὶ heightens the focus on this apodosis considerably. The euphemistic οἱ κοιμηθέντες, **those who have fallen asleep**, for having died carries with it the expectation of awakening in a new day with God in Heaven. If there's no resurrection, this doesn't happen. Of the six uses of ἀπόλλυμι in First Corinthians, 1:18 parallels the use here with the aorist ἀπώλοντο in reference to eternity. The sense is not cease to exist, but rather perish in eternal damnation in Hell. Without the resurrection of Christ all humanity is destined for eternal damnation completely cut off from God.

Defense four, the sad situation of believers, v. 19.

εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν. **If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.**

15.19
 εἰ...ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον,
 655 ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν.

Again another first class conditional sentence assuming the stance of the elitists of 'no resurrection.' The protasis εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον pictures believers living their earthly life with hope in Christ limited only to this life and not to anything beyond death. Although the precise scenario can be understood different ways, the sense of it most likely is Christians living in hope in this life but having nothing beyond death that will happen to them as divine blessing. They have lived their entire Christian life in the delusion that Heaven awaits them after death. The placing this in a first class protasis rather than the hypothetical third class protasis strongly hints that this is likely the case for the elitists at Corinth. The first person plural ἐσμὲν, **we are**, takes some of the sting off the severe indictment built into the first class structure. That is, Paul is implying, if I were in your shoes, but of course I'm not.

The apodosis ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν draws the conclusion implicit in this scenario: **we are of all people most to be pitied**. The superlative adjective ἐλεεινός, -ή, -όν is used only twice in the NT: 1 Cor.

15:19 and Rev. 3:17. Both times the picture is of individual totally duped into assuming something about themselves that utterly doesn't exist. What this produces is the human reaction of "O those totally stupid people! How could anyone be so dumb?" They are not themselves aware of their deception, and the reaction to them is of mockery and ridicule. Paul looks upon such individuals adopted the position of the elitists at Corinth as the most foolish of all humanity.

Thus in vv. 12-19 Paul makes his first defense of the principle of resurrection by attacking denials of it and showing what their denial actually means for Christian belief. In short, without the principle of resurrection there is no Christianity. To be sure, it may exist in the thinking of individuals, but they are among the most foolish of all human beings.

In application to modern Christianity, this fundamental assertion by Paul needs to be remembered. A lot of twisting and distorting the principle of resurrection, and especially, that of Christ can be found in today's world. From Paul's apostolic perspective such people in no way are authentic Christians and are living a life of self-delusion that will prove eternally fatal once they step into eternity at death.

ii) The reality of resurrection, vv. 20-28.

20 Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ τῶν κεκοιμημένων. ἐν Χριστῷ
 21 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, εἰ...ἡλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον,
 καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν. 22

ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. 23 Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῷ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. 25 δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ ἢ ἦ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. 26 ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος· 27 πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. 28 ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῇ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

20 **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.** 21 **For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being;** 22 **for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.** 23 **But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.** 24 **Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has de-**

15.20 δὲ
656 **Νυνὶ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται**
 ἐκ νεκρῶν
 ἀπαρχῇ τῶν κεκοιμημένων.

15.21 γὰρ
 ἐπειδὴ δι’ ἀνθρώπου θάνατος,
657 **(ἐστὶν) καὶ δι’ ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν.**

15.22 γὰρ
 ὡσπερ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν,
658 **οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται.**

15.23 δὲ
659 **(ἐστὶν) ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι·**
 | ἀπαρχῇ Χριστός,
 | ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
 | ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ,
 15.24 | εἶτα τὸ τέλος,
 ὅταν παραδιδῷ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί,
 ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν.

15.25 γὰρ
660 **δεῖ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν**
 ἄχρι οὗ θῆ ἅπαντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς
 ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.

661 ^{15.26} **ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταγεῖται ὁ θάνατος·**
 15.27 γὰρ
662 **πάντα ὑπέταξεν**
 ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.

δὲ
 ὅταν εἶπη
 ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται,
663 **δῆλον**
ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα.

15.28 δὲ
664 **τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα,**
 ἵνα ᾧ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

stroyed every ruler and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

With verse twenty, Paul switches sides in the argument to now describe actual reality verses the what it would be if that characterizes vv. 13-19. In other words, he switches from the viewpoint of the Corinthian elitists to the apostolic Gospel perspective. Verses 20-28 is the first of a two part defense of this Gospel perspective that runs through verse thirty-four.

The rhetorical structure of vv. 20-28 is laid out clearly in the block diagram. The central affirmation in v. 20 (#656) is then justified by a series declarations grouped into four sets by γὰρ: v. 21, vv. 22-24, vv. 25-26, vv. 27-28. Here Paul’s creativity comes to the forefront in the way he presents his argument. He shifts the argument from Christ’s resurrection being dependent upon resurrection generally (vv. 13-18) to resurrection of humans being dependent upon Christ’s resurrection. This focus has wide ranging implications for his discussion which is spelled out in detail both in vv. 20-28 and vv. 29-34. Christ as the only resurrected individual to ever appear physically to humans upon the earth then becomes critical for comprehending some of the aspects of the

resurrected body for believers in eternity (vv. 35-58).⁴⁰³

Thesis: Christ has been raised, v. 20. Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγγέρται ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων. **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.** This declaration reflects the apostolic Gospel that Paul has proclaimed to the Corinthians from the beginning. His declaration is emphatic as reflected in the use of the emphatic adverb Νυνὶ. Contrary to the elitists' denial, Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. This is reality! This picks up on the appearances described in vv. 4-11 and builds off that foundation of validation of Christ's resurrection.

But a new dimension is added to this direction that has already been affirmed in terms of an inseparable connection of Christ's resurrection and human resurrection. Christ in resurrection becomes ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων, **a first fruit of those who have fallen asleep** (in death). The reference to τῶν κεκοιμημένων alludes back to οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ, **those having fallen asleep in Christ**, in v. 18. The shift from the aorist passive participle κοιμηθέντες to the perfect passive participle κεκοιμημένων stresses that the moment of dying is not the end or disaster, but instead the beginning of something wonderful for believers. They are inseparably linked to the risen Christ and thus experience a resurrection to eternal life that He provides.

The idea of ἀπαρχὴ comes out of the Israelite sacrificial system with the grain offerings given in the Jerusalem temple.⁴⁰⁴ The Jewish festival of Pentecost was

⁴⁰³After refuting the counteraxiom of the denial by ruthlessly exposing its unacceptable logical consequences Paul reverses the direction of argument to establish the remarkable consequences for which the axiom of resurrection, and in particular the resurrection of Jesus Christ, stands as the foundation.³⁶ Again, in terms of deliberative rhetoric, he unfolds a series of 'advantages,' i.e., fundamentals of Christian life and eschatological promise. After he has addressed the 'conceivability' of future resurrection (vv. 35-37), Paul will return to this practical dimension in his conclusion to the whole argument in v. 58." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1223.]

⁴⁰⁴The background religious meaning of ἀπαρχὴ is overwhelmingly Jewish in nature. In the Greek secular usage it generally designated a properly owed 'tax' from goods etc.

In the oldest literary example (Hdt., I, 92) ἀπαρχὴ means not only a. the true "firstfruits" of natural products¹ but also b. the "proportionate gift" from the earnings or possessions of the pious giver, then "thankoffering" for any success,² and finally c. any "offering" to the deity or to the servants or sanctuary of the deity, whether as a special or a regular offering. Hence it is used even of the Jewish tax³ (Jos. Ant., 16, 172), or first-fruits to the state, or an inheritance tax. For details, cf. the similar usage in the LXX. Figuratively it is used in Eur. Ion, 401 f.: προσφθεγμάτων ἀπαρχαί, for the first greeting or address (to Apollo). ἀπαρχὴ then comes to have, like ἀρχή, the sense of "beginning" (hence the textual variations between ἀπαρχή(ι) and ἀρ' ἀρχῆς), and finally the sense of certification of birth.

Religiously the offering of men as ἀπαρχὴ is of interest. To be

the most important one of these festivals in its original conception in the OT.⁴⁰⁵ The offering up of selections of wheat and barley at the beginning of the early summer harvest period was both an acknowledgement that the harvest belongs to God and the offering signified God's promise of a full harvest yet to come. Christ as the offered up sacrifice guarantees the full harvest of believers yet to come. How all of this will play itself out is now to be explained by Paul in the sets of justifying statements in vv. 21-28.

Reasons for and implications of this resurrection of Christ, vv. 21-28. As visually depicted in [the above diagram](#), Paul presents a series of justifications for this affirmation of the resurrection of Christ and its implication for believers. The repetition of the causal conjunction γὰρ defines four groups of reasons. These naturally come together in two groups of vv. 21-24 and 25-28.

Christ and Adam, vv. 21-24. 21 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν. 22 ὡς περὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. 23 Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. **21 For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; 22 for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he hands**

sure, the expression is rare in this sense.⁴ When used, it is often not subject to historical control, since it refers to the offerings of whole portions of the population of a city (usually to the Delphic Apoll.) with a view to colonisation.⁵ Yet the clear impression remains that these are regarded as religious acts and are undertaken as such.⁶ In addition we read that individuals are offered as → ἀνάθημα to a deity (Eur. Ion, 310, cf. Phoen. Schol. on 214); ἀπαρχὴ might easily be substituted; and men who dedicated themselves to the service of the sanctuary, or who were made over to the temple by their parents or masters (ιερόδουλοι etc.; → δοῦλος),⁷ were in fact called ἀπαρχή (cf. Diod. S., IV, 66, 6).

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 1:484-485.]

⁴⁰⁵By the time of the life of Jesus, the focus of the Pentecost festival had shifted. This in large part because Jewish society in Judea was no longer rural and agricultural but now urban and business oriented in orientation. It centered on the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai as divine promise of still greater things yet to come. For many first century Jews the greater thing guaranteed by the giving of the Torah to Moses was the anticipated coming of the expected Messiah, who according to some traditions would make His appearance on the Day of Pentecost from the Mt. of Olives. This background perspective stands behind the Acts 2 account of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost for Christians.

over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

Paul's scribal Jewish heritage as a Pharisee gives him insight here for developing his argument.⁴⁰⁶ He begins with a general principle: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, for since through a man is death, also through a man is resurrection of the dead. This principle is now repeated but with individuals named: ὡςπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. For since in Adam all died, so also in Christ will all be made alive. The third step is then an emphasis upon the proper sequence of being made alive: 23 Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

In this pattern of argumentation, the apostle builds off the principle found in Genesis 1-4 that the source of physical death among humans is traced back to Adam.⁴⁰⁷ He follows the traditional Jewish interpretive

⁴⁰⁶Both 1 Cor. 15:21-28, 45-58 and Rom. 5:12-20 stand as the two NT sources for this discussion. One must understand the Jewish mind here where not only Adam and Christ signify religious principles but Abraham as well in Rom. 4.

Whereas Paul's use of Abraham typology (e.g., Romans 4) underlines the continuity of God's faithful acts, "the Adam typology," Beker observes, "operates not in terms of continuity but in terms of discontinuity. Here the last (eschatological) Adam reverses radically what the first Adam has initiated in world history (Rom 5:12-17; 1 Cor 15:20-22), so that the ... apocalyptic thrust of the Adam typology underscores the radical newness of God's act in Christ."⁵⁶ The background to this typology is therefore the apocalyptic background of the two ages with its "ontological antithesis of death and life."⁵⁷ Beker works out the implications of this apocalyptic background convincingly and in detail.⁵⁸ Building on the work of P. Vielhauer and Klaus Koch, he shows that for Paul "the final resurrection is total renewal in an apocalyptic sense: 'the new world' ... so that the resurrection of Christ announces the ... dawn of the general resurrection to come."⁵⁹ In Becker's view it was failure to grasp "the apocalyptic connection" that constituted the heart of the problem at Corinth, and hence "constitutes the basis of Paul's argument (15:20-28)."⁶⁰ The resurrection is not less than, but far more than, "the enthronement of Christ as 'Lord.' ..." Thus Beker concludes, in 1 Cor 15:22 we might "expect 'For as by a man came death, by a man came also life,' but instead we read 'by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead' " (his italics).⁶¹

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1226.]

⁴⁰⁷"It is essential to hold the double set of parallels together since the two respective referents of ἀνθρώπου in v. 21 are explained at once in v. 22 as (i) Adam and (ii) Christ. As the double γάρ, for, indicates, Holleman's emphasis on representation

view of both individuality but solidarity of the human race in Adam.⁴⁰⁸ Adam is both an individual and typologically a signal of humanity simultaneously. In this kind of reasoning, Paul develops his Jewish oriented argument for the resurrection being connected to believers through Christ. But one should avoid seeing this Jewish source as the basis for Paul's viewpoint here. It merely served to give a legitimizing framework for such typology, but Paul's view both in First Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 is distinctly Christian in its content.

A related question then arises: Does Paul's use of Jewish based arguments here suggest a Jewish background for the elitists in the Corinthian church? Probably not, although the possibility of some of them being Jewish Christians with heavy Hellenistic influences is very real. Greek traditions, both religious and philo-

(vv. 21-22) as complementing temporal priority and promise in firstfruits (v. 20) finds classic expression here. In Bruce's words, "Paul now draws an analogy between two uniquely representative men: Adam, head of the old creation, in whom all die, and Christ, head of the new creation, 'the first-born from the dead' (Col 1:18; cf. Rev 1:8) in whom all are to be made alive in resurrection."⁴⁶ Adam is, for Paul, both an individual and a corporate entity: 'he was what his Hebrew name signifies—'mankind'. The whole of mankind is viewed as originally existing in Adam."⁴⁷ These verses may appear more logically problematic in the light of modern Western individualism and supposed autonomy than they are. Today, with globalization and international economics, it should be clearer than ever before that humanity as a whole is 'bound up in a bundle of created existence' (Robinson's phrase), i.e., of structural and corporate sin and fallenness. (However, see the warning note of Fitzmyer, below).⁴⁸ In continuity with the promises of the OT Paul thinks of **Adam** and of **humankind** both in structural-corporate and individual terms, just as the language concerning the righteous Suffering Servant in Isaiah 40-55 oscillates between depicting the Servant as an individual and as a corporate people.⁴⁹ Even so, the argument that humanity is, simply as a brute fact, bound up in the solidarities, vulnerabilities, and consequences of the life and destiny of **Adam** finds its saving parallel in the gospel assurance that the new humanity is bound up in the solidarities, atoning work, and resurrection victory and promise of **Christ** as the 'last' (i.e., eschatological) **Adam** (see 15:45). J. A. T. Robinson observes, 'Solidarity [jointly sharing liabilities and advantages] is the divinely ordained structure in which personal life is to be lived.'⁵⁰ Davies further claims that 'Paul accepted the traditional Rabbinic doctrine of the unity of mankind in Adam.' But Fitzmyer adds a note of warning: none of the rabbinic passages 'says a thing about the 'inclusion' of all humanity 'in' the body of Adam in the manner of 1 Cor 15:22.'⁵¹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1224-1225.]

⁴⁰⁸It is interesting to notice that the overwhelming bulk of the Adam typology discussion in Jewish literature of the period comes from Hellenistic Judaism and very little from the more traditional Hebraistic Judaism. Also it is this same Jewish literary source where most of the Messianic discussion about eschatological end times is found as well.

sophical, did not tend to trace human origins back to a single human, although they did often tend to trace these origins back to some god who took on human form. It is distinctly the Jewish heritage with divine creation of Adam and Eve that stood apart in the ancient world. And to this heritage Paul appeals in his arguments here.

Christ has reversed the destructive path that Adam's sin put humanity on. By coming into connection with the risen Christ, believers then share in the marvelous resurrection experienced by Christ. But there is a divine τάγμα⁴⁰⁹ at work here (v. 23). It is then defined in v. 24 as

ἀπαρχή Χριστός,

Christ as first fruit

ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ,

then those in Christ at His coming

εἶτα τὸ τέλος

then the end

Thus Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday morning becomes the basis for the resurrection of believers at the return of Christ. This then triggers the very end of human history which is defined by the two temporal clauses:

ὅταν παραδιδῶ⁴¹⁰ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί,

whenever He gives the Kingdom to God the Father.

ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν.

whenever He has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

The twin temporal clauses define simultaneous activity rather than sequential actions. The most graphic picture of this in the NT is presented by John in a multi segment depiction of the same event in Rev. 19:11-16,

⁴⁰⁹“The word τάγμα, that which has been **arranged**, thing placed in its **proper order**, hence in a military context a corps, troop division, or rank of troops, underlines both the purposive activity of God and the apocalyptic context of thought.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1229.]

⁴¹⁰One should note the text confusion created by the present tense subjunctive παραδιδῶ and the aorist subjunctive καταργήσῃ. Due to the futuristic nature of both clauses some copyists felt compelled to switch the present tense παραδιδῶ over to the aorist tense παραδῶ in order to match the aorist καταργήσῃ: K L P 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1881. 2464 *M* latt. But the present tense παραδιδῶ has stronger support as the original wording of the text: P⁴⁶ κ A D Ψ 0243. 0270. 1505. 1739. (B F G). [Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 549.]

The meaning of both subjunctive mood forms is not much different. The process action of the present tense sees the handing over of rule by Christ to God including a process, while the destruction of death is a decisive action as the point of the aorist verb.

17-21; 20:7-10.⁴¹¹ Paul's more graphic depiction is in 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11. Here in First Corinthians he sketches out broad contours of events as a part of his affirmation of the connection of believers' resurrection to that of Christ. Faith commitment to the risen Christ has linked us to Jesus and will enable the sharing of resurrection experience at the end of human history in the second coming of Christ. It is this resurrection experience that gives ultimate victory to the believer that lasts for all eternity.

Christ's ultimate triumph over death, vv. 25-28. 25

δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεῦεν ἄχρι οὗ θῆ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. 26 ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος. 27 πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. 28 ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῆ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. 25 *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection," it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.*

This second set of justifying statements amplifies the necessity of Christ coming to absolute power and control over all things and all people in creation. The central goal of this is to destroy the last and most powerful of enemies, i.e., ὁ θάνατος (v. 26). Death was introduced through Adam and now it will be destroyed through the last Adam, Christ.

Once all this is accomplished then Christ Himself comes under full submission to God the Father: ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῆ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (v. 28). The play on the verb ὑποτάσσω here is fascinating although somewhat confusing. Indeed, this verse stood prominent in many of the church controversies over the nature of Christ in the third, fourth, and fifth century councils.⁴¹²

⁴¹¹For an in depth analysis of the Revelation text see my 1,100 page plus commentary on Revelation in the BIC commentary series at [cranfordville.com: http://cranfordville.com/BIC/Index_BIC_Revelation.html](http://cranfordville.com/BIC/Index_BIC_Revelation.html)

⁴¹²“Not surprisingly the exegesis of this verse featured prominently in the controversies of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. Origen expounds this verse in the context of the temporality of the world, which has God as its Source and End.¹⁴⁰ However, he has also to correct the view of ‘the heretics’ who regard the verse as ascribing a ‘demeaning’ subjection to the Son: the emphasis, Origen replies, is on the triumph of God in which the ‘subjection’ of all things is ‘extremely rational and logical’ if God is God and if all things have been restored to their proper order.”¹⁴¹ Chrysostom



One should not read some system of subordination of Christ into Paul's statement here. A key to this verse is the purpose clause ἵνα ἧ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, **that God may be all things in all things**. Obviously such an esoteric statement as this it has a particular situation in mind. Clearly Paul is not advocating the Stoic pantheism with used similar statements in both Greek and Latin.⁴¹³ Although possible grammar wise, it's not likely either that the πᾶσιν should be taken as masculine rather than neuter with the resulting translation of **...may be all things among everyone**. Was the case that some of the Corinthian elitists had adopted a mystical, philosophical based understanding of Christ and even of God? Some commentators have suggested the so-called "Christ party," ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ, alluded to in 1:12 may very well be the target in mind here by Paul. The adoption of elements of the Stoic concept has injected a static idea of eternity and the divine into Christianity that Paul clearly refutes by the dynamic emphasis here on God taking over control of all things in every aspect of His creation. Contextually the point of the purpose

spreads his comments on v. 28 over what amounts to the equivalent of nearly a dozen columns.¹⁴² This verse, he insists, cannot contradict Christ's exaltation in Phil 2:9. Paul does not say that Christ will cease to reign, only that his reign will not cease before all things have been set to right: Christ will not be 'without power.'¹⁴³ That God may be all in all means that all things may be 'dependent on him.'¹⁴⁴ This change of emphasis reflects a history of debate in which Ariens appealed to this verse for a subordinationist Christology. Augustine is still more emphatic. 'We should not think that Christ will so give up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that he shall take it away.'¹⁴⁵ In 1 Cor 15:24–28 'he must reign' determines the relativity of 'until.' Thus when he hands over the rule to God (v. 24) means 'when he shall have brought believers to the contemplation of God,' while 'subjection' to God (v. 28) means change from 'the substance of a creature' (in the incarnation) to 'become the substance of God.'¹⁴⁶ Augustine's treatise On the Trinity ends with the acclamation of 'the one God, the Trinity,' as He who remains 'all in all.'¹⁴⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1238.]

⁴¹³ "Although the expression τὰ πάντα was used in Stoic thought to denote the universe and 'the All,' the dynamic, eschatological movement of Pauline thought precludes any affinity with Stoic pantheism. Far from identifying God with 'the All,' Paul sees God as the source and goal of a world in need of reconciliation and salvation through (δὲ) αὐτοῦ, Rom 11:36) God in Christ.¹⁵¹ Schweitzer comments that whereas 'in the Stoic view the world is thought of as static.... The world is Nature.... Paul lives in the conception of the dramatic world-view characteristic of the late Jewish eschatology.... He concludes ... 'For from Him and through Him and unto Him are all things' (Rom 11:36); but he cannot ... add that all things are *in* God' (his italics).¹⁵² Into this frame of reference Schweitzer places 1 Cor 15:26–28, with its conscious emphasis on succession and purposive process.¹⁵³" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1239.]

clause is to affirm the achieving by God of His original goal in creation of a created order purged of all evil and where He can be fully Himself without having to confront evil every place in creation. Clearly this is the portrait painted by John in Revelation 22 using images of city, garden etc. to portray the eternal order of things. I strongly suspect that this is Paul's intended point here as well.

Also important to note is that in the background of the terminology used by Paul in vv. 26-27 stands Psalms 8:5-8 and Psalm 110 (LXX 109).⁴¹⁴ Both the poetic expression and the emphasis upon God's sovereign control over His creation in these psalms provide a defining framework for Paul's application of them to the Son of David, Christ, in an eschatological realization. If Greek mystical, esoteric thinking had penetrated into the views of the elitists, then Paul busts it to pieces with the eloquent Hebrew affirmation of God working through His Son in order to achieve absolute sovereignty over a purged and evil free creation at the end of history. With the destruction of death, nothing but nothing

⁴¹⁴**Psalm 8:5-9 (LXX).** 5 τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι μιμήσκη αὐτοῦ, ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, ὅτι ἐπισκέπη αὐτόν; † 6 ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχὺ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους, δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν. † 7 καὶ κατέστησας αὐτόν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου, πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ. † 8 πρόβατα καὶ βόας πάσας, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὰ κτήνη τοῦ πεδίου, † 9 τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἰχθύας τῆς θαλάσσης, τὰ διαπορευόμενα τρίβους θαλασσῶν. †

4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? 5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

Psalm 110 (LXX 109). 1 Τῷ Δαυιδ ψαλμός. Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου. † 2 ῥάβδον δυνάμεώς σου ἐξαποστελεῖ κύριος ἐκ Σιων, καὶ κατακυριεύει ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου. † 3 μετὰ σοῦ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς δυνάμεώς σου ἐν ταῖς λαμπρότησιν τῶν ἁγίων· ἐκ γαστροῦ πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐξεγέννησά σε. † 4 ὡμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμελήθησεται Σὺ εἶ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ. † 5 κύριος ἐκ δεξιῶν σου συνέθλασεν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλεῖς. † 6 κρινεῖ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, πληρώσει πτώματα, συνθλάσει κεφαλὰς ἐπὶ γῆς πολλῶν. † 7 ἐκ χειμάρρου ἐν ὁδῷ πίεται· διὰ τοῦτο ὑψώσει κεφαλὴν. †

Of David. A Psalm. 1 The Lord says to my lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." 2 The Lord sends out from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes. 3 Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you. 4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." 5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter heads over the wide earth. 7 He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head.

ing stands in the way of God's complete sovereignty being expressed over His creation. Remember that sovereignty and power in this world stand against enemies seeking to destroy. Once all these enemies have themselves been destroyed, sovereignty and power take on a new marvelous meaning of security and blessing for those experiencing it. God's sovereignty is threatening only to those opposing Him. Yielding to it brings peace and blessing.

iii) Further defense of Christ's resurrection, vv. 29-

34.

29 Ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν; εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, τί καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν; 30 Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν; 31 καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, [ἀδελφοί], ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. 32 εἰ

15.29 Ἐπεὶ
665 τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι
 ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν;
 εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,
666 τί καὶ βαπτίζονται
 ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν;
667 15.30 Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν
 πᾶσαν ὥραν;
668 15.31 καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω,
669 νῆ (ἐστὶν) τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν,
 [ἀδελφοί], | ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.
 15.32 εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα
 ἐν Ἐφέσῳ,
670 τί μοι (ἐστὶν) τὸ ὄφελος;
 εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,
671 φάγωμεν
 καὶ
672 πίωμεν,
 γὰρ
673 αὐριον ἀποθνήσκομεν.
674 15.33 μὴ πλανᾶσθε·
675 φθείρουσιν ἡθὴ χρηστὰ ὁμιλίας κακαί.
676 15.34 ἐκνήψατε
 δικαίως
 καὶ
677 μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε,
 γὰρ
678 ἀγνωσίαν θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν,
 πρὸς ἐντροπὴν
679 ὑμῖν λαλῶ.

κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αὐριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν. 33 μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἡθὴ χρηστὰ ὁμιλίας κακαί. 34 ἐκνήψατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε, ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν, πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λαλῶ.

29 Otherwise, what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

30 And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? 31 I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you—a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” 33 Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good

morals.” 34 Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

In this unit of text the apostle continues his defense of the resurrection of Christ and then of believers. But here his pattern of argumentation shifts into a new direction that includes quoting Greek philosophers etc. Verse 34 concludes with an admonition to the Corinthians to ‘get their act together’ for they are missing opportunities to lead people to saving faith in the risen Christ.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁵“In vv. 29–34 Paul turns from his majestic contemplation of God’s ordered eschatological, sovereign purposes to resume his emphasis on the consequences of denying the resurrection. The thought begun in v. 20 confirmed the cause and ground for such belief; vv. 29–34 focus on the consequences of belief or unbelief in terms of a consis-

The example of proxy baptism in the church, v. 29. The first supplementary argument for resurrection comes in verse 29, and is one of the strangest statements found inside the NT.⁴¹⁶ Critical to making sense of these two rhetorical questions is νεκροὶ and βαπτίζονται. The natural sense of οἱ νεκροὶ is referencing individuals who have physically died. Also of βαπτίζονται, the Christian initiation ordinance of water baptism is the most common meaning, especially the passive voice usage. But such a practice is unknown in ancient Christianity outside of this one isolated reference. Thus from the second century on Bible interpreters have questioned this meaning of Paul's statements.

The two rhetorical questions pose the issue, but not until the second one in the form of a first class conditional sentence is the connection of this to the larger issue of resurrection seen.

Ἐπεὶ

**τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν;
εἰ ὄλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,
τί καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν;**

Also central to the meaning of this verse is the precise sense of the future tense ποιήσουσιν, which has an enormous of legitimate potential meanings.⁴¹⁷ The

tendency and ethics of lifestyle: (a) baptism for the sake of (or for) the dead would be senseless if resurrection is denied (v. 29); (b) Paul's own sacrifice of his life would be equally pointless and stupid (vv. 30–32a); (c) why not go the whole way and relapse into a lifestyle concerned only for pleasure in this life (vv. 32b–34)? [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1240.]

⁴¹⁶Verse 29 is a notoriously difficult crux: the most 'hotly disputed' in the epistle (Conzelmann); 'it is not clear precisely what this practice was' (Dale Martin); 'everything must be understood as tentative' (Fee); a variety of understandings emerge 'given the enigmatic nature of the practice' (Collins).¹⁵⁵ By 1887 Godet had counted 'about thirty explanations' for baptized for the dead, while B. M. Foschini and R. Schnackenburg allude to 'more than forty'.¹⁵⁶ Wolff's commentary includes seventeen subcategories with seven issue-centered general approaches.¹⁵⁷ A vast literature stretches from the second century to the present day. Mathis Rissi devoted an entire book to this one verse, categorizing a mass of views on the history of interpretation under four main groups, with variations in each group. (a) One category adds σωματίων to ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν, and identifies the dead with those who are being baptized. (b) A second view understands baptism as the suffering and death of martyrdom. (c) A third interprets baptism broadly as washing (where the Hebrew but not the Greek may use a common word). (d) The fourth understands this as vicarious baptism on behalf of people who are dead. Rissi rejects the 'sacramentalism' often implied in this.¹⁵⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1240.]

⁴¹⁷The semantic range of ποιέω is vast, as the sheer column-inches in BAGD and Grimm-Thayer bear witness, although proportionately much less space is devoted to the word in Liddell-Scott-Jones or Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*.¹⁵⁹ The relevant

understanding of Thiselton answers more of the lexicographical and contextual aspects and thus represents a more likely meaning intended by Paul: **What do those people think they are doing who ...?**

What οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν alludes to is understood from the second century beginning with the church father Tertullian is that some believers at Corinth were undergoing the rite of Christian baptism in behalf of friends and family who professed faith in Christ while living but were unable to follow through with the rite of baptism for some reason. In the solidarity of a collective oriented society, these individuals felt it important for their deceased friends to have credited to them the experience of baptism vicariously as a proxy experience. To be sure, such a view has numerous question marks attached to it. A modification of this view is that the living friends and family did this action in behalf of their deceased believing family members and friends in the hope of securing a shared experience of resurrection with the deceased.⁴¹⁸

possibilities for exploration in this verse may be summarized as (a) achieving, bringing about; (b) intransitive doing as an activity; (c) fashioning, perhaps in an indulgent, self-generating way; and (d) doing with a future to indicate the subjective dimension also implicit in (c), i.e., doing in terms of what one thinks one is doing. (i) NJB's *What are people up to who ...?* is very tempting and could be right. We included it as our translation in an earlier draft, but it misses the subjective dimension which several writers perceive (probably rightly) here. Worse in this respect is (ii), *What do they achieve ...?* (cf. Grotius, "quid efficient?"). P. Bachmann, A. Schlatter, and Barrett (in part) argue for this view, but Meyer comments that a notion of 'achievement' by baptism would be 'a thought foreign to the apostle. He wished to point out the subjective absurdity of the procedure.'¹⁶⁰ (iii) Weiss understands τί ποιήσουσιν as 'indeed of course a mode of logical future,' but renders it, 'What should they resort to.... What will they do in the future?'¹⁶¹ This accords with Barrett's second point that the future may convey the force of, *What will they do next?* (i.e., when it is discovered that there is no resurrection).¹⁶² Barrett agrees that the net force is subjective or self-involving: 'Will not these people look fools when ...?' (iv) NRSV, NIV, *what will they do ...?* (with Wolff and Collins) is similar, but loses both the logical and subjective force.¹⁶³ (v) Curiously REB underlines the subjective aspect, but transfers this to the readers rather than those to whom the text refers: *What do you suppose they are doing?* (vi) Moffatt can find more lexicographical support than we might imagine for *What is the meaning of people getting baptized ...?* and is a possible way forward. (vii) All in all, **What do those people think they are doing who ...?** does justice to (a) the use of the future as a logical present; (b) the subjective or self-involving aspect; (c) an open-ended appeal to them to reflect on their self-consistency of thought and action; and (d) the wide semantic range of the word." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1241.]

⁴¹⁸J. K. Howard fully supports and develops this view against those which favor vicarious baptism. He writes that baptism for (for the sake of) the dead is 'not in order to remedy some deficien-



What is clear from the way these rhetorical questions are framed is that this practice was limited to a small number of individuals inside the church at Corinth.⁴¹⁹ Also, that Paul neither approves nor condemns the practice. Such a practice represents an abnormal custom not deemed necessary in apostolic Christianity. But referencing those who engage in this at Corinth helps Paul make the point of why do such a thing if there is no resurrection. Clearly the practice assumed a future resurrection of the dead by those engaging in it. That

cy on the part of the dead, but in order to be reunited with them at the resurrection.²¹⁸ Schackenburg agrees that ‘the argument does not step outside the frame of primitive Christian views and above all fits excellently into the resurrection chapter.’²¹⁹ The linguistic force of ὑπέρ, *for the sake of*, is preserved,

667 together with a convincing nonmetaphorical meaning for both τῶν νεκρῶν (the Christian dead) and the middle-voice force of οἱ βαπτιζόμενα, *those who have themselves baptized*. We may return to G. G. Findlay’s succinct and careful comments. After exposing the fallacy of some competing views, he observes, ‘Paul is referring rather to a much commoner, indeed a normal experience, that the death of Christians leads to the conversion of survivors, who in the first instance ‘for the sake of the dead’ (their beloved dead) and in the hope of re-union, turn to Christ—e.g., when a dying mother wins her son by the appeal ‘Meet me in heaven!’ Such appeals, and their frequent salutary effect, give strong and touching evidence of faith in the resurrection’ (Findlay’s italics).²²⁰

“The supposed objection that such conversion would depend on mixed motives in the first place merely finds replication over the centuries in many pastoral situations, and, second, should not obscure the focus of the confident witness to Christ and to the resurrection which such a plea transparently presupposed. From a dying loved one, this would carry enormous weight. There is no room for pretense or self-interest on a deathbed: the sincerity and transparency of faith and witness become overwhelming. Of two recent articles, the work of R. E. DeMaris on archaeological evidence concerning the importance of the world of the dead in mid-first-century Corinth carries weight, but may in effect count equally in favor of the ‘vicarious baptism’ view or this final argument.²²¹ For the more significant the fate of the dead, the more important and effective would be the plea of the deathbed Christian, with a view to reunion in the afterlife. On the other hand: most of the arguments against view (11) still apply. J. D. Reaume’s recent article, however, confirms the direction of our own arguments.²²² We see no reason to reject this view (B)(13) as the least problematic and most convincing of all.”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1248–1249.]

⁴¹⁹Given the numerous weird practices and beliefs that Paul references about the elitist groups in the Corinthian church, one should not be surprised at this very unusual practice existing in the church there.

it is never mentioned elsewhere in the NT and never became a practice in emerging Christianity over the next several centuries strongly suggests that no norm or standard can be assumed here for Christianity generally, contrary to some modern day cults who practice some version of proxy baptism based on this text.

Paul’s personal experience, vv. 30-31. 30 Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν; 31 καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, [ἀδελφοί]⁴²⁰, ἦν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. 30 **And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? 31 I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you — a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

667 **Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν**
πᾶσαν ὥραν;
668 **καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω,**
669 **νῆ (ἐστὶν) τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν,**
[ἀδελφοί],
|
ἦν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

Paul raises a personal question about his motivation as proof of the resurrection. His life is lived constantly in danger because of his beliefs. Why would he do this if there was no resurrection? It would not make any sense. The sense of καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, *every day I die*, is matched by a later statement to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 1:9a, ἀλλ’ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχήκαμεν..., *Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death...* It is a repeating and emphasis on the initial statement **Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν; Why do we also put our lives in danger every hour?** The particle of emphasis νῆ sets this first statement up with as much certainty as the second statement, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, [ἀδελφοί], ἦν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. **Indeed as certain as boasting about you,**

⁴²⁰“In v. 31 a number of important early MSS include the vocative ἀδελφοί after καύχησιν, i.e., κ, Α, Β, as well as 33, Coptic, and the Vulgate. However, it is omitted by the earlier P⁴⁶, together with D, F, G, L, the Syriac, and Ambrosiaster. On the ground that its insertion is so much easier to explain than its omission, and the combination of P⁴⁶ and the Western text, most writers regard the P⁴⁶ reading as correct. UBS 4th ed. places it in square brackets (as does the 1979 ed. of the Nestle-Aland text). Metzger explains that ‘the Committee was reluctant to drop it from the text altogether’ because of its inclusion in κ, Α, and Β; but ranked it as ‘C,’ i.e., difficult to decide upon with certainty.²²³ NRSV, NIV, and REB retain it (NRSV, NIV, *brothers and sisters*; REB, *my friends*); but NJB (surely rightly) omits it (as does AV/KJV). Why should this term of affection have been omitted by the varied traditions from which it is absent, unless they reflect the text?” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1249.]

brothers, which I make in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁴²¹ Paul's conviction of the resurrection of the dead is just as certain as the pride he takes in the church at Corinth. With so many problems existing in the church, the temptation is to wonder about this. But it must always be remembered that all the problems discussed by Paul touched only a small part of the church which in the majority elements was very stable and genuine.

Paul's experience at Ephesus, vv. 32-33. 32 εἰ κατὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αὔριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν. 33 μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἡθηρησὶ κακαί. 32 If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

Again Paul uses a first class conditional protasis that assumes the reality of an earlier experience he had while in Ephesus: εἰ κατὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, **if humanly speaking I fought the wild beasts in Ephesus**. The question here is whether Paul meant this literally or metaphorically.⁴²² Several impossible bar-

⁴²¹Paul uses an idiom associated with taking an oath or with 'affirming' in a quasi-legal sense. Grimm-Thayer notes concerning νή: 'a particle employed in affirmations and oaths (common in Attic) and joined to an acc of the pers (for the most part, a divinity) or of the thing affirmed or sworn by ... [often best translated as] by ... 1 Cor 15:31 (Gen 42:15, 16).'²²⁹ BAGD's entry is similar: 'strong affirmation,' with examples from Epictetus and the papyri.²³⁰ The accusative that denotes what Paul affirms or swears by (νή) is τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, the [act of] glorying in you (see Textual Note [2] above). Robertson and Plummer approve of Rutherford's 'I assure you by the [brotherly; see Textual Note (1)] pride in your faith with which I am possessed in Christ Jesus our Lord'." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1250.]

⁴²²*Fighting with wild beasts* (θηριομαχέω) occurs in the aorist, normally to depict a past event, but since Paul writes from Ephesus, **I have battled** becomes the normal English equivalent.²³⁵ Some allude to being forced to fight with wild animals as a punishment for an alleged or actual crime (Diodorus Siculus, 3.43.7 [first century BC]; Josephus, Wars 7.38; Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians, 1:2; Letter to the Trallians, 10). However, Ignatius uses the compound verb both literally (as above) and metaphorically: *from Syria to Rome I fight with wild beasts, bound to ten leopards, that is a detachment of soldiers* (Ignatius, Letter to the Romans, 5:1).²³⁶ Luther and Calvin discuss in detail forms of persecution at Rome which entailed battling with wild beasts, but these historically belong to a later date than around 54–55.²³⁷ Weiss and Héring regard the allusion as literal but also as merely hypothetical, which seems to reduce the force of an argument which rhetorically demands a climax or peak.²³⁸ On the other hand, Héring's argument that as a Roman citizen Paul could not have been submitted to such a punishment equally points in the direction of metaphor. The catalogue of sufferings in 2 Cor 11:23ff. also makes no mention of this experience. Even if Weiss and Héring can overcome the grammatical problem of the indicative, most understand it as metaphor. Fee con-

15.32 εἰ κατὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι (ἐστὶν) τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, γὰρ αὔριον ἀποθνήσκομεν. 15.33 μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἡθηρησὶ κακαί.

riers rise up against a literal understanding. Although Christians in the arena at Rome did undergo such an experience it wasn't until after the coliseum in Rome was constructed until into the second century AD. And those experiences were limited to Rome only. Also, as a Roman citizen Paul could not be forced to such an experience, even though it had been a limited form of execution such before the beginning of the Christian era.

Some think that the 'wild beasts' at Ephesus were Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths who tried to have Paul executed according to Acts 19:23-27. But the problem here is that this event is depicted by Luke as coming at the end of Paul's three plus year stay in Ephesus, while this letter was written by Paul at least one to two years earlier from Ephesus. The only other 'candidate' from Paul's time in Ephesus in Acts 19 would be the Jewish synagogue leaders who ἠπειθουν κακολογοῦντες τὴν ὁδὸν ἐνώπιον τοῦ πλήθους, **were speaking evil against the way before the congregation** (v. 9b). But the intensity of this early episode coming after three months in the city and Paul's language here in First Corinthians, ἐθηριομάχησα, doesn't match at all, and thus makes the synagogue leaders very unlikely to be the 'wild beasts' that Paul alludes to. A final argument in favor of the figurative meaning is that in the detailed listing of sufferings mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:23-29, no mention is made about fighting wild beasts at Ephesus.

What we must conclude is that a serious confrontation, perhaps violent confrontation, occurred while

tends that it 'must be' metaphor, while Collins sees a metaphorical allusion to the agōn motif as more probable than some hypothetical event.²³⁹ Tertullian regarded it as a metaphorical allusion to the tumult narrated in Acts 19.²⁴⁰ R. E. Osborne and A. J. Malherbe consider alternatives and conclude that metaphor is clearly used here.²⁴¹ Wolff compares the experience of Paul's coming to this end of himself (or 'receiving a sentence of death'): 'we even despaired of life' (2 Cor 1:8–11).²⁴² In 1 Cor 16:9 Paul alludes to continuing opposition at Ephesus." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1251–1252.]

Paul was in the city and prior to the writing of this letter. Luke, for unknown reasons, chose not to include this episode in his depiction in Acts 19. The figurative meaning of θηριομαχέω in ancient literature -- it is only used here inside the NT -- does normally denote violent confrontation with an opponent or opponents. But what that may have been in Paul's experience in Ephesus remains a mystery.

The apodosis makes the central point in regard to this scenario: τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; **What's the point?** The meaning here becomes clear in the first class conditional sentence that follows:

εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται,
φάγωμεν καὶ πίνωμεν,
 γὰρ
αὔριον ἀποθνήσκομεν.
 Since the dead are not being raised,
let's eat and drink
 for
tomorrow we die.

The protasis εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται repeats the protasis in v. 29b εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, linking the issue back to the core issue πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινας ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν; **How are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?** in v. 12. If the denial of resurrection being made by the elitists in Corinthians is correct, then Paul's risking his life to preach the risen Christ is foolishness! In one allusion here in the apodosis, Paul picks up on both an OT episode and several sarcastic references to the Greek philosophy of Epicureanism by others in the Greek speaking world.

In Isa. 22:12-14, many of the desperate inhabitants of Jerusalem facing the seeming destruction of their city by the Assyrians decide to 'party like there is no tomorrow.'⁴²³ They had lost trust in God to deliver them and turned toward immorality in a libertine kind of life style.⁴²⁴ But the use of Isa. 22:13 also picks up on

423 Isa. 22:12-14. 12 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν κύριος σαβαωθ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ κλαυθμὸν καὶ κοπετὸν καὶ ξύρησιν καὶ ζῶσιν σάκκων,† 13 αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐποιήσαντο εὐφροσύνην καὶ ἀγαλλίαμα σφάζοντες μόσχους καὶ θύοντες πρόβατα ὥστε φαγεῖν κρέα καὶ πιεῖν οἶνον λέγοντες **Φάγωμεν καὶ πίνωμεν, αὔριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν.**† 14 καὶ ἀνακακαλυμμένα ταῦτα ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς ὠσίν κυρίου σαβαωθ, ὅτι οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται ὑμῖν αὕτη ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἕως ἂν ἀποθάνητε.†

12 In that day the Lord God of hosts called to weeping and mourning, to baldness and putting on sackcloth; 13 but instead there was joy and festivity, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating meat and drinking wine. **“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”** 14 The Lord of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you until you die, says the Lord God of hosts.

⁴²⁴Paul now quotes words of despair about a life with nothing beyond the dissolution of personal existence as the end. Is he quoting from Isa 22:13, or from an Epicurean slogan, or from an anti-Epicurean slogan which offers an ironic overstatement of Epicurean philosophy? C. D. Stanley does not include the quotation

a very common condemnation of Epicureanism by its critics in the Greek speaking world of Corinth. For the Epicureans the heart of living was having fun and this came chiefly through banqueting which also included brazen sexual immorality as well.⁴²⁵

Paul ingeniously combines this OT Jewish episode reflecting failed trust in God with the rather sarcastic criticism of the immoral life style of the Epicureans in order to assert that if there is no resurrection these people are correct.⁴²⁶ There is no tomorrow, and just live for today in the unbridled expression of physical desires. The elitists who depended on their Greek reasoning to deny the resurrection can't even make good use of their pagan background, much less get the apostolic Gospel correctly. Any of these elitists who may have had a Hellenistic Jewish background would have felt additionally the sting of the quote from Isa. 22:13 as well.

Paul moves from this rather stinging rebuke of the elitists to a second one in v. 33: μὴ πλανᾶσθε· φθείρουσιν ἡἷη χρηστὰ ὁμιλία κακαί. **Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”** Here the apostle quotes a very popular Greek maxim in wide circulation during the first in his Paul and the Language of Scripture.²⁴³ Although he omits it from his *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Hays observes in his commentary that such scepticism as is envisaged would lead the readers to act 'like the frenzied inhabitants of Jerusalem who faced siege and annihilation at the hands of the Assyrians (Isa 22:12–14): instead of facing their fate with repentance and weeping, they decided to 'party like [i.e., as if] there were no tomorrow' ... quoted from Isa 22:13.'²⁴⁴ In practice virtually all major commentators assume or argue that Paul quotes from this passage.²⁴⁵ The question which arises is simply whether this quotation also coincides with a quotation from hellenistic philosophical or ethical controversy. Epicureanism in its sophisticated form is more than crude materialism, but its opponents readily characterized it as such, especially in popular Stoic-Cynic circles. As Fee reminds us, Plutarch speaks of a life of 'eating and drinking' as a dissolute and empty life, with an anti-Epicurean Tendency.²⁴⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1252–1253.]

⁴²⁵One of the very interesting aspects of what Paul does with this rebuke of the Corinthian elitists here is to turn their Greek philosophy against them. From having grown up in one of the three major centers of Greek philosophical teaching in the first century world, Tarsus, he knew the teachings of the Greek philosophers as well or better than these Corinthian elitists did. Very cleverly here he uses it against them.

⁴²⁶The two sources together form an admirable, logical, and rhetorical bridge to vv. 33–34, as Eriksson points out. Both Isa 22:13 and 'contemporary anti-Epicurean polemic' equally 'designate the libertine life.... Paul uses it to point to the utter futility of a life without the motivation given by the resurrection of Christ.'²⁴⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1253.]



century.⁴²⁷ Probably it originated with the philosopher Menander in a comedy play attributed to him before the beginning of the Christian era. But by the first Christian century it is widely quoted in numerous Greek and Latin sources. What is interesting about the quote is its clear link to Paul's earlier criticism of divisiveness among the Corinthians in 1:10-17. The σχίσματα, *divisions*, in 1:10 now are alluded to in this Greek philosophy quote as ὀμιλῖαι κακαί, *bad gangs*, in 15:33. The impact of pagan Greek thinking into the life of the church in Corinth is ruining the spiritual life of the church. Ironically, this is confirmed by a Greek maxim no less! Although in the Greek maxim ἤθη χρηστὰ, *good morals*, has no particular Christian thrust, Paul's use of the maxim contextually thrusts ἤθη χρηστὰ to refer to the general spiritual life and health of the church. The heart of the Corinthian elitists' failure was to not recognize God's way of thinking in contrast to the very different Greek way of thinking. They sought to combine the two and it led to disaster. In issues like resurrection, that difference was very clear and should have been clearly understood by these people at Corinth, but it wasn't.

Concluding admonitions, v. 34. ἐκνήψατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε, ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν, πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λαλῶ. *Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.*

676 ^{15.34} ἐκνήψατε
δικαίως
καὶ
677 μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε,

γὰρ
678 ἀγνωσίαν θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν,
πρὸς ἐντροπὴν
679 ὑμῖν λαλῶ.

Paul brings to a climate this segment of his defense of resurrection with a pair of blunt admonitions that build in the previous one, μὴ πλανᾶσθε, *stop being deceived*,

⁴²⁷Jerome seems first to have attributed the quotation to Menander's comedy, but there is clear evidence that it had also become a popular maxim.²⁴⁹ Paul may well have heard it cited more than once as a maxim, and we may infer neither knowledge nor ignorance of Greek literature on Paul's part from this quotation. ὀμιλῖαι deserves a carefully nuanced translation. It does indeed denote *association, intercourse, company*, and then by extension a speech or sermon.²⁵⁰ However, it conveys the notion of *a clique, a group, or a 'gang' who regularly do things together and to which people 'belong.'* Hence we translate **belonging to bad gangs** for ὀμιλῖαι κακαί. The usual translation is *bad company* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB; as against AV/KJV, *evil communications*). But this loses the force of the peer pressure experienced from an 'in' group with which a person's life has become closely bound."²⁵¹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1254.]

in v. 33. First is ἐκνήψατε δικαίως. The clear meaning of the aorist imperative verb ἐκνήψω is literally, 'sober up!' Although only used here in the NT, the secular use defines recovering from drunkenness. Thus the figurative meaning is 'come to your senses,' even though this loses the pointed thrust of the Greek verb.

The addition of the adverb of manner δικαίως adds a certain tone to the verb that is not entirely clear.⁴²⁸ Used just 5 times in the NT, δικαίως comes from the adjective δίκαιος, -αία, -ον with the sense of *right, just, honest*. Here as Paul's words, rather than citation of a Greek source as in the above maxim, the apostle calls upon the Corinthian elitists to realize the corrupting influence of the pagan thinking they have adopted and to abandon it totally. They must come to God's way of thinking which δικαίως alludes to.

This sense of ἐκνήψατε δικαίως corresponds to the second imperative καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε, *and stop sinning*, which is set up as synonymous parallelism here. Again there is a biting sting to Paul's rebuke. In the Greek paganism being adopted by this group of people in the church the verb ἀμαρτάνω in the prohibitive imperative of the present tense had the sense of *stop living in ignorance!* But the Christian definition of ἀμαρτάνω based on LXX usage alludes to failure to measure up to God's expectation (cf. Rom. 3:23). Their functioning in a figurative 'drunken stupor' religiously becomes living in ignorance from a Greek perspective. And this in spite of their feeling they were doing superior thinking to Paul's preaching of the Gospel. Thus not only is there the sting of condemnation from the Greek background of these two admonitions, but even more severe rebuke from the Christian meaning of these terms. They were completely out of touch with God and His ways!

Paul issues this pair of severe rebukes on a specific basis as defined in the causal clause (γὰρ) that follows: ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν, πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λαλῶ. *For some possess ignorance of God, to your shame I say this.* The τινες here picks up on ἐν ὑμῖν τινες, *some of you*, in v. 12 in reference to the elitists in the Corinthian church. In spite of claiming to be Christian, these peo-

⁴²⁸The coupling of δικαίως with *rousing oneself from drunken stupor* has been understood in two quite distinct ways, in accordance with the fact that the Greek relates *either* (a) to moral or relational *rightness* or (b) to *conformity to an appropriate norm* which need not always be specified. On the basis of the second meaning Barrett rightly observes: 'Wake up properly (δικαίως, not righteously; for this sense see Kümmel)...'²⁵⁵ The metaphor requires an English rendering which somehow combines (a) waking to a clear mind after drunken stupor; (b) waking up to reality, i.e., *coming to one's senses*, in place of a fantasy, escapist world; (c) *regaining a necessary, proper sobriety.*" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1255.]



ple in the church are not saved believers. Instead, they are living in the delusion of not only being Christian, but be a superior one to Paul himself (cf. μή πλανᾶσθε in v. 33 which builds off of 2:1-16). The phrase ἀγνωσίαν... ἔχουσιν is much stronger than just the verb ἀγνοεῖν, **to be ignorant**. It denotes an utter, total ignorance, in this case, θεοῦ, **of God**.⁴²⁹

The final comment by Paul, πρὸς ἐντροπήν ὑμῶν λαλῶ, **I say this to your shame**, also has tones in the first century culture of honor/shame that modern readers would tend to miss. This is the second time this exact statement has been made. In 6:5, Paul's rebuke of the tendency to take fesses to the secular courts was severe. Now in 15:34, he shames them again over the issue of denying the principle of resurrection.⁴³⁰ Modern

⁴²⁹“Some people’ simply represents τινες, but picks up the resonance to the Greek ear of the some of 15:12 who have, in effect, been the ‘opponents’ for the whole of the treatise from 15:1 up to this point. The first word (before γάρ) in the key clause is ἀγνωσίαν. Whatever our theories about *gnosis, knowledge*, in this epistle, it is clearly a favorite word of ‘the strong’ at least. ‘We all have gnosis’ (8:1, in our group?) is characteristically followed by ‘But it is not the case that everyone [in the church at Corinth] has ‘knowledge’ (8:7). Some (τινες) remain more vulnerable (8:8–13). It would be easier to translate simply *some have utter ignorance of God*, which would preserve Paul’s word ἀγνωσίαν and its emphasis. But the alpha privative ἀ-γνωσίαν permits the word-play on knowledge to be recognized (e.g., in Eng. unknowledge or non-knowledge; ignorance loses the resonance). To add weight to the solemnity of Paul’s ringing indictment we translate γάρ, *for*, after τινες *as you see* (i.e., in a logical sense ‘**some people, you see, have an utter lack of ‘knowledge’ of God**). We need some such word as *utter* (not in the Greek) because ἀγνωσίαν ἔχειν ;means more than ἀγνοεῖν; in Paul and in much biblical tradition. It is often synonymous, Edwards notes, with a darkened pre-Christian state (1 Clement 59). Since it often characterizes the Gentile mind, the thought seems to be, ‘Some of you are cherishing that ignorance of God which belongs to the heathen.’²⁵⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1256.]

⁴³⁰“Not surprisingly Paul makes this an issue of what mattered perhaps most of all in a culture oriented to the scale of honor and shame (see above on 6:5, *it is to make you ashamed that I say this to you*). We have only to recall the importance of honor and self-praise, instantiated in rhetoric, benefactions, and monuments, to recall how sensitive the readers (esp. ‘the strong’) would be to praise in their honor or to accusations which would bring **shame**. Bruce Winter includes an illuminating set of contrasts placed on the honor-shame scale with reference to 1 Cor 1:26–28: ‘Status in secular Corinth: σοφοί, δυνατοί, εὐγενεῖς’ (versus τὰ μωρά ... τὰ ἀσθενῆ ... τὰ ἀγενῆ ... τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ... τὰ μὴ ὄντα), side by side with the Sophists’ list which begins ἐνδοξοί, πλούσιοι, ἡγεμόνες ... up to twelve terms.²⁶⁴ Andrew Clarke similarly, as we have noted above, demonstrates ‘self-praise’ as “a widely accepted practice....”²⁶⁵ Almost nothing could have brought home to the group or groups in question in ch. 15 the enormity of their attitude on their own ground. This verse thus forms the hinge to vv. 35–58, where Paul argues on the basis of the reality of God’s creative and sovereign agency through Christ by the Spirit.” [Anthony C.

western, and especially western hemisphere, individualism blinds us to the enormity of embarrassment felt for being publicly shamed, as Paul does through this letter against these elitists. Few actions that Paul could have taken as a spiritual leader would have had the same impact as these simple words πρὸς ἐντροπήν ὑμῶν λαλῶ. It’s likely that this shaming of these people in the church produced, at least in part, the bitter feelings against Paul that he deals with in 2 Cor. 10-13.

iv) The nature of the resurrection body, vv. 35-58.

In this section the focus is upon describing what Paul meant by resurrection.⁴³¹ Although the thrust is different from the preceding sections, it is closely linked to them. The structuring of the theme introduction in v. 35 makes this very clear: Ἄλλ’ ἐρεῖ τις· πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποῖω δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; **But someone objects, “How are the dead being raised? And with what kind of body do they have?”** In Greek diatribe style, Paul introduces the contrary view of the elitists as an objection to his view of resurrection. Verses 36-58 constitute his reply to this objection. And is introduced in typical Greek rhetorical fashion with ἄφρων, **you fool!** For modern readers this seems harsh but in Paul’s Greco-Roman world such blunt language in debate was normative and expected. One should note that the second singular σὺ dominates vv. 36-49 as Paul is carrying on a ‘dialogue’ with his ‘straw man’ objector set up as ἐρεῖ τις, **some one objects**, in v. 35.

Paul dismisses the objection in two *refutatio*: vv. 36-49 and vv. 50-57. These are sometimes also labeled as *confirmatio* by modern students of ancient Greek/Latin rhetoric. The more appropriate label depends upon whether the dominate theme centers on exposing the wrongs of the opponent’s view, or espousal of the correctness of one’s own view. Here such a mixture of these two elements is present that choosing one or the other label is difficult. Thus different proposals will surface among the commentators with specialized training in ancient rhetoric. Clearly Paul closes in v. 58 with a word of praise and encouragement to his read-

Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1257.]

⁴³¹“Eriksson’s recent rhetorical analysis coheres well with emphases identified in some older modern works (Weiss, Kennedy, and Robertson and Plummer) and in some more recent works (M. M. Mitchell, D. F. Watson, and Wolff).¹ Eriksson writes: ‘A new round of argumentation with *refutatio* and *confirmatio* starts in 15:35.... The question concerns the nature of the resurrection, the stasis of quality signaled by πῶς.... The question is more closely specified as ποῖω δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; this puts the emphasis on the definition of the resurrection body.’²” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1258–1259.]

ers adopting his view of resurrection.

The objection, v. 35. Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις· πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; **But someone will object, "How are the dead raised? And what kind of body do they possess in resurrection?"**

15.35 Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις·
680 πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί;
δὲ ποίῳ σώματι ἔρχονται;

Paul follows the standard diatribe structure that James did in Jas. 2:18 with Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις.⁴³² While James crushes the objection to his principle that only working faith is saving faith, Paul in his response to this objector to the idea of resurrection affirms consequences of such a denial but without the hugely blunt attacking direct language that James uses.

The objection posed by Paul in the mouth of an objector is framed in two rhetorical questions:

πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί;
ποίῳ δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται;
How are the dead raised?

And with what kind of body can they come?

These move from the broad to the specific and thus signal how Paul is going to respond. Most of his emphasis will fall on the specific question since he has already spent considerable effort responding to the first broad question. Although cognitively the two questions at first appear to be somewhat distinct from one another, in reality the specific oriented second question builds off the premise of the first question. There has to be a resurrection action before there can be a resurrection body! Ultimately not much difference in thrust exists between the two questions. The interrogative adverb πῶς raises the issue of how such an action occurs. And the interrogative adjective ποίῳ is qualitative in meaning thus raising the issue of what is the nature of the product of this resurrection action.

The use of ἔρχονται as a potential present tense function is consistent with the hypothetical nature of the question, and thus is better translated as **can come**.⁴³³

⁴³²James 2:18-26 is considered by many scholars biblical and classical to be among the best constructed diatribes in ancient Greek literature. James sets up an objector to this assertion in 2:14 that only a working faith is a saving faith. In 2:18-23 he addresses this objector with devastating arguments crushing the objection. And then in vv. 24-26 he engages his readers with a switch to the second person plural forms with further destruction of any objection to his principle of 2:14.

⁴³³“The use of the word **come** (ἐρχονται) may seem unexpected and even puzzling: ‘Paul is probably thinking of real coming—out of graves, with Christ’ (Barrett’s italics).¹⁷ However, we must not forget that the issue is that of conceptual and logical possibility in the mouth of the objector (probably real, possibly rhetorical). Hence it is helpful to use the English logical ‘can’: **With what**

Paul is assuming here the coming out of the grave. The question seems to hint at an assumption that Paul’s view follows the typical Jewish apocalyptic view of a physical body brought back to an essentially physical life.⁴³⁴ Perhaps the Corinthian elitists had some familiarity with the standard Jewish apocalyptic depiction of resurrection which they found easy to dismiss as distastefully crude for an educated person. But this is not entirely clear. And for certain Paul doesn’t give anything close of the usual Jewish apocalyptic answer.

First response by Paul, vv. 36-49. Paul’s initial response is a lesson in Jewish agricultural life. He uses the analogy of a seed and a plant in order to compare both the similarities and differences of the physical and the resurrection bodies. First, he affirms God’s sovereign control over all this in vv. 36-38. Then in vv. 39-41 he gives a long list of living things etc. in order to illustrate the similarities and differences. Finally, in vv. 42-

kind of body can they [possibly] come? REB’s *in what kind of body* simply refuses to take Paul’s use of *come* seriously (cf. *do they come*, NRSV, Collins; *will they come*, NIV; *do they have when they come*, NJB). ‘The real concern behind their denial ... was an implicit understanding that they meant the re-animation of dead bodies, the resuscitation of corpses.’¹⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1263.]

⁴³⁴One should note that in the background here stands the Jewish apocalyptic literature of this era -- overwhelmingly coming out of Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora including the province of Asia -- which assumes that the resurrection body is composed of rearranged particles of the rotting flesh of the dead corpse.

This is all the more sharply focused when they cite evidence from Jewish apocalyptic which presupposes a view that the resurrection body is an organism composed of particles reassembled from those of the rotting or rotted corpse: “In what shape will those live who live in Thy day?... He answered and said to me... The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead [which it now receives in order to preserve them]. It shall make no change in their form but as it has received, so it will restore them” (2 Baruch 49:2; 50:1-2 [my italics]).¹⁴

R. H. Charles observes that whereas some of the Pharisees prior to 2 Baruch (i.e., *Apocalypse of Baruch*, dated c. AD 75-100) believed in a transformed mode of resurrection existence, 2 Baruch insists on a crudely materialist view according to which “the earth preserves the body intact, as committed to it.”¹⁵ On the other hand, Charles’s note should not be taken to imply an even greater crudity than exists. Sometimes “the earth” is replaced by the notion that the earthly forms are preserved unchanged in Sheol (4 Bar. 21:23; 30:2-5, although 2 Baruch is probably a composite document). The key points are: (i) The questions of 2 Bar. 49:2 are closely similar to those of 1 Cor 15:35; but (ii) the emphasis on no change of 2 Bar. 50:2 is utterly in contradiction to Paul’s “we shall all be changed” (15:51) and “what you sow is not the body that shall be” (15:37a).¹⁶ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1262.]

49 he applies this seed / plant analogy to the physical / resurrection bodies with the emphasis on the latter.

Death for the seed is necessary for life in the plant, vv. 36-38.

36 ἄφρων, σὺ ὁ σπείρεις, οὐ ζωοποιεῖται ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ· 37 καὶ ὁ σπείρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν· 38 ὁ δὲ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα καθὼς ἠθέλησεν, καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα. **36 Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.**

^{15.36} ἄφρων,
681 σὺ ὁ σπείρεις οὐ ζωοποιεῖται
ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ·
^{15.37} καὶ
ὁ σπείρεις,
682 οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις
ἀλλὰ
683 γυμνὸν κόκκον (σπείρεις)
εἰ τύχοι σίτου
ἢ
τινος τῶν λοιπῶν·
^{15.38} ὁ δὲ
684 ὁ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα
καθὼς ἠθέλησεν,
καὶ
685 ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα.

One thing that should be remembered by north American readers⁴³⁵ of this biblical text is the much higher level of bluntness and directness in the first century cultural world of both Jews, Greeks, and Romans. It was much more direct than many traditional modern European cultures of today. And in the Greek world of polemics using insulting labels for one's opponents was both normative and expected but did not trigger the emotional reaction that would happen in today's society. Thus when Paul addresses his objector by calling him a ἄφρων, that is, someone who has lost his mind, the Corinthian readers heard this as a signal of the beginning of the apostle's response, not as any kind of personal insult.

This attention getting device puts the readers on guard. Why was he foolish? But it becomes clear from the subsequent statements that foolishness lies in failing to realize the necessity of death to life as made clear by seeds and plants. This agricultural metaphor was rather commonly applied to human life in the secular world of that day, although not quite the way Paul

⁴³⁵This is even more important for readers coming from an Asian background where politeness is the rule always.

develops the metaphor.

The two agents in the sowing process are the individual sowing the seed and God who turns the seed into a living plant through its dying in the ground. Clearly the important agent here is God who does the miracle of turning death into life.

After asserting the principle of planting a seed in the ground where it 'dies' in order to come to life as a plant, Paul takes the logic to the next step: One plants seeds, not fully developed plants: καὶ ὁ σπείρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν· And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. The very rare NT use of a future

tense participle γενησόμενον, what it is going to become, is quite appropriate here. One hopes that the seed will sprout into a certain kind of plant, but it must begin as a bare seed (γυμνὸν κόκκον) and go through the 'dying' process for that to happen. This is true whether the seed is an ordinary grain of wheat, τύχοι σίτου, or some kind of other seeds, ἢ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν. The central point here is both the continuity and discontinuity between the seed and the subsequent plant. They are both connected and yet disconnected. A plant doesn't look like the seed, and the seed doesn't resemble the plant. Yet one comes out of the other. In his unusual use of τὸ σῶμα to refer to the plant in the analogy, Paul strongly points beyond the analogy to the application of the resurrection body in its linkage to the physical body.

The miracle in the analogy is the necessity of the seed dying before the plant can live. How does this happen? Out of his Jewish heritage, Paul affirms pointedly that this is a miracle of the sovereign God: ὁ δὲ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ σῶμα καθὼς ἠθέλησεν, καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.⁴³⁶ The God who created all seeds is the God who turns the seed into a plant through its 'dying'.⁴³⁷ The Corinthian elitists

⁴³⁶The tendency of a few post Cartesian commentators to read a Cartesian dualism into this, i.e., γυμνὸν κόκκον = bare soul / τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον = clothed resurrection body, is completely false and irrelevant here.

⁴³⁷"If, writes Kennedy, we ask what is the link between the bare grain of the old creation or old order and the 'body' (σῶμα) of the new, Paul provides 'the only one [answer] we can expect him to give.... 'The sovereign power of God.' 'He giveth it a body according as he willed' (ἠθέλησεν); 'the aorist denotes the final [i.e., purposive] act of God's will, determining the constitution of nature', so Edwards ad loc. admirably.²⁴ The present force of δίδωσιν stands in contrast to the aorist of ἠθέλησεν. The aorist in this context denotes 'not 'as he wills' (according to his choice or liking) but in accordance with his past decree in creation, by which

who may or may not have acknowledged this would not have come to this conclusion out of their pagan religious heritage. But for Jews and Christians such is a given.

That God gives a distinct form to each plant, ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα, is given in language again that points beyond the analogy to how God works in creating diversity in His new age.⁴³⁸ But this stretches over into this age as well from Paul's parallel statement in 12:18, νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἑκάστῳ αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν. *But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.*

God's ordered diversity in things and people, vv. 39-41.

39 Οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ ἢ αὐτὴ σὰρξ ἀλλ' ἄλλη μὲν ἀνθρώπων, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ κτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ σὰρξ πτηνῶν, ἄλλη δὲ ἰχθύων. 40 καὶ σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια· ἀλλ' ἑτέρα μὲν ἢ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα, ἑτέρα δὲ ἢ τῶν ἐπιγείων. 41

the propagation of life on earth was determined from the beginning (Gen 1:11, 12; for the verb cf. . . . 12:18).²⁵ Thus REB's *of his choice* is too bland; NIV's *as he has determined* is better, recalling the decrees of creation, but misses the purposive aspect, which will be explicated in vv. 39–42. God's decree was made in the light of the purpose or role which he assigned to each of his creatures. A broad comparison with examples in BAGD but more especially a comparison with the issue of how God apportions gifts to believers within the body of Christ's church καθὼς ἠθέλησεν (12:18) will corroborate this point (see above on 12:18). Differentiation in accordance with God's sovereign decree in relation to his future purposes remains a fundamental principle of the 'ordering' (15:24–28; 14:40; 12:4–11), whether of the old creation or the new. The use of καθὼς underlines the comparative explication: **just as he purposed.**²⁶ The position of ὁ δὲ θεός at the beginning of the sentence is properly emphatic: *it is God who gives (to) it a body.*²⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1264–1265.]

⁴³⁸“The καὶ before ἐκάστῳ also has an explicative force, denoting namely or that is (i.e.). It is important to note that ‘the singular [of σπέρμα, seed] is used collectively’ of grains or kernels sown; hence when the plural occurs (as here) it often denotes kinds of seeds.²⁷ English offers parallels in such words as *cheese* or *fruit* where novelists will often write of *cheeses* or *fruits* to denote a bountiful provision of kinds of fruit and types of cheese. The use of ἴδιον σῶμα, **its own particular body** (with REB; cf. *its own body*, NRSV, NIV; *but its own kind of body*, NJB), ranks almost equally in emphasis with God. The key phrase remains **God gives to it a body just as he purposed**, but the second principle is that of contrast, *differentiation, and variety* which simultaneously promotes a continuity of identity. This is one reason why ‘order’ becomes so important for chs. 12, 14, and 15: *genuine differentiation and variety* reflects the will of God, provided that it does not collapse into sheer confusion and the loss of the very identity which preserves *the otherness of the other as other* and not a mere replication or projection of ‘the strong’ within any group. If, as Cullmann declares, ‘the Spirit is the anticipation of the End in the present,’ it is not difficult to see why the parallel between 15:38 and 12:18 is so important.²⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1265.]”

ἄλλη δόξα ἡλίου, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα σελήνης, καὶ ἄλλη δόξα ἀστέρων· ἀστὴρ γὰρ ἀστέρος διαφέρει ἐν δόξῃ. 39 Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

686 ^{15.39} Οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ ἢ αὐτὴ σὰρξ
ἀλλ'
687 ἄλλη μὲν ἀνθρώπων,
δὲ
688 ἄλλη σὰρξ κτηνῶν,
δὲ
689 ἄλλη σὰρξ πτηνῶν,
δὲ
690 ἄλλη ἰχθύων.

^{15.40} καὶ
691 σώματα ἐπουράνια,
καὶ
692 σώματα ἐπίγεια·
ἀλλ'
693 ἑτέρα μὲν ἢ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα,
δὲ
694 ἑτέρα ἢ τῶν ἐπιγείων.

^{15.41} ἄλλη δόξα ἡλίου,
καὶ
696 ἄλλη δόξα σελήνης,
καὶ
697 ἄλλη δόξα ἀστέρων·
γὰρ
698 ἀστὴρ ἀστέρος διαφέρει
ἐν δόξῃ.

Now Paul elaborates on the wide diversity ordered by God in creation. Notice from the diagram how these are grouped. Statement 686 is the header declaration of diversity with the use of σὰρξ, **flesh**, that most immediately applies to the animal world of living creatures in #s 687-690. In shifting to inanimate objects beginning in statement 691, the term shifts to the plural σώματα, **bodies**. Statements 691-694 transition from animals to the celestial 'bodies' which are contrasted then in statements 695-698. With the shift here to δόξα the emphasis shifts to outward appearance with distinct tones of radiance. But the core principle remains the same: God has created items of great diversity and yet they all stand as His creation. Vv. 39-41 become an amplification of the concluding statement in v. 38: καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν σπερμάτων ἴδιον σῶμα, **and to each of the seeds its own body**, in a context broader than just seeds and plants.

The connection between the three key terms used

in this series σὰρξ—σῶμα—δόξα underscores the principle of continuity and discontinuity that is important to the depiction of the resurrection body. First σὰρξ is the stuff out of which a σῶμα is made with an emphasis upon the physical, while δόξα is the outward appearance of the σῶμα that has shape and form. This triad of inner connected terms forms the heart of Paul's answers to the objector's two questions in v. 35.⁴³⁹ The point seems to be the stress on continuity and discontinuity with the emphasis here on the individual's resurrection body being distinct to who he was in his/her physical body. In this the apostle distances himself from the crude Jewish apocalyptic teaching of resurrection as duplication of the physical body for eternity.⁴⁴⁰ But at the same time he rejects the idea of some ethereal 'spiritual' body with little or no connection to the physical body. The resurrection body is a real σῶμα with individual distinctives that have links to the previous earthly body but at the same time is unique and not just a reproduction of the physical body.

In the first grouping, v. 39, Paul contrasts the differences between humans (ἀνθρώπων), animals (κτηνῶν), birds (πτηνῶν), and fish (ἰχθύων). This is a rather typical listing found across ancient literature. Also the repeated use of elliptical ἄλλη for ἄλλη σὰρξ stresses distinctions within the framework of commonality.

In the middle transition section in v. 40, he switches over to ἔτερα for ἔτερα σώματα which denotes an entirely different form or shape between σώματα ἐπουράνια and σώματα ἐπίγεια. Although most modern western languages are not equipped with vocabulary to easily signal these shifts as was both classical and koine Greek,⁴⁴¹ the contrast is very pointed. The emphasis now moves from content (σὰρξ) to the shaped form (σώματα) of the content. With the foundational issue being over the earthly body and the resurrection body

⁴³⁹“With the help of the series of concepts σὰρξ—σῶμα—δόξα, ‘flesh—body—luster,’ Paul seeks to show that the resurrection from the dead is ontologically possible; that is, he answers the question πῶς; = ποίῳ σώματι; ‘how? = with what kind of body?’” [Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 281.]

⁴⁴⁰Endless arguments are recorded in some of this literature over whether a person would have a severed finger restored in the resurrection, at what age would the resurrection body be formed: what it looked like at physical death or at the peak of one's youth or old age. On and on these arguments went, based on this very false idea that resurrection is but the reformation of the physical body.

⁴⁴¹If in Greek I wanted to stress that both humans and dogs belong to the animal world, the Greek pronoun ἄλλος would be appropriate. That is both are animals although different kinds of animals. But ἕτερος with be required in referencing a human and an oak tree. The only commonality here would be ‘living’ while the differences far outweigh this very secondary point of commonality.

Paul stresses a profound difference between the two entities with the language of v. 40. The two adjectives ἐπίγεια / ἐπουράνια nicely draw this contrast for Paul. To be sure commentators since the second century have argued over the implications of this contrast, and especially with the sense of ἐπουράνια.⁴⁴² Within the metaphor Paul clearly is alluding to those entities one can see in the sky, as v. 41 elaborates.⁴⁴³

This allows the apostle to focus on the resurrection body in its outward appearance (δόξα) by association of it with the celestial bodies of the sun (ἡλίου), moon (σελήνης), and stars (ἀστέρων). Note also his return to the pronoun ἄλλη that stresses distinction within the framework of commonality. Thus we have a natural allusion to the resurrection body from a first century world perspective. The sun, stars, and moon can be seen but not a lot about them is known. Jesus in His resurrection body was seen, ὥφθη, by individuals on

⁴⁴²“The meaning of σώματα ἐπουράνια (v. 40) has been debated since the patristic era. The Greek simply means *existing in heaven* in contrast to ἐπίγεια, *existing on earth* (ἐπί + γῆ, ἐπί + οὐρανός). But οὐρανός includes (1) the sky above the earth; (2) the sphere of clouds and stars; (3) the abode or sphere of God and angels; and (4), in conjunction with earth, that which denotes the whole universe as a complete entity created by God. BAGD provide instances of authors and texts which demonstrate each.⁴² Thus ἐπουράνιος in lexicographical terms includes (1) the dwelling or sphere of God or Christ (esp. 1 Cor 15:48–49; cf. Heb 12:12); and (2) the sphere in which the sun, moon, and stars are located (BAGD cite 15:40 in the light of 15:41); as well as (3), more widely or generally, heavenly things or heaven (2 Cor 12:2; Heb 8:5).⁴³ In the light of v. 41, it might seem obvious that v. 40 alludes to the sphere of the sun, moon, and stars. However, some interpreters object that Paul would not use σῶμα of an impersonal entity, and that to apply this to astronomical ‘bodies’ either imports a modern meaning of σῶμα or presupposes a view of astral bodies as quasi-personal, as reflected in some non-Christian first-century religions. Meyer and Findlay, among others, argue this forcefully, insisting that Paul alludes to bodies of angels in v. 40, appealing to supposed parallels in Matt 22:30 and Luke 20:36.⁴⁴” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1268.]

⁴⁴³“In view of the debate, we have translated the controversial Greek term as **super-earthly bodies** to allow for the wide semantic range of the Greek and the natural contextual influence of v. 41 (cf. NRSV, NIV, NJB, REB, *heavenly bodies*). However, if (1) we follow Schweizer in insisting that in 15:38 body ‘comes close to meaning ‘form,’ (2) we accept that Paul replies to his objectors at this point in terms of the currency which they use, and (3) we recognize that body is used on occasion of inorganic or impersonal entities in Greek writers of Paul's own day, this leaves no problem in assuming that the primary reference of super-earthly bodies is stars and planets, even if Paul does not explicitly exclude possible allusion to angelic beings.⁴⁸” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1269.]

earth (vv. 5-7) but not a lot was known about this body, beyond it having a connection to his earthly body while also being very different from it. Couple this with the adamant assertion that the believer's resurrection body is both similar to yet distinct from that of Christ and one can see the logic of Paul's argument very easily.⁴⁴⁴

Summing up in application, vv. 42-49.

42 Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ· 43 σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ· σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει· 44 σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν. 45 οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἄδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἄδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. 46 ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικόν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν. 47 ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. 48 οἶος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι· 49 καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. 42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the

⁴⁴⁴This is the natural sense of Paul's analogy in contrast to some futile attempt to link the celestial entities here to certain Greek philosophical views of the sun etc. representing the immortal souls in eternity after death separates the soul from the body at death.

We remain unconvinced, however, by Dale Martin's proposal that Paul alludes to heavenly bodies in the sense found in certain traditions of Greek philosophy from the pre-Socratics to Origen, namely, that of immortal souls clothed in a substance of glory akin to that of the sun or the stars.⁴⁹ In the *Timaeus* Plato speculates about a rearrangement of the elements of earth, water, air, and fire in such a way that fire now dominates.⁵⁰ A first-century inscription does indeed read, "Do not weep for me.... For I have become an evening star among the gods."⁵¹ Martin compares this with the "shining" of the righteous in Dan 12:3. Nevertheless, two objections among others are substantial. (1) As we commented in relation to Héring, the issue moves from substance in v. 39 to form in vv. 40–41.52 (2) In vv. 42–57 it becomes clear that spiritual does not mean "composed of spirit" (in the sense of substance) but transformation in accordance with the moral and theological character of the Holy Spirit within the context of sin, salvation, and the splendor of holiness. Martin's analysis leaves no room for the decisive turn of Paul's argument in v. 44 (see below) and misconstrues the nature of glory or splendor for Paul.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1269.

man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Now Paul moves to a summing up of his figurative based arguments for resurrection with specific application to the resurrection body itself. Here the details move beyond the comparisons to the surrounding physical world in order to center on the moral and spiritual aspects of this awaited body for eternity. In this summary he picks up some the language of the previous comparisons, e.g., σπείρεται, sowing, ἐπουράνιος, celestial et als. Statement 699 as an elliptical statement without a verb functions as a header for this unit of text.

The internal thought flow is clear with just a glance at the diagram. First in statements 700-704 the contrast between the earthly body and the heavenly body is drawn via the contrastive verbs in the seed / plant analogy (vv. 36-37): σπείρεται / ἐγείρεται contrast. The core term on continuity is σῶμα for both sides of the contrast. One should remember that σῶμα as referencing the body denotes the idea of outward form and shape.

The distinctions are made through opposing adjective modifiers as is charted out below:

σπείρεται==>	σῶμα==>	ἐγείρεται:
ἐν φθορᾷ,		ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ
ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ,		ἐν δόξῃ
ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ		ἐν δυνάμει
ψυχικόν,		πνευματικόν

Verse 44b comes back to reinforce these distinctions with a first class conditional statement: Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν. Since there is a physical body, there also is a spiritual body.

This transitional sentence then sets up the second part of this unit (statements #s 709-718) in vv. 45-49. Here the background foundation for comparisons of these two existences is the earlier Adam and Christ in vv. 21-22. The physical existence with its negatives comes from Adam, but spiritual existence with its positives comes through Christ.

Sowing and raising up, vv. 42-44. 42 Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ· 43 σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ· σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει· 44 σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν. 42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

The self-contained unit is very well defined with a

699 ^{15.42} οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν.

700 σπείρεται
ἐν φθορᾷ,

701 ἐγείρεται
ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ·

702 ^{15.43} σπείρεται
ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ,

703 ἐγείρεται
ἐν δόξῃ·

704 σπείρεται
ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ,

705 ἐγείρεται
ἐν δυνάμει·

706 ^{15.44} σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν,

707 ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν.

708 ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν.

709 ^{15.45} οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται·
ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ
εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν,
ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ...ζωοποιοῦν.
εἰς πνεῦμα

^{15.46} ἀλλ’

710 οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικόν (ἐστὶν)
ἀλλὰ

711 τὸ ψυχικόν (ἐστὶν),
ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν (ἐστὶν).

712 ^{15.47} ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος (ἐστὶν) χοϊκός
ἐκ γῆς,

713 ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος (ἐστὶν)
ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.

714 ^{15.48} οἶος ὁ χοϊκός,

715 τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί,
καὶ

716 οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος,

717 τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι·

^{15.49} καὶ
καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ,

718 φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου.

header (v. 42a) and a conclusion oriented affirmation (v. 44b). Between is a series of contrasts built off the σπείρεται, **sowing** / ἐγείρεται, **being raised**, contrasts of the σῶμα, **body**. The contrasts move toward the climatic difference of ψυχικόν / πνευματικόν in v. 44.

The header in v. 42a defines this unit as an application of the previous discussion reaching back to v. 1, but especially vv. 37-41: Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. So also the resurrection of the dead. Interesting-

ly instead of using the noun ἐγερσις from the verb ἐγείρεται repeated in this unit, he instead uses ἀνάστασις. Both nouns mean to come up, either ἐγερσις as raised up or ἀνάστασις as stood up. But ἐγερσις is only used once in the entire NT (Mt. 27:53) and there with the meaning of resurrection. But ἀνάστασις is used 42 times in the NT with all but one designating resurrection. It is Paul's noun for resurrection with the four uses in First Corinthians here in chapter fifteen: vv. 12, 13, 21, 42. Thus no special significance can be attached to the use of this particular noun since it is the commonly used noun for resurrection throughout the NT.

On the negative side, the σῶμα as physical body has several characteristics:

σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ,
is sown in perishability
σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ,
in sown in dishonor
σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ,
is sown in weakness
σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν,
is sown a sensual body

The image of σπείρεται, **is sown**, plays off the seed analogy in vv. 36-37 and refers to the physical death of the body. At death, the physical body carries these traits. The prepositional phrase ἐν φθορᾷ denotes decay and eventual **destruction**.⁴⁴⁵ Thus the body over time

⁴⁴⁵“The first major contrast or component of *discontinuity* is marked by ἐν φθορᾷ ... ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. It is customary for exegetes to understand this simply as a contrast of duration: *perishable ... imperishable* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB); *in corruption ... in incorruption* (AV/ KJV); *in mortality ... in immortality* (Collins). This entirely reflects the meaning of ἀφθαρσία in lexicography, where most instances denote *incorruptibility, immortality*, e.g., in Philo, Plutarch, Ignatius, and LXX (Wisdom, 4 Maccabees).⁵⁸ However, since 1964 I have consistently held that φθορά is the term within the semantic opposition that carries the decisive content, in relation to which the contrast is signaled by the alpha privative. φθορά denotes ‘decreasing capacities and increasing weaknesses, issuing in exhaustion and stagnation,’ i.e., in a state of **decay**.⁵⁹ In the LXX φθορά regularly translates either of two Hebrew words: תָּחַל (*shachat*) and כְּבַל (*chebel*). The force of תָּחַל and its cognate forms conveys not only destruction or termination but also mutilation. In the Niph'al it

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decays and moves toward extinction.

Second the physical is sown ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, *in dishonor*.⁴⁴⁶ Context plays an important role in understanding the thrust of this trait. It stands as the opposite of ἐν δόξῃ, in glory. This imposes some limits on the meaning of ἀτιμία which itself is lexically the opposite of τιμὴ with the meaning of honor or respect. The noun ἀτιμία is a Pauline term inside the NT with six uses: Rom 1:26; 9:21; 1 Cor. 11:14; 15:43; 2 Cor. 6:8; 11:21; 2 Tim. 2:20. A wide range of translation words is used by the NRSV for these six instances: degrading, ordinary, dishonor, shame. Most likely here the sense of *humiliation*, especially from sin, is at the heart of the intended meaning. In the background stands the honor / shame principle

may denote to be marred, spoiled, while the Hiph'il form means to pervert or to corrupt (in a moral sense).⁶⁰ The semantic contrast to such decay would not be permanence or everlasting duration, but ethical, aesthetic, and psychosocial flourishing and abundance, even perhaps perfection, and certainly fullness of life. The second Hebrew word, הבה, denotes a semantic range beginning with vapor or breath and extending through to vanity, emptiness, fruitlessness. The full force of the word finds expression in Isa 49:4: 'I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity' (NRSV).⁶¹ The semantic contrast now lies with the purposive progression of dynamic life-processes, in which satisfaction or delight is based on what is substantial and solid." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1271–1272.]

⁴⁴⁶The semantic opposition of the first half of v. 43 does not merely negate and affirm precisely the same quality or disposition, and the contrast between ἀτιμία and δόξῃ can be misunderstood in more than one way. While the Greek negative noun often means *dishonor; disgrace, shame* (BAGD) and is usually translated *dishonor* (NRSV, NIV, AV/KJV), many German commentators associate the word more specifically with *humiliation* or *a lowly position* (Lange, Niedrigkeit), with *misery, pitifulness* (Wolff and Langee, *Jämmerlichkeit*), or with *troublesomeness, lamentation, and complaint* (Wolff, Kläglichkeit).⁶⁵ However, Fee and REB rightly recognize that *humiliation* includes either or both of the two distinct senses that may stand in contrast to glory or to splendor: (a) that which corresponds to Paul's use of τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, *the body of our humiliation*, i.e., *of our lowly state*, in Phil 3:21 (the same context of pre-resurrection and post-resurrection modes of existence); and (b) the shame-honor contrast which we might expect in opposition to δόξα, *splendor*.⁶⁶ The former understanding includes the sense of *mourning, sorrow, frailty, and grief* which finds a paradigm in sudden death and bereavement in the midst of life. The latter calls attention to association with sinful desires and habituated actions which were performed in the 'old' body, but from which the raised body will be entirely free. NJB's *contemptible* too readily permits a dualist devaluation of the body, or else commits us exclusively to (b). However, it is likely that broader nuances are at issue, for which *humiliation* offers the most appropriate understanding, and Liddell-Scott-Jones provide instances of this wider meaning of the Greek outside the New Testament.⁶⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1273–1274.]

of Paul's world in which sin compounds into dishonor for the physical life.

Third, this body is sown ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, *in weakness*. In a world where disease and sickness are typically life threatening experiences, the weakness or vulnerability of the physical body is quite obvious.⁴⁴⁷ This continues to develop the picture of decay and humiliation from the first two traits.

The fourth trait, σῶμα ψυχικόν, plays off the adjective ψυχικός, -ή, -όν, with 6 NT uses and referring to that which relates to the physical and sensory world. In 2:14, Paul uses ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος in reference to an individual focused on this world in contrast to the spiritual realities from God. The use of the English 'physical' to translate ψυχικόν is inadequate. Especially since it stands as the opposite of σῶμα πνευματικόν, *a body produced by the Holy Spirit*. The use in Jude 19 is helpful: Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες, ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες. *These are the divisive people, worldly and not possessing the Spirit*, Paul's point in 15:44 is to emphasize that at death the body still is essentially a depraved body which has no place in God's eternal plan.

The collective picture of the physical body in this life is dark and negative, especially when viewed from the spiritual angle. It stands as a part of this corrupted, sin filled world and thus is completely unqualified for eternity. The elitists at Corinth would most likely have agreed with most, if not all, of this assessment of the physical body. But what they took issue with is the other side of this contrastive equation that Paul sets forth.

On the positive side of each of these four sets of traits is an affirmation of the resurrection body that

⁴⁴⁷The second semantic opposition of this verse (which is the third of the four in vv. 42–44) raises less difficulty. The contrast between ἀσθένεια and δύναμις is equivalent to Eng. **weakness-power**. **Weakness** explicates further the theme of decay (v. 42) and humiliation (v. 43a). Decreasing capacities in psychophysical life begin from the moment brain cells die and habituated conduct blocks capacities to re-create and to move in novel directions. The insight of existentialist philosophers that human persons experience limitations through their own past decisions coheres entirely with Paul's understanding of created personhood. Just as **power** in this epistle repeatedly denotes the capacity to carry through purposes or actions with operative effectiveness, so **weakness** denotes an incapacity to achieve such competency and the spiral of consequent frustration and deenergization through maximal unsuccessful effort and distraction.⁶⁹ In Paul's analysis of the human condition in this epistle, aspirations toward self-affirmation become self-defeating unless they stand within the sphere which is transformatively energized by the power of the cross. In the pre-resurrection mode of existence, however, the new creation always remains tarnished and weakened by imperfections in realizing this goal with finality." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1274.]



emerges from death by the miracle of God.

Whereas the σῶμα in its physical condition is ἐν φθορᾷ, the resurrection body emerging from it after death is ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ.⁴⁴⁸ What is subject to decay and destruction now will be turned into just the opposite in eternity. That is, a body that never decays and that lasts for all eternity.

Also as the body in this life exists ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, in the life to come our bodies as believers will exist ἐν δόξῃ. Against the shame/honor traditions of Paul's world, the humiliation of this life will be transformed into the radiance of God's very presence in Heaven. Sin takes its toll on our bodies now, but they will be brought to their full capacity as a product of God's work in eternity.

Thirdly, we all know the weakness of our physical bodies in this life with the ravages of sin, sickness, and disease. But in the resurrection all this will be banished forever and we will be fully able to honor God the way He deserves ἐν δυνάμει.

Finally, our physical life now is bound to this world and limited by it as a σῶμα ψυχικόν. But in the resurrection God, working through the Holy Spirit, will create a brand new body fully suited to eternal life with the Heavenly Father.⁴⁴⁹ One must remember here that the eternal existence is defined as σῶμα, a body based ex-

⁴⁴⁸One side note here that is important. the threefold repetition of ἐγείρεται, is raised, does inherently assume a timeline of whether this happens soon after death or at the second coming of Christ. Here Paul is contrasting characteristic traits between physical existence and eternal existence. But elsewhere in this chapter he does make it clear that resurrection is connected to the second coming of Christ, just as he already has affirmed in 1 Thess. 4.

⁴⁴⁹“The key issue hinges on the respective understandings (and respective translations) of the major contrastive Greek words σῶμα ψυχικόν and σῶμα πνευματικόν. I have no doubt whatever that Paul uses the adjective πνευματικός in its regular Pauline sense to denote that which pertains to the Holy Spirit of God. However, a number of VSS and writers suggest different conclusions. One of several relevant factors concerns the relation between this verse and v. 50. Traditionally it was often assumed that the acknowledgment that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (v. 50) presupposed the problem of how ‘physical’ bodies could enter the sphere of heaven. Jeremias convincingly disposed of this mistaken understanding in his well-known study of this verse when he argued that flesh and blood here refers not to a corrupted human corpse, but to human nature as such in its frailty and in its sinfulness.⁷² The Hebrew phrase often refers to human nature in its frailty, whether alive or dead, in rabbinic sources.⁷³ Neither the living nor the dead can take part in the reign of God as they are, i.e., without salvific transformation. In this light it can be seen that NRSV's rendering (also REB's, surprisingly) of the semantic contrast as *sown a physical body ... raised a spiritual body* prejudices and probably distorts our interpretation of spiritual (i.e., spiritual versus physical) as against NIV and NJB's infinitely preferable *natural body ... spiritual body* (i.e., spiritual [beyond nature] versus natural).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1275.]

istence rather than some nebulous ethereal existence like a ghost. But it is in no way the apocalyptic Jewish reorganized particles of the physical body. Instead, it is the basis of existence in eternity as recognized individuals who enjoy a life that lasts forever and is completely free of the destructive presence of sin and death.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁵⁰“Three possible views of σῶμα πνευματικόν now emerge, of which the first two do not stand up to close scrutiny.

(a) The late nineteenth-century view of πνεῦμα as “a transcendent physical essence, a supersensuous kind of matter” was promoted in 1877 by Otto Pfleiderer, and developed by Johannes Weiss in terms of a ‘heavenly light substance.’⁷⁷ Recently it has found a new advocate in Dale Martin in connection with different worldviews held by the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ in Corinth. Philosophers of the time, he argues, would speak of the soul as some kind of ‘stuff,’ and astral ‘bodies’ were those in which the element of fire predominated over air, earth, and water.⁷⁸ In the four canonical Gospels, Martin continues, the nature of the resurrection body of Jesus Christ was not at all clear, whereas for Paul the resurrection mode of existence is to be identified with ‘the heavenly bodies’ which, in the light of vv. 44–49, recall ‘popular beliefs about the composition and hierarchy of heavenly bodies.’⁷⁹ At all events, his adjectives describe ‘their substance and composition’ which prove to be ‘similar’ to notions of the actual soul in popular philosophy. Pneuma is an ‘entity held in common by human beings and the stars ... a pneumatic body ... not ... composed of the heavier matter of the earth ... the substance of stars.’⁸⁰

“One major difficulty which besets this view is that, as Jeremias argues concerning v. 50, Paul is not primarily addressing the question of the composition of the ‘body.’ (i) Apart from the broader hermeneutical issue, the parallel three contrasts, especially the negatives decay (v. 42), humiliation, and weakness (v. 43), do not denote ‘substances’ but modes of existence or of life. This is confirmed by (ii) the generally accepted modal use of ἐν in the sets of contrasts, as well as (iii) the widely accepted (although not decisive) lexicographical distinction between -νοσ endings, which often, perhaps regularly, denote composition, in distinction from -ικος endings, which regularly denote modes of being or characteristics. Kennedy, Robertson and Plummer, and more recent writers provide decisive arguments against ‘composition.’⁸¹ (iv) Further, Louw and Nida distinguish no fewer than eleven semantic domains for πνεῦμα (including πνευματικός), of which in Pauline material πνευματικός most frequently and characteristically means ‘pertaining to being derived from, or being about, the Spirit.’⁸² Thus πνεῦμα refers to both spiritual gifts and gifts from the Holy Spirit (12:1; cf. 2:13; Rom 1:11; cf. Eph 1:3; 5:19—hymns inspired by the Holy Spirit, not produced by celestial or actual wavelengths). On rare (always non-Pauline) occasions in the New Testament, πνεῦμα may denote a ghost or spirit being (almost exclusively Mark 14:26; Luke 24:37; Acts 23:8), but such a use is generally avoided because of its association with evil spirits (Mark 9:25; cf. Mark 1:34, δαίμων).⁸³ Paul is speaking in v. 44 of a mode and pattern of intersubjective life directed by the Holy Spirit.

“(b) Even less convincing is the theory that σῶμα πνευματικόν means simply a nonphysical ‘body.’ This would offer a concession (as would [a]) to hellenistic thought, but misses Paul's point entirely. (i) Again, as Fee observed, ‘the transformed body is not composed of ‘spirit’; it is a body adapted to the eschatological existence that is under the ultimate domination of the Spirit.’⁸⁴ All of the objections to (a) apply here. (ii) Further, as M. E. Dahl con-



sistently argues, *σῶμα ψυχικόν = the totality of man as created and capable of eternal life ... σῶμα πνευματικόν = the totality of man redeemed by the new dispensation of the Spirit and actually endowed with eternal life* (v. 44)⁸⁵ (his italics) on the grounds of the difficulties of alternative views and the understanding of human persons as totalities, shared by the Old Testament and Paul. Neither a purely ‘nonphysical’ nor merely ‘bodily’ (in any quasi-physical sense) explanation offers an adequate account of 15:44. To express it in crude terms, the totality of the mode of life of the resurrection existence in the Holy Spirit is more than physical but not less, i.e., the equivalent capacities to aesthetic and empirical satisfaction (including, with Käsemann, communicative recognition and differentiation in an intersubjective, public domain) cannot be less than those of earthly physical life if this mode of existence embraces the ‘more’ of the agency of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Creator God. Heaven is not Sheol, where earthly existence is perceived to be ‘thinned down.’

“Startlingly, since all the exegetical, theological, and lexicographical evidence is against it, Louw and Nida astonish us by placing 15:44 almost alone in a short sub-category under the heading ‘pertaining to not being physical.’⁸⁶ Perhaps they are unduly influenced by other foreign-language cultures, for some of which they propose ‘a body which will not have flesh and bones,’ since even a ‘body’ under the direction of the Spirit is perceived to be physical unless the nuances of Greek and Paul are explained. Elsewhere, however, they rightly note on the basis of 1 Cor 3:1 that *πνευματικός* denotes ‘a pattern of life controlled and directed by God’s Spirit.’⁸⁷

“(c) The allusion to 1 Cor 3:1 provides an admirable starting point for confirmation of the third understanding which we have been urging. We translated the contrast between *πνευματικός* and *σάρκινος* ... *σαρκικός* in 3:1, 3 as ‘people of **the Spirit** ... people moved by entirely *human drives* ... *unspiritual*...’ Thus Barrett understands v. 44 to refer to ‘the new body animated by the Spirit of God.’⁸⁸ Bruce hints at the dimension of Christology and character by alluding here to the life-giving Spirit of v. 45.⁸⁹ The natural body derives its character from the Adam of creation; the body which is raised derives its character from the last Adam, Christ, who is both Lord of the Spirit and himself raised by God through the Spirit (Rom 8:11). Wolff declares, ‘The spiritual body of the resurrection (*der pneumatische Auferstehungsleib*) is through and through a body under the control of the divine Spirit, according to v. 45 a creation of Christ (cf. also vv. 21–22) who is ‘the life-giving Spirit’.’⁹⁰

“This provides a constructive connection between the salvific and ethical character of the body directed by the Holy Spirit and the character of Christ’s own raised body in later traditions of the canonical Gospels as ‘more’ but not ‘less’ than an earthly physical body. In these resurrection traditions Jesus Christ was not always immediately ‘recognized’ (John 20:14, 15; 21:12; Luke 24:13–20) but his personal identity was recognized in terms of sociophysical gestures and characteristics (Luke 24:31; John 20:16, 20, 27–28; action, voice, hands, side). In the tradition of Luke-Acts Jesus ‘ascended’ above the clouds (Acts 1:9, 10), but in the Johannine tradition Jesus appears to have shared in the meal of fish (John 21:12, 13).⁹¹ Paul’s analogies concerning the created order are the corresponding match between bodily form and purposive function (birds, fish, sun, moon, stars), which strongly, indeed surely conclusively, suggests that what counts as a body (*sōma*, *form*, in relation to a public context) depends precisely upon its immediate environment and purpose. When Jesus Christ appeared within the environment of our world’s space-time for the purpose of provid-

ing visible and tangible (John 20:27) evidence of his identity to witnesses as Jesus of Nazareth both raised and transformed, this ‘bodily’ mode verged on, but also transcended, the physical. In the event of the ascension (whether we regard this as a genuine event or as an event within a projected narrative world) the ‘body’ would transcend physical limitations. However, we must not become re-seduced into construing Paul’s purpose in these verses as describing the composition of the *sōma*. The point is, rather, that a resurrection mode of existence characterized by the reversal of decay, splendor, power, and being constituted by (the direction, control, and character of) the (Holy) Spirit would be expected not to be reduced in potential from the physical capacities which biblical traditions value, but enhanced above and beyond them in ways that both assimilate and transcend them.

“Body, therefore, affirms the biblical tradition of a positive attitude toward physicality as a condition for experiencing life in its fullness, but also assimilates, subsumes, and transcends the role of the physical in the public domain of earthly life. Hence it would be appropriate to conceive of the raised body as a form or mode of existence of the whole person including every level of intersubjective communicative experience that guarantees both the continuity of personal identity and an enhanced experience of community which facilitates intimate union with God in Christ and with differentiated ‘others’ who also share this union. If the marriage bond, e.g., ceases at death, this is also not because the resurrection body offers any ‘less,’ but because interpersonal union is assimilated and subsumed into a ‘more’ that absorbs exclusivity but ‘adds’ a hitherto unimagined depth. Such mutuality of union and respect for difference, however, presupposes a ‘pattern of existence controlled and directed by the [Holy] Spirit’ (BAGD, above), and a mode of existence designed by God for the new environment of the eschatological new creation. This may imply philosophical issues about how the raised community will freely choose such holiness of disposition, but these would take us too far beyond the text.

“On the other hand, the three pairs of contrasts—decay and its absence or reversal, humiliation and splendor, and an ordinary human body and a body constituted by the Spirit—give solid ground for conceiving of the postresurrection mode of life as a purposive and dynamic crescendo of life, since the living God who acts purposively decrees this fitting mode, rather than envisaging some static ending in which the raised body is forever trapped, as if in the last ‘frozen’ frame of a film or movie. In the biblical writings the Spirit is closely associated with ongoing vitality, which Paul takes up in v. 45b.

“Many begin a new paragraph with v. 44b.⁹² However, the second half of v. 44 merely signals the reader, if any doubt should still remain, to reflect back upon what has been said already about the created order and the infinite resourcefulness of God as Creator. If God can create an ordinary human body (v. 44a) among a myriad of other forms and species, is it not logical to suppose that just as there is a body for the human realm (v. 44b, *σῶμα ψυχικόν*, the same Greek term as v. 44a, even if translated differently into English) there is also a body for the realm of the Spirit (*ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν*, same Greek as v. 44a)? The one necessary exegetical caveat is to note that realm of the Spirit (i.e., *πνευματικόν*) does not mean primarily the nonphysical realm (although it certainly includes this), but what befits the transformation of character or pattern of existence effected by the Holy Spirit. Here the biological analogies of transforming a bare seed or grain into fruit, flower, or harvest may take on an aesthetic dimension for illustrative purposes to underline (a) contrast; (b) continuity of identity; and (c) full



Paul's' concluding declaration for this unit comes in v. 44b as *Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν, Since there is an earth bound body, there also is a body created by the Spirit of God.* The listing stressed discontinuity but this concluding statement is a reminder that the discontinuity exists within the framework of continuity.

Adam and Christ, vv. 45-49. 45 οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. 46 ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικόν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν. 47

and radical transformation of form and character.

“Theissen notes that in contrast to the Corinthian tradition that Paul corrects in vv. 44–45 ‘the pneumatic is to be understood as goal, not as origin.... The conferral of Pneuma signifies an expansion of consciousness beyond the familiar ‘psychic’ limits.... Paul presupposes the existence of a new world.’⁹³ The dynamic, ongoing, purposive nature of this ‘new world’ is underlined by Paul’s insistence that it is characterized by love as the one disposition that survives the eschaton (13:8–13), which he already defined as purposive dynamic habituated action (13:4–7; see above on these verses). The raised body provides conditions for the meaningful experience of receiving and giving this creative love. As J. Cambier reminds us, v. 44 sums up the transformation which is introduced in vv. 37–38 — ‘what you sow is not the body which shall be ... God gives ...’— and turns neither on two ‘compositions’ nor on two ‘states,’ but on ‘two tendencies, two forces....’⁹⁴ Paul is concerned with how the new, raised ‘body’ is ‘oriented’; and ‘the principal enemy’ which he targets is the reduced existence of the soul-shade in the ‘Sheol-Hades’ of both Jews and Greeks.⁹⁵ Hence he leads on to the triumph of v. 55: ‘Where, O death, is your victory?’

“By way of contrast, gnostic texts read Paul as using spiritual here in the hermeneutical sense of a ‘spiritual’ or ‘allegorical’ (i.e., metaphorical) reading of the resurrection of the ‘body.’⁹⁶ Irenaeus attacks such a view decisively. After quoting 1 Cor 15:36, 41–44, he alludes to the Valentinian view as understanding something different from Paul: Paul does not refer to ‘immortal spirits’ but to those in Christ who, just as Christ was raised bodily, will be made alive in ‘bodies’ different from bodies that decompose.⁹⁷ Tertullian distances himself from Marcion’s devaluation of the body, and Marcion’s related reading of 1 Cor 15:42–44, in the same way.⁹⁸ Thomas Aquinas understands the raised body to function with a multiplicity of organs or ‘parts.’⁹⁹ However, Luther captures Paul’s perspective well: ‘It is really the work of God.... it will not be a body that eats, sleeps, and digests, but ... has life in Him ... lives solely of and by the Spirit.’¹⁰⁰ Christ, Luther adds (on vv. 48–49), is our prototype, who devours the poison of the sin that corrupts (vv. 54–55), and the raised body therefore will be ‘endowed with a more beautiful and better form than the present one.’¹⁰¹ ‘Be content to hear what God will do. Then leave it to Him’; ‘it will be strong and vigorous, healthy and happy ... more beautiful than the sun and moon.... We shall all have spiritual gifts.’¹⁰² This is entirely in conflict with a countertradition that can be traced back to Justin: ‘we expect to receive again our own bodies, though they be dead and cast into the earth.’¹⁰³ In Irenaeus and in Tertullian there is ambivalence in this direction, and it conflicts with Paul’s argument explicitly in 15:36–38, 42–44, 50–54.¹⁰⁴”

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1276–1281.

ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. 48 οἷος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι. 49 καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. 45 Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

In this second half of the larger unit of vv. 42-49 that sums up Paul’s discussion thus far, he returns to the Adam / Christ typology brought up earlier in vv. 21-22, but now with much greater detail, somewhat similar to Rom. 5:12-19 but with a different emphasis.

The internal arrangement of vv. 45-49 flows first in v. 45a out of a reference to Gen. 2:7 that provides the basis for the Adam typology which is then balanced by the Christ typology in v. 45b. This is followed by contrastive details under the two headers of Adam and Christ in vv. 46-49. The literary strategy is similar to the first section of providing contrastive details between the earth bound body and the Spirit produced body coming out of it (vv. 42-44).

First, οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, *Thus also it stands written: the first man Adam became a living being.* The introductory modifiers οὕτως καὶ, *thus also*, repeats the same phrase in v. 42 as a part of the header in this verse. It signals the opening of a new emphasis seen as application what was previously said for both units of vv. 42-44 and 45-49.

The reference to Gen. 2:7 is slightly modified for Paul’s use of it: ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν in Paul but καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν in the LXX.⁴⁵¹ The adjective πρῶτος is added by Paul to amplify ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ, *the last Adam*, on the Christ side of the contrast. Both Paul and the LXX translate over into Greek as εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν the *Hebrew idiom* הַיְהוָה שָׁנַח.⁴⁵² Thus the breath of God

⁴⁵¹LXX Gen. 2:7. καὶ ἐπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

BHS Gen. 2:7

וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפְחֶה בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים וַיִּהְיֶה הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה׃

NRSV Gen. 2:7. *then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.*

⁴⁵²The citation is from Gen 2:7: καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν (LXX), but Paul has inserted the word πρῶτος.¹⁰⁵



turns Adam into a living being: *καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, and God breathed into his face the breath of life. But the Hebrew says יָרַח אֶפְרָיִם, God breathed into his nostrils.*⁴⁵³

Use of the combination ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ, the man Adam, underscores Adam's identity with humanity.⁴⁵⁴ This picks up on the parallel statements ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, *for since through a man death came* (v. 21) and ὡςπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, *for since in Adam all die* (v. 22). It is this connection that forms the basis of the old life characterization that Paul lists on the Adam column that follows. Even more precise is the later statement of Paul in Rom. 5:15b, *εἰ γὰρ*

Some regard the introductory οὕτως as marking an acknowledgment that Paul does not cite the LXX verbatim.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, there is much to be said for REB's it is in this sense that scripture says.... The Septuagintal (and Pauline) use of εἰς in εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν simply reflects the Hebrew use of the equivalent לְ (le). The whole of the Hebrew original, however, includes the word Adam, which LXX translates ἄνθρωπος: יְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיִּית (wayehi ha'adam lenephesh chayyah; and man/Adam became [for] a living nephesh/ψυχή/person). C. D. Stanley rightly sees this as fruitful for comparing Paul's usual citations of the LXX with his possible use of the Hebrew: 'Nothing in either Greek or Hebrew textual traditions offers any reason to think that Paul might have the word πρῶτος in his Vorlage of Gen 2:7.'¹⁰⁷ However, the addition formalizes 'the fundamental contrast between Adam and Christ as the πρῶτος and ἔσχατος Adam (v. 46b) that forms the backbone of the ensuing argument.'¹⁰⁸ The insertion of Ἀδάμ, however, may not be due entirely to the shape of Paul's argument. Theodotion and Symmachus read ὁ Ἀδάμ ἄνθρωπος in their own LXX texts. As Stanley observes, since Heb. אָדָם ('Adam) serves either as a generic term for humankind or as a proper name for a male person, a dual word order in Paul and in Theodotion/Symmachus would be entirely possible and understandable: 'Paul may not have added the proper name Ἀδάμ to his text of Gen 2:7.'¹⁰⁹ (This also underlines that the correct MS reading in v. 45 is not that followed by B and K; see above under Textual Note.)" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1281.]

⁴⁵³This sort of translation methodology is normative in the LXX, and did not create any problems for the writers of the NT. .

⁴⁵⁴"The corporate and representative role of Adam, however, is not exclusive to Paul or even apocalyptic, but emerges in hellenistic Wisdom texts and Philo.¹¹³ Nevertheless, 'the main difference between Paul and Philo arises in relation to the eschatological role of the firstborn heavenly man which also underlies Paul's phrase ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ (v. 45).'¹¹⁴ As Goppelt observes, late Judaism had already established 'the destructive power of Adam' which provides the apocalyptic and soteriological backcloth for Paul 'to demonstrate the saving power of Christ.'¹¹⁵ 'Paul rejects the kind of speculation about an ideal original man that is found in Philo with a remark that he inserts into ... his argument (1 Cor 15:46). He accepts the order revealed by scripture and redemptive history.... According to Gen 2:7, the first man is from the earth, whereas the *second man is from heaven*' (my italics).¹¹⁶ Each 'imprints his likeness on those under his headship (1 Cor 15:48).'¹¹⁷" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1282–1283.]

τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον, *for since by the trespass of the one the many died*. Humanity's sinful and depraved condition comes out of Adam and envelops all people over all of human history.

Then (v. 45b), Paul adds the balancing Christ side of the characterization: ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ. *the last Adam become a giver of life for the spirit.*⁴⁵⁵ This builds off the earlier statement in v. 22b: οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. *Thus also in Christ all can be made alive*. Thus the believer's resurrection experience comes out of Jesus as the risen Christ.⁴⁵⁶ Only from the risen Christ can come spirit existence in resurrection.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵"The Adam-Christ typology has already been introduced in 15:21–22, where it closely anticipates the better-known typology of Rom 5:12–19. Morna Hooker points out that in spite of difficulties of syntax, 'the parallels and contrasts between Adam and Christ [in Rom 5:12–19] are clear: five times over, first negatively and then positively, everything which happened 'in Adam' is more than counterbalanced by what happens 'in Christ.'¹¹⁰

"The contrast plays a fundamental part not only in this chapter (15:20–22, 45–49) but in the whole of Paul's theology. James Dunn discusses several passages where the first and last Adam lie at the heart of Paul's thought and argument, naming especially Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:20–22, and 15:45: 'Paul deliberately sets Jesus alongside Adam.... Adam is clearly understood in some sort of representative capacity. Adam is humankind, an individual who embodies or represents a whole race of people ... so also does Christ. Adam is 'the type of the One to come' (Rom 5:14) ... the eschatological counterpart of the primeval Adam.... Each begins an epoch, and the character of each epoch is established by their action.'¹¹¹"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1281–1282.]

⁴⁵⁶In the Roman 5:14–19 analogy, the Christ column stresses divine grace and justification before a holy God., Note v. 19: ὡςπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί, οὕτως καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί. *For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

⁴⁵⁷"It seems probable, then, that Paul's explication of the eschatological 'order' (cf. on vv. 23–28 above) and purposive sequence serves a dual purpose. (a) It underlines the need to look ahead: believers will be transformed fully into that mode of existence which characterizes Christ as Spirit (i.e., both beyond earthly horizons of imagination and beyond the destructive effects of weakness and sin). (b) It also serves as a probable polemic against any Christology which draws on the Archetypal Man theme (found perhaps among some of the more sophisticated 'strong') based on scraps of religious philosophy originating from hellenistic or hellenistic-Jewish 'wisdom' traditions or perhaps Philo's world of thought.¹²³ Adam is no archetypal model who represents Ideal Humanity; he stands for all that is fallen and destructive. This is the very background that makes an understanding of the proclamation of the cross (1:18–25) utterly central and the ground of all hope. The cross brings reversal (cf. 1:26–31), not simply degrees of 'ad-



Also note the sequential importance of ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ, *the first man Adam*, and ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ, *the last Adam*. This one / two sequence will play an important role in the amplification in vv. 46-48.⁴⁵⁸ The label ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ, *the last Adam*, with its clear eschatological thrust, becomes ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος, *the second man* (v. 47) with the sequential order emphasized. Both as ἄνθρωπος stand as sources for all humanity: Adam that of a sinful body; Christ of resurrection life for eternity.

V. 46: ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν. *But not first is the Spirit produced item, instead the sensual then the Spirit produced item.*

vance.' Hence v. 46 underlines the contrast between the two orders of being represented respectively by the first Adam and the last Adam, but the resurrection carries with it no 'myth of eternal return' but the promise of new creation. Paul does not devalue the physical, which is God's gift, but the natural is bound up with human sin and bondage, and there is no hope of full salvation without transformation by an act of the sovereign God which entails the mediate agency also of Christ and the Spirit." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1284.]

⁴⁵⁸ Predictably, Schmithals regards the supposed interruption of v. 46 as further evidence of gnostic influence at Corinth.¹²⁴ We have already noted the problems which beset this view. Although we concede that it is possible to overstress the problem of 'Realized Eschatology at Corinth,' nevertheless this verse links gospel-grounded transformation with eschatological horizons grounded in Christ.¹²⁵ A surprising number of late-nineteenth-century commentaries allude here to 'a law of progress,' perhaps reflecting a relatively 'new' theological acceptance of evolutionary angles of understanding.¹²⁶ However, an eschatology which focuses on new creation is precisely not based on 'a low view of progress.' All the same, an allusion to 'law' remains acceptable if by this we mean the 'order' of the divine purpose which Paul underlines in vv. 23-28: everything in its proper order.¹²⁷ Eschatological discontinuity implies that the Corinthians cannot yet live as if the triumph is complete: first, the natural, everyday order of life with all its constraints and contingencies, i.e., the purely human, continues; only after that does 'Christlikeness,' i.e., bearing the imprint of the last Adam, become wholly transposed into following Christ in the realm of the Spirit without constraint or qualification.

"Because this very fine point relates so closely to the Corinthian view of salvation, it is scarcely surprising that the allusion to Spirit caused considerable perplexity in patristic exegesis. Ambrosiaster (followed by Grotius, Estius, and Heinrici) sees this as referring to the empowering of Christ at his resurrection by the Spirit.¹²⁸ Theophylact regards this as denoting the messianic anointing by the Spirit, and the use of τὸ ζῶοποιόν may have influenced the formulation of the article on the Holy Spirit as 'the Lord, the Giver of Life' in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The explanation offered above, however, takes full account of Paul's context of situation and the force of his argument at this specific point. Robertson and Plummer better convey Paul's thought: 'There is nothing final in the universe except God.'¹²⁹"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1284-1285.]

What may well stand behind this emphasis is a rejection of some form of Corinthian elitist thinking influenced from Plato where the idealized eternal order comes first and the inferior mirrored material copy comes second.⁴⁵⁹ Clearly the Jewish philosopher of the first century BCE took this idea and twisted the two creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 into an eternal Adam (Gen. 1) and a human Adam (Gen. 2). Some traces of his false thinking seem to be present behind Paul denial in v. 46.⁴⁶⁰ In this twisted perspective salva-

⁴⁵⁹ Walther Schmithals (Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, 169-70; cf. Jewett, *Anthropological Terms*, 352-56) is completely mistaken to find here a Gnostic polemic being destroyed. No developed system of Gnostic thinking existed in the mid-first century Christian communities.

Predictably, Schmithals regards the supposed interruption of v. 46 as further evidence of gnostic influence at Corinth.¹²⁴ We have already noted the problems which beset this view. Although we concede that it is possible to overstress the problem of "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," nevertheless this verse links gospel-grounded transformation with eschatological horizons grounded in Christ.¹²⁵ A surprising number of late-nineteenth-century commentaries allude here to "a law of progress," perhaps reflecting a relatively "new" theological acceptance of evolutionary angles of understanding.¹²⁶ However, an eschatology which focuses on new creation is precisely not based on "a low view of progress." All the same, an allusion to "law" remains acceptable if by this we mean the "order" of the divine purpose which Paul underlines in vv. 23-28: everything in its proper order.¹²⁷ Eschatological discontinuity implies that the Corinthians cannot yet live as if the triumph is complete: first, the natural, everyday order of life with all its constraints and contingencies, i.e., the purely human, continues; only after that does "Christlikeness," i.e., bearing the imprint of the last Adam, become wholly transposed into following Christ in the realm of the Spirit without constraint or qualification.

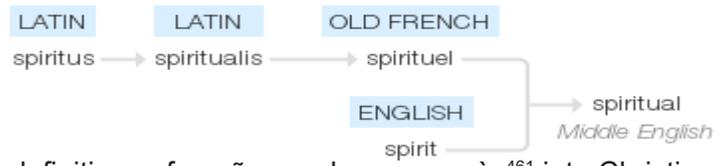
[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1284-1285.]

⁴⁶⁰ First-century speculative interpretations of Adam and Genesis 1 agree with Paul in describing Adam as the parent of humankind, as the first man (Philo, *De Abrahamo* 56; 1 Cor 15:47). However, Philo is sufficiently influenced by Plato's theory of Forms or Ideas to associate the two creation accounts in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 with two concepts of Adam. That which bears the stamp of God's image (1:26) is πνεῦμα: spiritual and heavenly. The prototype of Ideal Adam is οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος ... κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ γεγονώς... However this 'heavenly man' who bears 'God's image' is different from the Adam who is 'earthly' (γῆϊνος) and was 'made out of bits of matter' (ἐκ σποράδος ὕλης), which Moses calls 'clay' or 'soil' (ἦν χοῦν κέκληκεν) in *Legum Allegoriae* 1:31-32. As in Plato's philosophy, first comes the eternal heavenly Idea or Form; second comes the empirical, contingent, earthly copy which seeks to approximate the Form or Pattern from which it was derived. For Philo, humankind or 'man' in Gen 2:7 is an admixture of the contingent, an object of sense data (αἰσθητός ... ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς συνεστώς), and a reaching up to the incorporeal (ἀσώματος) and incorruptible (ἄφθαρτος). On this basis, 'spirituality' could be perceived as the opposite of how Paul views it. For Paul new creation and transformation came from beyond and were constituted by the agency of the Holy Spirit, not an immanent human spirit.



tion becomes merely an advancement from the moral Adam to the spiritual Adam in the realization of the idealized Adam of Genesis one. This Paul totally rejects for Adam both in action and symbol stands for all that is sinful and fallen, while Christ alone represents that produced by the Spirit of God both in His person and as representative of those redeemed through the cross.

Thus it is not surprising that from patristic times to the present Paul's use of πνεῦμα, *Spirit* (v. 45) as equal to τὸ πνευματικόν, *that produced by the Spirit* (v. 46) which then is equated with both ὁ ἐπουράνιος, *the one of heaven* and οἱ ἐπουράνιοι, *those of heaven* (v. 48), has presented interpretive challenges. The creation of the word 'spiritual' completely detached from Christ and the Holy Spirit from the ancient Latin reflects the intrusion of the Greek philosophical world with its own



definitions of πνεῦμα and πνευματικόν⁴⁶¹ into Christian thought⁴⁶² during the patristic era.⁴⁶³ The focus shifts to the achievement of the individual through disciplined effort that produces a certain status religiously that is labeled 'spiritual.' But such is radically opposite of Paul's teaching that everything about our existence as believers is the product of the working of the Holy Spirit in our life. We personally achieve nothing of lasting quality through our own efforts.

But by creating a different, non-Pauline definition of πνευματικός, -ή, -όν, the basis of salvation shifts however subtly from total dependence on Christ to

"It is important to note that 'whether Paul read Philo' has little bearing on the issues. Philo, in spite of all his own idiosyncrasies as no 'representative' thinker, nevertheless was in touch with, and often reflects, religious philosophies of the day which, especially in Jewish or Christian circles, become attractive when they appear to combine sophisticated concepts with possible readings of scripture.¹²⁰ Recently Elaine Pagels has looked again at 'the cluster of logia that interpret Genesis 1' in the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of John. What is presupposed, she urges, is not some single 'gnostic myth' but a 'widely known and varied ... exegesis [which] connects the eikon of Gen 1:26–27 with the primordial light ... to show ... the way back to ... primordial creation' (Gen 1:3).¹²¹ Pagels perceives the Fourth Gospel as directing 'polemics against a type of Genesis exegesis used by a wide range of readers, both Jewish and Christian,' and it is not farfetched to detect such a concern in Paul.¹²²

"It seems probable, then, that Paul's explication of the eschatological 'order' (cf. on vv. 23–28 above) and purposive sequence serves a dual purpose. (a) It underlines the need to look ahead: believers will be transformed fully into that mode of existence which characterizes Christ as Spirit (i.e., both beyond earthly horizons of imagination and beyond the destructive effects of weakness and sin). (b) It also serves as a probable polemic against any Christology which draws on the Archetypal Man theme (found perhaps among some of the more sophisticated 'strong') based on scraps of religious philosophy originating from hellenistic or hellenistic-Jewish 'wisdom' traditions or perhaps Philo's world of thought.¹²³ Adam is no archetypal model who represents Ideal Humanity; he stands for all that is fallen and destructive. This is the very background that makes an understanding of the proclamation of the cross (1:18–25) utterly central and the ground of all hope. The cross brings reversal (cf. 1:26–31), not simply degrees of 'advance.' Hence v. 46 underlines the contrast between the two orders of being represented respectively by the first Adam and the last Adam, but the resurrection carries with it no 'myth of eternal return' but the promise of new creation. Paul does not devalue the physical, which is God's gift, but the natural is bound up with human sin and bondage, and there is no hope of full salvation without transformation by an act of the sovereign God which entails the mediate agency also of Christ and the Spirit."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1283–1284.]

⁴⁶¹"Derived from πνέω, the verbal noun πνεῦμα means the elemental natural and vital force which, matter and process in one, acts as a stream of air in the blowing of the wind and the inhaling and exhaling of breath, and hence transf. as the breath of the spirit which, in a way which may be detected both outwardly and inwardly, fills with inspiration and grips with enthusiasm.¹ Whether visibly or not there resides in the word an effective and directed power which it owes, not so much to the -μα, but rather to the basic idea of energy contained in the root πνεφ—. This finds cosmologically representative expression in Plat. Phaed., 112b when in the myth about the constitution of the earth the movement of the wind and the process of breathing are compared: ὥσπερ τῶν ἀναπνεόντων ἀεὶ ἐκπνεῖ τε καὶ ἀναπνεῖ ῥέον τὸ πνεῦμα, οὕτω καὶ ἐκεῖ ζυναιωρούμενον τῷ ὑγρῷ τὸ πνεῦμα δεινούς τινας ἀνέμους καὶ ἀμηχάνους παρέχεται καὶ εἰσιὼν καὶ ἐξιόν.² From this there are logically developed and expanded the various occasional uses and nuances, both lit. and fig., acc. to the sphere or context of reality. Within these the force of πνεῦμα may be seen in its varied nature and strength." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:334–335.]

⁴⁶² Of the 26 NT uses of πνευματικός, -ή, -όν only two instances in 1 Pet. 2:5 are not Pauline used instances. And via Silas as the writer of First Peter the Pauline language is quite noticeable all through First Peter. The term is never used in the NT as the opposite of σωματικόν as denoting the inner life of a human being.

⁴⁶³"Because this very fine point relates so closely to the Corinthian view of salvation, it is scarcely surprising that the allusion to **Spirit** caused considerable perplexity in patristic exegesis. Ambrosiaster (followed by Grotius, Estius, and Heinrici) sees this as referring to the empowering of Christ at his resurrection by the **Spirit**.¹²⁸ Theophylact regards this as denoting the messianic anointing by the Spirit, and the use of τὸ ζωοποιόν may have influenced the formulation of the article on the Holy Spirit as 'the Lord, the Giver of Life' in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The explanation offered above, however, takes full account of Paul's context of situation and the force of his argument at this specific point. Robertson and Plummer better convey Paul's thought: 'There is nothing final in the universe except God.'¹²⁹" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1285.]



our individual efforts. Often the shift is in the sense of ‘supplementing’ or ‘adding to’ the work of Christ. But apostolic teaching will not under any circumstance permit the slightest shift away from total dependence on Christ and His work as the exclusive foundation of Christian existence and hope for eternity.

V. 47, ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.⁴⁶⁴ *The first man is from the dust of the earth; the second man is from Heaven.* Here origins for both Adam and Christ are asserted, again in contradiction of any of the ‘sophisticated’ thinking of the Corinthian elitists. The preposition ἐκ denotes source or origin of something or someone. From Adam comes our connection to the earth, but from Christ comes connections to Heaven for believers.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴The original wording of this verse was bothersome to copyists and others over the first several centuries. Consequently several modifications surface in the manuscripts.

Three variants are at issue. (1) Marcion changed the second man to Lord (κύριος), for reasons of theology. Tertullian explicitly attacks Marcion’s changing of the text for his own purposes: “If the first was a man, can there be a second unless he were a man also? Or if the second is ‘Lord,’ was the first also ‘Lord’?”¹³⁰ Here is an early witness to textual issues. (2) The AV/KJV phrase the Lord from heaven is based on the reading of κ³, A, D2, K, L, and Syriac VSS. Against this, however, is ranged a decisive plurality of early text-types: κ*, B, C, D, Coptic, Bohairic (Sahidic often follows A and various Latin MSS); all rightly omit κύριος. (3) P⁴⁶ reads ἄνθρωπος πνευματικός, but is virtually unsupported. The common assumption is that an early scribe was influenced by having just copied this phrase in v. 46. The UBS 4th ed. text is therefore not to be doubled.¹³¹

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1285–1286.]

⁴⁶⁵“Several themes are interwoven in these succinct, syntactically abbreviated verses. (1) One major strand, the fundamental one, continues to expound the theme of somatic forms: humanity as such finds its model in **the first Adam**, who was created from **earth’s soil** (Gen 2:7, Hebrew and LXX) and shares the mortality and fragility of what belongs to those whose σῶμα is made from that which disintegrates into **dust** in the grave (on the Greek and Hebrew, see below). The *raised Christ*, however, belongs to, indeed provides the model for, a different order of existence. Raised by God through the agency of the Holy Spirit, **the second man** exhibits those qualities that come from heaven and shape the character and nature of the form in which those ‘in’ Christ (see above) will be raised. (2) A second, less central strand takes up the background of thought which we discussed under v. 46 about the potential for misunderstanding invited by non-Christian speculation about two Adams of a different kind in the type of thought on which Philo draws (whether Paul knew his writings or not). Above all, spiritual levels of existence do not mean those which draw their character from *the human spirit within, but from the Spirit of God* who is both within and beyond: *the Beyond* who is within. (3) Although Barrett, among others, warns us not to interpret these verses as a matter of moral likeness to Christ, the pronouns οἶος ... τοιοῦτοι, twice repeated, are ‘correlative pronouns of character or quality’ which enhance more than mere somatic form.¹³² On this basis we use Eng. **model/models** (cf. REB, *is the pattern ... is the pattern*

Vv. 48-49, 48 οἶος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι. 49 καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

In this subsequent sentence after v. 47, Paul centers on the implications for believers of the Adam / Christ comparison of origins in v. 47.⁴⁶⁶ Interestingly, in playing off the LXX translation of Gen. 2:7, χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, **dust from the earth**, Paul from all indications creates a new Greek adjective χοϊκός, -ή, -όν not found in the Greek literature prior to First Corinthians.⁴⁶⁷

First Paul links material humanity to Adam: οἶος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, **As was the man of dust, so** [v. 48]; NJB, *is the pattern*; NRSV, NIV, Collins, *as ... so ...*). The resurrection mode of existence, for Paul, is decisively shaped and directed by the Holy Spirit in accordance with transformation into the image of Christ as well as a new ‘form’ (15:44, 45, 49, 50–57). (4) Paul appeals to the first half of Gen 2:7 (cf. the second half in v. 45).” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1286.]

⁴⁶⁶“Hence a background is inherited in the first-century world of those familiar with scripture which projects subtle and multivalent nuances on which Paul plays. (a) **Earthly** stands implicitly in contrast to being of the **Holy Spirit** in 15:47. (b) The allusion to the material **dust** describes the σῶμα which is laid in the grave in weakness and sorrow, to disintegrate into bones and powder. (c) The whole string of nouns and adjectives with ἐκ + genitive of source or efficient cause provides a contrast in the clearest terms between the characteristics of two modes of existence represented respectively by ὁ χοϊκός and ὁ ἐπουράνιος. The latter can best be translated by **what pertains to heaven**. For heaven is not a locality as such, but the realm characterized by the immediate presence and purity of the living God in and through Christ and the Spirit.¹³⁸ Further, *the spiritual Man* or *the heavenly Man* smacks of the dubious ‘heavenly man’ speculation.¹³⁹ Even the allusion suggested by Barrett to the Son of Man as a heavenly figure in Dan 7:13 and 1 Enoch 46:1–3 is so fraught with complexity in contemporary debate as to be at best an uncertain background.¹⁴⁰” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1287.]

⁴⁶⁷Such was common for ancient writers of Greek. Among the more educated writers, the ability to create a maximum number of new words while still being understood was a mark of superior knowledge and writing skills. [If you read much modern technical writing, this same trait remains in place today.] Thus Paul’s creating χοϊκός, -ή, -όν from the more common noun χοῦς, **dust**, with the clear meaning ‘**made of dust**’ signaled to his Corinthian elitists that he was no dummy and unskilled in the language. Interestingly, the adjective begins surfacing in some later Greek Christian writings due to the four instances of it here in chapter 15. The more common distinction for **earthly** from οὐράνιος is γήινος ἄνθρωπος, **man of clay**, used by Philo.

are those who are of the dust. The continuity of fallen humanity with Adam cannot be denied or explained away. But for the children of God another connection is critical and central: *καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι, and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.* One should note carefully the qualitative nature of both sets of pronouns used by Paul: οἷος and τοιοῦτοι. Everything here is set up in parallels:

οἷος ὁ χοϊκός,
 τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί,
 καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος,
 τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι

The connection to Adam is more than mere materiality; it has moral tones. Similarly, the believers' connection to Christ has morality tones in reference to a similar quality of life lived by the followers of Christ.

The second half of this sentence in v. 49 then applies these connections to those who are in Christ, i.e., the 'we' in the first person plural verbs ἐφορέσαμεν and φορέσομεν.⁴⁶⁸ One should note also the distinct dif-

⁴⁶⁸Whether we read the future indicative φορέσομεν, **we shall wear**, or the aorist subjunctive, *let us wear*, reflects a long-standing crux. The subjunctive is supported by a wide range of early texts: P⁴⁶, κ, C, D, F, G. Latin VSS, Coptic, Bohairic, Clement, the Latin of Irenaeus, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa. The UBS 4th ed. text has the future indicative, supported only by B and a few minuscules, with the Coptic, Sahidic, Gregory Nazianzus, and a few other minor sources. NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB, RV, AV/KJV, and Barrett all follow the indicative reading, but some VSS (NRSV, NIV, RVmg, and Barrett) with a note recording the variant reading of the subjunctive. It is symptomatic of the intensity of the debate that while Conzelmann observes, 'the context demands the indicative,' Fee reads the subjunctive, declaring, 'The UBS committee abandoned its better text-critical sense,' on the ground that if the B reading makes such better sense, it is difficult to see why such a large range of texts, including the Alexandrian, should have changed it.¹⁴⁷ Metzger supports the UBS Committee's categorization of the indicative as 'almost certain, 'B,' ' on exegetical grounds: the text is didactic.¹⁴⁸ The debate began in the early centuries. Tertullian argues against Marcion: "He says, 'let us wear [or bear]' as a precept; not 'we shall wear [or bear] in the sense of promise.'¹⁴⁹ Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Basil appear to read the subjunctive.¹⁵⁰ Yet Theodoret decisively and probably Theodore favor the indicative, and Cyril of Alexandria appears to oscillate.¹⁵¹ Although he follows the Latin subjunctive reading *portemus*, Thomas Aquinas cites Rom 8:29 for the promissory nature of we shall.... *Quos praescivit et praedestinavit conformes. Sic ergo debemus conformari*, i.e., we ought to be because we shall be....¹⁵² The key point recognized in modern scholarship, however, is identified by Barrett: the 'short' *o* of the indicative and the *omega* of the subjunctive varied little, if at all, in Greek *pronunciation* (e.g., in dictation, or in public reading), hence '*only exegesis can determine the original sense and reading*' (my italics).¹⁵³ Thus the majority of modern commentators stand with Barrett and Conzelmann.¹⁵⁴ However, the issue cannot be closed when Heinrich, Allo, Sider, Collins, and Wolff stand with Fee.¹⁵⁵ In our view, the indicative has the probability of the textual issue, which is closely parallel to Rom 5:1, *we have peace with God...*" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary

ference between the verb used here φορέω from the much more common φέρω. φορέω has the sense of 'wearing' beyond just the carrying idea of φέρω. This is highlighted by the two direct objects: τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, *the image/form of the 'made of dust'* / καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου, *also the image/form of the heavenly.* In eloquent expression Paul reminds the Corinthians of still being 'earth bound' but also in salvation of also being 'heaven bound'.¹⁴⁶⁹

Thus in this second refutatio in vv.35-49,⁴⁷⁰ Paul has dramatically denied all of the twisting of the idea of resurrection set forth by the Corinthian elitists. In the process, we pick up bits and pieces of this perversion of the apostolic teaching, but not enough to identify it as a unitary alternative viewpoint. Most likely different versions floated around among the house church groups oriented toward the elitist mentality opposing Paul.

Second response by Paul, vv. 50-57.

50 Τοῦτο δὲ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομησάτω οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ. 51 ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω· πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, 52 ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι· σαλπύσει γὰρ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἀφθαρτοὶ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα. 53 Δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν. 54 ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν, τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος·

κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος.

55 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;

(Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1288–1289.]

⁴⁶⁹Meanwhile, the Corinthians are to remember the two sets of forces which operate. They are still *human*; indeed, they are *vulnerable, fallible, and fragile* as **wearing the image of him who was formed from earth's dust** (on the Greek vocabulary, see above). They are not yet purely 'people of the Spirit' but share the constraints and limitations of *being human* (cf. 1 Corinthians 8–10 and 12–14). Nevertheless, they are en route to a mode of existence wholly like that of the raised Christ in glory. Then, as Luther writes, believers 'become completely spiritual ... live[s] solely of and by the Spirit... We shall divest ourselves of that image ... and receive another's, namely the celestial Christ's. Then we shall have the same form and essence which He now has since His resurrection.'¹⁵⁷ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1290.]

⁴⁷⁰The use of Greek deliberative rhetorical structures by Paul follows the pattern of:

Narratio, vv. 1-11

Refutatio one, vv. 12-19

Conformatio one, vv. 20-34

Refutation two, vv. 35-49

Conformatio two, vv. 50-57

Peroratio, v. 58



ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;
 56 τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία, ἢ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος· 57 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

50 What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perish-

able body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

55 “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This unit in vv. 50-57 follows the rhetorical pattern

of a *conformatio* in a manner similar to vv. 20-34. Paul moves from rejecting the twisted view of the Corinthian elitists in vv. 35-49 to celebrating the correctness and implications of the apostolic view in vv. 50-57. This grows out of the objector’s questions posed in v. 35.⁴⁷¹

The internal arrangement of ideas, as displayed in the block diagram above, follow the sequence of a basic declaration in the ὅτι clause of v. 50 reaching back to the objector’s questions in v. 35. Verses 51-53 the elaborate this thesis declaration about resurrection. Fi-

⁴⁷¹It is too simplistic to assume that vv. 36-49 answer the first question, πῶς ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί; while vv. 50-57 answer the second question ποῖω δὲ σώματι ἔρχονται; The two questions are much more inter connected than this assumption would allow, as the above exegesis on v. 35 demonstrated. The *refutatio* in vv. 35-49 disprove a denial of the resurrection and the *conformatio* in vv. 50-57 celebrate it for believers at the second coming of Christ.

15.50 δέ
 719 Τοῦτο φημι,
 | ἀδελφοί,
 ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομησαὶ οὐ δύναται
 οὐδὲ
 ἢ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ.

15.51 ἰδοὺ
 720 μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω·
 721 πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα,
 δέ
 722 πάντες ἀλλαγησόμεθα,
 15.52 ἐν ἀτόμῳ,
 ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ,
 ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι·
 γὰρ
 723 σαλπίζει
 καὶ
 724 οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἀφθαρτοὶ
 καὶ
 725 ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα.

15.53 γὰρ
 726 Δεῖ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν
 καὶ
 727 τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

15.54 δέ
 ὅταν τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν
 καὶ
 τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν,
 728 τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος
 ὁ γεγραμμένος·
 15.55 κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος·
 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;
 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

15.56 δέ
 729 τὸ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία,
 δέ
 730 ἢ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος·
 15.57 δέ
 731 τῷ θεῷ χάρις
 τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος
 διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.



nally vv. 54-57 celebrate the victory over death in resurrection

Affirmation of foundation, v. 50. Τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ. What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

A small number of manuscript copies substitute γὰρ for δέ: D F G b; Mcion^T Ir^{lat} Ambst. The causal conjunction γὰρ links v. 50 back to v. 49 as a justifying statement. But the evidence overwhelmingly supports δέ which sets up vv. 50-57 as parallel to vv. 36-49. This becomes important because it impacts how Τοῦτο φημι should be understood and then translated. The NRSV “What I am saying,” is inadequate both lexicographically and contextually because it favors the understanding of the γὰρ reading of the text.

The better expression of Τοῦτο φημι is “**This I declare...**” The more formal nature of φημι rather than λέγω is adequately addressed. The contextual role of vv. 50-57 is more clearly affirmed.

What Paul affirms is a fundamental spiritual principle: ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ. Note the synonymous parallelism set up here which make the one point stated in the first strophe emphatically:

σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται

οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ.

flesh and blood the Kingdom of God cannot inherit

neither does the perishable inherit the imperishable

The depiction of humanity as σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα, flesh and blood, is more than labeling humanity as weak and helpless, although the LXX frequently implies weakness in its rendering of the Hebrew text. As Paul has made repeatedly in chapter fifteen, humanity in its fallen, depraved condition is completely unfit for eternity. Just ‘cleaning up’ by overcoming the forces of evil is totally inadequate for eternity. We must be completely transformed if we are to stand before an utterly pure and holy God in eternity. Justification at conversion begins that process of getting us ready for eternity and resurrection at the parousia of Christ completes the transformation.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷²The LXX regularly uses **flesh and blood** to denote human-kind in its weakness and vulnerability, and in this sense Paul declares elsewhere that his revelation of gospel truth comes not from “*flesh and blood*” but from God.¹⁶⁴ However, Jeremias’s study sheds light on a critical issue. Although this term frequently calls attention to human weakness, far more is at stake than the view of many older modern commentators that ‘Man ... is too weak to wield the sceptre over the vast and mighty forces of the other world.’¹⁶⁵ It is not simply that ‘our present bodies, whether living or dead, are absolutely unfitted for the Kingdom.’¹⁶⁶ Collins rightly underlines the apocalyptic framework of thought here, even though he dissents

This is the point underscored by the second strophe οὐδὲ ἡ φθορὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομεῖ, **neither can the perishable inherit the imperishable.** In the refutatio part 2 of vv. 42-49 the image of sowing a seed to produce a plant as a symbol of physical death, and our dual linkage to Adam and to Christ as believers underscored the continuity of our connection both to this world and the world to come. But now Paul stresses the discontinuity between life in the material world and life in eternity before a holy God. Only via transformation of our existence can we move out of this world and into the world of Heaven. The receiving of a resurrection ‘body’ or life / existence is the critical requirement for this life to come.

Thus the two strophes affirm the critical necessity of resurrection. “Whereas the first half of the parallelism is concerned with the need for new creation, the second explicates this further in terms of the impossibility of decay somehow achieving its own reversal (see above on v. 42), or even negation by its own capacities without divine transformation.”⁴⁷³

Note how similar Paul’s declaration here is to his much later affirmation in Phil. 3:21, ὃς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξει αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. **He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.** About a decade later Paul in writing to the Philippians reflects on his declarations to the Corinthians and gives a good succinct summation of it to the church at Philippi. His views did not change over this period of time, contrary to the claim of some interpreters. The resurrection of believers remains linked to the parousia of Christ.

But this spiritual reality of resurrection can’t be concluded by mere human reasoning, and the dependence of the Corinthian elitists on Greek reasoning left them clueless as the both the nature and need for

from Jeremias over the nature of the parallelism between the two halves of this present verse.¹⁶⁷ Apocalyptic emphasizes ‘a radical incompatibility between the present condition of human existence and the resurrected condition.... Transformation is necessary.’¹⁶⁸ Indeed so, but this entails not only transformation from weakness to power (vv. 43–44) but also new creation in terms of full deliverance from sin to a disposition of holiness. It is an axiom of Jewish-Christian theology that only the pure and holy can rest in the immediate presence of God.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1291.]

⁴⁷³Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1292.

resurrection. Only through divine revelation can this be grasped. Thus (v. 51) Paul's thesis is affirmed as mystery: ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω· **Indeed I speak a mystery to you.** Paul likes this word μυστήριον and uses it several times (5x in 1 Cor; 21x of the 27 NT uses).⁴⁷⁴ The Gospel is hidden from human reasoning and becomes known only through divine revelation, given to the apostles and shared with the Christian community by them. The outside non-Christian world largely remains ignorant of this message of salvation by their spiritual blindness and rebellion against God. Contained in this Gospel is the mystery of the resurrection at the coming of Christ.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁴The Pauline lit. has μ. in 21 places. A secret or mystery, too profound for human ingenuity, is God's reason for the partial hardening of Israel's heart **Ro 11:25** or the transformation of the surviving Christians at the Parousia **1 Cor 15:51**. Even Christ, who was understood by so few, is God's secret or mystery **Col 2:2**, hidden ages ago **1:26** (cp. Herm. Wr. 1, 16 τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον μέχρι τῆσδε τῆς ἡμέρας), but now gloriously revealed among the gentiles **vs. 27**, to whom the secret of Christ, i.e. his relevance for them, is proclaimed, **4:3** (CMitton, ET 60, '48/49, 320f). Cp. **Ro 16:25**; **1 Cor 2:1** (cp. Just., D. 91, 1; 131, 2 al. μ. τοῦ σταυροῦ; 74, 3 τὸ σωτήριον τοῦτο μ., τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ πάθος τοῦ χριστοῦ). The pl. is used to denote Christian preaching by the apostles and teachers in the expr. οἰκονόμοι μυστηρίων θεοῦ **1 Cor 4:1** (Iambli., Vi. Pyth. 23, 104 calls the teachings of Pyth. θεῖα μυστήρια). Not all Christians are capable of understanding all the mysteries. The one who speaks in tongues πνεύματι λαλεῖ μυστήρια utters secret truths in the Spirit which the person alone shares w. God, and which others, even Christians, do not understand **1 Cor 14:2**. Therefore the possession of all mysteries is a great joy **13:2** (Just., D. 44, 2). And the spirit-filled apostle can say of the highest stage of Christian knowledge, revealed only to the τέλειοι: λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ we impart the wisdom of God in the form of a mystery (ἐν μυστηρίῳ=in a mysterious manner [Laud. Therap. 11] or =secretly, so that no unauthorized person would learn of it [cp. Cyr. of Scyth. p. 90, 14 ἐν μυστηρίῳ λέγει]) **2:7** (AKlöpffer, ZWT 47, 1905, 525–45).—Eph, for which (as well as for Col) μ. is a predominant concept, sees the μ. τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ (sc. θεοῦ) **1:9** or μ. τ. Χριστοῦ **3:4** or μ. τ. εὐαγγελίου **6:19** in acceptance of the gentiles as Christians **3:3ff, 9ff**. A unique great mystery is revealed **5:32**, where the relation betw. Christ and the Christian community or church is spoken of on the basis of Gen 2:24 (cp. the interpretation of the sun as symbol of God, Theoph. Ant. 2, 15 [p. 138, 8], and s. WKnox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, '39, 183f; 227f; WBieder, TZ 11, '55, 329–43). [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 662.]

⁴⁷⁵There may be two distinct nuances to Paul's use of μυστήριον in v. 51a. It would accord with his use of the term elsewhere to denote what was once hidden but has now been disclosed by divine revelation. On the other hand, many interpreters explain it in a way which is closer to its modern meaning in English. Paul cannot and does not say more about the precise nature of the change. He knows that Christ's own resurrection mode of existence provides the model (cf. also Phil 3:20–21), but much more than this we cannot know. It may be that Paul uses this word

Here again is a cut at the Corinthian elitists who depended upon their corrupt Greek reasoning to grasp spiritual reality. Thus, as the objector in v. 35 pictures, they were largely ignorant of the meaning of resurrection. But to those committed unconditionally to the risen Christ comes basic understanding, and more importantly, dramatic affirmation of what is ahead for them in the coming of Christ.

The heart of the μυστήριον given to the Corinthian readers by Paul is laid out in vv. 51b-53. Note from the above diagram on the right how Paul describes this experience. Statements #s 721-722 set forth the essence of resurrection: ἀλλαγησόμεθα, we will be changed. How and why this takes place is then given in two sets of justifying statements that follow: #s 723-725 and 726-727.

The heart of the coming experience is set forth in v. 51b in a doublet expression: πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, **not all of us will fall asleep (in death), but we all will be changed.** Amazingly this statement has occasioned considerable misunderstanding and manuscript alterations by copyists prior to the middle ages.⁴⁷⁶ In the rather clearly defined original read-

721	πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα,
	δὲ
722	πάντες ἀλλαγησόμεθα,
15.52	ἐν ἁτόμῳ,
	ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ,
	ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι·
	γὰρ
	σαλπίζει
	καὶ
	οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι
	καὶ
	ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα.
15.53	γὰρ
	Δεῖ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν
	καὶ
	τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

consciously to convey both senses of the term. Alternatively the latter nuance may sufficiently account for its use.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1295.]

⁴⁷⁶The textual variants reflect complex concerns of theology, and Conzelmann and Fee have detailed notes on them.¹⁷⁴ The text followed by the UBS 4th ed. is doubtless correct and evaluated as ‘certain’ (“A”).¹⁷⁵ The UBS text follows B, Dc, K, Syriac, and Coptic. The problem faced by scribes was that since Paul and his generation had died, the reading πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα *we shall not all sleep* (i.e., in death) seems false as it stands, and therefore to invite suspicion and correction. In fact, Paul almost certainly alludes to humankind inclusive of ‘we’ as believers, and their anxiety was misplaced (see exegesis below). As it was perceived, however, the problem gave rise to a series of corrections,



ing the sense is clear and consistent with Paul's idea of the imminence of the second coming of Christ. That Paul and all of his original Corinthians readers died before the return of Christ is largely irrelevant. His point is that some believers will be living and some will have already died when the return of Christ takes place.

The apostle Paul's view of his own situation did undergo development. From 1 Thess. 4:13-18 (late 40s) when Paul expected to still be alive at this final moment to still thinking this in First Corinthians (ca 53 AD) to beginning to reassess it by Second Corinthians (ca 55 AD)⁴⁷⁷ to the realization by Philippians (61 AD) that most likely he would pass away before Christ returns. Yet even in Philippians, he still retains the imminence of Christ's return expectation in Philippians not too many years prior to his execution at the hands of Nero. Far too much chronology gets mixed into the interpretive understanding of Paul's eschatological thinking. Modern preoccupation with chronological time was unknown in the ancient world.⁴⁷⁸

Paul's main point has little or nothing to do with whether he or the Corinthian readers will still be living at Christ's return. What it is about is that all will be changed at that moment in time: πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα.⁴⁷⁹

as follows: (1) κ, C, and 33 transfer the negative to the following clause, πάντες (μὲν) κοιμηθησόμεθα, οὐ πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα; (2) The early date of the first alteration can be seen, as Metzger observes, from the fact that the early P⁴⁶, followed by A^c and Origen, conflates both readings to arrive at: *we shall not all sleep, and we shall not all be changed*; (3) A* follows κ, C, and 33 in removing the first negative, but replaces the οὐ with οἶ, to read οἶ πάντες μὲν κοιμηθησόμεθα. Finally (4), the Western D*, Vulgate, and Tertullian and Marcion substitute ἀναστησόμεθα, *we shall all be raised*, for the first clause, and *but we shall not all be changed* for the second.¹⁷⁶ It is generally agreed (Metzger, Conzelmann, et al.) that this is a polemical affirmation of the resurrection of all, in the context of the times. κ and C (accepted by Augustine) also reflect the 'average view' that all must die, i.e., they actually preclude the possibility that the parousia will arrive during the lifetime of the readers. Paul, in our view, leaves this issue open (see below), but clearly the early copyists understood the verse as implying an eschatology of imminence that needed correction, on the assumption that Paul could not have been wrong. Prior to the UBS 4th ed. and recent commentators, Westcott-Hort, Meyer, and Heinrici accept the correct reading." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1293.]

⁴⁷⁷Cf. chapters one and five of Second Corinthians. My doctoral dissertation was on this topic in chapter five in the middle 1970s. It took much effort to wade through the mountains of ultimately worthless comments that had no clue to the changes happening in Paul's thinking.

⁴⁷⁸For a helpful analysis of this see Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 383–85, and in "The Logical Role . . .," *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–23 (on first-person utterances).

⁴⁷⁹Although not made explicit, the πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, **but we all will be changed**, most likely includes the non-believing world who will be outfitted with an existence not subject to

Both the living and the dead will undergo the same change.

The quickness of this change is stressed by ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι, **in a moment, at the blink of an eye, at the final trumpet blowing**.⁴⁸⁰ The trumpet blowing stresses the divine ordering of the end of time as Paul underscores in 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

Justifying statement 1, v. 52b. σαλπίζει γὰρ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα. **For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised** death for their eternal damnation (cf. Rev. 20:10-15). But this is not Paul's point here; instead, the resurrection of believers is his concern. Although 5 of the 6 NT uses of the verb ἀλλάσσω are in Paul's writings, the two uses here in vv. 51-52 are the only places with a resurrection change surfaces.

⁴⁸⁰“The change or transformation will be instantaneous, ἐν ἀτόμῳ (τέμνω, *I cut*, with alpha privative), denoting that which is indivisible, i.e., **in an instant**, the smallest conceivable moment of time. ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ indicates very rapid eye movement. Most frequently it denotes a rapid, darting glance out of the corner of one's eye, but since ῥίπτω simply means to throw, it may have a wider meaning as well. With different nouns, outside the New Testament it can denote the rapid wing movement which causes the buzz of a gnat or the twinkling (cf. AV/KJV) of a star. This is the only occurrence of the word in the New Testament, and although NRSV, NJB, REB, and NIV follow AV/KJV's *twinkling of an eye*, this translation depends on modern recognition of the phrase as itself a metaphor for instantaneousness. Strictly the sparkle or change of light of an eye is a process, and rests on transferring the metaphor of a twinkling star. Collins translates **in the blinking of an eye**, which preserves the creative metaphor but avoids dependence on a tradition of understanding.¹⁸⁸

“**The last trumpet** intensifies the metaphor of suddenness, adding the dimension of divine decree and ordered signal. In both Testaments (Exod 19:16; Zech 9:14; 1 Thess 4:16) manifestations of God are associated with the sound of the trumpet. Additionally, however, **the trumpet** awakens a sleeping army to be urgently roused to activity, including possible battle when the alert is sounded. In view of its military background, with which readers would be entirely familiar, sound would be universally interpreted less as the sound of a musical note than as a **loud signal** for all to hear. The trumpet announces the moment of change, in accordance with the timing of God's royal decree. The form of the future σαλπίζει is late Greek (σαλπίζεται is not used). In apocalyptic literature the trumpet is a standard image for announcing a new beginning decreed by God (cf. Rev 11:15). As Collins (closely with Wolff) writes, “‘Last’ may not suggest so much last in a series (cf. Rev 8:2; 11:15), as the source of the final, eschatological trumpet sound . . . the passing of the present order of reality.”¹⁸⁹ Ambrosiaster understands the trumpet sound as a sound of triumph when the battle is over.¹⁹⁰ Bruce cites similarly the ‘great trumpet’ for the return of the exiles in Isa 27:13 (cf. Matt 24:31) and that of the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:9), as well as the apocalyptic trumpet for the Lord's descent from heaven in 1 Thess 4:16–17.¹⁹¹ Augustine also alludes to 1 Thess 4:16: it denotes ‘a clear signal’ which Paul elsewhere calls ‘the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God’ (1 Thess 4:16).¹⁹² [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1295–1296.]



imperishable, and we will be changed. Note that at this divine signal of the end, all the dead will be raised imperishable. Then believers will be changed over into their eternal existence.⁴⁸¹ The addition of ἀφθαρτοι, imperishable, to the first strophe οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἀφθαρτοι underscores the change into an existence no longer subject to death and decay. For believers this is marvelous news; for non-believers this is their worst nightmare come true since the torments of eternal damnation will never cease for them. Death is no longer an option!

The second strophe ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγῶμεθα, we will be changed, reaches the climatic point where a brand new existence is given which is no longer subject to death as Paul celebrates in vv. 54-57.

Justifying statement 2, v. 53. Δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

This second justifying statement injects the will and action of God into this end time experience with the use of Δεῖ γὰρ, for it is divinely mandated that.... The impersonal infinitive δεῖ is used some 116 times inside the NT with heavenly dependence upon the LXX for its core meaning of a divinely mandated necessity.⁴⁸² The Greeks

⁴⁸¹Assuming that Paul follows an understanding similar to John's in Rev. 19:21, all non-believers on earth will suffer death on the defeat of Satan and his forces at the final battle which will signal the beginning of the eternal order starting with final judgment, 20:9-15, this would stand behind his distinction between the raising of the dead and the transformation of believers. Otherwise, Paul's words here apply only to believers.

⁴⁸²"This brief review shows us that the term is at home in Gk. and Hellenistic usage. The case is different in the OT and the Rabbis. There is a reason for this. Behind the term stands the thought of a neutral deity, of an (→) ἀνάγκη deity, which determines the course of the world and thus brings it under the δεῖ. This necessity expressed by the δεῖ affects the thought, volition and action of individuals, so that the word constantly recurs. Even in the weaker everyday usage the underlying thought may still be discerned. The biblical view of God, however, does not express a neutral necessity. It thinks of God in terms of the will which personally summons man and which fashions history according to its plan. This means that the OT uses a personal address where the Gk. world would have δεῖ. In the LXX, Josephus, other Jewish Hellenists and even the NT, however, the Gk. and Hellenistic usage is adopted. Tension is thus introduced by reason of the inadequate concept of God which underlies this usage. A plain example is to be found in Lv. 5:17: where the LXX has ὃν οὐ δεῖ ποιεῖν for the Mas. כִּי לֹא יִשְׁחָט. On the other hand, when the LXX, the Hellenistic Jews and even more so the NT adopt the word, they speak a language understood by those whom they are attempting to reach. And by linking it with, and referring it to, the biblical view of God, they make it plain that it no longer expresses the neutral necessity of fate. Instead, it indicates the will of God declared in the message. This is the standpoint from which it is applied in many different ways." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964—), 2:22.]

saw this as impersonal fate, controlled by disinterested deity. But Jews and Christians understood that the will and plan of God the Creator controls and orders what is required of humanity.⁴⁸³ Thus the transformation at the

⁴⁸³"The word δεῖ expresses the necessity of the eschatological event, and is thus an eschatological term in the NT. It is well adapted for this role, since the eschatological event is one which is hidden from man, which can be known only by special revelation, and which sets man before an inconceivable necessity of historical occurrence grounded in the divine will. The tension which results when δεῖ is linked with the biblical doctrine of God applies also to this δεῖ which stands over the great eschatological drama. It is the δεῖ of the mysterious God who pursues His plans for the world in the eschatological event. Not a blind belief in destiny, but faith in God's eternal plans formulates this δεῖ. The δεῖ denotes that God is in Himself committed to these plans. It thus expresses a necessity which lies in the very nature of God and which issues in the execution of His plans in the eschatological event.

"The concept is formulated by Daniel as follows: ἔστι θεὸς ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀνακαλύπτων μυστήρια, ὃς ἐδήλωσε τῷ βασιλεῖ Ναβουχοδονοσορ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν (Da. LXX 2:28; 2 cf. 2:29, 45). It is taken up by the Apocalypticist, who begins his work with the words: ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός, δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει (Rev. 1:1; cf. 4:1; 22:6). The same formulation is found in the Syn. apocalypse. After recounting the events which will come to pass, Jesus says: δεῖ γὰρ <πάντα> γενέσθαι, ἀλλ' οὐπω τὸ τέλος (Mt. 24:6 and par.).³ It is emphasised as quite essential to the close of the eschatological period and the beginning of the end: εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (Mk. 13:10; cf. Jn. 10:16). The imperative of eschatology is both to judgment and salvation. All the detailed acts of this eschatological occurrence stand under it. To it belongs the Messianic time which opens with the return of Elias, whom Jesus finds in John the Baptist: ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ λέγοντες· τί οὖν οἱ γραμματεῖς λέγουσιν ὅτι Ἠλίαν δεῖ ἔλθειν πρῶτον; ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Ἠλίας μὲν ἔρχεται καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα· λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Ἠλίας ἤδη ἦλθεν (Mt. 17:10 ff.; Mk. 9:11). The coming of Elias, which the disciples see under this imperative, has already been fulfilled according to these sayings. The eschatological, Messianic age has come. This throws a clear ray of light on the use of δεῖ in Christ's prophecies of His suffering and resurrection. It has a secure place in these according to the Synoptists: δεῖ αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπελθεῖν καὶ πολλὰ παθεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι (Mt. 16:21 and par.; cf. also Lk. 17:25; 24:7, 26; Ac. 3:21; 17:3). The suffering, death and resurrection of Christ are parts of the eschatological drama. Christ is not just the Preacher of eschatology; His history is eschatology. This δεῖ, under which His suffering, death and resurrection, and according to Lk. His ascension, stand, belongs to the mysterious divine work of judgment and salvation in the last time. What Paul and other NT figures say of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ is the theoretical development of this mysterious δεῖ and therefore the interpretation of the eschatological action of God in His Christ. This is confirmed by the fact that in the NT *kerygma* this history of Christ is declared to be the fulfilment of Scripture: πῶς οὖν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ ὅτι οὕτως δεῖ γενέσθαι (Mt. 26:54; cf. Lk. 22:37; 24:25 f.). John shares this view with the Synoptists when he interprets the crucifixion as follows: ὕψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον



second coming is a divinely mandated action according to God's plan.

Paul repeats the core idea of resurrection in the second justifying statements in a parallel declaration:

τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν
καὶ

τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν.

This perishable (body) must be clothed with imperishability
and

this mortal (body) must be clothed with immortality

The fourfold use of the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο as a neuter gender adjective modifying in vv. 53-54 points clearly back to the neuter noun σῶμα, body, in vv. 35-44. The first set of terms φθαρτὸν / ἀφθαρσίαν, perishable / imperishability is followed by the even stronger terms θνητὸν / ἀθανασίαν, liable to death / not subject to death in the second strophe.⁴⁸⁴ The new use of the

(3:14; cf. 12:34), or when he refers to Scripture in relation to the resurrection: οὐδέπω γὰρ ἤδεισαν τὴν γραφήν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι (20:9). In Paul's use of the term we are confronted by such eschatological necessities as the reign of Christ in the eschatological age up to the end (1 C. 15:25), the judgment (2 C. 5:10) and the resurrection change (1 C. 15:53), which has its basis in the present separation from God in virtue of the divine invisibility (1 C. 8:2).

"4. In connexion with the δεῖ which shapes the history of Christ, δεῖ has also a place in the description of God's saving action towards men. This action is in John regeneration, the new birth of man without which he can have no part in the kingdom of God: δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν (Jn. 3:7). In the apostolic *kerygma* we read: καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἢ σωτηρία· οὔτε γὰρ ὄνομά ἐστιν ἕτερον ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν τὸ δεδομένον ἐν ἀνθρώποις, ἐν ᾧ δεῖ σωθῆναι ἡμᾶς (Ac. 4:12). The saving action of God towards men reaches its goal in faith in the name of Jesus. When the shaken jailor at Philippi asks what is necessary for salvation: τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ, he is given the answer: πιστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου (Ac. 16:30 f.; cf. Hb. 11:6).⁴⁷

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:23–24.]

⁴⁸⁴"In our own era after the turn of the millennium, when medicine has prolonged life beyond all earlier imagination, it is important not to lose sight of Paul's emphasis on release from degenerating capacities which the more philosophical, abstract *incorruption* (AV/KJV), or even the more static, metaphysical *imperishable* (REB, NIV, NJB), or *imperishability* (NRSV), may perhaps convey less forcefully and less explicitly as the semantic opposite of τὸ φθαρτὸν. Similarly, *immortality* (REB, NIV, NRSV, NJB, AV/KJV) is correct but misses part of the added force provided by the use of the two terms *liable to death* and *incapable of dying* in deliberate semantic opposition. Of all the Church Fathers, it is Ambrose who best captures and conveys the dynamic and positive content of ἀφθαρσία and ἀθανασία in concrete terms: 'The blossom of the resurrection' is these; 'What is richer ...? Here is the manifold fruit, the harvest, whereby man's nature grows more vigorous and productive after death.'¹⁹⁴"

"Augustine also captures the logical basis to which Paul's 'of God' constantly calls attention: 'People are amazed that God, who

image of being clothed, ἐνδύσασθαι, stresses the continuity factor while the two pairs of opposites the discontinuity aspect. Thus in beautiful expression the apostle affirms resurrection at the coming of Christ as a divinely mandated action to take place according to His plan.

Celebration of this resurrection, vv. 54-57.

54 ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν,⁴⁸⁵ τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος·

κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος.

55 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;

ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

56 τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἁμαρτία, ἢ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος· 57 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through

made all things from nothing, makes a heavenly body from human flesh.... Is he who was able to make you when you did not exist not able to make over what you once were?¹⁹⁵"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1297.]

⁴⁸⁵"The UBS 4th ed., which is generally more optimistic than the 3d ed., categorizes the longer reading of v. 54 (above) as 'almost certain' ('B'). The 3d ed. (1966) had classified this reading less convincingly as having 'a considerable degree of doubt' ('C,' in 3d ed. terms). A shorter reading begins with the second clause, ὅταν δὲ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται τὴν ἀθανασίαν, and has the support of the early P⁴⁶, K*, and probably C*, MSS of Old Latin, Vulgate, Coptic (Sah and Boh), and Latin VSS of Irenaeus, Origen, Ambrosiaster, and Hilary. The longer reading (above and UBS 4th ed.) is supported by B and D, with possible deciphering of an unclear C, in part K, Syriac, and Byzantine readings, and the Greek of Origen, Athanasius, and Chrysostom. Two clear canons of textual criticism conflict: (1) Very often the shorter reading is more probable (since copyists are more likely to add than to subtract): (2) the phenomenon of homoioteleuton readily explains an omission of a clause or a phrase when the eye of the copyist readily moves from one occurrence of a similar word or phrase to another. In this case, the second axiom carries far more weight in this verse in spite of early support for the shorter reading. Conzelmann simply states, 'P⁴⁶ ... is a result of homoioteleuton.'¹⁹⁶ As a result of the early divergence of readings, other, later variants also occur, but these need not detain us.¹⁹⁷ (2) P⁴⁶, B, D*, and Tertullian, read νίκος, *strife*, in place of νίκος, *victory*, but this is generally ascribed to aural error in misunderstanding dictation.: [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1297–1298.]



15.54 δὲ
 ὅταν τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν
 καὶ
 τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν,
728 τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος
 ὁ γεγραμμένος·

15.55 κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος.
 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νίκος;
 ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;

15.56 δὲ
729 τὸ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἢ ἀμαρτία,
 δὲ

730 ἢ δύνამις τῆς ἀμαρτίας ὁ νόμος·
 15.57 δὲ

731 τῷ θεῷ χάρις
 τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος
 διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ἀφεῖλεν ὁ θεὸς πᾶν
 δάκρυον ἀπὸ παντὸς
 προσώπου· τὸ ὄνειδος
 τοῦ λαοῦ ἀφεῖλεν ἀπὸ
 πάσης τῆς γῆς, τὸ γὰρ
 στόμα κυρίου ἐλάλησεν.
 he will swallow up death
 forever. Then the Lord
 God will wipe away the
 tears from all faces, and
 the disgrace of his peo-
 ple he will take away
 from all the earth, for the
 Lord has spoken.

Hos. 13:14. ἐκ
 χειρὸς ἄδου ῥύσομαι
 αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐκ θανάτου

The indefinite temporal dependent clause ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν, both links the sentence it introduces back to the previous statements and sets up another important point connection to resurrection at the parousia of Christ. The use of ὅταν rather than ὅτε appropriately defines this future moment indefinitely in terms of when it will happen. This doesn't diminish the certainty of it happening at all; only avoids date setting. The repetition of the two parallel strophes in v. 53 is done for standard scribal Jewish linking purposes.

What this moment of resurrection occurrence at the parousia of Jesus also means is τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος, *then taking place will be the saying that is written....* Interestingly, this is the only OT prophetic reference to Christ used by Paul that was not realized in His first coming.⁴⁸⁶ Paul does not cite or quote from a single passage of OT text here. Instead, he gives something of a short summation of a couple of passages:⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁶Chrysostom understands γενήσεται ὁ λόγος to mean 'the word shall be fulfilled' (cf. γίνεσθαι in the sense of to be fulfilled in Matt 6:10; Mark 11:23). This is probably the only loose citation (if citation rather than paraphrase it is) in which fulfillments of scripture to which Paul alludes have not already taken place in Christ. His point, however, remains true to the christological principle: by virtue of the cross and Christ's resurrection the fulfillment is guaranteed, but a later time. Hence γενήσεται bears some such sense as 'shall become operative,' or 'shall come into force.'" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1298.]

⁴⁸⁷Most commentators agree that Paul cites, or alludes to, Isa 25:8, probably in conjunction with Hos 13:14.¹⁹⁹ C. D. Stanley gives detailed attention to how Paul uses and molds this combined quotation.²⁰⁰ First, Stanley notes, Paul combines parts of Isa 25:8 and Hos 13:14 in such a way as to give 'no indication that vv. 54b–55 might represent anything other than a continuous quotation from a single biblical passage.'²⁰¹ There is no evidence to suggest

λυτρώσομαι αὐτοῦς· ποῦ ἡ δίκη σου, θάνατε; ποῦ τὸ κέντρον σου, ἄδη; παράκλησις κέκρυπται ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν μου.† *Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your destruction? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.*⁴⁸⁸

that these had been combined prior to Paul's use of them together. Stanley urges that the combined use is the fruit of thought and care, not the by-product of careless citation.²⁰² [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1298–1299.]

⁴⁸⁸Isa 25:8 takes a different form in both the Hebrew and the LXX from Paul's own wording, however. The Hebrew text reads בלע המות לנצח (billa' hammaweth lanetsach), *he will swallow up death forever*. The LXX reads καταπέτιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας, *death has drunk up in its strength*, but the Greek VSS of Aquila and Theodotion read εἰς νίκος, *in victory* (although Symmachus reads εἰς τέλος). The LXX thus turns death (המות, hammaweth, object in Hebrew) into a nominative (which does not fit the surrounding verses; 25:6a, 8b) and interprets נצח as if it were nearer to the cognate Aramaic verb *to overcome* than to the Hebrew idiom *forever*. This explains why Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus all have differing variants: all three revisers were trying to correct a faulty LXX rendering of the Hebrew.²⁰³ Paul's version takes up elements from all three, but especially the text of Theodotion: καταπέτιεν, *Death has been swallowed up*; with εἰς νίκος, *in victory*.²⁰⁴ As Stanley suggests, doubtless there was a common tradition behind these Greek translations and revisions which Paul knew and used.²⁰⁵

"Paul's citation of, or allusion to, Hos 13:14 also differs both from the LXX and from the Hebrew. The Hebrew of v. 14 reads אהי דברייך מות אהי קטבך שאול (ehiy debareyka meweth eh qatabeka she'ol) *Where, O Death, are your plagues? Where, O She'ol, is your destruction?* The LXX reads ποῦ ἡ δίκη σου θάνατε; ποῦ τὸ κέντρον σου ἄδη, *Where, O Death, is your judgment (or penalty)? Where, O Hades, is your sting?* Paul's citation, therefore, changes the LXX's *judgment* or *penalty* to *victory*; and *Hades*, to *Death*. There is also a change in word order for rhetorical purposes."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Tes-



Paul's use of γενήσεται, rather than πληρωθῆ, stresses that the principle of death's defeat will become relevant at the parousia of Christ. The apostle does not label this a Messianic prophecy to be fulfilled.

Paul's summation points to the work of Christ that has removed the sting of death because the triumph of Christ over evil includes death as well. John's depiction is even more graphic (Rev. 20:14a): καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. **And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.** Never again will the people of God taste the awfulness of dying.⁴⁸⁹

Verses 56-57 comprise Paul's midrashic commentary on the OT texts alluded to: 56 τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἡ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος. 57 τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. **56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

In his elaboration we see a concise summation of Rom. 4-7 and Gal. 3.⁴⁹⁰ What enables death to 'sting' us is sin, ἡ ἁμαρτία, that which we inherited from Adam and made worse by our own rebellion against God. And what enables sin to possess such a sting is the divine Law of God that sets the standards of a holy God's expectations upon sinful humanity.

This means that God has given to His believing people victory over all this through both the death and resurrection of Christ as affirmed at the beginning of the chapter in vv. 1-3.⁴⁹¹

tament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1299.]

⁴⁸⁹In **Rev. 20:14-15**, such is not the experience of the non-believing world: 14 καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερός ἐστιν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός. 15 καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. **14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; 15 and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.**

⁴⁹⁰Findlay offers the delightfully succinct comment that this verse 'throws into an epigram the doctrine of Rom 4-7 and Gal 3 respecting the interrelations of Sin, Law and Death.'²¹² Bengel, as might be expected, is no less succinct: *Si peccatum non esset, mors nil posset ... sine lege peccatum non sentitur; sub lege, peccatum dominatur* (Rom 6:14).²¹³ Cullmann, as we noted above, explains the terror of death in terms of the loss of good, including the loss of the divine presence in God-forsakenness and even the experience of divine wrath. But it is sin, the human turning away from God to become centered upon the self, that has turned death into such deadly poison, so that it hurts and kills like a sting." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1301.]

⁴⁹¹Paul can therefore urge Christian believers who have been placed in a right relationship with God through the work of Christ to consider themselves (i.e., to be determined by the eschatological

The Corinthian elitists have settled for rotten meat in comparison to the prime steak that Paul puts on the table before them. Their culture and dependency upon it and its ways of thinking have spoiled a beautifully rich Gospel meal that Paul put before them in his evangelizing of Corinth on the second missionary journey. Now they have another opportunity to abandon that phony way of thinking and return to the apostolic Gospel. Here they can feast in the celebration of victory over death and in the marvelous transformation that awaits the true believers at the second coming of Christ. May we never allow the world around us to corrupt our understanding of this marvelous good news of victory through Christ Jesus!

Concluding praise and admonition, v. 58.

Ἵστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ.

So then, my beloved brothers, become steadfast, immovable, abounding in the Lord's work always, since you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

732 Ἵστε,
ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί,
ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε,
ἀμετακίνητοι,
περισσεύοντες
ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου
πάντοτε,
εἰδότες
ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς
ἐν κυρίῳ.

With this final admonition with an application tone the apostle concludes this discussion of resurrection, in ancient Greek rhetoric known as a *Peroratio*. The core admonition is simply ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, **become steadfast, immovable.**

projected world in which they are) 'dead to sin' and 'alive to God' (Rom 6:11), as those freed from death (6:13). A reversal of the process of 'wasting,' 'degenerating,' being 'on the way to ruin' (τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, 1 Cor 1:18) has been taken in hand with the work of Christ, and reaches its ultimate goal in the final transformation of the resurrection. This addresses Paul's question concerning corporate humanity: 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom 7:24).²¹⁸ Beker writes, 'Death is the primal power: it is 'the last enemy' (1 Cor 15:26) within the field of interlocking forces. The antithesis between the two ages can be summed up as 'the reign of death' as opposed to the 'reign of life' (Rom 5:17, 21). And death remains in some way the signature of the world, even after its allies—the law, the flesh, and sin—have been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ.'²¹⁹ "The alliance of sin and death is intimate indeed."²²⁰ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1302.]

Paul's application of this lengthy discussion on resurrection is for the Corinthians to remain committed to the apostolic Gospel and its teaching about resurrection. It stands as an appeal to the Corinthian elitists to abandon their phony understandings in favor of the apostolic Gospel. The predicate adjective ἔδραῖοι by being placed in front of the verb receives primary emphasis. The central idea of ἔδραῖος is for the Corinthians to firmly plant themselves on the firm footing of the apostolic Gospel. The second adjective, ἀμετακίνητοι, from ἀμετακίνητος, stresses the importance of not moving away from this first footing of the apostolic Gospel.

How does one do this best? περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε, *by abounding in the Lord's work always*. Thus it's not just correct thinking that keeps a believer on the right track. Critically important is that we stay where we are supposed to be both in our thinking and in our actions by being thoroughly, actively involved in doing the Lord's work in this world. This also must be a consistent, not a spasmodic, pattern as πάντοτε, *always*, makes very clear, especially by being placed at the end of the clause as an adverb. There's no place in God's Kingdom either now or in eternity for 'part time Christians!'

The incentive for this kind of commitment comes in the causal participle phrase εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ, *because you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*. Paul sets the tone here by using ὁ κόπος, rather than τὸ ἔργον, with the intensified meaning of 'hard work,' rather than just action or activity. This re-enforces the participle phrase περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε above by underscoring that service is not an issue of high volume so much as it concerns itself with serious, consistent service. This kind of committed service always produces results that please and glorify the Lord. The phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, placed at the end for emphasis,⁴⁹² limits the framework of such service as coming out of commitment to Christ, not from mere self-effort.

Summary Conclusions about Chapter Fifteen

This discussion of Paul stands as the most detailed articulation of the idea of resurrection found anywhere in the entire Christian Bible.⁴⁹³ Over the centuries it has received various kinds of attention, depending on the current issues regarding the resurrection at each century. The issues have centered on the nature of Christ's

⁴⁹²Note how the NRSV captures well this emphatic point by placing "in the Lord" at the beginning of the that clause.

⁴⁹³For an exceedingly helpful summation of the role of chapter fifteen among the patristic fathers, see "THE POSTHISTORY, IMPACT, AND ACTUALIZATION OF CHAPTER 15" in Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1306-1312. .

resurrection, the resurrection body of believers, the time of the resurrection of believers, among other connected issues.

Typically Paul's teaching has suffered distortion more often than being correctly understood. Why? Largely because current issues in each century defined how Paul's discussion in the mid-first century was interpreted. Not until the last half century have interpreters began to give proper weight and attention to the issue among the Corinthian elitists that prompted Paul's rebuttal. And this against the social dynamics of the city of Corinth at this particular point in time. First Clement written at the end of the first century to this same church makes its clear that different issues dominated the life of the Christian community some fifty years later. Also commentators, especially in the UK and Europe, are recognizing the unique nature of the issue at Corinth that did not exist in any of the other churches that Paul wrote letters to in his ministry. All of this leads to the clear conclusion that if we are to correctly understand First Corinthians 15 it MUST be understood solely against the backdrop of the issue Paul is addressing in the mid-first century Corinthian church. Applications and understandings of the text have legitimacy ONLY within the framework of this perspective.⁴⁹⁴

At the heart of the socio dynamics going on at Corinth among the elitist members of the church was a huge cultural failure. Paul put it on the table at the outset in chapter one as their continuing to depend on Greek ways of thinking out of their heritage and social surroundings rather than to shift over to God's ways of thinking. The limitations and false trails in pagan Greek thinking mixed in with some pagan religious ideas brought a huge fist full of problems and false thinking into their Christian perspectives. Repeatedly the apostle rebuts and condemns such in the addressing of the long list of problems morally, socially, and thinking wise that were surfacing inside the church.

Although the issue addressed in chapter fifteen centers on the resurrection first of Christ and then of believers, Paul introduces it in vv. 1-2 as a problem with the apostolic Gospel. In following the classical structure of deliberative debate he lays out the issue fully in the *narratio* (vv. 1-11) and two *refutatio* (vv. 12-19 & 35-49) and two *confirmatio* (vv. 20-34 & 50-57) with the *peroratio* in v. 58 concluding the discussion. Inside these, especially the second set of refutatio and confirmatio (vv. 35-57) Paul mixes standard Jewish scribal

⁴⁹⁴Unfortunately, this is what makes the majority of commentaries, especially those over twenty to thirty years old, not worth the cost of the paper for the print version. The same mistakes that have plagued the history of interpretation of this text since the second century onward continue to be made in our day by way too many commentators.



arguments into his presentation. Unquestionably, this is not the way a post-enlightenment theologian would argue this issue. Thus understanding Paul's strategy of dealing with the unique twisting of the idea of resurrection (cf. v. 12) is essential for grasping what he is trying to accomplish.

Central to this thesis on resurrection is the connection of the believer's resurrection to that of Jesus'. Also critical is the dual continuity and discontinuity of our physical body to the coming resurrection body. He completely rejects the Greek philosophical depreciation of the material body, but affirms that through Adam's sin our material bodies have suffered depravity and ruin, so that they are completely unsuited for an eternal existence in the presence of a holy God. Thus resurrection means a complete revamping and transformation of our existence so that we can enjoy eternity with God.

Analogous language is essential since Paul here describes something no one outside of Christ has yet experienced and been alive on earth to demonstrate it. So resurrection means life following death in terms of the planting of a seed that produces a plant with fruit. It means that our human link to Adam that produced the depravity that disqualifies us is overcome through being linked to the risen Christ.

Over and over the apostle rejects the twisted Greek thinking of the Corinthian elitists who resorted to ethereal phantasy ideas out of some of the pagan religions to explain away the resurrection. The apostle rejects their condemnation of the apostolic teaching as nothing more than the Jewish apocalyptic view that resurrection is nothing more than the rearrangement of the material content of the individual. Paul carefully weaves his way through the extremes of the Greek rejection of the idea of resurrection on one side, and the apocalyptic Jewish extreme on the other side. Neither are correct because in part they both fail to hold in proper balance the continuity and, at the same time, the discontinuity of the resurrection body to the depraved material body.

Only within this framework of understanding can chapter fifteen provide a legitimate source of divine revelation to address contemporary issues of resurrec-

tion that arise in our day and time. Otherwise the inevitability of repeating the same centuries old mistakes of contemporary cultural domination of the issue will plague our conclusions as well.

11) Concerning the collection for the saints, 16:1-4.

16.1 Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογεΐας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ὡσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε. 2 κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἑαυτῶ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐοδῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεΐται γίνωνται. 3 ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι, οὐς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, δι' ἐπιστολῶν τούτους πέμψω ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ· 4 ἐὰν δὲ ἄξιον ᾦ τοῦ κάμει πορεύεσθαι, σὺν ἐμοὶ πορεύονται.

16.1 Now concerning the collection for the saints: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

16.1	δὲ	Περὶ τῆς λογεΐας	τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους
		ὡσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας,	οὕτως καὶ
733	ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε.		
16.2	ἕκαστος ὑμῶν...τιθέτω	κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου	παρ' ἑαυτῶ
734	θησαυρίζων	ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐοδῶται,	ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεΐται γίνωνται.
16.3	δὲ	ὅταν παραγένωμαι,	
735	οὐς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, δι' ἐπιστολῶν	τούτους πέμψω	ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν
16.4	δὲ	εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ·	
736	ἐὰν ἄξιον ᾦ τοῦ κάμει πορεύεσθαι,	σὺν ἐμοὶ	πορεύονται.

The final formal topic in Paul's response to inquiries from the group in the church is contained in the brief instructions regarding the relief offering being collected for Jewish Christians in Judea. The topic signal Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογεΐας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, And now concerning the collection for the saints.... (v.1) is the last of 5

instances beginning in 7:1 (cf. 7:1; 8:1, 4; 12:1; 16:1, 12),⁴⁹⁵ which indicate a new topic to be considered. This final listing deals here with the very brief topic regarding the relief offering.

Although at first glance this seems somewhat detached from all of the other issues that Paul addressed in the letter body, one should not draw such a conclusion. From [the very detailed account](#) of the issues connected to this relief offering that are given in Second Corinthians 8-9, the Corinthians were balking at participating in this effort by the other Pauline churches. At first they committed themselves sometime prior to the writing of First Corinthians around 53-54 AD. But by the time of Second Corinthians in 55 - 56 AD the situation had changed dramatically. They promised, but did nothing to carry out their promise. It prompted a visit from Ephesus to Corinth by Paul after the writing of First Corinthians that turned into heated confrontation between him and at least some segments of the Corinthian church. The intervention of some of Paul's associates, especially Timothy and Titus, helped resolve these issues so that by 56-57 when Paul wrote Second Corinthians prior to his visit the atmosphere was much more positive. And the Corinthians were 'on board' with the relief offering.

The importance of the Corinthian participation emerges out of the wide scope of this offering that occupied a great of effort and time during Paul's third missionary journey. All of the churches from Galatia to Asia to Macedonia and Achaia were participating in this offering.⁴⁹⁶ For the Corinthians to opt out of participation would be a huge black eye on them that would have negative repercussions across the Pauline churches.

The label used by Paul here τῆς λογεΐας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, the collection for the saints, is quite interesting with this being the only NT use of ἡ λογεΐα. Background analysis of this word in secular Greek sources of that time indicate that it referred to a monetary collection that was different from the usual gathering of money, e.g., for tax purposes.⁴⁹⁷ Paul carefully avoids

⁴⁹⁵Two of the uses, 8:4; 16:12, function somewhat differently than the others that follow an established pattern of topic introduction in the Greek literature. Context is the key signal here to what the preposition phrase in the sentence pre-field with Περὶ is indicating. The Latin uses *de* for the same purpose, as the Vulgate's *de collectis autem* here reflects.

⁴⁹⁶From the sequel it emerges that preparations for the collection have already been made in Corinth. Its further progress after the writing of 1 Corinthians can be learned from 2 Cor 8 and 9.¹² The reference to Galatia makes it plain that the collection takes place throughout the whole of Paul's missionary territory. This is in harmony with the agreement at the Apostolic Council; see Gal 2:10*.¹³ [Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 295.]

⁴⁹⁷The genitive which follows περὶ δέ, namely τῆς λογεΐας,

using Jewish oriented terms for the temple tax imposed (e.g., δίδραχμον in Mt. 17:24) upon all religious practicing Jews by the temple authorities in Jerusalem.⁴⁹⁸ The Jewish tax was quite controversial among Jews and

is of particular interest. ἡ λογεΐα, **the collection** (i.e., of money), is found only in papyri and inscriptions, and only here in the New Testament. Moulton-Milligan confirm A. Deissmann's research on the use of the word in papyri to denote *financial contributions*, especially 'irregular local contributions as opposed to regular taxes' (e.g., Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 2:239:8 [AD 66], 'I swear that I have levied no contributions in the above village'; also BGU 2:515:7 [AD 193], *a collection for religious purposes*).¹⁰ A Theban ostrakon dated 4 August 63, cited by Deissmann, witnesses to the use of the word for a religious collection for the priests of Isis: 'I received from you four drachmae, 1 obol, being the collection of Isis for public works' (τὴν λογιάν Ἰσιδος περὶ τῶν δημοσίων).¹¹ A first-century inscription on a marble tablet from Smyrna also speaks of a religious procession (πομπὴν τῶν θεῶν) at which a collection was taken.¹² Grimm-Thayer's comment that the word is not found outside Jewish or Christian writers (among 'profane' authors) requires correction in the light of extensive examples from the papyri, inscriptions, and ostraca, as BAGD recognize.¹³ The translation **collection** reflects the linguistic connection with the force of λόγος in nonbiblical Greek as 'collectedness.'¹⁴

"This research is not simply of interest to lexicographers. It suggests that Paul avoids more usual words because he wishes to avoid any implication that it is to be regarded as a kind of 'tax,' and certainly not as a repeated tax. It is possible that the term was used by the Corinthians themselves; but Paul chooses his words for the collection carefully.¹⁵ Sometimes Paul refers to this collection for God's people in Jerusalem as a gift of kindness or of generosity (χάρις, v. 3; and 2 Cor 8:7); sometimes as an act of service (διακονία, 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13; Rom 15:25, 31); sometimes as an act of fellowship, partnership, sharing, or solidarity (κοινωνία, Rom 15:26); sometimes as bringing a blessing (εὐλογία, 2 Cor 9:5); and yet further as an act of service to God (λειτουργία, 2 Cor 9:12).¹⁶

"A whole theology of giving is implicit both in these terms and in their various contexts. As Collins observes, each of Paul's longer or major epistles makes reference to giving, finance, and collecting contributions (1 Cor 16:1-4; Rom 15:25-28; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Gal 2:10).¹⁷ In Gal 2:10 it expresses tangibly a recognition of mutual care, responsibility, and sharing on the part of different ethnic or economic statuses within the worldwide church (Jew and Gentile). This 'sealed' the agreement with James of Jerusalem, Peter, and John about the Gentile mission (Gal 2:1-10)."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1318-1319.]

⁴⁹⁸This should not be confused with the later **fiscus Judaicus** imposed after 70 AD by the Roman authorities upon all Jews for simply being Jews. This replaced the temple tax, i.e., the 'half shekel' tax based on Ex. 30:13, imposed on all Jews by the temple authorities for maintenance of the Jerusalem temple. The later tax was imposed by the Romans as punishment for the Jewish revolt that led to the destruction of the temple. All Jews throughout the empire were required to pay this tax. The proceeds collected went to the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter which was a major center of Roman religion.

the Romans as well. The apostle goes to great lengths to be clear that the *λογεῖα* being collected was a voluntary one time expression of Gentile appreciation to and support of the Jewish Christian communities in Judea.⁴⁹⁹ It was not a Christian version of the unpopular

499 A helpful supplementary bibliography is provided by Thiselton in the NIGTC volume on First Corinthians:

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———, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (Eng. trans., London: SCM, 1968), 193–96.

Vassiliades, P., "Equality and Justice in Classical Antiquity and in Paul: The Social Implications of the Pauline Collection," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 36 (1992): 51–59.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1317.

Add to this should be also:

Georgi, Dieter. *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1992.

Jewish temple tax.

The guidelines for this collection had first been given to the churches of Galatia when the apostle passed through there at the beginning of the third missionary journey (cf. Acts 18:23): *ὡςπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia*.⁵⁰⁰ With Galatians being written on the second missionary journey some years earlier, one would not expect any mention of such instructions in this letter. The reference in 2:10 of remembering the poor as an acknowledged request from the Jerusalem leaders is too broad to be an allusion to this effort in the mid fifties by Paul. Consequently we don't know the specific content of those instructions apart from Paul's apparent summation of a few of the major points here in his instructions to the Corinthians. Paul's later referencing of the actions of some of the churches in 2 Cor. 8-9 only mentions the generosity of the Macedonian churches as exceptional (8:1-5). But this was done mostly to light a fire under the Corinthians, since over a year earlier Paul had mistakenly understood that the Corinthians were eagerly prepared to give and had so told the Macedonians (cf. 9:2-4).

A lot of wasted commentary space surfaces over Paul's use of the verb *διέταξα* from *διατάσσω*. Did Paul 'command' the churches to take up the offering? That tone stands in stark contradiction to the orientation of the specific instructions here in 16:1-4, especially along with those in 2 Cor. 8-9. An appeal is made but Paul possessed no ecclesiastical authority to order a church

[German original 1965]

Nickle, Keith F. *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*. SBT 48. London: SCM, and Geneva, Ala.: Allenson, 1966.

[Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 7, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 590.]

⁵⁰⁰⁺**Galatia** almost certainly means the Roman Province of Galatia, which included the communities founded by Paul in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe during his so-called First Missionary Journey (Acts 13–14).²⁶ *διατάσσω* entails unavoidable inferences about apostolic authority (on this use of this verb see above under 7:17; cf. also 9:14 where *ὁ κύριος* is the subject, and the broader force in 11:34). Although Collins translates *τοὺς ἁγίους* as *the holy ones*, this loses some intelligibility in modern English for some readers, even if *the saints* (NRSV) may be misleading in seeming to apply for some readers believers who acquire a certain degree of habits of holiness (more seriously than 1:2, where goal may also be implied).²⁷ *God's people* (above) is adopted by REB and NIV (with *God's holy people* in NJB, equally acceptable). In view of the Old Testament background those who argue that this term applies in particular to the Jerusalem community of believers may have an arguable case, but Paul seems to use the term more widely to denote Christian believers as such. Only the context can determine the semantic scope here." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1320–1321.]



to do anything. Of the six times Paul uses this verb διατάσσω, four of them are in First Corinthians and all six of them carrying the tone of giving detailed instructions on some responsibility to his readers: 1 Cor. 7:17; 9:14; 11:34; 16:1; Gal. 3:19; Tit. 1:5. The core meaning of the verb is to make orderly arrangements with someone for something to be done.

Paul wants the Corinthians to follow the same instructions that he had given to the Galatians: οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε. Note from [the above diagram](#) the close linkage of the comparative clause introduced by ὡσπερ with the correlative adverbial roles of οὕτως καὶ. The aorist imperative ποιήσατε here stresses the importance of the Corinthians making the same commitment to take up an offering. The actual receiving of the offering would cover a lengthy period of time of repeated contribution, rather than a single collection on one meeting time of the various house churches, as becomes clear in the summary instructions given to them in vv. 2-4.

There are two general instructions given to the Corinthians in vv. 2-4:

a) *κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἑαυτῶ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐδοῶται, Every Sunday let each one of you put (something) aside as you store up whatever extra you have earned.*⁵⁰¹ The Hebrew idiom in the μίαν σαββάτου reflects the day after the Sabbath and here affirms this as a special day of the week due to Jesus' resurrection. It marked the beginning of a new week and thus gave believers time to calculate out their earnings from the previous week.

To read a lot more into this reference κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου, -- as many commentators do -- is highly questionable. The phrase here simply means that believers should calculate out and set aside the determined amount to be collected -- most likely shortly prior Paul arrival, cf. v. 3 -- for him by each of the members of the house churches in the city. The phrase μία σαββάτου or τῆ μιᾶ τῶν σαββάτων is used in the gospels to mark the resurrection of Jesus: Mk. 16:2; Lk. 24:1; Jhn. 20:1, 19. One should note that the appeal to Rev. 1:10 is completely false for contending that Sun-

⁵⁰¹“(1) The UBS 4th ed. σαββάτου is well attested (A, B, C, D, F, G, κ¹, 33, Syriac, Sahidic), and it is not surprising that some later MSS (κ², K, L, M, Syriac, Bohairic) should provide σαββάτων (plural) as a supposed correction. (2) εὐδοῶται is a rare word (in the New Testament only here and in Rom 1:10) and may be either present passive subjunctive or perfect passive indicative (Moulton, Findlay, and Robertson and Plummer propose perfect passive subjunctive [see below]).²⁸ In view of such uncertainty in the grammatical form, some MSS read εὐδοῶθη, first aoristive pass subjunctive (supported by κ², A, C, K. However, εὐδοῶται receives solid support, e.g., κ^{*}, B, D, F, G, and may be accepted.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1321.]

day was the meeting day for Christians, since John's statement ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ only means [on a day that I dedicated myself to the Lord](#). In no way does it specify a particular day of the week; rather, it was one particular day that John devoted himself to prayer to the Lord. Did Christians meet in groups on Sunday? Acts 20:7 indicates one particular time by Ἐν δὲ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων συνηγμένων ἡμῶν κλάσαι ἄρτον, [but on the first day of the week while we were gathering together to break bread](#). This happened in Troas on the third missionary in the mid fifties of the first century. But Luke's depiction is clearly in reference to that particular occasion when Paul and the group with him were preparing to leave the city on Monday of that week.

The eisogizing of these random references into a view that Christians replaced the Jewish sabbath of Saturday to a Christian sabbath meeting observance is enormous. No where inside the NT is such even hinted at. The first possible signal of a shift comes with the Didache in 14:1 in the first half of the second century. And even this reference only indicates Sunday as a meeting time and probable limiting of the Lord's Supper observance to each Sunday meeting out of the numerous meetings that took place during each week.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰²[Justin Martyr](#) (100-168 AD) is the first Christian writer to describe this in *Apology* 1:67b. This writing comes somewhere between 147 and 161 AD.

Καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγρούς μερόντων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται, καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκειται μέχρις ἐγχωρῆ. Ἔϊτα παυσάμενου τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος ὁ προεστὼς διὰ λόγου τὴν νοθεσίαν καὶ πρόκλησιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τούτων μιμήσεως ποιεῖται. Ἔπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν. Καὶ, ὡς προέφημεν, παυσάμενων ἡμῶν τῆς εὐχῆς ἄρτος προσφέρεται καὶ οἶνος καὶ ὕδωρ, καὶ ὁ προεστὼς εὐχὰς ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας, ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ, ἀναπέμπει καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων τὸ ἀμήν· καὶ ἡ διάδοσις καὶ ἡ μετάληψις ἀπὸ τῶν εὐχαριστηθέντων ἐκάστῳ γίνεται καὶ τοῖς οὐ παροῦσι διὰ τῶν διακόνων πέμπεται. Οἱ εὐποροῦντες δὲ καὶ βουλόμενοι κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὀβούλεται δίδωσι, καὶ τὸ συλλεγόμενον παρὰ τῷ προεστῶτι ἀποτίθεται, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπικουρεῖ ὀρφανοῖς τε καὶ χήραις, καὶ τοῖς διὰ νόσον ἢ δι' ἄλλην αἰτίαν λειπομένοις, καὶ τοῖς ἐν δεσμοῖς οὔσι, καὶ τοῖς παρεπιδήμοις οὔσι ξένους, καὶ ἀπλῶς πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν χρεῖα οὔσι κηδεμῶν γίνεται. **Τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέραν** κοινῇ πάντες τὴν συνέλευσιν ποιούμεθα, ἐπειθὴ πρώτη ἐστὶν ἡμέρα, ἐν ἧ ὁ θεὸς τὸ σκότος καὶ τὴν ὕλην τρέψας κόσμον ἐποίησε, καὶ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἡμέτερος σωτὴρ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη· τῇ γὰρ πρὸ τῆς κρονικῆς ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτὸν καὶ τῇ μετὰ τὴν κρονικὴν, ἧτις ἐστὶν ἡλίου ἡμέρα, φανείς τοῖς ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ μαθηταῖς ἐδίδαξε ταῦτα ἅπερ εἰς ἐπίσκεψιν καὶ ὑμῖν ἀνεδώκαμεν.

[Justin Martyr, “The Apologies of Justin Martyr, to Which Is Appended the Epistle to Diognetus” (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1877), 63–64.]

On the day which is called Sunday [=τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου



The church fathers signal that this shifting of sabbath observance took place in the second century and most likely toward the end of it. That would correspond to the rampant anti-Semitism plaguing Christianity beginning in the second century.

A further argument against such an assumption about the significance of κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου is the instruction ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἑαυτῶ τιθέτω, *let each one of you put (something) aside for himself*. This is clearly an individual action done privately and not contributing publicly in a Christian meeting. The modal participle phrase attached to the verb θησαυρίζω ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐδοῦται defines this putting aside as the individual storing it up for a latter time of giving it to the apostle.

What is to be stored up for the later collection is ὃ τι ἐὰν εὐδοῦται. This rare verb εὐδοῶ (4 NT uses: 3 Jn 2 (2x); Rom. 1:10; 1 Cor. 16:2) literally in the passive voice means to *be led along a good road*. The sense of this figuratively is to *prosper in life*, mostly financially. Consequently, the translations of the verb εὐδοῦται are all over the map: *profit* (Barrett); *gain* (BAGD and Collins); *whatever he can afford* (REB); or *as each can spare* (NJB), to name just a few.

Exactly what amount is this? One cannot determine anything from Paul's very generalized depiction here. Clearly it is not connected to a tithe: δέκατος, ἀποδεκατώ, δεκατώ, the terms related to tithing in

λεγομένη ἡμέρα, lit. the Roman name, the day of the sun] we have a common assembly of all who live in the cities or in the outlying districts, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as there is time. Then, when the reader has finished, the president of the assembly verbally admonishes and invites all to imitate such examples of virtue. Then we all stand up together and offer up our prayers, and, as we said before, after we finish our prayers, bread and wine and water are presented. He who presides likewise offers up prayers and thanksgivings, to the best of his ability, and the people express their approval by saying 'Amen.' The Eucharistic elements are distributed and consumed by those present, and to those who are absent they are sent through the deacons. The wealthy, if they wish, contribute whatever they desire, and the collection is placed in the custody of the president. [With it] he helps the orphans and widows, those who are needy because of sickness or any other reason, and the captives and strangers in our midst; in short, he takes care of all those in need. Sunday, indeed, is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, transforming the darkness and [prime] matter, created the world;¹ and our Savior Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the same day. For they crucified Him on the day before that of Saturn, and on the day after, which is Sunday, He appeared to His Apostles and disciples, and taught them the things which we have passed on to you also for consideration

[Thomas B. Falls with Justin Martyr, *The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy or The Rule of God*, vol. 6, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 106–107.]

the NT. Most likely the apostle used this broad term expecting the Corinthians to seek God's guidance in the amount they should contribute. Very likely he was hoping that they would follow the example of the Macedonians which he describes in 2 Cor. 8:3 as ὅτι κατὰ δύναμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν, αὐθαίρετοι, *because according to their means -- I affirm -- and beyond their means they voluntarily contributed*. Paul is consistent with the statements of Jesus emphasizing generosity as the measuring standard for financial giving.⁵⁰³ In 8:5, the foundation principle is illustrated by the Macedonians: καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίσαμεν ἀλλ' ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ. *And not as we expected but first they gave themselves to the Lord and then to us through God's will*.

The objective behind this systematic setting aside is ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται, *so that when I come then no collecting will need to be done*. That is, upon Paul's arrival the church members will have all of their donations ready to present to him; no further fund raising will need to be done.

b) τούτους πέμψω ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. *such ones I will send to carry your gift to Jerusalem.*

This core expression is qualified in several ways. First upon Paul's arrival, ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι, those to carry the gift are οὓς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, *whomever you may have approved*. That is, the Corinthian church itself is to select individuals -- the number is left up to them -- as representatives to go to Jerusalem in order to formally present their gift to the leaders in Jerusalem.⁵⁰⁴ Thus the church, through its representatives, would have a direct participation in presenting their gift to the Christian leaders in Jerusalem for distribution among the saints in Judea. These individuals would then report back to their home church in Corinth how the gift was received and how it was to be used. In the pattern

⁵⁰³Generosity is not measured by how much one gives. Instead, it is determined by how much the individual has left after giving. The NT promotes sacrificial giving, following the example of Christ.

⁵⁰⁴Once again Paul's judicious pastoral strategy emerges. If Corinth raises a substantial sum, its transmission to the Jerusalem recipients must be by those whom the Corinthians themselves fully trust, whose integrity is above suspicion at Corinth. It is not enough for Paul to trust them. Findlay translates: *those whom you accredit by letter*, and in theory δι' ἐπιστολῶν, **by means of letters [of authorization]**, could refer to δοκιμάσητε, [delegates] whom you approve.⁴⁷ Most writers, however, more convincingly construe the letters of accreditation with the main finite verb πέμψω, **I will send**, which regularly occurs in syntagmatic semantic relation with letters." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1324.]

set up each contributing Pauline church had representatives to make formal presentations in Jerusalem. This created a large traveling group which served to give extra security for traveling with a large sum of money. This sort of thing was common place in Paul's world. The Romans typically used soldiers, but everyone else was dependent upon trusted friends and slaves for a security detail.

The phrase δι' ἐπιστολῶν, with letters, most likely modifies the verb πέμψω with not just the sense validation of the members of the delegation but rather as letters of authorization for the gift coming from Corinth.

The final statement (v. 4) of Paul in this regard pertains to his own plans at the time of the writing of this letter. At that point he was not yet sure whether he should accompany the group to Jerusalem or not: ἐὰν δὲ ἄξιον ἦ τοῦ κάμει πορεύεσθαι, σὺν ἐμοὶ πορεύονται. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me. One interpretive question is the modification of ἄξιον. Some older commentators link it to the idea of if the size of the donation merits it I will go. But this is hardly likely grammatically. More more likely is Paul's uncertainty over how welcomed he would be in Jerusalem, not by the Christians but by the Jewish authorities.

But by the writing of 2 Corinthians a couple of years later, Paul is firmly convinced of the Lord's leadership in him traveling to Jerusalem as 2 Cor. 1:15-16 asserts and also as Rom. 15:26-27, written from Corinth after 27 Corinthian, affirms. This passage in Romans 15 also affirms that the Corinthians in the end did come through in fine order with their contribution.

Travel plans, 16:5-12.

As a standard literary form inside ancient Greek letters, this literary sub-form signals both the ending of the letter body and a transition into the formal Conclusio of the letter. In this unit, not only Paul's personal agenda is mentioned in vv. 5-9, but also plans for Timothy (vv. 10-11) and Apollos (v. 12). This is rather typical of this section in many of Paul's letters.

Paul's own plans, vv. 5-9. 5 Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω· Μακεδονίαν γὰρ διέρχομαι, 6 πρὸς ὑμᾶς δὲ τυχὸν παραμενῶ ἢ καὶ παραχειμάσω, ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε οὐ εἰάν πορεύωμαι. 7 οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐάν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ. 8 ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς· 9 θύρα γὰρ μοι ἀνέωγεν

μεγάλη καὶ ἐνεργής, καὶ ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί. 5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia—for I intend to pass through Macedonia— 6 and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. 7 I do not want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

16.5	δὲ	
737	Ἐλεύσομαι	
	πρὸς ὑμᾶς	
	ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω·	
	γὰρ	
738	Μακεδονίαν διέρχομαι,	
16.6	δὲ	
	πρὸς ὑμᾶς	
739	τυχὸν παραμενῶ	
	ἢ	
	καὶ	
740	παραχειμάσω,	
	ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε	
	οὐ εἰάν πορεύωμαι.	
16.7	γὰρ	
	ἄρτι	
	ἐν παρόδῳ	
741	οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς... ἰδεῖν,	
	γὰρ	
742	ἐλπίζω χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμεῖναι	
	πρὸς ὑμᾶς	
	ἐάν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ.	
16.8	δὲ	
743	ἐπιμενῶ	
	ἐν Ἐφέσῳ	
	ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς·	
16.9	γὰρ	
744	θύρα μοι ἀνέωγεν	
	μεγάλη	
	καὶ	
	ἐνεργής,	
	καὶ	
745	ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί.	

Note from the diagram how these ideas are set up. First in statement 737, his core plan is stated: Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω, Now I will come to you whenever I have passed through Macedonia. This is followed by three sets of justifying statements: #s 738-740, 741-743, and 744-745. These provide amplification behind Paul's intended agenda of going first to Macedonia from Ephesus and then to Corinth in Achaia, and from there to Jerusalem.

One should note that this plan was changed and then changed back in Paul's projections. In 2 Cor. 1:15-

17 he describes a different plan to first visit Corinth, then Macedonia, and a return back to Corinth from where he would then head to Jerusalem.⁵⁰⁵

But as he mentions in 2 Cor. 2:12-13,⁵⁰⁶ after leaving Ephesus he went first to Troas and from there to Macedonia before arriving in Achaia where Corinth was located. This is where the travel log of Luke corresponds to Paul's references in Acts 20:1-3,⁵⁰⁷ What evidently triggered this schedule was a short visit directly to Corinth from Ephesus by Paul that served only to heat up the tensions between him and the church. This came after the writing of First Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:1-3).⁵⁰⁸ **Out of this came another letter, the so-called 'sor-**

⁵⁰⁵2 Cor. 1:15-17. 15 Καὶ ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει ἐβουλόμην πρότερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε, 16 καὶ δι' ὑμῶν διελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν. 17 τοῦτο οὖν βουλόμενος μήτι ἄρα τῇ ἐλαφρία ἐχρησάμην; ἢ ἂ βουλευομαι κατὰ σάρκα βουλευομαι, ἵνα ἢ παρ' ἐμοὶ τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ;

15 Since I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a double favor; 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judea. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?

⁵⁰⁶2 Cor. 2:12-13. 12 Ἐλθὼν δὲ εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θύρας μοι ἀνεωγμένης ἐν κυρίῳ, 13 οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν τῷ πνεύματί μου τῷ μὴ εὐρεῖν με Τίτον τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, ἀλλ' ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς ἐξῆλθον εἰς Μακεδονίαν.

12 When I came to Troas to proclaim the good news of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord; 13 but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said farewell to them and went on to Macedonia.

⁵⁰⁷Acts 20:1-3. 20 Μετὰ δὲ τὸ παύσασθαι τὸν θόρυβον μεταπεμψάμενος ὁ Παῦλος τοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ παρακαλέσας, ἀσπασάμενος ἐξῆλθεν πορεύεσθαι εἰς Μακεδονίαν. 2 διελθὼν δὲ τὰ μέρη ἐκεῖνα καὶ παρακαλέσας αὐτοὺς λόγῳ πολλῷ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα 3 ποιήσας τε μῆνας τρεῖς· γενομένης ἐπιβουλῆς αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων μέλλοντι ἀνάγεσθαι εἰς τὴν Συρίαν, ἐγένετο γνώμη τοῦ ὑποστρέφειν διὰ Μακεδονίας.

20 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples; and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left for Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given the believers much encouragement, he came to Greece, 3 where he stayed for three months. He was about to set sail for Syria when a plot was made against him by the Jews, and so he decided to return through Macedonia.

⁵⁰⁸2 Cor. 2:1-3 2.1 Ἐκρίνα γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ τοῦτο τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν. 2 εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ λυπῶ ὑμᾶς, καὶ τίς ὁ εὐφραίνων με εἰ μὴ ὁ λυπούμενος ἐξ ἐμοῦ; 3 καὶ ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτό, ἵνα μὴ ἐλθὼν λύπην σχῶ ἀφ' ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν, πεποισθῶς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἡ ἐμὴ χαρὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐστίν. 4 ἐκ γὰρ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας ἔγραψα ὑμῖν διὰ πολλῶν δακρύων, οὐχ ἵνα λυπηθῆτε ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀγάπην ἵνα γνῶτε ἣν ἔχω περισσοτέρως εἰς ὑμᾶς.

2.1 So I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. 2 For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? 3 And I wrote as I did, so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made

rowful letter,' (2:4) which further agitated the situation. Standing behind much of this schedule is Titus. He had been sent ahead of Paul to Corinth to help resolve the tensions and especially to help the Corinthians finish their collection for the relief offering (2 Cor. 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18). As soon as Titus was comfortable with the situation in Corinth he was to head back toward Ephesus by way of Macedonia and Troas (2:13). When Titus did not show up in Troas after a period of time Paul decided to leave Troas and go on to Macedonia. Somewhere in Macedonia Paul met up with Titus (7:6), who had good news about the situation in Corinth. This prompted the writing of Second Corinthians that Titus carried back to Corinth in advance of Paul's third visit to the church there (12:14; 13:1, 2). This is the visit mentioned briefly by Luke in Acts 20:1-3, who only describes two visits.

What is reflected in all of these travel plans that get altered is the central commitment of Paul to follow God's leading. Additionally a fluid situation in Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth served to signal the greatest need for Paul's ministry at each point of time. Although some in the Corinthian church interpreted Paul's flexibility as lack of decisiveness as a leader (2 Cor. 1:17-21), Paul was more concerned with following God's leadership than doing what people in the church expected him to do.

What Paul expresses in 16:6-9 is his intention to spend more time over the winter months at Corinth: πρὸς ὑμᾶς δὲ τυχὸν παραμεινῶ ἢ καὶ παραχειμάσω, perhaps I will remain with you, or even spend the winter. Acts 20:3 indicates that Paul spent three months (μῆνας τρεῖς) in Corinth on this visit. This would have been at the end of 56 AD and the beginning of 57 AD. A major reason for the stay was climate oriented. During the winter months travel especially by ship in the northern Mediterranean was especially dangerous, as the Luke voyage to Rome by Paul in Acts illustrates (cf. Acts 27:9-12).

His stated intention for this visit is ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε οὗ ἂν πορεύωμαι, so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. The verb προπέμψητε from προπέμπω carries with it the core idea of equipping someone to make a journey.⁵⁰⁹ Although Paul mostly

me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you. 4 For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

⁵⁰⁹“to assist someone in making a journey, send on one's way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc. (1 Macc 12:4; 1 Esdr 4:47; EpArist 172) τινά someone 1 Cor 16:11. W. δέχεσθαι Pol 1:1. σπουδαίως Tit 3:13. ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ 3J 6. W. the destination given οὗ ἂν πορεύωμαι 1 Cor 16:6. Pass. w. ὑπό τινος Ac 15:3. Also w. the destination: εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν 2 Cor 1:16; ἐκεῖ Ro 15:24.—M-M.” [William Arndt,



‘paid his own way’ in his missionary travels, a trip from Corinth to Jerusalem was costly and would require funding help from others. His hope is that the Corinthians would see fit to help him and those traveling with him (cf. Acts 20:4 for some of them) in making this trip. Note his flexibility at this point with the adverbial relative clause οὗ ἂν πορεύομαι, [wherever I may go](#).

The second set of justifying statements comes in vv. 7-8: 7 οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἂν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ. 8 ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς· 7 for I do not want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost. Here the apostle expresses a desire to spend a longer period of time with the Corinthians. When one surveys all the headaches the church caused him, it is tempting to wonder why he would want to spend any time there. He had a long three year plus ministry in Ephesus that God blessed tremendously. Traveling back through Macedonia on his way to Corinth after this letter brought him enjoyment and profitable ministry at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea [Gk Beréa (Βερέα)].

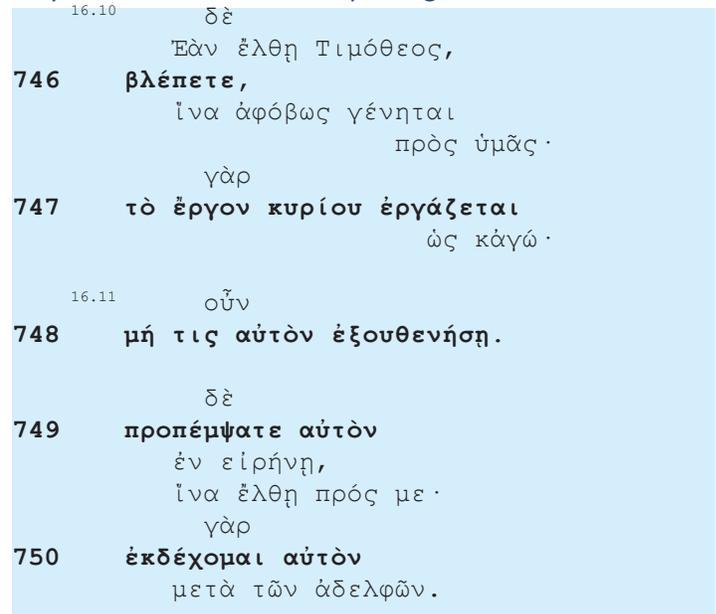
Note Paul’s use of the very Greek and non-Jewish *conditio Jacobaea* named for James 4:15 but used by Paul here as well: ἂν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ, [if the Lord permits](#).⁵¹⁰ Apostolic Christianity lived each day seeking the guidance of the Lord through life.

At the writing of this letter his stated intention was to remain in Ephesus until after the Jewish festival of Pentecost: ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς; [But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost](#). What this statement confirms is that First Corinthians was written sometime in the spring since Pentecost comes 50 days after Passover which is in late March to early April. Also the summer months after Pentecost were excellent times to travel in that part of the ancient world. But the real reason for remaining longer in Ephesus is: θύρα γὰρ μοι ἀνέωγεν μεγάλη καὶ ἐνεργής, καὶ ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί. [for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries](#). Paul uses the metaphor of an ‘open door’ two other times in 2 Cor. 2:12 (θύρας ἀνεωγμένης, [open door](#)) and Col. 4:3 (ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου, [that God will open for us a door for the Word](#)) as an expression of opportunity to do ministry in the Gospel. Here it is a ‘big door,’ [θύρα γὰρ μοι ἀνέωγεν μεγάλη](#), that [has opened up. But additionally, the apostle faces nu-](#)

Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 873.]
⁵¹⁰“ἂν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ, ‘if the Lord permits’: the celebrated *conditio Jacobaea* (Jas 4:15*) is fundamentally a Greek (not a Jewish) phrase.”²⁷⁹ [Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 297.]

merous enemies (ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί) in Ephesus as well. Acts 19 traces out some of these opportunities as well as enemies. These are most likely the wild beasts that Paul mentioned in 15:32.

Timothy’s plans, vv. 10-11. 10 Ἐὰν δὲ ἔλθῃ Τιμόθεος, βλέπετε, ἵνα ἀφόβως γένηται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ ἔργον κυρίου ἐργάζεται ὡς καγώ· 11 μὴ τις οὖν αὐτὸν ἐξουθενήσῃ. προπέμψατε δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν εἰρήνῃ, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς με· ἐκδέχομαι γὰρ αὐτὸν μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν. 10 [When Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord just as I am; 11 therefore let no one despise him. Send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I am expecting him with the brothers.](#)



Note again from the diagram how the ideas are arranged by Paul. The admonition in statement 746 is justified (γὰρ) by statement 747. Two implications (οὖν) of this are made explicit in statements 748 and 749 with the justifying (γὰρ) statement 750. All of it concerns Timothy and his trip to Ephesus. The earlier statement in 4:17 about Paul sending Timothy to Ephesus is important here: Διὰ τοῦτο ἐπεμψα⁵¹¹ ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον, ὃς ἐστίν μου τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν καὶ πιστὸν ἐν κυρίῳ, ὃς ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ [Ἰησοῦ], καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω. [For this reason I am sending you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church.](#) In all likelihood Timothy was not the actual writing secretary for First Corinthians but probably the main individual who carried the letter to Corinth. In 4:17, Timothy is brought

⁵¹¹The aorist verb ἐπεμψα is here in the Epistolary Aorist function, meaning that the completed action is viewed not from the time of the writing of the letter but from the time of the reading of the letter. The English present tense is the only proper way to translate this without giving a misleading implication of an earlier action prior to the writing of the letter.

up as the potential target of the Corinthians' negativity by what is written in the letter, especially from those opposing Paul in the church. Here in 16:10-11, Paul sternly admonishes the church to make sure that they treat Timothy properly. This is possibly the same trip mentioned by Luke in Acts 19:22 where both Timothy and Erastus are sent to Macedonia while Paul remains in Ephesus: ἀποστειλάς δὲ εἰς τὴν Μακεδονίαν δύο τῶν διακονούντων αὐτῷ, Τιμόθεον καὶ Ἐραστον, αὐτὸς ἐπέσχεν χρόνον εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν. Quite likely Sosthenes (cf. 1:1) was another member of this group.

Why (γὰρ) the warning to the Corinthians? Timothy is doing the Lord's work just as Paul is (τὸ γὰρ ἔργον κυρίου ἐργάζεται ὡς κἀγώ). Both of these men were servants of Christ seeking only to obey the Lord. And thus they should be treated with appropriate respect.

What does this imply (οὖν)? μή τις οὖν αὐτὸν ἐξουθενήσῃ. **Therefore let no one treat him with contempt.** The Corinthian elitists are here targeted by Paul as those who potentially would abuse Timothy once he arrived at Corinth. This in no way implies timidity on Timothy's part, but rather that Timothy might become the target of scorn by these elitists as the representative of Paul.⁵¹²

Also implicit is the admonition προπέμψατε δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν εἰρήνῃ, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς με, **And properly outfit him for his journey in peace, so that he may come to me.** In order words, when Timothy has completed his mission to deliver the letter and give proper elaboration of it to

⁵¹²The myth of Timothy as a weak person is mainly the product of nineteenth century German aggressive personality orientation when many German NT scholars concluded from 1-2 Timothy that Timothy wasn't aggressive enough, like the apostle Paul, whom they tended to "Germanize" extensively in their portrayals. .

As Hutson has recently argued, there is no evidence in either Paul's epistles or in Acts to suggest that Timothy was in any way timid.⁸⁷ According to Acts 16:1-2, Timothy was a native of Lystra, the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father, who was chosen by Paul during his second missionary journey to accompany him, as one well spoken of by other Christians (Acts 16:2-3). He became Paul's regular associate or co-worker and trusted emissary. His name stands alongside that of Paul in 1 Thess 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1, Phil 1:1, and Philem 1 (cf. Col 1:1). Phil 2:20-22 witnesses to his special relationship to Paul. On Paul's journeys at times he accompanies Paul together with Silas (Acts 16:6-40; cf. 17:10-14; 1 Thess 2:2). Along with Paul and Silvanus he preached at Corinth (2 Cor 1:19), and 16:10-11 may, Hutson argues, suggest his courage rather than the reverse. Paul's directions to the Corinthian church now are that they should take care that (one clear meaning of βλέπετε, i.e., see to it that ...): (a) Timothy is free from fear; he has no need to be apprehensive; (b) he is not to be despised or undervalued but receives due respect; and (c) his return journey to Paul at Ephesus is facilitated by the practical support of necessary provisions and other practical needs.⁸⁸ On the technical force of προπέμψω, see above under v. 6.

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1331.

the various house church groups, the church in Corinth should facilitate his return to Ephesus in order to report back to Paul.

What is not clear is whether Erastus, who went with Timothy to Macedonia from Ephesus, also traveled on to Corinth with him or not. Travelers, for safety reasons, seldom traveled alone in the ancient Roman world. So likely Erastus did go with Timothy on to Corinth, but he is not mentioned here, possibly because Paul was convinced that Timothy was the potential target of negativity intended for Paul as the one who carried the letter and read it with explanations to each of the house church groups in Corinth. As the actual writer of the letter he was uniquely qualified to do this.

Apollos' plans, v. 12. Περί δὲ Ἀπολλῶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, πολλὰ παρεκάλεσα αὐτόν, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν· καὶ πάντως οὐκ ἦν θέλημα ἵνα νῦν ἔλθῃ· ἐλεύσεται δὲ ὅταν εὐκαιρήσῃ. **Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now. He will come when he has the opportunity.**

	16.12	δὲ
		Περί Ἀπολλῶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ,
		πολλὰ
751		παρεκάλεσα αὐτόν,
		ἵνα ἔλθῃ
		πρὸς ὑμᾶς
		μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν·
		καὶ
		πάντως
752		οὐκ ἦν θέλημα
		ἵνα νῦν ἔλθῃ·
		δὲ
753		ἐλεύσεται
		ὅταν εὐκαιρήσῃ.

The other associate of Paul mentioned is Apollos. The formal Περί δὲ Ἀπολλῶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, **And concerning Apollos, my brother**, has some limited tones of a new topic signal. Probably it indicates that inquiry about Apollos from some in the Corinthian church had been relayed through the delegation to Paul. Here the apostle responds to it.

Apollos had served in the church at Corinth earlier (Acts 18:27-19:1), as well as at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26). Luke describes him in glowing terms in Acts **18:24-25**.⁵¹³ Out of this came the so-called "Apollos"

⁵¹³Acts 18:24-25. 24 Ἰουδαῖος δὲ τις Ἀπολλῶς ὀνόματι, Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τῷ γένει, ἀνὴρ λόγιος, κατήνησεν εἰς Ἐφεσον, δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς. 25 οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ζέων τῷ πνεύματι ἐλάλει καὶ ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου.

24 Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things



group in the Corinthian church mentioned in 1:12. Paul used himself and Apollos as illustrations in chapters three and four to show the Corinthians the phoniness of such divisiveness in the church. The Paul group and the Apollos group squared off against one another (4:6) but Paul and Apollos themselves were good friends and worked together closely in the Gospel especially in Ephesus as is made clear here in 16:12. The appeal of Apollos to some in the Corinthian church may well have originated out of a trait mentioned by Luke in Acts 18:24, ἀνὴρ λόγιος, *an eloquent man*. It is tempting to link the Corinthian elitists to the Apollos group in the church but no clear indication provides a basis for such connection.⁵¹⁴

Paul goes to great pains here to affirm both his friendship with Apollos and also that he had urged Apollos to make the trip to Corinth with Timothy so he could his influence to help straighten out the messes in the Corinthian church: πολλὰ παρεκάλεσα αὐτόν, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, *many times I urged him to come to you with the brothers*. Paul's statement here dispels any grounds for an accusation of hostility between himself and Apollos, or that the apostle did not want Apollos in Corinth. The adjective πολλὰ used adverbially here can imply either numerous repeated requests, or, more likely, a deeply earnest request made to Apollos. Paul genuinely desired Apollos to accompany Timothy and the others to Corinth.

Paul notes this about Apollos and then goes on to

concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

⁵¹⁴On the nature and grounds of a so-called 'Apollos ethos,' see above under 1:12. There is no need to rehearse the details here. Hurd follows Weiss, as we noted under 1:12, in associating this following with a 'Wisdom' theology, but a number of alternative hypotheses have been floated. The key point underlined by Barrett and Schrage is that Paul never suggests any difference between Apollos and himself, and Apollos was not responsible for the Corinthians' misperceptions.⁹¹ It may well be the case, as some have suggested, that Apollos's very reluctance to visit Corinth, indeed his being fully determined not to go yet (πάντως οὐκ ἦν θέλημα ἵνα νῦν ἔλθῃ), arose from his disgust that some at Corinth had manipulated his name as a slogan to promote the claims of a so-called Apollos group. As Wolff observes, Apollos does not appear explicitly to send his greeting along with Aquila and Prisca (v. 19), although it is likely that Apollos was with Paul at Ephesus between AD 52 and 54.⁹² According to Acts 18:27 Apollos had 'greatly helped those who through grace had believed,' and, as Hurst and others suggest, the group at Corinth lionized Apollos as a focus of personal loyalty. His name occurs at least six times in the main section on splits in the church and the role of ministers (1:1–4:21).⁹³ Hence it is imperative for Paul to disclaim any hand in Apollos's decision. Indeed, he insists that the reverse is the case. Paul pleaded with him, urged him, or besought him (παρεκάλεσα) earnestly (πολλά) to go to Corinth, but Apollos had made up his mind not to do so." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1332.]

indicate that the choice not to accompany Timothy to Corinth from Ephesus was strictly that made by Apollos: καὶ πάντως οὐκ ἦν θέλημα ἵνα νῦν ἔλθῃ, *and not at all was he of a mind to come now*. What motivated this refusal is not stated by Paul. Perhaps it was the learning that his name had been manipulated by the Apollos group and he wanted nothing to do with them. But such is speculation and the text only hints that Apollos did not feel a divine leadership to return to Corinth.

This is made clear by ἐλεύσεται δὲ ὅταν εὐκαιρήσῃ, *but he will come whenever the time is right*.⁵¹⁵ For Apollos and Paul a 'convenient time' meant sensing the leadership of God to do something, not just depending upon outward circumstances to favor some action. Apollos would come to Corinth, but just not now -- this is the point made here.

These travel plans give some glimpse into the inner personal relation that the apostle had with a large number of other Christian leaders who worked closely with him. He did not control them, nor was he their boss. His language of referring to them as brothers, coworkers, partners etc. found throughout his letters underscores the respect he had for them, and most likely also signals the kind of respect they possessed for him. The much later ecclesiastical structures of control and authority from the church fathers centuries later did not exist among the leadership of apostolic Christianity.

Miscellaneous items, 16:13-18.

13 Γρηγορεῖτε, στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε. 14 πάντα ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ γινέσθω.

15 Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί· οἴδατε τὴν οἰκίαν Στεφανᾶ, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀχαΐας καὶ εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς· 16 ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτάσσησθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις καὶ παντὶ τῷ συνεργοῦντι καὶ κοπιῶντι. 17 χαίρω δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ καὶ Φορτουνάτου καὶ

⁵¹⁵**67.4 εὐκαιρέωα:** *to experience an appropriate occasion for some activity*—'to have an appropriate time for, to have an occasion to, to have a chance to.' καὶ οὐδὲ φαγεῖν εὐκαιροῦν 'and they didn't have time to eat' Mk 6:31; ἐλεύσεται δὲ ὅταν εὐκαιρήσῃ 'and he will go when he has a chance' or '... when it is a favorable occasion' or '... when he has an opportunity to do so' 1 Cor 16:12.

67.5 εὐκαιρία, ας f: a favorable occasion for some event—'opportunity, good occasion, favorable time.' ἀπὸ τότε ἐζήτηε εὐκαιρίαν ἵνα αὐτὸν παραδῶ 'from then on he sought a favorable opportunity to betray him' Mt 26:16.

67.6 εὐκαιρος, ον; εὐκαιρως: pertaining to being a favorable occasion for some event—'favorable, good.'

εὐκαιρος: γενομένης ἡμέρας εὐκαιροῦ ὅτε Ηρώδης τοῖς γενεσίοις αὐτοῦ δεῖπνον ἐποίησεν 'a favorable time occurred when Herod gave a banquet in celebration of his birthday' Mk 6:21.

εὐκαίρως: καὶ ἐζήτηε πῶς αὐτὸν εὐκαίρως παραδοῖ 'and he sought how he might betray him at an opportune time' Mk 14:11.

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 627.]

Ἀρχαίκοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν· 18 ἀνέπαυσαν γὰρ τὸ ἔμὸν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν. ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιούτους.

13 Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in love.

15 Now, brothers and sisters, you know that members of the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; 16 I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people, and of everyone who works and toils with them. 17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. So give recognition to such persons.

These last two units of the letter body continue the transition of the letter into the formal Conclusio of vv. 19-24.⁵¹⁶ One should not expect sharp divisions of the core units of an ancient Greek letter. Instead, smooth transitions from one unit to the next dominate. Paul had a clear sense of this letter writing tradition in his world, and his Jewish heritage encouraged such transitions even more. When the letter was being read to the various house church groups in Corinth by Timothy, the audiences would have sensed automatically that the letter was starting to wind down at the hearing of the travel plans beginning in v. 5. What then was read to the end of the written material would not have been surprising or unusual to the listeners.

Paraenesis, vv. 13-14. 13 Γρηγορεῖτε, στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε. 14 πάντα ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ γινέσθω. 13 Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in love.

As the diagram illustrates, this unit of text is a series of parenthetical admonitions that are short, rapid fire kinds of encouragements given. They are broad, generalized expressions mostly playing off of figurative

⁵¹⁶In 1:1–3 we noted that Paul used the conventional epistolary opening common to letters of the hellenistic and early imperial Roman periods but that he also filled these conventional forms with a distinctive Christian content. The same principle applies to the closure of the letter.⁹⁷ Hellenistic writers often closed their letters with some such wish as *be strong* or *may you prosper*, and Paul repeats the general sentiment with the addition of in the faith (v. 13). The use of a series of short, terse exhortations at the end of a letter is characteristic of Paul's style (cf. Rom 16:17–19; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:8–9; 1 Thess 5:12–22). Two verses (vv. 13–14) embody five imperatives of their kind. It is peculiar to this epistle and its situation, however, to stress the importance of love three times in closing (vv. 14, 22, 24; cf. 1:10 and 13:1–13). Other unusual and distinctive features include the anathema of v. 22 (elsewhere only in Gal 1:8–9) and the postscript (v. 24) after the final grace (v. 23). 'Nowhere else in his correspondence does Paul assure the community of his love in a fashion as solemn as he does in 1 Corinthians.'⁹⁸ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1333–1334.]

754 ^{16.13} Γρηγορεῖτε,
755 στήκετε
ἐν τῇ πίστει,
756 ἀνδρίζεσθε,
757 κραταιοῦσθε.

ἐν ἀγάπῃ
758 ^{16.14} πάντα ὑμῶν... γινέσθω.

meanings rather than literal verb meanings. The first four (#s 754-757) are present tense second person plural admonitions with a positive thrust. The final one (# 758) is third person present imperative that is inclusive and summary with πάντα ὑμῶν, *all of you*, as the subject.

The first two are more specifically religiously focused, particularly with the prepositional phrase ἐν τῇ πίστει, *in your faith*. Most commentators miss the point of τῇ πίστει by translating it out of the context of later patristic Christianity as a body of beliefs. Inside apostolic Christianity, and Paul's writings especially, it references one's faith surrender and commitment to Christ within the framework of the apostolic Gospel. Here Paul in short, punctual fashion admonishes the Corinthians to do what he has been advocating throughout the letter. They must remain alert to teachings that shift them away from this faith surrender to Christ and also must remain firm in this commitment to the risen Christ. The thinking and teachings of the Corinthian elitists diminish such commitment and would replace it with an mental understanding predicated upon Greek reasoning.

The second pair of admonitions center on personality and inner personal relations: ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε, *be courageous, be strong*. Translating the first admonition, ἀνδρίζεσθε, from ἀνδρίζομαι, is somewhat challenging. Literally, the admonition in secular Greek is 'be manly.' The stem ἀνδρ- stresses maleness and is connected to ἀνήρ, ἀνδρός for a man. It is only used this one time in the NT so definitional insight must come from the surrounding literature and the context. Out of that comes the background that ἀνδρίζεσθε stresses being a man not just in opposition to being a female, but more importantly in opposition to being childish, as 13:11 illustrates. Thus the idea of being courageously mature emerges over against the self-centeredness of childishness seeking short term gratification.⁵¹⁷ Contextually it sums up true spirituali-

⁵¹⁷The translation of ἀνδρίζεσθε has probably become unnecessarily sensitive. In lexicographical terms the meaning clearly turns on 'masculine' writers stereotypically associated with ἀνήρ (gen ἀνδρός). BAGD propose conduct oneself in a manly or courageous way, especially with κραταιοῦσθαι (as here).¹⁰⁵ Classical translations often render *be a man!* (cf. AV/KJV, *quit you like men*, for this verse). Most modern English VSS translate it *be courageous* (NRSV, NIV; cf. *be brave*, NJB, or, better, *be valiant*, REB). But here the gender issue threatens to obscure the force of be a



ty in opposition to childish behavior of the Corinthians, who considered themselves as spiritual as condemned in 3:1; 13:10-1; 14:20.

This verb is closely linked to the one following it: κραταιοῦσθε, *become strong*. It also is related to the second verb of the first pair: στήκετε, *stand*. The idea of firm conviction being developed stands behind both verbs, and especially the latter one.

Here is a sharp rebuke of the Corinthian elitists who evidently with their arrogant claim of superiority were seeking to intimidate the rest into submission to their claims. Paul's calls upon the congregation to stand up in opposition to this arrogance by a few. This is a 'bottom line' point that the body of the letter has been making all along and now is summarized into a pointed set of admonitions at the close of the letter.

The final admonition in v. 14, πάντα ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ γινέσθω. *Let all of you be in love*, picks up the core principle of 8:1b, ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ, *knowledge puffs up, but love builds up*. All through the letter the principle of self-sacrificing ἀγάπη for others supersedes all personal, individual concerns. This was just the opposite of the approach of the elitists in the church. Now in rapping up the letter the apostle restates this axiom in a way almost impossible to translate. The idea of the present imperative γινέσθω is to become thoroughly saturated and immersed ἐν ἀγάπῃ, *in love*. Every member of the church was obligated to

man! ἀνὴρ has two semantic oppositions, not one: it does not simply pose a contrast with supposedly 'feminine' qualities; it also stands in contrast with childish ways, as strikingly in 1 Cor 13:11: ἐφρόνου ὡς νήπιος (*I had a childish mind-set, attitude*) but *I set all this aside ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ (when I became a man)*. Hence the Greek suggests both maturity and courage: **show mature courage**. This reflects, in the closure of the letter, Paul's earlier rebukes that their notions of 'the spiritual' were immature and childish (3:1, ὡς νηπίοις; 13:10, 11; 14:20; regularly in the context of defining 'spiritual').

"It is no accident that a similar duality of nuance attaches to κραταιοῦσθε, although we must not lose sight of the connection with the previous verb cited by BAGD. κραταίω in the active means "to strengthen," but in the passive "to become strong" (cf. Philo, *De Agricultura* 160; *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 27; Ps 30:25; Eph 3:16).¹⁰⁶ In the LXX it may translate Heb. חָזַק (chazaq) or the Greek passive, also ἔμεται (*emets*), to **make strong**, to **increase in strength**.¹⁰⁷ In view of the conjunction of four imperatives in the continuous present, this last translation seems most appropriate to Paul's concerns about his readers' stability and maturity.

"As Paul has argued earlier, childishness often takes the form of self-centered concern and short-term gratification. Hence he pleads that whatever the Corinthian Christians do, the motivation and attitude should be that of love, i.e., a concern for the good of "the other" which embodies respect and seeks to build them up in the long term (cf. 8:7-13; 13:1-13).¹⁰⁸"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1336-1337.]

do this, not just a few. For the elitists such an action required a total denial of the previous thinking and behavior. God's way of thinking must take care of their lives. For the rest who already were moving this direction, it just needed to deepen itself. The imperative γινέσθω is present tense denoting ongoing responsibility, rather than a momentary commitment.

Commendation of Stephanas, vv. 15-18. 15

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί· οἴδατε τὴν οἰκίαν Στεφανᾶ, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀχαΐας καὶ εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτοῦς· 16 ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτάσσησθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις καὶ παντὶ τῷ συνεργοῦντι καὶ κοπιῶντι. 17 χαίρω δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ καὶ Φορτουνάτου καὶ Ἀχαϊκοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν· 18 ἀνέπαυσαν γὰρ τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν. ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιούτους. 15 *Now, brothers and sisters, you know that members of the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; 16 I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people, and of everyone who works and toils with them. 17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. So give recognition to such persons.*

It is not accidental that this affirmation of the household of Stephanas immediately follows the admonitions in vv. 13-14. This family exemplifies everything that Paul admonishes the Corinthians to become. They become the concrete example of what he means in these admonitions. By content it also signals First Corinthians as an epistolary recommendation.⁵¹⁸ If the Corinthians, especially the elitists, want to understand what this letter to the Church is about, all they need do is to look closely at the Christian commitment and behavior of this family in the church. It exemplifies what Paul desires the entire church to become.

Note how these thoughts are arranged. The exclusive focus on the household of Stephanas is in state-

⁵¹⁸It remains the case that the epistolographic forms of vv. 15-18 closely resemble those found frequently in *letters of commendation* in the hellenistic letter forms of Paul's day.¹¹⁰ In the introduction to 1:1-9 we cited over forty research items of modern literature on these letter forms of which those by Kim, White, Stirewalt, and Malherbe repay special attention.¹¹¹ Some of the so-called criteria for identification of patterns, it must be conceded, could hardly be other than predictable, e.g., the name of the person commended, a participial clause identifying or describing them, a statement of their relationship to the writer, and so on. However, it remains the case that, as in the introduction to the letter (1:1-9), Paul follows normal custom and convention where he can, even if he cannot avoid adding distinctively Christian touches or content." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1337-1338.]

16.15 δὲ
759 Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς,
 ἀδελφοί·
760 οἶδατε τὴν οἰκίαν Στεφανᾶ,
 | ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀχαΐας
 | | καὶ
 | | εἰς διακονίαν
 | | τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς·
 16.16 ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτάσσησθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις
 καὶ
 παντὶ τῷ συνεργοῦντι
 καὶ
 κοπιῶντι.

16.17 δὲ
761 χαίρω
 ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ
 | καὶ
 | Φορτουνάτου
 | καὶ
 | Ἀχαϊκοῦ,
 ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὗτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν·
 16.18 γὰρ
762 ἀνέπαυσαν τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα
 καὶ
 τὸ ὑμῶν.
 οὖν
763 ἐπιγινώσκετε τοὺς τοιοῦτους.

ments 759-760. The arrival of Stephanas with the others at Ephesus from Corinth is shared in #s 761-762. The implication (οὖν) in #763 is drawn from both previous sets.

Paul's appeal to his readers in v. 15 is emphatic with both Παρακαλῶ, *I appeal*, and οἶδατε, *you know*. He strongly presses upon his readers a reminder of this family in their midst at Corinth. How fortunate Paul was to have in the Corinthian church a solid Christian family whom he could hold up as a model for everyone else in the church. The readers at Corinth might not fully grasp all the details of Paul's discussion in the letter body of First Corinthians. But they could recognize the needed traits by reflecting on what they observed from this family. This the apostle strongly emphasizes by these introductory expressions.

One important clarification point. The family is identified as τὴν οἰκίαν Στεφανᾶ, *the household of Stephanas*. The similar phrase τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον is used in 1:16 in reference to those whom Paul baptized in the initial ministry in Corinth some years earlier. The reference to οἶκία would have included all slaves that were in the family and considered in that world as family members. Paul's reference to baptism in 1:16 designates not just the husband, wife, and perhaps older children, but also the slaves in the family. Although Stephanas is only mentioned three times and all in First Corinthians (1:16; 16:15, 17), it is clear that Paul felt a close, en-

dearing relationship with this family in his ministry.⁵¹⁹

Only two characterizing traits are emphasized in the ὅτι clause in v. 15b.

First, ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀχαΐας, *they are a firstfruit of Achaia*. Does this imply that this family constituted the first converts in the province of Achaia. Not likely, since Acts 17:34 indicates that Dionysius, Damaris, and others came to Christ through Paul's ministry in Athens before he came to Corinth. The religious significance of ἀπαρχὴ is more significant than the temporal implication. What Paul is asserting here is that this family was among those early converts whose conversion gave promise of many others to come. As the grain offering of the Jews at Pentecost symbolized a ἀπαρχὴ, so did the conversion of the family of Stephanas at Corinth. Note how Paul uses ἀπαρχὴ in 15:20 and 23 for Christ as the ἀπαρχὴ of the resurrection for believers. Christ's resurrection signals others to come. Thus this family had a special role in the spread of the Gospel, not just in the city but in the surrounding province of Achaia.

Second, καὶ εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς, *and for ministry to the saints they devoted themselves*. Taking key terms here excessively literally creates a wide array of weird interpretive conclusions.⁵²⁰ The adult

⁵¹⁹“Those who belonged to Stephanas' household (*oikos* in 1:16; *oikia* in 16:15) are not further identified. Such a household may have included male and female family members, freedmen and women, and/or slaves. Due to their leadership role mentioned in 16:15–16, those referred to by Paul would be adults, whether male or female. This, however, does not preclude the presence of children. It is sometimes suggested that Fortunatus and Achaicus, named immediately after Stephanas, were part of that household. Though possible, this is uncertain because household members would probably not be singled out by name apart from the global designation and because the delegates sent by the Corinthians would undoubtedly be from more than one household to provide a broader representation of the community.” [John Gillman, “Stephanas (Person),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 207.]

⁵²⁰“The use of τάσσω in εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς has more to do with *appointing* or *assigning* to a task, office, or position than *have devoted themselves* (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB) might seem to suggest.¹¹⁷ *τάγμα* (15:23), *τάξις* (14:40), and *ὑποτάσσω* (14:32, 34; 15:27, 28; 16:16) play a significant part in this epistle in which ‘rights’ and ‘freedom’ feature in Corinthian thinking. The problem is that *appointed themselves* has the nuance of the very self-centered forwardness that troubles Paul, whereas *ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς* is clearly commended here. Robertson and Plummer understand ‘appointed themselves’ as ‘a self-imposed duty.’¹¹⁸ *Devoted themselves* must be understood in the sense of set them-



family members did not set themselves up as deacons in the church. To the contrary, Paul is asserting that the members of this family took upon themselves to give Christian ministry to benefit the saints, i.e., the members of the Christian community in Corinth and beyond. The use of the aorist ἔταξαν signifies a specific point of commitment to such service in the name of Christ.

As the above diagram illustrates the purpose ἵνα clause goes back to the verb οἴδατε, *you know*. That is, the point in reflecting on this family is to allow them to minister to the needs of the church: ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτάσσησθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις καὶ παντὶ τῷ συνεργοῦντι καὶ κοπιῶντι (v. 16). But it's not just this family alone who is setting a positive example that needs to be followed. Paul adds καὶ παντὶ τῷ συνεργοῦντι καὶ κοπιῶντι, *and all the fellow workers and laborers*. Here the verb ὑποτάσσησθε points to accepting the positive influence of these kinds of people, τοῖς τοιοῦτοις. To follow after their example will put one on the right path toward pleasing God, and also toward solving the messes that the elitists have created in the church by not following a good role model.

The second part of this unit of material in vv. 17-18 (#s 761-763 in the above diagram) serves first to provide a specific example of service by Stephanas, and by Fortunatus and Achaicus, who are implied in the παντὶ τῷ συνεργοῦντι καὶ κοπιῶντι in v. 16b. Then it affirms Paul's positive feelings generally about the church in spite of its many problems.

In using a common epistolary term to express joy to the recipients of an ancient letter, Paul speaks of χαίρω δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ Στεφανᾶ καὶ Φορτουνάτου καὶ Ἀχαϊκοῦ, *and I am rejoicing at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus*. We know virtually nothing about any of these three men outside of the mentioning in First Corinthians. Interestingly, Στεφανᾶς, Stephanas is a Greek name, while Φορτουνάτος comes from the Latin *Fortunatus*, and Ἀχαϊκός also comes from the Latin *Achaicus*. Some early church fathers were persuaded that these latter two men were freedmen from Roman colonist's stock in Corinth.⁵²¹ A slight possibility exists that Ἀχαϊκός might have been a slave of Stephanas,

selves aside for this work. Today we might speak of their loyal commitment to this work of service and ministry.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1338–1339.]

⁵²¹“We know nothing about **Fortunatus** and **Achaicus** except that since they bear Latin names (cf. **Stephanas** as a Greek name) they may well have been freedmen, or of freedmen's stock from the Roman colonists.¹²⁴ The name Achaicus might also seem to suggest that he had not always lived in Corinth, since “the Achaian” would make little sense as a name in Achaia.¹²⁵” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1339–1340.]

but nothing concrete establishes this. Whatever their social status, they were servants of Christ in Corinth who made the trip with Stephanas across to Ephesus to seek Paul's advice on several matters in the church.

The basis for Paul's rejoicing is given in the causal ὅτι clause: ὅτι τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα οὔτοι ἀνεπλήρωσαν, *because they have made up for your absence*.⁵²² The central point in Paul's expression is that these three Corinthian brethren supplied encouragement to the apostle about the church.

The subsequent justifying statement (γὰρ) in v. 18a clarifies Paul's point: ἀνέπαυσαν γὰρ τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν, *for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours*. The sense of ἀνέπαυσαν, *to rest up* literally, is better expressed figuratively by the English idiom *they lifted my spirits*. Paul's use of πνεῦμα is one of the rare times it refers to the 'human spirit,' i.e., the interior part of a person.⁵²³ These three men in their arrival and reporting

⁵²²“Paul states that **the arrival** of these three from Corinth made up for (ἀνεπλήρωσαν) the ὑστέρημα, *absence, deficiency, lack*, left by the distance between Paul and the Corinthian church itself. In modern English idiom Paul seems to say that they compensate for his **missing** his dear Christian brothers and sisters there. The three arrivals help to *fill up* (ἀνα + πληρόω) *the hole* which their absence leaves. This combines affection for the Corinthian church with appreciation for their three representatives. BAGD seem to imply that it is Paul's absence from Corinth for which they make up.¹²⁶ Robertson and Plummer argue that ‘my want of you’ and ‘your want of me’ are both possible, and that both make good sense.¹²⁷ However, NRSV, NIV, NJB, and Collins all presuppose the exegesis proposed here. Edwards supports this decisively, and even Robertson and Plummer plausibly comment: ‘They were a little bit of Corinth, and as such a delight to the Apostle.’¹²⁸ A more difficult issue is whether we should follow Barrett and REB in understanding τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑστέρημα as *they have done what you had no chance to do* (REB [supplied *what you could not do for me* (Barrett)]).¹²⁹ This is possible, but seems to go further than the Greek. In the absence of firmer evidence, it is wise to assume that the themes of presence and absence determine the meaning (as translated above): ‘An antithesis is intended between παρουσία and ὑστέρημα.’¹³⁰ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1340.]

⁵²³“Paul seldom uses πνεῦμα to refer to *spirit* in the more modern psychological sense, although he does so occasionally. Schweizer cites 1 Cor 7:34 (*in body and spirit*) and 2 Cor 7:1 (*flesh and spirit*) as clear examples of such a use.¹³¹ But most recent Pauline specialists agree that this is an entirely uncharacteristic and secondary use. Emphatically Paul ‘never reckons with the salvation of a mere soul’ or with πνεῦμα as the major point of contact for salvation.¹³² In 1 Corinthians πνεῦμα is the divine Spirit who communicates revelation (1 Cor 2:6–15) or who characterizes the resurrection mode of existence (15:42–44).¹³³ Jewett sees parallels between πνεῦμα in 16:18 and ‘loose parallels in Rabbinic Judaism. But [he adds] Paul's concept of the spirit is not typically Rabbinic.’¹³⁴ Where Jewett underlines the limitations of Paul's use of ‘human spirit,’ Dunn explicates Paul's more central and characteristic

to Paul about the situation at Corinth gave the apostle relief. To be sure, a fist full of messes existed in the church, but as of this point they had not engulfed the entire church, only a few of the house church groups. And even these had hope of being turned around to a positive direction.

How did the arrival of these three men in Ephesus lifts the spirits of the Corinthians? καὶ τὸ ὑμῶν. Contextually, what Paul seems to be saying here is that their arrival lifted his spirits just as they had been doing back home at Corinth for the church members prior to the trip to Ephesus.⁵²⁴

The final statement of Paul in v. 18b is making explicit what was implicit in what he just said: ἐπιγινώσκετε οὖν τοὺς τοιούτους. **thus you should recognize such individuals.** The sense of ἐπιγινώσκετε here is not just to fully understand who such individuals are but to express this deeper awareness openly, here in the context of the house church groups in the Christian community. This centers on verbal recognition, but can be done in other ways of assistance to them in ministry as well.

10.1.4 Conclusio, 16:19-24

19 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας. ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ. 20 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες. Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ.

21 Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου.

22 εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἦτω ἀνάθεμα. μαράνα θά.

23 ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν.

24 ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

understanding of πνεῦμα.¹³⁵ One of the most useful comparisons between Paul and uses of πνεῦμα in the hellenistic world of Paul's day remains the unduly neglected study by R. B. Hoyle.¹³⁶ The classic use for *human spirit* occurs when Paul wishes to set some form of supracognitive or subcognitive mode of experience in contrast to that of rational reflection (1 Cor 14:14–15; see above). However, this is not in view in 16:18. Hence it causes least misunderstanding to follow REB's *they have raised my spirits* rather than the traditional *refreshed my spirit* (NRSV, NIV). NJB finds an alternative way forward: *They have set my mind at rest*, which is still preferable to NRSV and NIV, depending on the force of the verb." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1340–1341.]

⁵²⁴“In view of the inferential sentence which follows, **just as they do yours** (NJB, *just as they did yours*; NRSV, *as well as yours*; REB, *and no doubt yours too*) seems the most probable and least forced understanding of the Greek.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1341.]

19 The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. 20 All the brothers and sisters send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

22 Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord. Our Lord, come!

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

24 My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

16.19 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας.

765 ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς... Ἀκύλας
ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ
πολλὰ Πρίσκα
σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

766 16.20 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες.

767 Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους
ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ.

768 16.21 Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου.

769 16.22 εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον,
ἦτω ἀνάθεμα.

770 μαράνα θά.

771 16.23 ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν.

772 16.24 ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

By verse 19, Paul has reached the formal *Conclusio* of the letter. It is comprised of standard elements found in ancient letters: greetings (#s 764-767); letter verification (# 768); prayers of different kinds (#769-772) with the twin *Benedictio* at the end (#s 771-772).

Greetings, vv. 19-20. 19 Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας. ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ. 20 ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες. Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ. 19 The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. 20 All the brothers and sisters send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Four times Paul uses the verb ἀσπάζομαι (#s 764-767 in diagram).⁵²⁵ The first three references greetings

⁵²⁵“Sending greetings is yet another standard and expected part of hellenistic letter forms in Paul's day (see the substantial literature cited above on letter forms). Moulton-Milligan declare, ‘The papyri have shown conclusively that this common NT word (ἀσπάζομαι) was the regular *term techn* for conveying the greetings at the end of a letter.’¹⁴² Their numerous examples include BGU 4:1079:83–4 (from AD 41); BGU 2:423:18–20 (2d cent.), and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 7:1067:25. The semantic range may

being sent from Ephesus to the Corinthians. The fourth is an admonition to the Corinthians to use ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ, *with a holy kiss*, in sharing greetings among the church members.

The importance of this tradition comes out of the cultures of the first century. Maintaining friendships with others was a vital part of being in society. Underneath this custom of epistolary greetings stands the profound tradition of φιλία, *friendship*, in Paul's world. This was cross cultural in that world, rather than just being Roman or Jewish. People in the modern western hemisphere have trouble grasping the deep implications of this ancient custom.⁵²⁶ Modern Europeans understand it much better, since they have preserved many aspects of this ancient custom.⁵²⁷

The closing Greetings section match the Salutation at the beginning of the traditional Greek letter. Together they formed a band around the contents of the letter that were offered to strengthen the friendship between letter sender and recipient.

Here greetings come αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας, the churches of Asia. With the letter written from Ephesus, the principle city of the province of Asia, this was a natural framing of greetings.

Also more personal greetings come from Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ, *Aquila and Prisca, together the the church in their home*. These were more personal as reflected by ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ. *in the Lord, warmly*. This was largely due to this Christian couple having lived earlier in Corinth where they were instrumental in helping get the Christian community underway in Corinth (cf. Acts 18:1-3). Interestingly, by

vary from conveying *warm personal greeting* to some such equivalent as *pay one's respects to*.¹⁴³³ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1342.]

⁵²⁶ An example of this is the very puny article in the NIB:

GREETING [ברכה, *barakh*; ἀσπασμός *aspasmos*, χαιρεῖν *chairein*]. The Bible records the use of greetings in both letters and conversation. Gehazi is told not to greet anyone (*barakh*, 'to salute or greet with a blessing,' 2 Kgs 4:29). Mary is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting (Luke 1:29). John, within Elizabeth's womb, responds to Mary's greeting (Luke 1:41, 44). Paul greeted the church in Jerusalem (Acts 21:19), and he regularly mentions that he is writing the greeting in his letters in his own hand, suggesting that the rest of the letter was written by an amanuensis (see 1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17). James 1:1 and 1 Esd 8:9 use *chairein* for greeting.

[Kenneth D. Litwak, "Greeting," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 698.]

⁵²⁷ I will always remember my first experience of this in a German Baptist church in the early 1980s. The tradition is for visitors to stand and introduce themselves and then to pass on greetings from their home church to the congregation where they are visitors. This was one of my first feeble efforts to speak German in a group setting. But it struck me as a beautiful custom.

the time of the writing of Romans from Corinth a couple of years after First Corinthians, this couple is back in Rome where Paul sends them his greetings (Rom. 16:3-4).

Third, a more inclusive greeting is given: ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες, *all the brethren send you greetings*. This final expression seems to attempt to cover everyone else in Ephesus with connections and/or interest in the Corinthian church. Thus Paul's obligation to send greetings was completed with propriety and no one was left out in the Ephesian church.

The so-called holy kiss in v. 20b can be understood in different ways.⁵²⁸ Greetings using a kiss on the cheek were fairly standard across Paul's first century world, but usually took on specific meanings depending upon geographic location and ethnicity.⁵²⁹ Against the cultur-

⁵²⁸ Again I confess my cultural limitations of growing up in west Texas. Early on in my experiences in Germany in the early 80s, I realized that Germans usually shook hands with Americans as a greeting but kissed one another on the cheek with fellow Europeans. Later in the early 90s while living in Paris France, I discovered the French version of this greeting: a kiss on either cheek for normal friendship, but a three fold kiss for close friends. This hand shaking Texan had much to learn from Europeans about greeting others! When at the end of my time in Paris, my land lady at the boarding house gave me the three fold kiss as a farewell greeting, I felt quite honored.

⁵²⁹ ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ occurs in identical form in Rom 16:16 and with only minor variations in 2 Cor 13:12 and 1 Thess 5:26, as well as in 1 Pet 5:14 (there *with a kiss of love*, ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης). The *kiss* has been widely described as a sign of respect, affection, or reconciliation not only in Judaism but also more widely in the ancient world (cf. Mark 14:45; Luke 7:45; 15:20; 22:48).¹⁵⁶ We shall shortly question whether such an assumption squares with the evidence. Meanwhile in Christian circles to greet with a holy kiss occurred not only in Paul's own communities of Thessalonica and Corinth, but also in Rome (independently of Paul) and in the congregation to whom 1 Peter was addressed. The qualifying adjective *holy* might indicate either (i) its solemnity, or (ii) its specific use as a sign of affection and respect between fellow Christians, or (iii) a liturgical context.¹⁵⁷ By the time of Justin, it had assumed a formal liturgical status as 'the kiss of peace' in the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper (Justin, *Apologeticon*, 1:65).¹⁵⁸ However, as Fee and Dunn insist, in the absence of clear evidence that Paul explicitly molds his epistolary ending to form part of a Eucharist, it is too specific, if not anachronistic, to follow NEB and REB in translating holy kiss as *kiss of peace*.¹⁵⁹ It remains entirely possible, at the same time, to understand **holy kiss** as a kiss of peace in a non-eucharistic (or not specifically eucharistic) sense. Thus Ambrosiaster understands the holy kiss as a sign of peace which does away with discord.¹⁶⁰

"The evidence of the Gospels may seem to suggest that the kiss usually denoted regard, respect, and honor, whether or not it also denoted affection. The kiss of Judas (Luke 22:47) accorded with the convention according to which a servant or pupil greeted a master with honor.¹⁶¹ Similarly, a host would kiss an honored guest (Luke 7:45). The parting kiss of the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:37) expresses gratitude and respect for Paul as well as affection. Although a number of writers have linked the present allusion in



al backdrop of first century Corinth, the 'holy kiss' alluded to here was a kiss on the cheek that symbolized the sense of oneness and respect that should typify a Christian community.

Letter Verification, v. 21. Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου. This greeting (is) with my own hand, Paul's. Not only was this customary for more formal letters in the ancient world that were written by a writing secretary,

16:20 to so-called liturgical formulae in 16:22–23, as van Unnik convincingly urges, phrases such as *Dominus Vobiscum* initially owe more to a dynamic soteriology than to liturgical repetition, even if the latter subsequently provides an entirely appropriate setting.¹⁶² Indeed, considerable caution should be observed in assessing the claims of Robinson and Bornkamm about the 'eucharistic' setting of 16:20–24.¹⁶³

"Nevertheless, recent research by William Klassen (1993) turns some of these assumptions upside down, although he cites the same New Testament evidence.¹⁶⁴ Drawing partly on the earlier research of Klaus Thraede (1967), Klassen notes that in the Old Testament and in Graeco-Roman society, the role of the kiss remains varied and ambivalent.¹⁶⁵ By the first century devout Jews did not see the kiss 'as a merely formal act.'¹⁶⁶ In Graeco-Roman society the role of the kiss varies with geographical location and one's place or level in society: 'Graeco-Roman society treated the public kiss ... with considerable reticence,' although in some cases it 'serves ... as confirming reconciliation.'¹⁶⁷ It becomes a public sign for a 'religious community,' Thraede and Klassen insist, only with the emergence of Christianity.¹⁶⁸ In all probability 'It began as a practice which expressed the closeness of people who were coming from many different social classes and who were transcending gender, religious, national, and ethnic divisions and finding themselves one in Christ.'¹⁶⁹

"A **holy kiss** appropriately greets another of the holy people of God. To be sure, it is never intended to be erotic, although since everything or anything can be abused, Clement of Alexandria warns Christians against a 'shameless' use of the kiss, while Athenagoras (c. AD 176) warns against 'evil thought' which leads on to a second kiss because it is enjoyable.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Klassen concludes that whether or not some biblical passages seem to confirm the role of the kiss as a sign of respect, however, and reconciliation, the basic function was a celebration of oneness and solidarity and mutuality in Christ that transcended all boundaries of class, gender, or race. This readily explains, if it is correct, why the Eucharist or Lord's Supper very quickly became the major setting for the 'kiss of peace,' as the sharing of 'One Bread,' but it was not (arguably) the initial setting.

"Klassen's research carries much weight, but does not necessarily detract from more traditional explanations of the kiss in the New Testament. We conclude that it constituted a physical sign in the public domain of respect, affection, and reconciliation within the Christian community, and that its distinctive use among fellow believers underlined and nurtured the mutuality, reciprocity, and oneness of status and identity which all Christians share across divisions of race, class, and gender. It was clearly open to abuse, as patristic sources demonstrate, and a counterpart is needed today that offers an effective sign in the public domain that accords with these aims."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1344–1346.]

the apostle Paul indicates additionally in Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17; Philm 19; Col. 4:18 and Rom. 16:23 that he followed this common practice with the composition of his letters.

While not absolutely done in the first century world, a letter verification segment was common place for more formal letters. With the sender writing in his own hand writing the concluding words of the letter, this served to validate the contents of the entire letter as coming from him even though they were in someone else's handwriting, i.e., here most likely Sosthenes as the second sender in the Adscriptio (cf. 1:1). Timothy is the other possibility, or else a joint effort between the two of them. The assumption was that someone among the recipients knew Paul's handwriting and would recognize it.

The formulaic nature of Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου without an expressed verb underscores the verification function of the statement.

Paul in specifying Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς, the greeting, i.e., vv. 19-20 especially, as written directly by him, added a personal touch of warmth and friendship focus to the letter.

Prayers, vv. 22-24. 22 εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἦτω ἀνάθεμα. μαράνα θά. 23 ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν. 24 ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 22 Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord. Our Lord, come! 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24 My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

Four distinctly different prayer sentences are given here. One of the interpretive challenges is whether they should be treated as independent prayers, or considered as a single unit with four elements.⁵³⁰ The

⁵³⁰ "In a masterly concluding chapter to his very helpful Traditions as *Rhetorical Proof: Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians* Anders Eriksson offers one of the very few convincing exegetical accounts of these final three verses, so crucial that Paul chose to pen them in his own hand as his final note.¹⁷⁸ The verses, as Eriksson shows, must be held together and expounded as a single unit if we are to make sense of the separate parts. It would be a mistake to try to comment on each verse as if it were a separate text in its own right, for each verse draws meaning from its place among the other two. Indeed, Eriksson urges that vv. 22–24 make sense only as part of the peroratio of the whole letter. He criticizes many of the standard commentaries for undue haste over 16:13–24, as if the nature of epistolary and rhetorical material were less important than other parts of the letter, and with equal justice laments that many treat vv. 22–24 as either to be seen in strictly epistolary terms, or to be understood mainly in rhetorical terms, or (worst of all) to be approached in genetic terms, when many are distracted by issues of origin into floating hypotheses of eucharistic settings.¹⁷⁹ Against all this, Eriksson insists on a synchronic approach which treats epistolary and rhetorical aspects together as a way of understanding Paul's aims and strategy." [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B.



personal touch in the sender verification combined with the variations at this point in the other Pauline letters arguments strongly against any set liturgical formula structure here. Instead, they stand simply as prayers the apostle felt relevant and important for the Corinthians to hear at the end of the letter.

Much of the discussion centers around the highly questionable assumption that these prayers stand as a liturgical lead into the Eucharist observance, in a manner only typical of certain forms of Christianity from the late second century onward.⁵³¹ That is, the letter would be read prior to this observance with these verses transitioning from the reading to the observance.⁵³² But this

Eerdmans, 2000), 1348.]
⁵³¹Lietzmann (probably following A. Seeberg) and subsequently Robinson, Bornkamm, Käsemann, and many others (see above) developed the hypothesis that the occurrence of ἡτώ ανάθεμα, Μαράνα θά, and perhaps ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ in this context, together with the kiss (v. 20) as ‘a kiss of peace,’ signals a eucharistic context; but this is firmly rejected by Moule and Eriksson, and questioned by Fee.¹⁸⁰ The hypothesis gained initial currency not least because of the occurrence of μαρὰν ἄθά in the later Didache 10:6, alongside εἷ τις ἅγιος ἐστίν, ἐρχέσθω= εἷ τις οὐκ ἔστι μετανοεῖτω, while 9:1 (περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐχαριστίας) and 10:7 (εὐχαριστεῖν) provide the context for the Lord’s Supper and eucharistic prayers. This ‘reading back’ of the eucharistic setting of the Didache appeared to be confirmed by a summons to self-examination ‘as a staple part of the eucharistic liturgy’ in which cursing and blessing are actions ‘beyond private space’ and resonate with parallels in 1 Cor 11:27–34 and 14:38.¹⁸¹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1348–1349.]

⁵³²The initial text basis for this is the Didache which discusses the Lord’s Supper beginning in 9:1 with the header περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐχαριστίας, And concerning the Lord’s Supper.... In 10:6-7 phrases somewhat similar to some of those in 1 Cor. 16:22-24 surface.

Κεφ. θ'. Περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐχαριστίας, οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε· πρῶτον περὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου· Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἁγίας ἀμπέλου Δαβίδ [170] τοῦ παιδός σου, ἧς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· Περὶ δὲ τοῦ κλάσματος· Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ γνώσεως, ἧς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς [175] τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ὅσπερ ἦν τοῦτο κλάσμα διεσκορπισμένον ἐπάνω τῶν ὀρέων καὶ συναχθὲν ἐγένετο ἓν, οὕτω συναχθήτω σου ἡ ἐκκλησία ἀπὸ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς εἰς τὴν σὴν βασιλείαν· ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δύναμις διὰ Ἰησοῦ [180] Χριστοῦ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Μηδεὶς δὲ φαγέτω μηδὲ πιέτω ἀπὸ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὑμῶν, ἀλλ’ οἱ βαπτισθέντες εἰς ὄνομα Κυρίου· καὶ γὰρ περὶ τούτου εἶρηκεν ὁ Κύριος· Μη δῶτε τὸ ἅγιον τοῖς κυσί.

Κεφ. ι. [185] Μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐμπλησθῆναι οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε· Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Πάτερ ἅγιε, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἁγίου ὀνόματός σου, οὗ κατεσκήνωσας ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ πίστεως καὶ ἀθανασίας, ἧς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ [190] Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Σὺ, δέσποτα παντοκράτωρ, ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου, τροφήν τε καὶ ποτὸν ἕδωκας τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εἰς ἀπόλαυσιν ἵνα σοὶ εὐχαριστήσωσιν, ἡμῖν δὲ ἔχαρισω πνευματικῶν [195] τροφήν καὶ ποτὸν καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ τοῦ παιδός σου. Πρὸ πάντων εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι

approach mistakenly reads a much latter practice back into the text that didn’t exist in the first century. The scenario for the first century was the reading of the letter in specific church groups across the city to be followed by discussion and explanation mostly likely by Timothy or one of the other associates of Paul closely involved in the composition of the letter who had read the letter to the assembled group. They provided an authoritative interpretation of the contents of the letter. Prayers

ὅτι δυνατὸς εἶ· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Μνήσθητι, Κύριε, τῆς ἐκκλησίας σου τοῦ ῥύσασθαι αὐτὴν ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ καὶ τελειῶσαι [200] αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, καὶ συναξόν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, τὴν ἁγιασθεῖσαν εἰς τὴν σὴν βασιλείαν, ἣν ἠτοίμασας αὐτῇ· ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ἐλθέτω χάρις καὶ παρελθέτω ὁ κόσμος οὗτος. [205] Ὡσαννά τῷ υἱῷ Δαβίδ. Εἷ τις ἅγιος ἐστίν, ἐρχέσθω· εἷ τις οὐκ ἔστι, μετανοεῖτω· **μαραναθά.** Ἀμήν. Τοῖς δὲ προφήταις ἐπιτρέπετε εὐχαριστεῖν ὅσα θέλουσιν.

[Roswell D. Hitchcock and Francis Brown, eds., *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles: Greek*, trans. Roswell D. Hitchcock and Francis Brown, Revised and Enlarged. (London: John C. Nimmo, 1885), 16–20.]

CHAP. IX.—**Now concerning the Eucharist**, thus give thanks; first, concerning the cup: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. And concerning the broken bread: We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered over the hills and having been gathered together became one, so let thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom; for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever. But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, except those baptized into the name of the Lord; for in regard to this the Lord hath said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs.

CHAP. X.—Now after ye are filled thus do ye give thanks: We thank thee, holy Father, for thy holy name, which thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. Thou, Master Almighty, didst create all things for thy name’s sake; both food and drink thou didst give to men for enjoyment, in order that they might give thanks to thee; but to us thou hast graciously given spiritual food and drink and eternal life through thy servant. Before all things, we thank thee that thou art mighty; to thee be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, thy church, to deliver it from every evil and to make it perfect in thy love, and gather it from the four winds, it, the sanctified, into thy kingdom, which thou hast prepared for it; for thine is the power and the glory forever. Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the son of David! Whoever is holy, let him come; whoever is not, let him repent. **Maranatha.** Amen. But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they will.

[Roswell D. Hitchcock and Francis Brown, eds., *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, trans. Roswell D. Hitchcock and Francis Brown, Revised and Enlarged. (London: John C. Nimmo, 1885), 17–21.]



would both open the gathering and close it but these were not liturgical prayers.

The prayer sentences begin with εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἦτω ἀνάθεμα, *if anyone does not love the Lord, let him be anathema* (v. 22). Five of the six NT uses of ἀνάθεμα are in Paul's letters: Rom. 9:3; Gal. 1:8, 9; 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22 (cf. Acts 23:14). In 1 Cor. 12:3 no one who is a believer following the leadership of the Holy Spirit can say ἀνάθεμα regarding Jesus. The use in 16:22 extends this to define someone who doesn't love the Lord. As such both instances stand as a sharp warning to the Corinthian elitists whose ideas about Christ diminished the significance of Jesus as human and twisted the idea of commitment to Christ. The core idea of ἀνάθεμα is to bring glory to God through one's destruction and damnation into Hell. Such vindicates the righteous purity of a holy God Who is set to destroy all evil.

The second prayer is in Aramaic, rather than Greek although Greek letters are used to spell it: μαράνα θά. Not surprisingly, later copyists who knew neither Hebrew nor Greek had trouble with these non Greek words transliterated with Greek letters and thus two alternative spellings surface μαρὰν ἄθά and μαραναθά.⁵³³ But not too much should be read into these variations of spelling.⁵³⁴ The early patristic understanding of this request as connected to the Eucharist was that this prayer invoked the real presence of Christ in the cup and the bread of the Eucharist. But even the *Didache's* use of μαραναθά used in connection to the Lord's Supper did not contain this meaning, although it is often appealed to by those seeing a Eucharistic thrust here.

The eschatological thrust of the Aramaic is the more natural meaning of the phrase. Even the later

⁵³³“In v. 22 (a) μαράνα θά seems to be supported by P⁴⁶, א, A, B*, C, and D*, and is probably correct. (b) μαρὰν ἄθά has the support of B¹, D², probably D*, while (c) the single-word form μαραναθα occurs in F. While there is a difference in meaning between (a) and (b) in the Aramaic, replicated by the Greek (see below), the spacing of words and letters in crowded early MSS remains problematic.” [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1347.]

⁵³⁴“Further, we should not read too much into how *maranatha* is segmented or spaced. The Aramaic noun (ܡܪܢܐ) means **Lord**, and the verb ܐܬܐ (‘atha’) means **to come**. If ܐܬܐ (*tha*) stands on its own, this is probably imperative: **Our Lord, come!** The form ܐܬܐ (‘atha’) would probably be indicative: *comes* or possibly *has come* or *will come*. However, the exegetical issues discussed above are decisive, since issues of word spacing and even of dialect in Aramaic remain uncertain (see Textual Note). The part parallel in Rev 22:20, ‘Amen. Come, Lord Jesus,’ seems to confirm the imperative.²⁰⁶⁹ [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1352.]

1 Enoch 1:9, originally written in Aramaic toward the end of the first Christian century as a Jewish apocalyptic document, uses this Aramaic term ܐܬܐ ܡܪܢܐ in an eschatological setting of the anticipated return of God through His Messiah to bring judgment upon the world. The existing translation into Greek uses ἔρχεται, *He comes*, for the Aramaic original. This echoes Jude 14-15 which depicts the coming of Christ at the end for divine judgment and wrath. With the rich depiction of the resurrection of believers at this return of Christ in chapter fifteen, one can well understand the prayer here by Paul for Christ to return.

The third prayer sentence in v. 23a is ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ’ ὑμῶν, *The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you*. This is the standard *Benedictio*⁵³⁵ for most all of the letters of Paul: Rom. 16:20b; 2 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; Col. 4:18; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 3:18; 1 Tim. 6:21; 2 Tim. 4:22; Titus 3:15; Philm 25. The one thing the Corinthians need the most is the dynamism of divine grace at work in their midst. ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ is not static reflecting only an attitude or posture by Christ toward His people. To the contrary, the apostles perceived it as a spiritual presence and dynamic force from God bringing about life transforming change into the lives of believers.

The final expression as a prayer wish has also the tone of a promise: ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. *My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus*. ἡ ἀγάπη, as with ἡ χάρις, were used in the NT as action words, rather than specifications of passive attitudes or postures. Throughout this letter Paul has made it clear that his ἀγάπη for the Corinthians was genuine and prompted him to do all that he was doing in writing, praying, visiting, arranging for associates to come etc. This as the final words of the letter is what he leaves them with.

First Corinthians stands as a major writing of the apostle Paul. It is also among the most difficult to interpret, if not the most difficult. This in large part because it addresses a series of problems and issues that were unique to this one congregation and non-existent in any of the other churches. The major source of these problems centered in the failure of several in the church to adopt God's ways of thinking at their Christian conversion. Both their pagan education in Greek philosophy

⁵³⁵The *Benedictio* was the final prayer of blessing originally in the Friday evening Jewish synagogue gathering for study of the Torah. It was picked up in early Christian practice for their gatherings, especially in the beginning Jewish Christian phase of the Gospel being spread only in Galatia and Judea. Some form of formal benediction has closed out Christian worship services to our day among all branches of Christianity. The use of a *Benedictio* in letter writing was mostly a Christian distinctive rather than a universal pattern in the ancient world.

and their religious heritage in paganism continued to provide a core foundation for their comprehension of Christianity. Feeling this to be a far superior approach to the apostolic Gospel that Paul preached to them, an alternative way of supposedly Christian thinking emerged on this non-Christian foundation.

The consequence was that all of the faults of this way of thinking were brought over into their Christian perspective. The traditional Greek elitism, as phony as it was in secular society even, permeated this new alternative Christianity. Out of it came divisiveness and conflict among themselves. It failed to bring a high standard of ethical behavior, and so continued sexual immorality in the surrounding society was adopted as being okay for Christians. It blinded them to the most important dynamic for Christianity: ἀγάπη that put the needs of others ahead of one's own concerns in the model of God's ἀγάπη through Christ. Pagan religious practices such as glossolalia were brought directly into their Christianity without any awareness of how God works through His Spirit in the lives of His people. The self-centeredness promoted by this alternative perspective led them to stumble in the efforts to help their Jewish brethren in Judea.

For the apostle, as becomes especially clear in the closing part of this letter, the redemptive aspect of the church was that only some of the members had been sucked into this paganism with a thin layer of Christianity spread across it. Most of the people had resisted the teachings of the elitists, and reflected genuine commitment to Christ. From this core foundation of individuals like Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17) a renewal of the church life was possible. Paul's deep desire was to see this letter contribute to that renewal.

The main enduring message of First Corinthians centers in a strong warning to resist the 'culturalization' of religion. Culture does play a legitimate role as a filter through which we read our experiences. It helps define meaning for those experiences. But -- and it is a big one -- culture does not define the Gospel of Jesus Christ! This Gospel must always sit in judgment upon our culture since culture is a part of the depraved human experience in rebellion against God. Paul clearly understood the relationship between religion and culture, but the Corinthian elitists had no clue of how the two should interact with each other. Their egocentric Greek culture took control and judged the apostolic Gospel as an inferior way of Christian thinking. Disaster followed in the church!

Such is the continual temptation for Christians of every generation and in every distinct cultural setting. Surrender to culture stands behind much of the spiritual deadness found in present day Christianity. The central path to spiritual renewal today lays in regaining

the pure apostolic Gospel and in knowing how to properly communicate it within the framework of distinct cultures. Paul stands as the model for us to follow.

Know your Gospel well, and understand well the culture you seek to proclaim that Gospel to.

