

FROM CORINTH

To American Churches



A Corrective for the Coffee Cup Church

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

Lessons from Corinth to American Churches 1.0



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PREFACE

Is it not true that the authority of church rests on the Holy Scriptures?

Is it not true that the Apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians to insure the church would build its foundation on the Lord Jesus Christ?

Is it not true that many American churches have turned apostate?

Is it not true that a return to principles addressed in Corinthians would be a remedy to many church problems?

Since 1 & II Corinthians are foundational to a healthy church, I would encourage readers of this work to study the Letters of Paul to the Corinthians and do all he can to re-install Pauline principles in their local American church.

Brooky Stockton

DEDICATION

This Book is dedicated to my professors at Emmaus Bible School who did all they could to understand church principles and build the House of God on a Corinthian foundation.

Brooky Stockton, graduate of Emmaus Bible School (1968).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DISCLAIMER

This book is not anti-government. It is anti-corruption in government and church government.

Because the present political climate is pro-Zionism, pro-lawlessness, pro-censorship, antichrist, and antichristian: and, because government employees and government media is more sensitive than a step-mother about criticism, it is necessary to warn government officials of the following:

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INTRODUCTION

The Law of Worship and the American Coffee Cup Church

Psalm 96:9

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness



I visited a church in Colorado and was shocked by what I saw.

The 20 year-old "worship pastor" was dressed in a saggy t-shirt, in blue jeans, with long hair, banging on an electric guitar, and the people jumping around

like pogo sticks. My family walked out.

I shared this with my friend Jim who visited a Coffee-Cup Southern Baptist Church where members were chomping on donuts and getting up in the middle of the service to refill their plastic coffee cups. I won't repeat what he said to a deacon after the service.

We all love coffee and fellowship, but coffee cups in a church, sloppy dress, cowboy hats, and unveiled women in the service needs to be abandoned.

Let's consider the following plenary command:

Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness

Psalm 96:9: O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

We have here a call to recognize the greatness of God and to worship Him honorably -- something missing in many American churches.

The verb "worship" is a Hithpael imperative indicating reflexive action; that is, cause yourself to worship God in the beauty of holiness.

Furthermore, the command is not only a call to religious duty but it is the Old Testament (OT) invitation term to salvation.

The term "worship" (shachah) means "to bow down," "to honor," "to surrender to His authority." It is in the emphatic position of the sentence placing an additional stress on the duty of enjoining one's self to the LORD God.

“Worship” is a call to enter the kingdom.

How was a man saved in the OT? The answer is by rejecting idols (false gods) and acknowledging the true God (96:5). The Spirit called people to recognize God’s reign among men (96:6) and to surrender (bowing the knee) to His authority (96:9). Having experienced the wonder of salvation, the people were called to declare His glory to the nations (96:2, 4).

The object of worship is the “LORD,” the Creator, the God of Covenant, the One Who reigns, and the One Who judges the earth (96:13).

In Hebrew poetry, song writers use the literary tool of parallelism to reinforce and idea. Here, worship is connected with the fear of God and obedience to His law. Worship without law is religion without restraint.

Worship is a call to come into His presence and to enjoy Him.

This passage not only calls men to “bow the knee” to the LORD, but it calls men to embrace and to enforce the holy standards of worship; that is, **the means of worship is as important as the ends of worship.**

Worshiping God in the beauty of holiness is a command . . . not an option . . . not a great suggestion. The means of worship is “holiness” – clean, orderly, excellent dress and speech.

All worship is guided by law and all law carries with it enforcement authority; that is, there are holy standards, codes, and rules for worship that are not voluntary.

Let's get rid of casual and plastic cups and serve the King of kings.

We can start by reading and studying Paul’s letters to the Corinthians.

The Corinthian Church – Born in a Political Storm

Acts 18

The Synagogue Corporation v. the Apostle Paul and the Free Church

Case No: 51AD-Acts 18



This article is a commentary on Acts 18:1-18 about an incorporated Roman synagogue that hauled a free man into court in order to censure free speech. Paul denounced the Jewish synagogue corporation to establish a house church down the street. And, he did it without obtaining permission or a license from the Greek state.

Acts 18 is a history on the establishment of the Corinthian Church -- a church born in a battle between Judaism and Christianity.

Further, the church founder had to defend himself in a Greek Court against false accusation and frivolous claims by Jews who enjoyed the status as an approved government corporation. Thus, this section of Scripture sheds light on the subject of incorporation.

Paul Arrives in Corinth (50 AD)

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

Corinth was a center of commerce and of moral corruption. The sea port fueled commerce; and, the celebrated local worship of Aphrodite fed the corruption.

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

When Paul arrives in Corinth he meets Aquila and Priscilla who were part of the dispersion of Jews from Rome.

In 49 AD, the emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from the capital because of continuous "rioting over Chrestus," likely a Latinized christos, or messiah in Hebrew (Philip J. Long)

[Claudius] "expelled Jews from Rome because they were generating

incessant unrest through the instigation of Chrestus." *Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultantis Roma expulit.*

The legal persons (at least three) who established a Roman corporation were called *corpus habere* or *corporati* (incorporated persons) and the body of the group was called *corporatio*.

Rome was not concerned about a sect's beliefs or practices as long as it was a "registered government church;" that is, a *collegia licita* or legal religious guild. Rome controlled everything. It exerted tremendous control over the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and even appointed its High Priests.

This incorporation agreement with Rome regarding Jewish synagogues gave the Jews certain benefits, and also burdened them with duties, one of which, they could not heatedly persuade Romans to convert to Judaism.

The Jews, of course, sought more benefits and exemptions from Rome including but not limited to (a) exemption from military services; (b) the right to set up Jewish courts to try violators of Judaism in all parts of the Romans Empire; (c) the right to collect tithes (taxes) in every Roman city and send the money to Jerusalem; (d) and dual citizenship which gave them Roman civil rights and Jewish civil rights; (e) the right to own property and build synagogues around the Roman Empire.

"Associations of individuals, who were entitled to have a *corpus*, could hold property in common; they could hold it, as the Roman jurists remark, just as the state held property (*res communes*) . . . These *collegia* had a common chest, and could sue and be sued by their *syndicus* or *actor* . . . the property of the *collegium* was liable to be seized and sold for its debts . . . The *collegium* or *universitas* was governed by its own regulations, which might be any regulations that the members agreed upon, provided that they were not contrary to law. Some of these corporate bodies resembled our companies or guilds." (Long, *Colle'gium*)

Because the Jews were wayward and insubordinate to fundamental law, the Romans sensibly denied Jews the power of execution in criminal cases.

The tendency of Jews is to see themselves as "special," and exempt from laws they don't like created political tensions. The Jews wanted more race-orientated government privileges, more benefits, and more exemptions from Roman law. This self-promoting lobbying campaign irritated Emperor Claudius causing him to expel them from Rome -- another example of how the Jews "please not God, and are contrary to all men" (1 Thessalonians 2:15).

Incorporation Note: As Rome expanded its empire, the system had to develop policies on how to manage local customs, traditions, and religious preferences.

The Persians developed a policy of conciliation and succeeded; the Greeks initiated a policy of forced conformity and failed. Rome synthesized the two systems. They granted freedom of religion (conciliation) if the religious group would register with Rome as a state collegium /corporation (control). Rome exchanged benefits for control. The Jews throughout the empire gave up God-given rights in exchange for benefits.

The Roman Senate gave a great deal of freedom of religion to worshipers so long as the foreign religion applied for a license to operate. Until another religion was formally recognized, it was forbidden and labeled a *religio illicita*. Christianity was a *religio illicita* by Roman law, but this was of no concern to early Christians. Jesus, Who had all authority in heaven and earth, gave them authority to exist and to plant churches in the Roman Empire (Matthew 28:18-20). Unlike the American mind, Mediterranean Christians did not need permission from the state to conduct their gospel ministry. They understood (stand under) the authority of King Jesus; modern Christians only give lip service to His kingship.

The Jews incorporated their synagogues with Rome in order to enjoy the benefits of *religio licita* (licensed religion). There was a minority in Judaism that refused to do this, including the Qumran community. But most Jews cooperated with registering Judaism as a state-approved religion.

Furthermore, these false Jews, members of the synagogue of Satan, knew how to use *religio licita* and the *collegia licita* as a weapon against Christians. (See Revelation 2:9; 3:9).

In our day, enemies of the church like Lyndon B. Johnson (Zionist) used 501 c 3 IRS rules and corporation laws as a club to beat conservative churches into submission to the policies of the State. Liberal Zionists / communists are quite skilled at hauling conservatives into court who oppose abortion, homosexuality, feminism, transvestism, and communism (January 6, 2021), but conservatives don't know how to use the system against ANTIFA, the LGBTQ, or the Progressives.

Incorporation Note: Not only were the Jews licensed to practice their religion, they were incorporated. One of the benefits of being incorporated was that the Jewish community could purchase and own property in common. The presence of a synagogue meant this community had incorporated with Rome.

But, there is danger with incorporation: What is granted by the state can be taken away by the state. The Jews had a right to be in Rome, but Claudius nullified that right, and expelled the Jews from Rome.

Incorporation Note: "Incorporation" involves a written agreement between the applicant and the approving government agency. Did you know that Roman corporate law prohibited Jews from converting Roman citizens? And the Jews

agreed to that. That was part of the deal. They could proselytize other pagans, but they couldn't engage Roman citizens in attempt to convert them to Judaism.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

Corinth being a commercial center gave the apostle an opportunity to set up his craft as a tentmaker to supply his needs. Aided by Pricilla and Equila, Paul was able to forego the hassle of setting up a new business. This gave him time to engage the duties of his gospel ministry.

Because church support for missionaries had not yet matured, Paul did double duty providing for his own needs through his trade while performing his life mission of preaching the gospel.

Paul Proclaims the Gospel in the Synagogue

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Paul, according to his custom, began his ministry in the synagogue. Paul went to the synagogue instead of the market place because this is where men could talk freely about *Theos* and the *Tanakh*. In the course of sharing and preaching, many Jews and Greek proselytes were persuaded by Paul's expositions on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-12).

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

Silas and Timothy arrival in Corinth Paul was emboldened to preach the Word vigorously. (1 Thessalonians 2:18; 3:6 2 Corinthians 11:9).

Paul's Gospel Rejected by the Jews

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

When the staunch Jews began to revile Paul and blaspheme Christ (1 Corinthians 12:3), he "shook his raiment" in a symbolic gesture denouncing these Christ-rejecting Jews (Matthew 10:14). Every man being responsible for his own soul Paul declared, "Your blood be upon your own heads;" that is, he forced them to accept responsibility for their unbelief.

Rejected by these Jews, Paul announced that he would take his gospel to the gentiles in the city.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

Justus was a Gentile convert to the true God. While living with Pricilla and Aquila, Paul chose to continue his minister in the house of this religious proselyte. Because this home was near the synagogue, Paul was able to preach to Corinthians interested in learning more about the gospel.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Though rejected by the majority of Jews at the synagogue, Paul's ministry was effective. When Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue believed, one can only imagine the flaring tension and mayhem that arose in this community when the ruler of the synagogue was converted to Christianity. The fact that more Corinthians believed and were baptized added "fuel to the fires" of contention.

The apostles did not have a license to preach or to establish churches. Nor did these missionaries incorporate these *ecclesias* with Rome so they could enjoy the protection of the state. They chose imprisonment over privilege; and, death over slavery. There is no evidence anywhere in the New Testament that the early church applied for licenses or a corporate status from Rome's Internal Revenue Service. The early church chose freedom over state privilege.

After the Jews drove Paul out of the synagogue (18:7-8), what does he do? He simply walked next door and started a church. He didn't ask for the state's permission. He did this in city after city, even when the government was hunting him down like wolves after a scared rabbit.

During the first-century, Rome treated Christianity as if it was part of Judaism. Roman bureaucrats seemed oblivious to the subtleties of religious differences until the Jews opposed the Christians and explained their doctrines to the magistrates.

Paul Promised Protection by God

9-11 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

No doubt Paul was thrilled over the conversion of many Corinthians, but smoke in the air drifting from the fires of contention created a state of disquietude in the apostle. After the church was kicked out of the synagogue under threats and duress, Paul's natural instinct was to flee. But, God came to him in a dream and ordered him to stay under the pressure with the promise of protection: "Be not afraid . . ." And, he did so for another six months.

The corpus of the synagogue knew where Paul was conducting his ministry in the house of Justus and that without a permit. Eager to snitch on Paul, the

corporati of the synagogue (of Satan) stormed the court of Gallio eager to accuse him of being an unlicensed preacher.

Their strategy was simple: Force Gallio to rule Christianity a *religio illicita* and strike fear into the hearts of these break-a-ways from Judaism by having Paul flogged or executed in order to drown out the fires of Christianity.

If the synagogue *corporati* could get Gallio to rule against Christianity, it would set a precedent throughout the empire. But, they had to convince Gallio that the Christians were not Jews; that they were not a *religion licita* for the benefit of Rome. It was a brilliant strategy, but God restrains the wrath of man (Psalm 76:10).

Paul Indicted by Rebel Jews

12-13 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat (bema), saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeanus or Gallio (5 BC – c. AD 65) was a Roman senator and brother of the famous writer Seneca. He is best known for dismissing an accusation brought against Paul the Apostle in Corinth (Wiki).

Apparently, Gallio was a charming and gentle soul, with iron-like convictions. When his brother, Seneca was selected to tutor Nero, Gallio was promoted to proconsul, a semi-military civil-judicial political office under admiralty law of the newly constituted senatorial province of Achaia.

Under incorporated synagogue authority, the Plaintiff Jews hastily arrested Paul and verbally indicted him in Gallio's jurisdiction with the charge: "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

The substance of this accusation could have resulted in the death penalty for the apostle. The word for persuades (*anapeitho*) has negative connotations and implies an undermining of Rome's social structures. Gallio was uncharacteristically hostile to the Jews.

Proselytism in itself was not unlawful, but proselytism of a Roman citizen could merit execution at the worst and beatings at best. But, God made good come out of evil.

"contrary to law:" The second charge the Jews brought against Paul was that he was compelling them to worship Theos contrary to the law.

Fortunately for Paul, Sosthenes did not specify Roman law, but that is clearly what he had in mind. Rome could care less what you believed, so long as you submitted to Caesar and applied for a permit to exist as a *corporatio*.

From a legal perspective, the Jewish claim was void for vagueness and subject to dismissal. And, this is what Gallio did.

Incorporation Note: Why were the Jews so bold? Christians would never bring a political charge against Jews, but the Jews boldly marched into Gallio's Court making demands on him. Why? The answer lies in the fact that Judaism had been a *religio licita* (a licensed religion) for centuries. Christian churches, just getting started, had no standing in the Roman courts. Simeon Guterman says,

The basis of the *religio licita* was the *collegium licitum*. When a group of individuals organized an association with some religious or practical end in view and obtained the necessary authorization of the state they then constituted a *collegium licitum*.^[2]

Judaism was a *religio licita*, or authorized religion, and its synagogues *collegia licita*, or authorized associations, in the western parts of the Roman Empire Simeon L. Guterman, *Religious Toleration and Persecution in Ancient Rome* (London: Aiglon Press, 1951).

Again, Guterman's states,

"Each [synagogue] was an institution in its own right possessing without doubt all the attributes of a corporation or a *collegium*."

There were benefits to being incorporated because corporations could own property in common. Moreover, they had access to the Roman court system. When harassed on a local level, all these privileged Jews had to do was appeal to a magistrate, explain their license from Rome, and the local authorities were obligated to service their cause or the local magistrate could be sanctioned by Caesar.

Moreover, these Roman corporations possessed limited liability -- a benefit denied by Gallio.

Likewise, lawyers promise church leaders that the church can own property easily without setting up a trust; that it can sue or be sued without its officers being liable for corporate decisions. These attorneys promise that incorporation protects the corporate officers and members. But, this "romancing the diamond" leads churches into bondage. A good attorney knows how to pierce the corporate veil and to hold church officers personally liable for damages cause by any irresponsible, corporate actions.

Paul Protected by the Court

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

The Greek word "matter" (*adikema*) refers to crime or injuries to people at common law (transgression of rights); that is, Gallio immediately recognized

this was not a criminal matter but a metaphysical dispute about the Jewish religion -- a frivolous matter to the Romans. Like the Romans, U.S. federal courts refuse to hear a case if they find that it presents a political question; that is, courts settle criminal and civil disputes and are typically viewed as being the apolitical branch of government.

"O ye Jews" is used pejoratively as these people had a reputation for not pleasing God and being contrary to all men and their institutions (1 Thessalonians 2:15). Gallio had to search the inner vaults of his character to find a reason to exhibit patience toward these contumacious Jews. Eventually, the fractious nature of the Jews would result in the destruction of the nation by Titus in 70 AD.

This is the Spirit's way of telling us the Jews were anti-theism, antinomian, anti-Christ, and anti-humanity. And, today's Ashkenazi, so-called "Jews" have the same anti-Christ spirit as the first-century Jews.

The Jews brought this charge:

"This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."
But, this claim was deficient in the following ways:

The Plaintiffs did not legally identify themselves; that is, the court could not immediately take jurisdiction.

The Defendant was not properly identified. Therefore, the court had no *in personam* jurisdiction over Paul.

The phrase "the law" was void for vagueness. Which law? Jewish law? Roman law? Egyptian law? It wasn't in Rome's interest to have jurisdiction over Jewish religious law, and Gallio recognized the jurisdictional loop-hole immediately.

"Criminal statutes that lack sufficient definiteness or specificity are commonly held 'void for vagueness.'" (Cornell).

The court, therefore, did not accept subject matter jurisdiction over the presumptive complaint.

The case had to be dismissed because a dead corporation does not have parity with the living man. It is fundamentally unfair (against the laws of equity) for any court to maintain a cause by a "wealthy" corporation lacking a conscience against a poor, living man with a conscience.

"The fictional for-profit state corporation cannot reach parity with a lawful man." (FLS)

Since no one was injured and there was no victim, the court did not have criminal jurisdiction over this matter.

This frivolous claim was issued in bad faith to harass and embarrass the Defendant.

Since the Jews did not have a contract with Paul, the court did not have civil jurisdiction. Without a contract or a claim of property damage, this matter lacked subject matter jurisdiction which prevented the Court from applying the laws of equity to the dispute.

Courts generally refuse to hear a case that involves a political question. It only deals with injured parties or damaged property. No injury, no claim.

Moreover, the Plaintiffs presumed the corporation had rights, but corporations have no rights.

Paul did not need to defend himself because the whole matter was a political question and not a matter involving state interests or a damaged party.

Relying on the privilege of their incorporated status, the Jews marched into the court like Big Shots expecting the court to grant their demand . . . and order Paul to be executed. But, Gallio wanted nothing to do with their bad faith claim. Knowing that Claudius Caesar had recently expelled the repugnant Jews from Rome embolden Gallio to sanction these duplicitous persons in his court knowing that he was fully backed by Rome. Consequently, he ordered the plaintiffs to vacate his court. Gallio was not antisemitic, but he was antiterrorism.

Incorporation Note: These Jewish claimants had a false sense of security that proved to be disastrous in the instant case. They presumed their favored status as a religious organization would grant them favor in the eyes of the court . . . but, their de facto status quickly turned into a ruling on lack of standing.

Incorporation Note: The second half of verse 2 says, "Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome..." in 49 AD. This act by Caesar exposes how privileges granted by the state can also be taken away by the state.

And in modern times 501 c 3 government churches have had the same false sense of security thinking they are safe from the IRS. As Gallio rejected these Jews, government officials have the power to compel performance for 501 c 3 non-prophet organizations; that is, 501 c 3 charitable organizations have no God-given, constitutionally protected rights. Privileges gained can be privileges denied -- denied at the whim of a judge just like Gallio who refused to hear the case.

Incorporation Note: The IRS says that a church doesn't need to apply for tax exempt status because the Constitution already guarantees a church tax-exempt status (Amendment I). To think receiving an "official" "exempt status" is an extra measure of security is false security because it is not grounded upon fundamental law.

Any confidence state-church religious organizations have in the favor and protection of the state is a misplaced trust (Psalm 118:8-9).

Presiding Judge Gallio Dismisses the Case

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

Gallio immediately recognized the issue of subject matter jurisdiction regarding Jewish words, names, and Talmudic Case law. While Rome had quasi-authority over religion, it frequently considered internal disputes as frivolous and irrelevant to Rome's purpose.

Consequently, Gallio dismissed this case sua sponte (voluntarily) and with prejudice because the Jews “failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.”

There was no legal basis for the charge:

The Plaintiff's rights had not been violated;

The Plaintiff's property had not been damaged;

The charges were frivolous; and, the court had no interest in a political question.

The Plaintiff corporate actors clearly denied the Defendant's God-given due process rights;

There was a lack of parity between a State-approved synagogue corporation and the living man.

The court chose not to exercise authority over Jewish, Talmudic policies / case law.

Corporate law between Rome and Synagogue gave no rights to corporations.

If Sosthenes had lawyered up, he might have sustained his case.

1) If Sosthenes had accused Paul of converting Roman citizens to Christianity an *illicit religio*, rather than simply converting men, Gallio would have been forced by law to deal with the charges seriously.

2) If Sosthenes had not been so obnoxious and stubborn, Gallio might have been more inclined to hear the case. Claudius expelling Jews in Rome in 49 AD (see verse 2), empowered Gallio to abruptly dismiss the Jews' case.

3) If Sosthenes had mentioned that Paul was attempting to establish an *ecclesia illicita*, it might have gone good for the Jews and bad for Paul. The term *ecclesia* was a code word in the Roman theater of groups outside the jurisdiction of Roman law (outlaws), and in some cases trying to overthrow the government. This is why the apostle in his letter to the Corinthians forbid the

church (ecclesia) to take their disputes to Roman magistrates and to form their own courts (1 Corinthians 6).

4) Finally, the term *euangellion* (from which we get the word evangelism) was a controversial term because it was used by the military to pronounce victory over one army by another army. (See 2 Samuel 4:10; Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC) – Library 15.74).

Because God was at work frustrating Sosthenes, the synagogue prosecutor botched his job in bringing charges against Paul. No sooner had Sosthenes gotten once sentence out of his mouth, Gallio saw through the charade and dismissed the case in Paul's favor.

Plaintiffs Forced Out of the Court

16 -17 And he drave them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

Apparently, Gallio saw through the hypocrisy of the Jews.

When Gallio dismissed the case with prejudice, the Jews exhibited "bad courtroom behavior" and improper etiquette .Consequently, Gallio ordered the Jews to vacate the court. When the Jews showed contempt for the court's decision, Gallio ordered the bailiffs to "drive" Sosthenes and those colluding with his illegal scheme out of the court.

Apparently, the Greeks also saw through the hypocrisy of the Jews. Being eyewitness of the "bad courtroom behavior" and improper etiquette of the Ruler of the Synagogue, the Greeks felt compelled to punish this *archisunagogos* with a flogging.

Incorporation Note: Gallio saw immediately that this matter in his court was a religious issue and therefore a corporation issue. But, corporations do not have the rights of citizens; rights such as right of self-defense, right of cross examination, etc. As soon as Gallio perceived the nature of the controversy, he knew he didn't have to hear the case. Corporations are legal fictions subject to the state's whim, and cannot be treated with rights as a private Roman citizen could exercise. This explains why they could not appeal to their Roman contract rights for the corporation. It didn't have any!

"[A] corporation is not considered as a person within that clause of the fifth amendment to the constitution which protects a 'person' against self-incrimination." Churches need to wake up to the illusion of liberty when it comes to corporations. They are giving up far more than they are gaining (Len Young Smith and G. Gale Roberson, in Smith and Roberson's Business Law, p. 787)

Paul Departs from Corinth

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

Having experienced the pompous life in Athens and the banal life in Corinth, Paul took a temporary vow of a Nazarite in order to separate himself from the sins of the Greeks (Numbers 6:1-21). Having completed his consecration, he shaved his head. Possibly, Paul wanted to take his locks and burn them on the altar in Jerusalem -- which might explain his eagerness to go to Jerusalem.

Incorporation Note: All this parallels with our modern church predicament today because the corporate laws and IRS licensing operates under the same standards as Rome – with one exception: our constitution protects the right of churches to be free of government regulations; i.e., they don't have to become licensed or incorporated by the State.

Since the 1960s, over 90% of churches have voluntarily applied for 501-c-3 status.

Consequently, churches are doing what the government wants them to do and not doing what God wants them to do. Even the church treasurer has become an uncompensated tax collector for the IRS. Moreover, pastors seem proud they have a "government approved" church. This false sense of security deceptively diminishes their strength and power as "salt of the earth."

More Notes on Incorporation

- If the IRS codes and definitions are applied to the church then an official government "church" would be created ""that must totally surrender the sovereignty of the Lord's church to the IRS" (Pastor Dixon).
- The central tenet of the faith of the Church is the absolute sovereignty of the Church under the Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus is Lord, it is not possible or desirable for any church to surrender itself to be regulated by the IRS. "No man can serve two masters." No man; and no church (Stockton).
- Those who apply for a 501 c 2 exempt status surrender the Headship of Christ and replace Him with the legally, binding headship of the IRS -- arguably, the most evil organization on the planet. "The Czar of Religion (cults) in Washington, D.C., will replace the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of His church," (Dixon)
- Nowhere in law are churches required to register as nonprofit organizations. The First Amendment prohibits Congress or the State from regulating church meetings. The church has a right to exist and operate without permission from

the State: "Congress shall make no law establishing religion nor prohibit the free exercise thereof."

- Free churches are not against government; they are against overreaching government presumes for itself all rights and all powers.
- The average pastor has more fear of the IRS than the LORD God. Fortunately, the Supreme Court has ruled that no individual has a duty to Congress.

"The individual may stand upon his constitutional rights as citizen. He is entitled to carry on his private business in his own way. His power to contract is unlimited. He owes no duty to the State or to his neighbor to divulge his business, or to open his doors to an investigation, so far as it may tend to criminate him. He owes no duty to the State, since he receives nothing therefrom, beyond the protection of his life and property. His rights are such as existed by the law of the land long antecedent to the organization of the State, and can only be taken from him by due process of law, and in accordance with the Constitution. Among his rights are a refusal to incriminate himself, and the immunity of himself and his property from arrest or seizure except under a warrant of the law. He owes nothing to the public so long as he does not trespass upon their rights" Hale v. Henkel, 201 U.S. 43, 74 (1906).

- But, churches are often fooled by IRS British BAR attorney that they need to become a 501 c 3 church to avoid being taxed. Sharp pastors know that churches are already tax exempt and have no authority from Heaven to pay an a-turn-ney to turn the church into a slave of the State. Churches are not only "tax exempt" THEY ARE NON-ASSESSIBLE. They are not "tax exempt" because they are a non-prophet, 501 c 3 charitable organization, they are tax exempt because they are free churches serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . . " (1st Amendment).

"All church property . . . shall be exempt from taxation" (NM Constitution, Article 8, §3).

- A church has an unalienable right from God to conduct its kingdom business without interference from the federal government.
- A church does NOT need a license to operate. A Biblical church is under command of the Lord Jesus Christ and has His authority to scatter and establish churches in all the nations. A statutory license is required to do something that would otherwise be illegal, and there is nothing unlawful about converting sinners and establishing a church.

“License: “The permission by competent authority to do an act which, without such permission, would be illegal” (Black’s Law Dictionary, 6th Edition).

- If your church has been trapped by the Devil's lawyers, free yourself:

“Let me recommend that churches that are presently set up under the Internal Revenue Service’s 501(c)(3) tax exemption requirements send the IRS a letter saying that they are no longer claiming exemption under this section of the Internal Revenue Code. This is because every church is automatically tax-exempt. No church has to ask permission of the U.S. government.” (Dr. Gary North, President of ICE, Institute for Christian Economics).

Lessons from Corinth



To the American Churches,

Stop investing in the latest fads and get back to the Holy Scriptures and the gospel foundations of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sosthenes, your brother

The Power of the Cross

1 Corinthians 1:18

Q: Is it not true, that the cross of Calvary is the source of power and not "public education?"



Men are in search of power.

It has been said, "knowledge is power."

But, power is deeply associated with the cross. The power of God is not connected with worldly-knowledge, money, education, the Zodiac, rhetoric, or one's personal experiences.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching (logos) of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power (dunamis) of God.

Want power? Remember the cross: *cruci dum spiro fido.*

"preaching" can be literally translated, "the word (logos) of the cross." It is contrasted with "wisdom (sophia) of words" in verse 17, and the "wisdom of the wise" in verse 19 which is associated with eloquence, rhetoric, higher-education, diction, and the skills of oration.

The verbs "perish" and "saved" are both present, active participles that should be translated "those that are perishing" and "those that are being saved." The apostle does NOT contrast two states, but two processes among men that are being witnessed in the course of life. There are those who reject the logos of the cross and are perishing and there are those who hear and believe the logos of the cross that are being saved away from sin to holiness.

These conditions are not fixed states either now or in the future, but two plays happening in the theater of hearts which have not reached the final scene before the curtain comes down; that is, the conditions manifest in the present are incomplete.

That God saves men from sin by the cross is "foolishness" (moria) to those who are presently perishing. We get the word "moron" from the Greek word for foolish. Many of those who graduate from U of A (University of Arrogance) with BAs, MAs, and Ph.Ds consider students of the cross as morons . . . but the ones who are perishing are the real morons.

But, to those who embrace the cross . . .

are saved (past tense) - Romans 8:24 "We were saved . . ."

as a present state - Ephesians 2:5 "You have been saved . . ."

are being saved (a process) - 1 Corinthians 15:2 "Ye are being saved . . ."

and, will be saved (future tense) - Romans 10:9 "Thou shall be saved . . ."

Life has many ups and downs and twists and turns, but the cross is an historical fact that results in salvation for those who believe. The verb-tenses of salvation are there so that none might despair ("You have been saved"); and so, that none might presume ("You are being saved").

The sickness of soul and the perils that threaten life, flow from the central fact of man's sin and rebellion from God. (MacLaren)

So serious is the energy of sin in men that God sent His Son, not to provide a good example for them, but to die on the cross to save sinners. There is no other way that deeply flawed people could enter the kingdom.

When men believe, they are saved from the penalty of sin (past), the power of sin (present), and will be saved from the presence of sin (future).

The Power that saves sinners from sin is the cross . . . moronic to some . . . but power to others.

The antithesis of "foolishness" is the cross.

The cross is the power of God . . .

- It is the power of God because it is the "bargaining table" where the debtor party can meet with the creditor party to negotiate a settlement of debt; a bankers "bench" (bar) where sinners can settle their debts to the holy Judge who commands men to be holy as he is holy (Leviticus 20:7; 1 Peter 1:16);
- It is the power of God because the precious blood of Christ shed at the cross is the currency that was paid to discharge the debt . . . for, "life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11):
- It is the power of God because it honors the free will of man. Either man can accept God's gracious payment of debt by Christ at the cross, or the man can pay the debt with his own currency;
- It is the power of God because God executed his plan to save sinners by making Christ to be the substitute Lamb to pay for the sins of condemned men:
- It is the power of God because Christ is the perfect, innocent Lamb that satisfied the claims of Divine holiness, justice, and law;
- It is the power of God because God is satisfied (propitiated) with Christ's substitutionary work at the cross for sinners;

- It is the power of God because we are happy, satisfied beneficiaries of Christ's substitutionary work.
- It is the power of God because God punished Christ for our sin so that we would never have to be punished for our sins. If Christ has paid for our sins, there is nothing for us to pay for!
- It is the power of God because God took the sins of men who lived in the past and placed them on Christ in 32 AD; and, God took the sins of men not yet born and placed them on the Savior-Lamb in 32 AD.
- It is the power of God because in Christ's death at the cross and resurrection from the grave, He solved man's fundamental problem - death.
- It is the power of God because it fulfills the hope of sinners; the hope of being forgiven; of being in a right standing with God (justification); of being reconciled to God; of living forever with God in His kingdom; of power to break away from defiling habits and to live righteously.
- The cross is the power of God because Christians through the centuries testify to its saving power and effect for good in their own soul.

Want to see an example of the power of God? Consider verse one in this chapter:

1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

Q: Who is Sosthenes?

Acts 18: 12, 17 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

A: Sosthenes was the stubborn, contumacious Ruler of the government-corporation Synagogue in Corinth who played his role in arresting Paul, hauling him to Gallio's court, to have the apostle tried and condemned to death. The case was so frivolous and without merits, Gallio dismissed the case *sua sponte*. When Sosthenes exhibited contempt for the court, the judge ordered the bailiffs to drive the man out of the courtroom. On the way out of the district court constables abused their powers and literally beat some sense into the man outside the courtroom chambers.

When Sosthenes considered his shameful behavior and combined it with Paul's message on the cross, Sosthenes believed. After he was baptized, he traveled to Ephesus to reconcile with Paul. With reconciliation complete, Paul hired

Sosthenes to be his amanuensis in order to write his epistle to the church in Corinth. (see Acts18). Oh, the wonders of the cross and the power of God!!

Power does not come from knowledge about the world, but from knowledge associated with the cross -- a knowledge that saves even the most hostile-sinners like Sosthenes.

Cruci Dum Spiro Fido – As long as I live, I will remember the cross.

Christ, the Wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 1:24.

"Christ, the wisdom of God . . ."

Q: Is it not true that Christ is the Source of wisdom and not "self-help books?"

Need wisdom?



Men are in search of wisdom. From the monks in Tibet to the erudite schools of Harvard, men seek the illusive virtue we call wisdom.

However, the Bible tells us that Christ is the wisdom of God. His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead made philosophers out of every man (Chrysostom).

Christ is so simple to understand, a child can be instructed by him. So profound, doctors have to have all the pistons in their little brain firing to explore His universe of hope. Christ is so deep the intellects of history have yet to find the depths. His is a bottomless sea and a shoreless ocean that "passeth all

understanding."

The Greeks dedicate mid-Pentacostarion as a time to reflect on Christ as the Hagia Sophia.

He that would be wise would do well to navigate his craft in the revelation of His Word to explore Christ on the sea of Holy Scripture.

Christ is the Wisdom of God Outside of History

In his wisdom, He created the heavens and the earth—the heavens with all its millions of comets, molecular clouds, and luminescent hydrogen stars—the earth with its burning lava core and cool crust of rock and undulating seas of water hovered over by an atmosphere of oxygen and nitrogen perfectly adapted for life.

"For this heaven, great as it is, not only was made by Him, but made with ease; and that boundless earth, too, was brought into being even as if it had been nothing." (Chrysostom)

Who understands the depth of science behind planetary nebula or supernovas and white dwarfs? These glowing gas furnaces spiraling at supersonic speeds in

a global dome traveling to nowhere challenge the greatest intellects. According to reports from NASA, scientists have sent the Hubble craft into space in search of another planet fit for life with stunning disappointment. Only this little blue dot, as many speculate, has all the conditions necessary for human existence!

Proverbs 8:27 "When he prepared the heavens, I (wisdom) was there . . . "

It is Christ our Lord that scattered the sunbeams and anchored the pillars of the earth in a universe of nothing. Oh, how our hearts burst with joy knowing that the Creator was here—on earth—on this planet reconciling the world to Himself.

Before the world was made, Christ died for sinners.

Before Adam sinned there was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Before sin's wretched virus infected humanity, the Lamb's blood that makes men white as snow was spilled at the cross.

Before the first star was formed, He planned the temple, the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial system, his entrance into history as the way of salvation, the cross, the resurrection and the new heavens and the new earth. He is the Lamb of God, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the door of the Sheep, the Great Shepherd, the way, the truth, and the life—the great "I AM"—man's everlasting hope as the "resurrection and the life."

John 11:26 "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Christ is the Wisdom of God within History

In his childhood, Christ confounded doctors. He sunk the warships of criticism launched at him by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians. Spellbound crowds surrounded him like honey bees seeking the nectar of truth dripping from his lips. Prostitutes, tax collectors, and soldiers chained themselves to his eloquence.

Here is the perfect man Who never swore; never complained; never shouted. He was never silent when he should have spoken or speaking when He should have been silent. There was no question he did not answer and no answer He did not question; He unraveled mysteries and He also locked them in parables.

In Christ, truth was installed on a throne and wickedness sentenced to a scaffold. Kings searched for him but He preferred the company of fishermen and children.

One word from his lips caused Lazarus to rise from the grave. One touch cleansed a leper; cured a fever in Peter's mother-in-law; healed a chronic

discharge blood in a woman afflicted for twelve years; opened the eyes of the blind; unlocked the ears of the deaf and the mouth of the mute; and turned a funeral into a celebration. His teaching shed light on Moses; was deeper than Plato; greater than Solomon; more binding than a Supreme Court. He is Christ, the Wisdom of God.

Christ is the Wisdom of God over History

He sits at the right hand of God ruling as the unseen, unsung King of the nations. All of history moves toward the kingdom of God wherein He conquers hearts; dispenses mercy; orders justice; and, wages war against the forces of evil. In love and truth, He commands an army of volunteers that wage war against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness and their miscreants in the political and commercial system.`

"all things are working together for good to those who love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28)

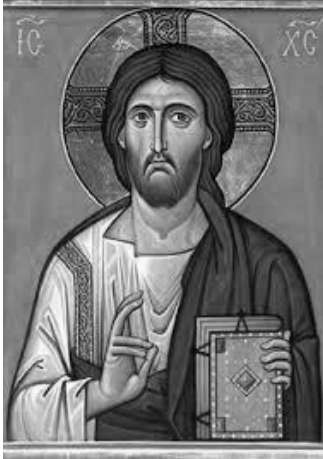
With the sword of truth He cast down arguments and everything that exalts itself above the knowledge of God. His judgment begins with the house of God wherein he purifies hearts, refines sinners, and perfects good deeds. He does it without wealth or empowering lust or bolstering the pride of men.

He can take doubters like C.S. Lewis, Lew Wallis, Simon Greenleaf, and Lee Strobel and turn them into champions of the faith. He took Saul, the "chief of sinners" and turned him to Christianity's greatest theologian . . . and he can take you and me, unravel the knots, and glorify God through these vessels of clay.

Need wisdom? Christ is the wisdom of God.

Christ, the Power of God

1 Corinthians 1:24.



Q: Is it not true that Christ is the Source of Christian power and not “positive thinking?”

Need power?

Men are in search of power. There are power drinks, power foods, power words, power sales, power investments, and power advertising. Power religions abound. We know of the power of money, the power of love, and that “knowledge is power.” But, there is a power of God. And, that power is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the Power of God as seen in Creation:

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Colossians 1:16).

The super nova and the tiny hydrogen atom were scattered through the universe by Christ. Entire galaxies litter the heavens and millions of lanterns in our own galaxy glow endlessly without flickering or exhausting their fuel. For by the Son of God “all things consist.”

We have been taught this blue marble we call “Earth” floats in a Sun-centered orbit never varying from its course around a burning star creating the perfect environment for life—not too hot and not too cold. Water falls from the sky nourishing all creatures great and small. But, just as amazing is the flat-earth model that challenges speculations about a spinning ball to the wonder and frustration of the best of men.

Who has not marveled at the perfection of the human hand, or the marvels of the human ear, or the camera of the human eye? Who made all these marvels? It was none other than “Christ, the power of God.”

Christ is the Power of God in History:

Consider Christ as a miracle of history where Pharaohs seized beautiful women (Sarah), ordered midwives to murder the preborn (Exodus 1), and taxed nations into poverty. Consider how compromising Hebrews married women outside tribal boundaries threatening genetic continuity, and how conquering nations impeded cultural distinctions.

Consider specifically how Athaliah assassinated all the babies in the king's nursery except Josiah (2 Kings 11); and, how the Jeconiah curse severed political power in the genetic line of Christ (Jeremiah 22:28–30).

Christ represents the power of God to maintain Abrahamic genetic cohesion through two-thousand years of wanderings, enslavement, captivity, raids, war, famine, and deportations in Israel, the land bridge between Europe, Asia, and Africa. But, at last the Messiah was born to Mary, the daughter of Nathan, the son of David (Luke 3).

Not only is He a miracle of history, but a miracle of biology. Luke informs us Mary was impregnated by the Spirit without the agency of an Adamic man. He was a creation of God in a woman, fully God and fully man.

The Son of God tabernacled among men. The Immortal became mortal. The Eternal became temporal. The Spiritual became flesh and dwelt among us as “the only begotten God.”[1] The babe grew into a man wherein He commanded the fish in the sea; hushed the winds; and, quieted the tempest.

The lame man leaping, the blind man seeing, the deaf man hearing, and the dumb man praising provide evidence Christ was the power of God. Hell trembled, heaven marveled, fears departed, and hearts sang when Lazarus was raised from the dead. Disease departed by his command and funerals stopped their march by His touch. In His own resurrection the citadels of hell tumbled like the walls of Jericho and the bright rays of the Easter sunrise scattered the dark fears that blinded all of humanity. He is the Christ of History, the Power of God.

Christ is the Power of God in Time Now for He “sitteth at the right hand of god” as the Lord Christ.

The reigns of history steering the chariot of destiny are in wounded hands. Ascended to the right hand of the Father, He is the Mediator between God and men; the Referee in the game of life; the Arbitrator of all disputes; the Judge with gavel in hand. He is the Head of every man (1 Corinthians 11:1-3); the Head of the church (Ephesians 1:22); and the King of the Nations (Jeremiah 10:7). Without the use of a scimitar or sword or guillotine or rifle or threat of imprisonment, he transformed nations and turned the “world upside down” (Acts 17:6-7).

By him doctors were humbled and fishermen became famous. By him the church chartered a course through the blood splattered seas of Nero (67 AD), Domitian (81 AD), Maximus (235 AD) and Queen Mary (1550 AD).

Through him the “bloody martyrs” became the seed of the church.”

Through Him the truth endured the disappointments of apostates, the betrayal of prelates and the hypocrisy of defiled bishops. Prayerlessness, church wars,

arrogant kings, persecutions, factions, blood and pride cannot stop Him. He is our advocate, Savior, and Redeemer. He is reigning now as “King of kings and Lord of lords” and He is coming again to take vengeance on “those who do not know God” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). He saves sinners, forgives transgressors, justifies the wicked, gives strength to the weak, and hope to the deprived. He is alive now hearing prayers, judging nations, and comforting the afflicted. Court is in session. He is Christ, the power of God.

But, our Lord did not use His power to escape the agony of the cross or the terrors of death that we might have power to become “sons of God” (John 1:12-13).

[Moreover, consider how Christ is the power of justice, of truth, of mercy, of grace, of wisdom, of miracles, of political confrontation in his ministry. He is the greatest miracle-worker, the greatest teacher, the greatest communicator, the greatest authority on God, Torah, and the Tanack that ever lived.]

Need power?

Christ can turn a keg of beer into groceries; a sinner into a saint; bring good out of evil; remove mountains; restore the years which the locust have eaten, and make the weak strong (Hebrews 11:34). Know Him, believe Him, trust Him! He is Christ the power of God.

[1] The term “begotten” (monogenh.j) is better translated “one of a kind” or “unique” rather than “born in time.”

[1] The term “begotten” (monogenes) is better translated “one of a kind” or “unique” rather than “born in time.”

Warning Against a Carnal Mind

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

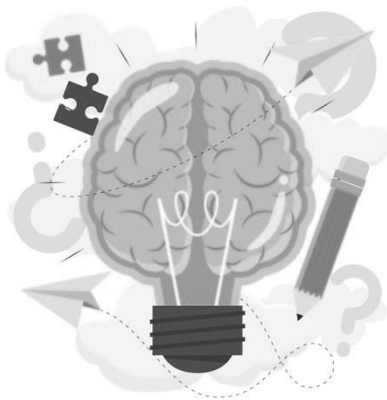


Figure 1: Courtesy of Freepik

Q: Do Christians have a carnal nature?

The “brethren” are the born-again Christians at Corinth, but they had a problem that prevented their growth in Christ.

“Ye are yet carnal” refers to thinking processes of the Corinthians and not their nature. The Corinthians did not have two natures, a white dog and a black dog living inside them. All were regenerated; and, all had the Holy Spirit.

But, their thinking was inundated with Corinthian values; that is, they were so indoctrinated by Corinthian customs and conventions they were not able to respond correctly to the pure gospel presented to them by the apostles. Paul had to “dumb down” his message and speak to them as “babes in Christ.”

While other churches had a manliness about them, the Corinthian community had a childishness about them that prevented growth; i.e. they lacked the mental maturity to grasp the greatness of Christ and His work on the cross for them. Consequently, Paul fed them with the milk and not the meat of the gospel. Their envy, strife, and division prevented them from seeking first the kingdom of God.

Likewise, many American churches are like the Corinthians -- as shallow as a puddle on the sidewalk. Many want a gospel of success and not a gospel that teaches them how to suffer well. Captured by a desire for wealth and health, they are unable to take up their cross to follow Christ. They would rather have money than the Master; fame rather than the reproach of Christ; comfort rather

than hardship; things rather than a ministry of self-sacrifice; earthly treasures rather than eternal reward.

1 Corinthians 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

The Kingdom of God Consists of Power

1 Corinthians 4:20



Q: Is it not true, that power is found in seeking the kingdom of God and not in seeking money?

People are in search of power.

Perhaps, you are seeking power.

If so, what kind of power are you seeking; and, if you had power, what would you do with it?

In our text, the apostle contrasts "talk" (logos) with "power" (dunamis).

The Corinthian church seems to be filled with chatterboxes that have an opinion on everything -- including the Apostle's ministry.

Paul instructs these sea-port Christians that being a "a-talk-a lot" is not the same as possessing Kingdom of God power.

The Kingdom of God is not a place, but a rule or law order among men. Those under the rule of God will have power . . . but for what?

Let's look at the "what" in the context of 1 Corinthians 4:20.

"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"

The power that Paul had was not the ability to be "Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. . . " but the power of love and meekness and morals.

Note the power that the Apostle boasted about in the previous verses: 4:9 et seq.:

4:9 - The power to endure the harsh judgment that he was no better than the slave-class in Roman society.

4:9 - The power to endure being on stage (spectacle = theater) and rigorously inspected and criticized for all he said and did.

4:10 - The power to endure being criticized as a fool -preacher for Christ, instead of a sage among men.

4:10 - Power to conduct his ministry under financial and social stress when others were increasing their financial strength and reputation.

4:10 - Power to conduct his ministry with integrity while being dishonored by those who had more status but less integrity.

4:11 - Power to conduct his ministry with honesty while suffering deprivations of life including but not limited to food, water, and a adequate shelter.

4:12 - Power to conduct a ministry without full financial support while having to do double duty: work and ministry.

4:12 - Power to bless others while being mistreated and cursed.

4:12 - Power to hold up while being viciously put down.

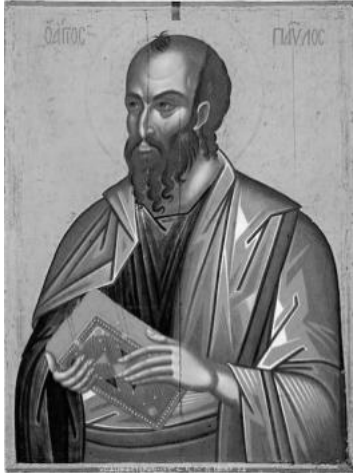
4:13 - Power to seek conciliation while being condemned.

Paul encouraged the Corinthians not only to be like Christ, but to follow his example of integrity even while being attacked and criticized. To fulfill this calling, the Corinthians needed to lay hold of kingdom power.

“A Christian should be an Alleluia from head to foot” - St. Augustine of Hippo.

Maintain Church Discipline

1 Corinthians 5



Q: Is it not true a pure church free of vice has more power and influence for good than a compromised church filled with miscreant members?

This chapter authorizes the Church of Jesus Christ to excommunicate unrepentant, law-breakers from their community. But, in order to do so, church leaders must grasp the principles of proper church discipline and have the courage to execute discipline in this permissive, tolerant society.

1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his

father's wife.

Apparently, Sosthenes reported a case in Corinth to the Apostle where a young man took his father's young widow to be his bride.

When Paul heard about the account, he was in a state of shock because such debauchery was not even rumored among the gentiles. Paul condemned this act of incest and placed this repulsive act in the category of sins known as "fornication" or *porneia*.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

Paul's shock continues. Not only was he stunned to hear of this act of incest, he was astonished at the Corinthians arrogance (puffed up) and casual response to this sin. Conduct opposed to fundamental morality called for grief, mourning, and discipline, and not over-indulgent love and tolerance.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

Because Paul was mature in the things of God, he was able to see this issue clearly. Therefore, he pronounced judgment on this man's wicked behavior and denounce it as sin.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul introduces the discipline that churches can follow when they have a member that violates God's law. When a church member is living in a sin mentioned in this chapter, initiate the following steps:

Step One: Identify the sinful behavior and label it correctly. The church is concerned with conduct, not thoughts.

Step Two: Confront the man directly and call him to repentance. If he does not repent, go to step three.

Step Three: At a meeting of the whole church, invoke the name of the Lord, and formally and officially hand the sinner over to Satan in the name of the Lord for the destruction of the flesh.

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The word "deliver" (parodidomai) means "to give or deliver over" a prisoner into the custody of another.

To "deliver one . . . unto Satan" is a formal prayer and declaration by the church that the church is removing their protective prayers and benefits of fellowships from the transgressor.

The term "destruction" of the flesh refers to Satan's power to punish and even kill the erring brother.

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

The "glorying" or boasting of the Corinthians about their love, tolerance of evil, and patience degenerated into a serious sin of the church.

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

The metaphor "leaven" is employed to communicate the infectiousness of sin. Holiness is not contagious, but sin contaminates everyone who tolerates it. Discipline is necessary so the whole church can be healthy and unleavened.

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul presents this young church with "a very deep and penetrating view of what the Christian life is, how it is sustained, and what it demands" (MacLaren).

"the feast" refers to the Lord's Supper (a.k.a. communion, Eucharist, breaking of bread) which the Lord instituted the night before He was betrayed to replace

the Passover Meal. The Passover was merely a shadow of the cross where His body was broken and His blood was shed for our sins.

It is a feast because the symbols of the bread and the wine invoke reflection of God's breathtaking banquet at the table of salvation provided by the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Exodus 12: Luke 22:7-38).

"let us keep the feast" (a present, active, volitive subjunctive): The Apostle exhorts the Corinthians to join the whole Christian community world-wide to remember Christ and His accomplishments at Calvary, but to do so without leaven – a metaphor for sin.

Most likely Paul was thinking of the Hebrew tradition of women performing spring house cleaning while carefully going through the cupboards removing every fragment of leaven before the Passover Meal - a marvelous shadow-picture of sanctification in the Christian life -- a walk which requires all believers to be holy and to eliminate traces of leaven in their own heart and mind.

The "old Leaven" is a symbol of the sinner's old life and habits of sin. Believers, in their walk with God, are required to forsake all vestiges of the Adamic life in order to please Him.

"neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness." The term "malice" refers to *mens rea* or evil intentions -- the secret motivations of the mind and heart. Wickedness refers to the conduct of habitual practicing sin during this pilgrimage on earth.

Positively, believers are ordered to keep the feast with "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth;" that is, to replace the leaven of malice and wickedness with sincerity and truth.

Because the shadows of the Passover were fulfilled in the Christ-event, God has granted to Christians the authority to make all of life a festival - a gala whereby believers put off the old man and put on the new man; to remove the grave clothes of selfishness and to wear the regalia of righteousness that feature the beauty of holiness -- the golden attributes of love. Believers don't have to be dirty. They can live clean every day.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

Apparently, Paul wrote a previous letter to the Corinthians which has not been preserved. One of the major purposes of that letter was to communicate to the church to separate themselves from sin and to avoid companions with defiling habits.

The word "company" (*sunanamignusthai*) has to do with close friendship and association. Obviously, Paul is NOT ordering the Christians to withdraw from

all sinners or they "must needs go out of the world." Rather, he orders the saints to remain an "arm's length" from sinners practicing the sins in verse 10; and, to disassociate from so-called "brethren" trapped in one of these behaviors.

Step Five: Some holy man / pastor / elder in the church needs to admonish the flock to disassociate and separate themselves (in a social sense) from unrepentant people engaged in any of the sinful behaviors described in this chapter.

Step Six: Excommunicate the erring member from the church and the privileges of church membership. This is done in love for the good of the "black sheep" in order to bring him to repentance; and, for the good of the church that other members might not be infected by the same sins. This final step is a public step that must be executed in a way that honors Christ and protects the privacy rights of the transgressor; that is, make your words brief, accurate, and honorable.

Consider developing church discipline policies before they have to be executed, and then consign the duties of church discipline to a mature, ruling elder who knows how to discipline members for the glory of God with a view of protecting privacy rights of the transgressor.

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

The apostle limits his order in his previous statement (letter). Disassociation from transgressors in the world is not totally possible, but it is possible to disconnect socially from transgressing Christian brothers.

Paul is NOT calling the Christians at Corinth to separate from weak brethren, struggling brethren, imperfect brethren, erring brethren, or people with peccadillos, but from unrepentant brethren engaged in any of the following mortal-sins:

Fornication (pornos) includes any forbidden sexual act: casual sex with the opposite sex, prostitution, rape, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, transvestitism, crossdressing, lewdness, and possibly porn addiction. (Note: pornography is an in-your-face public nuisance, but a self-confessed porn enthusiast may need prayer and accountability more than he / she needs church discipline).

Covetousness (pleonektais = over reachers) is not referring to "desires" or "thoughts" but to specific conduct: stealing, extortion, burglary, larceny, robbery, vandalism, fraud, pickpocketing, filching, pilfering, and any act that deprives another of his property or the value of his property.

Extortion (harpax) is the practice of obtaining something, especially money, through force or threats: blackmail, intimidation, coercion, duress, bullying, and generally menacing a victim.

(Warning: extortioners and the covetous people dress nicely and often engage in the practice of slander to deflect people's attention away from themselves to another.)

Idolatry (idololatrais) includes taking pay for obscene acts, engaging in commercial schemes, fraud, practicing rites associated with the cults, practicing pop psychology, worshipping the Zodiac or fake science, addiction to pornography, hoarding as a pack rat, obtaining tattoos, addiction to drugs or alcohol, obsession with vanity, politics, health, or other cultural fads.

Again, Paul's concern is not with peccadillos, bad manners, or foibles but with transgressions of God's law by adult members of the church. Disobedience by children are in the jurisdiction of the family and should be handled by the family where reason and righteousness prevails.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

Paul repeats himself. He is not ordering people to disassociate from all transgressors, but ONLY from professing believers who habitually violate God's law.

Railing (loidoros) includes gossip, blasphemy, slander, defamation, libel, smears, aspersions, calumny, muckraking and any other malicious conduct that murders the reputation of a man.

Note: Telling the truth about another when the truth needs to be told, howbeit unflattering is not railing. There is an appropriate place and time to tell the ugly truth about a transgressor. But, reckless, casual, informal muckraking is not acceptable.

Drunkard (methusos) includes any addiction to alcohol, food, drugs, soft drinks, food, or other substances that control the man causing him to be a danger to himself and others.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

The "I" is Paul and those who are likewise committed to Christ. Since the church ONLY has in personam jurisdiction over church members and subject-matter jurisdiction over the conduct-actions of its members, Paul limits the discipline of excommunication and disassociation to those "members" of a

church fellowship. This social-judicial authority does not extend past the church doors into the community.

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Paul adopts the formalities of a judge and pronounces the sentence to have these habitual sinners expelled from the church. The adverb "without" (exo) refers to members of society that are outside the jurisdiction of the ecclesia.

As to the sins of those without, it is God's job to deal with them as He's sees fit; that is, it is none of the church's business what they do or don't do. But sinning members within the fellowship of the local body are within the jurisdiction of church law, and those "wicked persons" must be "put away" (exairo) and driven out of the assembly.

Therefore, let us keep the feast with unleaven bread.

Church Courts

1 Corinthians 6



Q: Is it not true that carnal judges are incapable of solving church disputes?

When sheep snort and butt heads, there has to be an effective and ethical way to resolve substantial differences.

The Apostle, therefore, introduces the Corinthians to their authority as a church of Jesus Christ to set up a church court, to bind disputants to a contract, and to follow the rules of Biblical equity in

order to bring resolution to warring factions.

The Background

The church at Corinth was born in a political storm. Paul, ejected from the Roman Synagogue Corporation, established a free church at the house of Justus.

Later, the *corporati*, led by Sosthenes, arrested Paul, hauled him into a Roman Maritime Court overseen by Gallio, a Roman appointed governor. Gallio, recognizing bad faith among the Jews and the frivolous charge against Paul, dismissed the case with prejudice.

When Sosthenes exhibited contempt for the court, Gallio ordered his Greek bailiffs to escort the contumacious Jew(s) out of his chambers. Taking leave of the court, the Greek bailiffs punished Sosthenes with a severe beating. The good news is that Sosthenes repented, believed, and was reconciled to the Apostle (Acts 18:1-18; 1 Corinthians 1:1).

One of the issues at Corinth was, "How do squabbling Christians in a baby church solve disputes?" The converted Jews in the church and many Greeks thought the better part of wisdom was to take their discord to one of the Roman admiralty tribunals. This being the traditional, acceptable custom of solving conflicts, Paul had to introduce the Corinthians to their authority as an *ecclesia* under Christ to set up a church court to resolve issues between head-butting brethren.

The Apostle's First Rebuke

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

Paul is asking, "What kind of insanity has come over the sheep that the sheep want the wolves to decide what's best for the flock?" What kind of deception has come over righteous men to think they can find justice before the unrighteous; i.e., justice before a carnal, fleshly, duplicitous, power-seeker who is accustomed to taking bribes? Aren't the "saints" (holy ones) capable of measuring disputations against the standard of God's just law?

The word "dare" (tolma) means "to act so boldly."

The term "matter" (pragma) refers to deeds and transaction in commerce. We get the word "pragmatic" from the term "pragma." "Matters" does not include differences about ideas, theology, or politics. Courts are not set up to settle philosophical differences or to resolve political questions. Courts are useful when the magisterium have to discern the right and wrong of behavior and matters involving contract violations.

The court, however, has no authority to judge criminal matters. Crime is under the jurisdiction of the State.

Paul's searching question revealed a chasm between Christian law and Roman law. Roman judges were not fit to adjudicate affairs involving morals, true righteousness, and equity.

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

The word "judge" (krino) means "to esteem, divide, chose, pick, or approve" that is, judges approve or disapprove of actions based on a given-set of standards.

"To judge the world" refers the promise Christ gave to His personal followers (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30).

"smallest matters" refers to small, clear, manageable. trivial concerns at law. Here, Paul exudes with confidence that believers are capable of settling disputes among citizens in the kingdom on earth.

Because God is the One and Only Lawgiver (James 4:12), and saints are saved in order to practice the law (Romans 8:4). Paul infers "saints" (hagion) are being equipped for the task of judging the world. Since all believers are "lawyers in training," are not these apprentices of law capable of judging minor disputes between head-butting sheep?

Paul asks a searching question: "Are you Corinthians unworthy (anaxios) or unfit to sit on the bench?" Some saints are equipped to judge controversial matters. Other are not qualified to rule on matters of controversy. Baby Christians are not good choices to resolve disputes. Antinomians need not

apply to be a judge in church disputes for they do not recognize God's law as the standard of Christian conduct.

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Again, Paul reveals his confidence that the Corinthian were capable of solving their problems in house. Why Paul speaks of angels is a matter of controversy. Some think the saints will judge the behavior of fallen angels.

Possibly, Paul is injecting vigor and moral determination into the Corinthians by informing them that they are saved, moral-creatures being conformed to the image of God capable of judging angelic beings.

If Christians born of the Spirit are being conformed to the image of Christ, don't they have the moral capacity to judge angels and matters in another dimension? Aren't they equipped to judge right and wrong here on earth now?

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

"Ye have" means to possess.

"judgments of things pertaining to this life" refers to the jurisdiction of the saints -- the official authority given to them "to take dominion" of controversies on earth. This being so, the "least esteemed" in the church are said to be capable of rendering fair decisions. Paul's poise and fearlessness at appointing the shy and quiet members of the church to be judges is nothing short of astounding. He is not advising the saints at Corinth to make "pastors" judges, but common, willing members of the congregation.

Paul offers a solution: why not set up a church court?

Surely, there is a friend, or deacon, or pastor than can discern God's will on this matter.

The Apostle's Second Rebuke

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

Apparently, the Corinthians didn't share Paul's confidence about the ability of saints to judge earthly matters.

The "shame" in this congregation was that the Corinthians boasted about having superior gifts and being better than one another, yet, they could not identify one member in the church that had the moral character and the ethical capacity to perform the functions of a judge.

Apparently, when matters hit a road block, Christian men dragged their disputes before Roman tribunals composed of atheists and carnal men who served a different god and a different system of law.

When God's white sheep go before wolf judges wearing black robes they need to be rebuked. And, this is what the apostle is doing here.

The Apostle's Third Rebuke and Initial Remedy

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

The noun "fault" (hettma) refers to a flaw, a diminution, or a failure. Paul is saying the very fact you Corinthians have disputes reveals your failures as Christian men to live righteously and graciously. On top of that you are "dumb" enough to take sheep controversies to wolves for settlement.

The word "wrong" refers to some awareness of minor-injustice short of a crime - - something of no real consequence.

The word "defrauded" refers to matters of money and some sort of minor commercial loss . . . an unforeseen expense or feeling of deprivation. Were not the Corinthians acting like children demanding perfection to the penny?

Since going to a secular court to solve market place differences among Christian business partners is the spiritual tragedy of this community. Paul suggests a simple solution: Why not just absorb the loss and spare the church from smears and slurs from the secular community?

Again, we are not talking about criminal intent or a "guilty mind" (*mens rea*). Paul is addressing some type of inadvertent bereavement by one party in an action regarding the other party. Crimes (serious injuries to one's person or property) and the public extension of *mens rea* must be taken to secular courts that are trained to handle crimes.

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

The apostle continues his third rebuke: It is wrong to take these trivial commercial matters to a Roman Tribunal.

The phrase "do wrong" (*adikeo*) refers to a sober breach of God's laws. Taking "disputes" among Christians to secular magistrates is a serious violation of the Christian faith -- a sin with profound consequences.

The term "defraud" refers to a willful, stubborn refusal to settle a dispute in favor of the injured party. "Why not absorb the loss and save the Lord's name?" asks the Apostle (6:7).

Psalm 37:21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the

righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

Pragmatics

When it comes to disputes among brethren, consider the following remedies:

- ✓ Address the issue privately and absorb minor loses.
- ✓ For the parties to sit down and to calmly discuss the issue with the intent of coming to a reasonable remedy satisfactory to both parties.
- ✓ Go to a competent friend in the church and ask them to moderate the dispute.
- ✓ Go to a deacon or elder in the church and ask them to moderate the dispute.
- ✓ For serious matters of significant consequences, ask the Pastor or board of the church to set up an voluntary ecclesiastical court made up of at least three willing judges where the voluntary litigants must sign a binding contract to abide by the decision of the ecclesiastical court.
- ✓ For bigger churches, setting up an ecclesiastical court with simple and fair laws, procedures, contracts, rules of the court, and standards of etiquette for litigants may be necessary to stay within these apostolic guidelines.

The Wretchedness of Deception

1 Corinthians 6:8-11



Figure 2: Courtesy of Freepik

Q: Is it not true members in the church have been propagandized and brain washed by the secular world?

This is a passage about deception.

The wretchedness of deception is that the deceived does not know he is deceived.

Modern man thinks God is so loving that He would never send anyone to hell. But, those holding these views are greatly deceived.

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

Paul does not mix words. He rebukes the Corinthians on two fronts: (1) for doing wrong and for (2) defrauding their brethren by suing one another in a secular court before corrupt, worldly judges.

The word "wrong" in Greek is *adikéō* means "unrighteousness" – a doing *wrong (committing injustice)*; that is to inflict undeserved hurt upon a brother by trespassing against *God's law-order*. Wrong violates the universal common law: *Do your neighbor no harm*.

The word "defraud" comes from the Greek word *aposteréō* which means "to cheat or deprive a man of his property," the most fundamental right of a man. The Corinthians were cheating their brethren by going before a cheat judge to decide a case based on Mediterranean views of right and wrong.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

Paul's use of the verb "know" infers that he expected all Corinthians to believe the "unrighteous" shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

The "unrighteous" refers to judges in Corinth; that is, because these judges did not know God's law and were not Christian men, they frequently violated the rights of men with their corrupt judicial decisions.

If judges do not have God's law as their plumb line, how can they dispense justice? If they do not have jurisdiction in the kingdom of God, how can they have subject matter jurisdiction or in personam jurisdiction to decide disputes between kingdom citizens?

Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

"Be not deceived" means that some in Corinth were deceived and did not know it. Paul is emphatic. He lists the kinds of people that WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD . . . the kinds of people that included judges in Corinth.

"fornicators" comes from the Greek word "pornoï" which refers to those people who have intercourse with the opposite sex outside of marriage. **It is a deadly sin** for two unmarried consenting adults to engage in sexual intercourse.

"idolaters" refers to people who worship false gods. All religions are not the same nor are there many ways to God. There is only one God and one way to God, and that is through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Moreover, there is only One Lawgiver and one law (James 4:12).

"adulterers" refers to people who have voluntary sexual intercourse with someone other than that person's lawful spouse.

"effeminate" comes from the Greek word "malakoi" which means "soft," "delicate," or "effeminate." In our day, it would refer to psychologically damaged hairless males, girly boys, or transvestites (trannies) . . . those biological males that enter the world of fantasy to look, dress, and act like women -- the opposite of real men.

"abusers of themselves with mankind" is a spongy King James term for homosexuals (arsenokoitai) or Sodomites -- those lusty males engaging in abominable same-gender sexual acts; this term includes lesbians or women with women sexual acts; that is, neither Sodomites nor lesbians will enter the kingdom of God.

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul continues his list of those who cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Thieves: The Greek word for "thieves" is *kleptai*. We get the term *kleptomaniac* from this word. It refers to common thieves, pickpockets, shoplifters, burglars, and con-artists. It would also include professional thieves working for the government.

"**covetous**" comes from the Greek word *pleonektés*, and it refers to those with an inordinate desire to have more; and, to the avarice person who is willing to trample on the rights of others in order to possess a thing. It can refer to lusty people plotting to seduce someone or to people with an insatiable appetite to possess what is not theirs to take.

"**drunkards**" refers to those who are habitually drunk (or on drugs) and to binge drinkers that "fall off the wagon" every few months. On the street, terms like "hammered," "juiced up," "embalmed" or "skunked" identifies alcoholics.

"**revilers**" (loidoroi) refers to mouthy, ranting people who slander and abuse fellow man. Call it criticism, defamation, or libel, these men and women sever reputations to shreds with their razor-like tongues.

"**extortioners**" (harpages) are swindlers that employ deceit to abstract information, things, or money from innocent people. Extortion is the illegal use of one's official position or powers to obtain property, funds, or patronage; or, the improper use of psychological pressure to obtain something of value; or, the charging of excessive fees in order to increase profits.

Anyone who thinks God loves everybody and that everyone is going to heaven is seriously deceived. **The "unrighteous" will not enter the kingdom of God!**

The verb "shall not enter" is a future tense implying that those engaged in these despicable acts still have time to repent and believe the gospel.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

The good news is that the gospel came to Corinth with its miracle-working power to save liars and thieves.

"And such were some of you" is a testimony to the power of the gospel that washes away men's sins, justifies men by faith, and empowers them to be sanctified (made holy) by the power of God's Spirit.

The term "washed" refers to having one's sins washed away and being delivered from the power of sin by faith in the shed blood of Christ.

The term "justified" means "to be declared righteous and treated as such." It involves a change in status before God . . . from being condemned to being declared right with God.

The term "sanctified" refers to the process of being made holy throughout life. One is not sanctified so he can be justified; He is justified so he can be sanctified. One is justified by faith, and made holy by obedience to God's law. One is not justified by keeping the law, but the justified begin keeping the law.

The text says, "Don't be deceived." *The wretched thing about deception is that the deceived do not know they are deceived.* But, by walking in the light of God's Word, one can come out of darkness.

The Deadly Sin of Fornication

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Q: Is it not true that the sin of fornication has engulfed young people in America because of moral apostasy of American churches?



Figure 3: Courtesy of Freepik

Catholics distinguish between mortal (grave) sins and venial (pardonable) sins.

In Catholic sophia, a "mortal" sin is an act that seriously threatens one's relationship to God; whereas, a venial sin is something that is so commonly human it is more easily forgivable.

If there is an argument for distinguishing between mortal sins and venial sins, this passage supports the Catholic argument.

In 1 Corinthians 6:18, the apostle distinguishes between the deadly sin of fornication and other sins common to man:

18 "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

Ellicott references the seriousness and solemnness of the sin of fornication in the litany, "From fornication, and all other deadly sin, good Lord, deliver us."

Let's take a serious look at this passage and see if we can understand the Apostle's argument on the deadly sin of fornication.

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Free men that are not bound by the conscience of other men.

God's law is absolute. Where He has spoken, men are obligated to obey. Where there is no law, men are generally free to do what duty demands. But, just because people are free to do a thing does not mean it is prudent or expedient to do so. Freedom has limitations. There is no such thing as absolute freedom. Freedom is the fruit of responsible living. Paul chose not to engage in certain lawful activities because it might hinder his service to Christ. "Others may, I cannot."

There is all the difference in the world between eating things sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8:4) (a matter of expediency), and the committing fornication (a deadly sin).

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

Paul is setting up a contrast between matters of necessity like eating certain foods, and fleshly indulgences -- absolute prohibitions like fornication.

One's choice of foods is permissible, fornication is inadmissible. The former is consensual; the latter is banned. Real law is an expression of the will of a supreme Sovereign. It does not involve one's consent. Law is duty! No man is bound by statutory decrees, but all men are bound by prohibitions in the common law like "do not commit adultery . . . and do not steal."

Obligations arise out of contracts (consensual parties) or out of operation of law; i.e., mandatory obligations to a Sovereign designed to prevent injury to a person or to property.

Fornication is not a right; it is sin that injures both parties.

The word "fornication" comes from the word "porneia," illicit sexual acts other than marriage. The word "pornography" comes from "porneia" which refers to the "writings of pimps and whores."

Lawful matters are to be decided upon the highest principles of pragmatism and expediency; but, fornication is an unlawful act, and therefore the question of its pragmatism and expediency does not surface in this pilgrim journey on earth.

Paul explains the purpose of the body by negating any thought that the body is for sexual pleasure with consenting adults.

The body is not like can of coke where you consume the beverage and throw the can away.

The purpose of the body is to house the Spirit of God . . . to be His temple . . . to be His "home base" from which He accomplishes His holy purpose on earth.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

The plural pronoun "us" encompasses spirit, soul, and bodies of righteous men. God saves the whole man and not just his soul.

In verse 19, the body is identified as "the temple of the Holy Spirit." Since this is so, we dare not scribble *porneia-graffitii* on the holy temple using stalk-leaves from the Poisonous Tree.

God made the stomach for food and food for the stomach. Both will be destroyed by death.

But, God's intends is to save the whole man including his outer and inner man. For the "body" is equivalent to the "us" in this passage.

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

"Know ye not" contains a slight rebuke considering there were Corinthians who were ignorant of the fact their bodies are joined to Christ.

Though there is no right for using the body to commit fornication, Paul confronts the insane reasoning that it is possible to take the member-body away from Christ and make it a member-body of a prostitute through an act of fornication.

The double act of "taking the body away" from Christ and joining God's temple with a harlot is not plausible or credible.

The exclamation-prohibition, "God forbid!" (me genoito) is in the Optative Mood meaning, "it is impossible!!"

There is no way under heaven a man or woman can commit fornication and be a true Christian in fact. God forbid!

What a rebuke to the lax, indulgent, permissive professing Christians!

16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

We have here another reason to flee fornication. There is no such thing as casual sex. A sex act binds and unites. "Do not know" is an assertion that Paul's statement is true, correct, certain, and not misleading.

Conjugation means "oneness" with a whore – a reprehensible thought for the God-seeker! There is NO SUCH THING as a "Christian" fornicator any more than there is such a thing as a "Christian" prostitute (6:9).

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

By being "joined unto the Lord" in one spirit does NOT MEAN we are married to Christ in a spiritual sense as some nuns propose.

The union here is a spiritual one. Our union with Christ is intimate but mystical. We are united in faith, in ambition, and in purpose but not "married" to Him. Paul intensifies the argument against any degradation of the body by an act of fornication.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

There are few things more heretical than the fallacy that Christians are at liberty to choose their own law order.

Is there anything clearer than God's solemn command: "flee fornication?"

Immediate flight is the ONLY remedy for avoiding this deadly sin (See Joseph in Genesis 39).

What egregious sin fornication must be!

"without the body" means some sins profane the outer court of the temple without touching the holy place within the heart. Fornication defiles the inner sanctuary; that is, fornication injures the core of one's soul . . . his naos . . . his holy of holies . . . the very covenant on which his relationship to God is supposed to be founded.

"sinneth against his own body": The "body" in this passage is enlarged to include the whole man: spirit, soul, and body. Paul claims the body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit with a "naos" (inner sacred altar) that includes a meeting place where God meets with man! When one commits fornication, he commits a deadly sin that injures the whole man.

Other sins may only profane the outer courts of the temple; the sin of fornication defiles the very holy of holies within God's body-temple.

Thus, fornication is different from common sins in that it damages the whole man, poisons faith, and sullies the conscience.

Ellicott observed, fornication "hardens a' within, and petrifies the feelings."

It is the man that sins, not the flesh; fornication corrupts the whole man, not just the human body.

Matthew 15:15-20 But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us." 16 And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled. 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

Fornication is a mortal, deadly sin. No one can commit this sin without thunder erupting from Mount Sinai because of his trespass against the King's law-order.

Thus, we have the solemn order, "Flee fornication." This is not an option . . . or choice. It is command.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

"Do you not know" is a rebuke of ignorance.

Our bodies do not belong to government, governors, legislators, to the whims of social engineers, or the desires of a seductress.

We are owned by Another; that is, Christ has all rights over our bodies.

While in a political sense, we are sovereigns over our body; in a spiritual and legal sense, our bodies are not our own; they belong to our Lord and Savior.

That is, we act as his stewards over our bodies. We care for our bodies as ones who must give account on how one pilots his own vessel.

Paul gives two reasons we do not have absolute rights over our own bodies: (1) our bodies are inhabited by the Holy Spirit; and (2) we have been bought and purchased by the blood of Christ.

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Christians have been bought and are therefore owned by Another. Paul emphasizes you are not your own; i.e., you do not have absolute rights over your body! Your body is governed by God's rules!

The price of this purchase is the precious "blood of Christ," the currency of the spirit world (1 Peter 1:18-20).

Because we are not our own, we have a duty to glorify God in our whole being all the time.

Fornication, tattooing our body, and masking our face shames the Savior.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Application: During 2020 and 2021, Governors ordered residents of the State to wear masks. Many Christians errantly thinking they are government property complied.

What are Christians supposed to do? Are they to cover the temple of God? What does the Bible say?

Answer: Expedience may require one to wear a mask if he is in a dust storm or works in a factory with flying fragments of steel.

Christianity is the only religion in the world that doesn't use masks in a worship service. Christians are prohibited from doing so because men are made in the image of God. Not only is there no command to wear a mask, in many places masks are strictly forbidden. Lepers covered their faces. Condemned criminals like Haman (Esther) were forced by the government to wear a hood-mask.

Christian men are commanded to not wear masks or head gear in a worship service. Christian women, however, are ordered to wear a veil in church; and, OT women often wore a veil over their face in public as a symbol of modesty (SS 5:7). Christian women wear veils over their head as a symbolic notice that the congregation is to respect God's law-order (1 Corinthians 11:1-16).

Application 2: What about so called "vaccines" which are not vaccines? What does the Bible say? Didn't God create man in his own image? By what authority does a Christian have to accept the offer to inject dangerous, experimental, mRNA, DNA altering drugs into your body? Isn't this a form of suicide?

Answer:

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Proverbs 1:10).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Marriage and Divorce

1 Corinthians 7



Figure 4: Courtesy of Unsplash

Q: Is it not true that marriage is an institution of God and not government?

1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Apparently, the Corinthians lived in an indulgent, permissive society where the rule of law was greatly diminished. Consequently, many marriages were troubled by conflict. Some even left their spouse to pursue selfish ambitions.

Paul lays down the rules of marriage.

1. Marriage is a contract that contains marital privileges of a conjugal relationship. Those benefits are not to be denied in order to manipulate or punish one's spouse (7:1).
2. Marriage is a contract where each party gives up rights over their own body; where one's spouse has rights to enjoy a regular conjugal relationship (7:2).
3. Married couples are not permitted to "defraud" one another; that is to rob, steal, or nullify conjugal rights.
4. That wives or husbands would use intimacy as a tool to reward or punish their partner is despicable, detestable, and contemptible – something repulsive in Christian marriages.

5. Paul continues to give instruction to widows, single people, and disgruntled marriage partners. We'll look at the disgruntled spouse.
6. Marriage involves a man and a woman, not a man and a man or a woman and a woman. Marriage is not two people living under the same roof.
7. Marriage is a contract (a covenant) between a mature man and a mature woman to live together as man and wife under God's laws of integrity and love.
8. But, what if the believing spouse is suddenly spurned by their unbelieving partner?

Paul lays down the rule for divorce

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

Marriage is a benefit for the man and the woman. Even an unbeliever receives spiritual benefits when they are married to an unbeliever. Having an unbelieving spouse is **not** a legitimate cause for divorce.

Marriage is designed to be permanent union – “until death do ye part.”

A Biblical marriage is a three way contract (covenant) between a man and a woman under God's laws: i.e. God, man, woman.

A civil union is a three way contract between a man and a woman and the state or between any two artificial persons and the state.

Under God's law marriage is til “death do you part.” But, there are two exceptions: (1) adultery (Matthew 19), and (2) abandonment (1 Corinthians 7).

If the sexual union binds the couple together, the adulterous act breaches and nullifies the contract. The innocent partner is free to leave and remarry another.

If a man and woman are at war in the marriage there is a higher principle than the marriage union and that is the rule of “peace.” Peace, not war, must govern a Biblical marriage.

If a marriage goes awry and becomes a battlefield, something must be done to find peace. If one partner becomes so unhappy that divorce is the only option, let them depart.

The Biblical word for “divorce” is the word “depart” (chorizo). This is not a convenient “no fault” divorce, but a form of abandonment . . . a cause for divorce that results in peace and leaves the innocent party free to remarry.

Note: Christians are called to live in the real world of differences, conflict, and pain and not in Utopia near Fantasy Island.

Paul lays down the rule of freedom.

1 Corinthians 7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

Bond or freeman, circumcised or uncircumcised, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, Greek or Roman should live under God's rules.

Christians are not their own. They have been bought with the price of blood; and, therefore, have a duty to live under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and His law.

Christians are not permitted to live like slaves to government, municipal law, or subjects of some earthly king. They are under the "common law" and not the law of men, of legislatures, of congress, and of enacted statutes.

Where possible, live like a freeman and not a serf.

Paul's assertion was weaved into the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . . "

And, this principle is supported by Supreme Court Rulings:

"The individual may stand upon his constitutional rights as a citizen. He is entitled to carry on his private business in his own way. His power to contract is unlimited. He owes no duty to the state or to his neighbors to divulge his business, or to open his doors to an investigation, so far as it may tend to criminate him. He owes no such duty to the state, since he receives nothing therefrom, beyond the protection of his life and property. His rights are such as existed by the law of the land long antecedent to the organization of the state, and can only be taken from him by due process of law, and in accordance with the Constitution. Among his rights are a refusal to incriminate himself, and the immunity of himself and his property from arrest or seizure except under a warrant of the law. He owes nothing to the public so long as he does not trespass upon their rights" [Hale v. Henkel, 201 U.S. 43 (1906)].

Introduction to 1 Corinthians 11

1 Corinthians 11

Q: Is it not true that the commands in this chapter should be obeyed?

There are three crowning subjects covered in 1 Corinthians 11:

- Headship (11:1-3)
- Head Coverings (11:4-16)
- Head Remembering (11:17-34)

There are three heads mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:

- Christ is the head over every man.
- The husband is the head of the wife.
- God is the head over the Son.

Three ordinances are mentioned in 1 Corinthians:

- Baptism (chapter one)
- Head Coverings (chapter 11)
- The Lord's Supper (chapter 11)

There are three symbols in the passage and none of them are "cultural."

- Head Covering
- Bread
- Wine

The purpose of this chapter is "to set in order" the church (11:16; 34) where there are three expectations: men are to remove their headwear in church, women are to wear a Head Covering, and the church is to remember the Lord with integrity.

Three words are used in this chapter pointing to the necessity of observing these ordinances.

- Judged (11:31)
- Chastened (11:32)
- Condemned (11:32)

Three Holy Symbols

1 Corinthians 11

Q: Is it not true that 1 Corinthians 11 is the authority for communion and the ordinances of the church?

Because of neglect of the Word of God and because of misinformation about the Eucharist, let's revisit 1 Corinthians 10 and 11. We will look at the three essential symbols of Christianity found in these chapters:

The Women's Head Covering



Figure 5: Courtesy of Freepik

11:5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

11:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

11:10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

11:16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

This passage is about headship - The authority of Christ over the man; the authority of the man-husband over the woman; and the authority of God over Christ. Further, this passage covers three subjects: headship, Head Coverings, and head remembering.

The uncovered head of the man is a symbol that man is marvelously-made in the image of God and that Christ is the head of every man.

The Head Covering on the woman is a proclamation that God has a law-order; that she is under the authority over her husband (or father); that those gathered together in this place are here to focus on the glories of Christ and not the glory of man.

This passage is in the negative because it is the apostles' rebuke to women who come to church without a Head Covering, and a rebuke to men who are ignorant of God's law-order and who have not instructed their wives about humility, authority, and how to reverence God in a church service.

The Bread

11:23-24 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

The bread is a holy symbol of the body of Christ broken and bruised for us at Calvary; a precious icon of his vicarious suffering He endured to save men -- an icon which is sanctified (set apart) for religious services venerating the gospel of our Lord.

10:16 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

The one loaf and our participation in taking a part of that bread is a proclamation that we being many, are one -- that we individually have put our trust in Christ . . . and, that we share together in the benefits of our Lord's redemptive work at the cross; that believers from different races, cultures, and backgrounds belong to His fold.

The Cup of Blessing



Figure 6: Courtesy of Freepik

11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

The cup is a symbol of Christ's blood; the currency of the spirit-world; the price of redemption; the consideration paid in a new contract (testament) between God and man; the only currency accepted in

Heaven; that is, our participation in the cup is a faith-statement that we claim the efficacy of the blood as the only means for forgiveness; for the discharge of our debt to God; for our eternal salvation.

11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

"shew:" Christian participation in the bread and wine is a proclamation that the Lord's death is redemptive act that saves sinners from their sins when they believe.

10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

The "cup of blessing" (eulogia) is called a blessing because of what the wine represents – the wine represents the blood of Christ shed for our sins at Calvary (1 Peter 1:18-20). The blessing is that He shed his blood to redeem us from the penalty and power of sin. Because wine is red, it is a fitting symbol of the blood of Christ.

"We bless" means we set apart the cup (and the bread) for sacred use. We bless this "cup of blessing" because of what it signifies at Christian worship services. We "bless" means that we make prayers, sing praises, and rehearse glorious liturgy while performing the duties associated with the holy sacrament.

"Both Luke and Paul, in their account of the institution, express this part of the action by εὐχαριστήσας, having given thanks. And hence the service itself hath long borne the name of the eucharist, or thanksgiving, by way of eminence" (Benson)

Taking the cup is sometimes called the "Eucharist." The term "Eucharist" means "giving thanks." It is appropriate to call this "sacred meal" the "Eucharist" because Christians are thankful for what it represents . . . But in so doing we must separate it from "Roman Catholic Theology" which teaches more than the Scripture permits -- that the wine and bread are mystically transformed into the actual body and blood of the Lord. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the "Eucharist" empowers "priests," but this misinformation corrupts the truth about salvation to the injury of many.

The "cup of blessing" is not the literal blood of Christ! It is the "communion of the blood of Christ;" that is, it represent the believers communion (koinonia) with the Lord.

Drinking the "cup of blessing" is a personal statement that the worshiper is a participant in the benefits of the accomplishment of Christ at the cross; and, there is a holy, mystical, spiritual fellowship (communion) taking place between the living Christ and the worshiper when he participates in the "breaking of the bread."

This mystical blessing is not due to a magical quality of the bread or wine, but due to the remembrance of Christ (11:24-25) which the symbols invoke; that is, these symbols provoke sweet reflections about the Savior which are always a blessing to the worshiper.

Let us remember that participating in all three of these symbols are essential for a healthy perspective about life and salvation.

Postscript:

There are two more symbols of Christianity in 1 Corinthians:

1. The Cross - a dogmatic symbol adopted by the church to distinguish the religion of Christianity from all the other religions of the world -- a symbol of the literal cross where Christ was crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:17 "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

2. Baptism: a sacrament ordained by Christ representing one's identification with Christ, his reception of the gifts of the gospel, and the believer's cleansing from sin.

1 Corinthians 1:15 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

The Ordinance of Head Coverings

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Q: Is it not a Biblical mandate that men should remove their headwear in church and that women should veil themselves in church?

Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

The Biblical Case for Head Coverings

Introduction



This is a subject for true Christians in search of the will of God on the subject of Head Coverings and God's law-order.

The Apostle Paul informed Timothy that the Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16) and this passage is no exception.

We believe in the principle of Sola Scriptura and, therefore, the Biblical practice of Head Coverings. Further, we confess Sola Gloria, and therefore, assert that that the instructions on this subject in 1 Corinthians 11 suitably glorifies Christ and humbles man.

The topic of 1 Corinthians 11 is headship [11:1-2], Head Covering [11:3-16], and head remembering [11:17ff].

Three heads are mentioned: the headship of God, the headship of Christ, and the headship of man.

Three symbols are discussed: the Head Covering—a symbol of man's authority, the bread—a symbol of the body of Christ, and the wine—a symbol of the shed blood of our Lord which purchases our redemption.

Before us is an exhortation for men to remove their headwear, and for women to veil themselves when they approach God in prayer. The practice of women veiling themselves has been a Christian tradition for thousands of years, but in recent times has been abandoned by the people of God with chilling consequences.

So important is this in Christian tradition, even first ladies in the White House will veil themselves in the presence of a bishop or pope. A people seeking to

please God would do well to carefully study 1 Corinthians 11 and practice its ordinances.

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Paul calls the church to imitate him as he imitates Christ [11:1]. The verb "Be" (ginesthe) is an imperative. There are five commands in 11:1-16 (1, 2, 6, 6, 13).

The word "mimic" is derived from the Greek word "to follow" (mimatai). Paul could call believers to imitate him because he imitated Christ. The Torah is the objective standard for righteousness; and, Christ as the living Torah is the subjective standard for righteousness. To follow Christ is to follow the One Who fulfilled God's law and pleased the Father in every way. He is Lord of the family, the Lord of the Church, and the Lord of nations.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

The verb "keep" (atecho) is an imperative the Corinthians obeyed. Paul commends the Corinthian flock for remembering him and for keeping the ordinances he delivered to them. It takes positive energy to incorporate a Biblical practice into the life of a community, and the Corinthians had a zeal to arrange themselves under the authority of God's Law-word and to obey it.

The word "ordinance" (paradosis) is a cognate noun stemming from the verb "paradidomi." It refers to authoritative apostolic traditions established in the early church. In using the term "ordinance," the apostle is not referring to personal preferences or frivolous rituals or local Corinthian customs, but enduring practices applicable to all men for all time rooted in God's law. Geopolitical Israel had their feasts and festivals to aid them in their worship of YHWH and the church has its ordinances to build up the people of God.

The verbal form of ordinance (paradosis), meaning a command, is used in verse 23 in reference to Paul establishing the Lord's Supper as an ordinance to be practiced in the church; that is, a Divine sanction to be honored by God's people when they come together as Christians to honor our Lord. Baptism, communion, and Head Coverings (katakalypto) are three dogmatic ordinances delivered to the church to keep God's people true to the faith.

Failure to see the practice of Head Coverings as ordinances arising from Christian law has been the product of more than a little evil. Christians who neglect these warrants are more likely to violate the faith and slide into apostasy like feminism in the church.

Apparently, problems developed in the Corinthian community due to irregularities and objections to these ordinances.

God's Hierarchy

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Knowledge is essential to walk accurately. The axiom “knowledge is power” is certainly true in many instances. Hosea agonized over the fact that his people were being destroyed for want of knowledge (4:6).

Ignorance of God’s law left the nation without an immune system to defend off spiritual diseases. Likewise, the apostle sees ignorance as a threat to Christian health. “I want you to know . . .” is not a dietary suggestion but a staple necessary for spiritual vigor and vitality.

To be stout, Christians need to know God’s order of things; that is, His divinely ordained hierarchy: God, Christ, man, woman. The Father is the Head of Christ. Christ is the head of man. Man is the head of the woman. This the divine will for the creative order expressed in commands associated with the ordinance of Head Coverings.

By “head” Paul means authority to command and the requirement to obey. Christ is not inferior to the Father, but He had His duties as Son and Savior. As Jesus obeyed His Father, man should obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Likewise, the woman is not inferior to the man (husband / father), but she is under the command of man—under his protection, provision, and persuasion.

Just as recognizing the laws of nature are essential for physical health, surrendering to God’s law-order is essential for spiritual health. As Christ was subordinate to the Father in the accomplishments of redemption man should be subordinate to Christ in the task of dominion (Genesis 1:26; Philippians 2:5-12). Likewise, the woman must be subordinate to her husband at home and to the male led services at church for the advancement of the Christian faith (Ephesians 5:24).

Apparently, the liberal Christian community at Corinth fell into egalitarian views of Christian liberty wherein the women not only spurned the practice of Head Covering, many sought sacerdotal equality with men in their approach to God.

The term “andros” can refer to “man” or to a “husband.” The term “gunaikos” can refer to a “woman” or to a “wife.” In context, these two terms should be interpreted in their broadest sense because later in the instruction Paul says the “man is of the woman”. It would be inaccurate to say “a husband is of the wife.” Furthermore, the absence of the definite article indicates a broader construction than a particular “husband” or “wife.” Therefore, the context demands the term “man” or “woman” be taken in a capacious sense that includes Christian men, married and unmarried, and Christian women, married or unmarried.

In Regards to Men: Repudiation of a Covered Head

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

The apostle now instructs the church on the *paradosis* (ordinance) he wants them to employ as a body of believers when the church is assembled. The term “ordinance” is legal word. This is Christian law.

John McArthur makes this distinction between prayer and prophesy: "In the most general senses praying is talking to God about people, including ourselves, and prophesying is talking to people about God. One is vertical (man to God) and the other is horizontal (man to man), and they represent the two primary dimensions of believers' ministry." (Grace to You).

First, he instructs the men. Be informed, says the apostle: If a man prays to God or speaks for God wearing something on his head, he dishonors his head. A covered head would refer to a scarf, a hat, a cap, a yamaka, or turban of any kind. The phrase “his head” refers to Christ.

When a man prays with his head covered, he dishonors his King, the Lord Jesus Christ. When men approach God, they are to do so with uncovered heads; that is, they are to remove their headwear when praying to God. This deprivation does not apply to all activities of life—only to duties associated with one's approach to the Creator particularly in a public assembly.

The term “dishonoreth” means “to shame” or “disgrace.” For a man to demur in removing his hat in the worship of God shames the Lord Jesus Christ. If Paul were among us today, he would instruct old and young to remove their headwear in a church service because the goal of any gathering of believers is to honor and glorify Him (John 17:1ff).

The modern “messianic” male, following a Jewish model, publishes his rebellion to the gospel by wearing a yamaka. Likewise, a pope or bishop who wears a zucchetto (scull cap) during prayer dishonors our Lord as Head of the Church.

“Praying” and “prophesying” are present participles referring to the type of religious activities that require the practice of hat removal. Prayer is a general term for reverent approach to God; and, prophecy is a general term for speaking the mind of God to men. Praying includes such activities as prayer, praise, worship, singing, contemplation, and confession. Prophesying includes activities like Bible reading, teaching, preaching, and exhortation.

The apostolic instruction for men to remove their headwear and for women to place a veil over their head is limited to one's public religious life and is not intended to be expanded to all private activities of family life.

In Regards to Women: Repudiation of an Uncovered Head

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

Just as Paul has instructions for men, he has instructions for women.

Be informed, says the apostle: Every woman, old and young, who approaches God in a public assembly dedicated to prayer or expounding God's Word with her head uncovered "dishonors" (shames disgraces) her head; that is, her husband or the male authority figure in her life. Furthermore, she shames herself because an uncovered head reveals ignorance of God's law-order (Genesis 3:15), possession of a pagan world view, and obstinacy to the Law-word of God—a shame for a Christian woman!

This passage is about the godly decor of a woman in holy assemblies. It is not a grant of permission to pray or preach to the congregation. Paul addressed this issue in chapter 14 where he requires Christian woman to remain silent in public gatherings as well as most congregants. The duty of public prayer and preaching is limited to holy, happy, hopeful men (1 Timothy 2:8).

The adjective "uncovered" (a-katakalupto) means "without a covering" or "without something down the head" or "without a veil or scarf." The opposite of an uncovered head is a woman who intentionally and obediently places a headdress on her head.

Because she recognizes her subordinate role in the world and wants to please God, she veils herself as a symbol of her submission to the authority of the man who is obligated to protect her. The wearing of a veil is a sign the woman recognizes and honors God's law-order; that she understands the curse on women and is committed to resist it (Genesis 3:16).

To emphasize the utter shame of an uncovered head in public meetings, Paul likens an unveiled woman to a woman that is shaved bald. Because long hair is a universally recognized as a symbol of feminine beauty, Paul seeks to pierce the hearts of resistant, libertine Greeks by comparing an unveiled head to a condition of being shaved or bald. If a shaved-bald woman feels the shame of such contingency, should not the pious woman be embarrassed by approaching God without a Head Covering (katakalupto)?

A woman's long hair is not her symbolic "head covering" any more than an Old Testament priest's hair was a substitute for a priestly turban (Ezekiel 44:14, 20).

A question arises, "When should women cover their heads?"

The context is "when you come together" in verse 18; that is, the minimal practice of Christian adornment is meant to be applied at Christian gatherings when the whole church comes together as modeled in Acts 2:42. Broader

applications should not be discouraged; i.e., it is appropriate for a man to remove his headwear anytime he prays publically; and, it is appropriate for a woman to cover her head in her approach to God other than local church services.

A woman with a veil over her hair reminds of us that we should all be surrendered to the will of God and the authority of Scripture in our lives. It informs us the woman is a woman of God and that we are come together to honor the Savior.

The apostle is not exhorting women to take a public role in praying or prophesying. Those concerns are addressed elsewhere (I Corinthians 14:34ff; 1 Timothy 2:8ff). Paul exhorts women to veil themselves in public during the activities of prayer and preaching.

Corinth was a multicultural city with lusty seaman arriving at its ports daily. Every hair style and wardrobe imaginable could be observed in this city. Paul's instruction is Christian doctrine opposed to the ultra-conservative position of Jews whose women were known to veil their faces in the synagogue and in the market place; and it is opposed to the ultra-libertine Greek women at Corinth who went to the market place unveiled showing off their flowing, fashionable hairstyle to the delight of maritime travelers.

Discipline for Disobedience

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

Long hair is an international symbol of femininity and beauty. In Roman times, women everywhere wore long hair. Among Biblical people short hair was a sign of sickness, grief, or disgrace (Isaiah 3:24; Jeremiah 7:29).

Among the Jews and Greeks, cutting a woman's hair was punishment for adultery.

In the event of the death of a spouse, a wife might cut her hair as a sign of mourning. Some prostitutes may have worn short hair but we can deduct from pictographs it was **not** a universal custom. Unlike today, short hair among women was never in fashion in the Roman theater!

We have two main verbs in this verse: "Let her be shorn" (keirastho) and "Let her be covered" (katakalyptestho). Both are aorist imperatives charging the audience to "start the practice immediately!" The apostle's dogmatic command is clear. Wear a Head Covering or let her head be shaved.

We have two words for cutting of the hair: "to be shorn" (kerasthai), and "shaven" (xurao). The former refers to having a woman's hair cropped with scissors and the later has reference to her head being shaved with a razor. The



protasis is a first class conditional clause meaning "If it is true, and it is true;" i.e., "if a woman will not cover her head. . . and there are women at Corinth who resist the godly practice" (protasis), "let them be shorn" (the apodosis).

"For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off. In that day only a prostitute or an extreme feminist would shave her head . . . Paul therefore is saying, 'If you are not willing to look like a prostitute or a rebellious feminist by cutting off your hair, don't pray or prophesy with your head uncovered either.'" (John MacArthur).

This is not a joke or laughing matter. The apostle is serious about this ordinance and orders scissors to be brought to church and used to crop the hair of an autonomous woman. He reasons that if it is a shame for a woman even to have short hair, much less a shaved head, then let her respectfully consent to wear a veil in the house of God. If she refuses, let her be marked with shame by cropping her hair.

Paul's point is clear: If universal values demonstrate the shame of hair cropping, then it is appropriate for a pious woman to cover her head. So, let her be covered!

At this point, all loyalty to the literal-grammatical hermeneutic is tossed out the window even by the most courageous of conservative exegetes. Preachers, not wanting to appear misogynistic, jitterbug across the stage hoping not to be caught in a cross-fire between two red-headed Irish women taking umbrage at Paul's instruction. A reducto-absurdum to be sure . . . but literalness is preferred to spiritualizing the text. Crop the hair or wear a Head Covering orders the Apostle. Church discipline demands it.

Reasons for the Ordinance

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

(1) The Ontological Argument

Having emphatically addressed the mandate for women to wear a veil in worship, the apostle offers an ontological argument[1] behind the imperative. The present, indicative verb, "ought", designates a duty placed on the man to not wear anything on his head when approaching God. The reason for this prohibition is that man is made in the "image" (icon) and "glory" (doxa) of God.

By saying that man is made in the “image” of God, Paul implies that men have a duty to imitate God and reflect His transitive attributes. An “icon” is a representation of the prototype intended to reflect the image of the model. Finite man was God’s masterpiece of creation because Adam reflected the glory of God; that is, His personality and transitive attributes. When a man removes his headwear in worship, he publishes a testament: “May the glory of God be seen in this place, and may all surrender to his law-order” And, this is the goal of all public worship, the glory of God.

Women, on the other hand, are not announced as an icon of God or the icon of man. Rather, the Apostle says the woman is the “glory of man.”

The absence of the article communicates the quality of a thing; that is, she is gloriously the glory of man—if she abounds in womanly virtues that archive his honor. She is not the “image” (icon) of man and therefore has no duty to emulate man. She is not to imitate men or acquire masculine traits. She has her own purpose in the created order. Her approach to God must confess original intent by wearing a Head Covering. When a woman covers her head with a veil she also publishes a declaration: “May the glory of man be hidden, and may the glory of God be known in this place.”

Therefore, in a public setting where the goal is worship, the uncovered male and the covered female publish a unified statement to which all should aspire: “May the glory of man be veiled in this place and may the glory of God be recognized here.” Enough of man! We want to meet with God and see Him in this gathering of redeemed humanity!

The Spirit contrasts man’s creative purpose with that of the female who “is the glory of the man.” God has a purpose for the man and a purpose for the woman. The two are not the same. Paul rejects unisex spirituality common to Gnostic philosophy which encouraged women to adopt masculine traits and for men to develop the feminine side of their soul. Feminism has no place in the church.

Androgynous[2] spirituality is alien to Scripture, but common in pagan cultures. A “sexless soul”, while admired by the Greeks, is a weakness to be feared by a sane people. Equality of male and female before God does not demand obliteration of genders. The creation story carefully lays out the creative order and the purpose of the two sexes. The Head Covering tradition augurs well for the original intent of creation and the purposes of males and females.

The feminist gender-bender movement and its devilish consequences can be laid at the feet of the church that fails to publish God's law-order by practicing the ordinance of Head Covering.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

(2) A Cosmological Argument

Paul adds a cosmological[1] argument[3] to why women should be veiled in worship. Going back to the original creation, the apostle adds the order of creation to his list of reasons for the law of Head Covering. Adam was created first and directly by God; Eve was created second and that out of man. Sexuality is not an accident of nature nor are sexual differences the result of the fall. Sexual roles and identity were established by the Creator's wise design.

When a woman veils herself, she publishes the truth that man was created first and therefore has authority over her. It is the male that must lead. It is the male that has the onus to provide and protect. And, it is the honorable duty of a woman to support that leadership in obedience to her Creator.

[1] Cosmological: related to origin

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

(3) The Teleological Argument

The apostle adds a teleological reason[4] to his arsenal on why women should wear Head Coverings. A woman is womanly by design. She is teleologically[1] subordinate to man because she was created to be his helpmeet (*ezar*). As God is the *ezar* of man, the woman is the *ezar* of man. The woman was created for man, not man for the woman. A man finds his purpose in Christ, and the woman finds her purpose in her husband. As the man submits to his perfect Head (an advantage) whom he cannot see (a disadvantage), God calls the woman to submit to an imperfect man (a disadvantage) whom she can see (an advantage).

The Head Covering is a symbol of submission not only of a woman to man, but the woman to the high purpose of God. Since the veil is a symbol of submission it follows, then, that a man should not wear a Head Covering.

[1] Teleological: related to purpose rather than cause and effect.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

(4) The Celestial Argument

"For this cause" refers directly back to verses 7-9 (the purpose and order of creation). Thus, the Celestial argument follows the logic of cause and effect.

The word "power" is the Greek word *exousian* which is better translated "authority." Because she is under the authority of the man, she is required to wear the symbol of authority (a sign) — the Head Covering.

The veil is NOT a symbol of her authority over the man or authority to speak or pray in church. It informs others in her silence that she recognizes God's authority structure and is subject to His law-order: Men lead, women follow. Furthermore, it publishes to others that she is under authority of a man who will unleash all his lawful, manly power to protect her (1 Corinthians 14:34; Genesis 3:15).

The veil is a sign that the woman has surrendered to the authority God has set over her. The woman wears a veil to publish the order of creation and man's (husband) authority over her. A veil is a symbolic statement – a sign that the woman accepts God's role for her in this life and that she is under man's authority. Such a position gives a woman true power to pray and be heard by her Creator. Modern women wear wedding rings as a symbol they are under a man's coverture. Let a woman, therefore, wear a Head Covering as a sign of the headship of the man, rather than claim any *exousia* of her own.

Paul's celestial argument [5] for why women should cover their heads in public worship includes angelic beings. The whole wonder of Christ becoming a man and going to the cross because He was the obedient, submissive son mesmerized these celestial beings. The practice of Head Coverings educate angelic, celestial beings regarding the purposes and law-order of the Creator.

Wearing a veil publishes a truth to these unseen servants that Christ became a man and submitted to the will of the Father; that there is a divine order; that righteousness requires submission to God's law-word.

Furthermore, if angels covered their face and their feet in the presence of God and cried "holy, holy, holy" is the Lord God Almighty (Isaiah 6), women should arrange themselves in a deportment that depicts holiness and separation to God. Wearing a Head Covering is holy attire fit for a holy woman surrendered to the divine order.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

(5) The Symbiotic Argument

The word "nevertheless" is not adversative but supplementary. Verse 11-12 reinforces the principles laid down above, but adds in this section the principle that in the big scheme of things there really is no such thing as an atomic man, an independent woman or man.

Men and women are dependent on each other. No one is a universe unto himself with his own law being his own god. Such speculation is pagan and humanistic. Men need women, and women need men.

12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

No one is exempt from the law of nature or the law of nature's God. Woman was taken from man, but man (and women) is birthed by the woman. Nothing is self-generating and autonomous.

Consequently, a woman should proudly veil herself realizing in the grand scheme of things there would be no humanity without her. Head Coverings are a sign of womanhood and the dependence of all on her role in the plan of God. Nothing is gained pretending that people can live independent of each other. The Platonic, androgynous man is clearly rejected. The proud, independent, feminist woman is a shame. Life works when men cooperate with the divine plan for "all things are of God."

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

(6) The Argument from the Law of Nature

Paul adds an additional reason for women to veil themselves in verses 13-14 and that is the law of nature. The verb "Judge" is an aorist imperative meaning "start immediately." The word "comely" refers to a sense of propriety . . . and in this case, the standard for propriety is nature itself. The apostle appeals to the mature mind and orders his audience to exercise discernment. Using the measuring stick of the law of nature, Paul orders the Corinthians to consider if it is "comely" or "fitting" or "proper" (propriety) for a woman to pray uncovered. The assumed answer is negative.

The apostle does not say "pray or prophesy" in this verse as he did in verse 4-5. Prayer, not prophesying, is foremost in Paul's mind with respect to when women should veil themselves.

Paul draws from two laws of nature: (a) the shame of a man having long hair, and (b) the shame of women having short hair.

(a) The First Observation from Nature

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

Paul now appeals to the law of nature (phusis) to umpire the disputation raised by the libertine Corinthian women about the mandate of Head Covering. Stoic philosophers believed that intelligent men could discern rectitude by examining the laws of nature. A limited application of the laws of nature can be an aid in deciding some issues. Men tend toward beards and baldness, and the working man prefers a shorter hair style that doesn't interfere with his work. Short hair among men is a universal trait. It is manly by nature.

Furthermore, no self-respecting man would risk marring his masculinity by wearing anything that makes him look like a woman. Long hair is an anathema

to real men. A man pursuing androgynous deportment is insane and declares the death of God among men! It is apostate.

(b) The Second Observation from Nature

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

While the law of nature shuns men wearing long hair, the law of nature provides women with the beauty of long hair. The word "glory" (doxa) is the opposite of "disgrace" (stigma). Long hair is a universal mark of femininity and beauty. Long hair is a natural covering, a distinctive mark of womanhood, and contributes to her overall femininity--eye catching to all. If God gives the woman long hair as a natural covering, why won't a Christian woman wear a "spiritual" covering?

Long hair is not a substitute for the Head Covering as some errant teachers propose.

Women cropping their hair were not the problem in Corinth. Paul is not condemning hair styles in this passage. The problem lay with libertine women who refused to submit to the Biblical ordinance of veiling.

Paul reasons that if natural long hair is suitable for a woman, then she should be glad to wear a Head Covering in addition to her long hair. And, if Head Coverings are not suitable to her tastes, then let a deacon shear her locks. But, if she will not submit to the shears, then let her submit to the ordinance requiring her to wear a Head Covering.

Furthermore, those who teach that long hair is a symbol of submission to God will certainly find resistance to this teaching. Humanistic man will laugh at any attempt by Christians to turn long hair into a symbol of submission to God. What anthropologists would agree in that long hair is a symbol of piety? A symbol of femininity and sexuality, yes! But, piety, absolutely not! Cosmopolitan Magazine doesn't exist to reinforce Christian values!

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

(7) The Argument from Custom

The apostle terminates his interpellation with a final argument why women should veil themselves in their approach to God. Women should wear a veil because it was a custom established by the apostles and practiced by the Mediterranean Churches.

That this was a "local custom" unique to the Corinthians is rejected. You don't pull out the "big guns" of Scripture (quotes from Genesis) to enforce an exclusive, peculiar, local tradition. Moreover, the practice of Head Coverings is

no more a "local tradition" than using the symbols of bread and wine to represent the Lord's body and blood; and, it is no more a "local tradition" than God's requirement for wives to submit to their husbands. These were universal practices for all churches . . . not just the Corinthians.

[Note: Women wearing Head Coverings was the solid, Biblical practice of all churches until the 1960s: Since feminism raised its ugly head and head covering came off, these trends developed: dresses and bras came off; bikinis were in, free love entered the discourse; pornography flourished, teen pregnancy boomed, legislators approved abortion on demand, Sodomy, lesbianism, transgenderism, gender-bender curriculum, reading to kids by drag queens, mandatory masks and death jabs. Can you see the relationship between Christians discounting the Head Covering ordinance and the proliferation of feministic madness?]

The word "contentious" (*philoneikos*) means "fond of strife," "truculent."

The word "custom" refers to social practices.

Contention strife and bickering was not a practice in the first century church; but, veiling without contention was. For women to challenge the practice is to resist the ordinance established in all the churches. The veiling of woman was an apostolic tradition followed in every N.T. church. And, there is no authority to resist apostolic teaching, and to replace it with modern, permissive customs.

Those who do not recognize this authority are not recognized among the churches of God. Any who challenge the *paradosis* (ordinance) after this Biblical explanation are antinomian troublemakers who have no place in the company of the saints—the apostate church maybe, but not the true church of Jesus Christ! To treat "Head Covering" as matter of "interpretation" or "personal preferences" or "local custom" fails to take the Word of God seriously.

Head Covering is a matter of apostolic authority and is not open to debate. We simply do not tolerate contention on this subject. All are expected to arrange themselves under this mandate.

In conclusion, Christian art informs us that the ordinance of Head Covering was faithfully practiced by the church throughout the centuries until about 1960. During this period, the American church was recovering from the avalanche of German liberalism that infected theology; the "death of God" movement lingered like the stench in a fish market over spiritual life; American churches gave up their freedom and volunteered to be enslaved by the IRS by applying to become 501 c 3 organizations (1967); the ACLU challenged Bible reading and prayer in public schools (1962); pornography exploded as an industry (1958); bikinis wowed the world (1950s_); Catholic and Protestant censorship ended in Hollywood (1963); evolution became a dogma; students sought meaning in life by experimenting with psychedelic drugs (1967); rock

music dominated the airwaves (1950s-60s); feminists were in your face (1966); the stay-at-home mom became antique; hippies plunged into “free love” (Woodstock-1969); mini-skirts raged as a fashion for young women (1966); the face of Twiggy dawned Cosmopolitan Magazine (1966); clothes came off and youth streaked through terraces protesting the Viet Nam War (1967).

In the 1960s, America changed its gods and the cults of chaos ruled the West. It is not surprising, therefore, that that women garnished in the latest trendy hairstyle opposed the doctrine of Head Covering. Pastors were just glad women were in church with their clothes on. Young evangelists saw Head Covering as a hurdle to church growth and either ignored the doctrine in the exercise of winning the lost or excused the subject as a local Corinthian custom. In mainstream immature Christianity, Head Covering became irrelevant.

But after 50 years of chaos, increased divorce rates, teen pregnancy, the unisex plague, and maddening feminism in the church, many pastors have come to their senses and are revisiting the *paradosis* of Head Covering and seeing the practice as not only Biblical but a corrective mandate for the plague of antinomianism among us. The autonomous woman is a myth birthed by radical feminism.

How important is the practice of Head Covering?

If we could talk to the Apostle Paul today, I am convinced that he would not only confirm the ordinance of baptism, the ordinance of communion (Eucharist), he would affirm the ordinance of Head Covering; that is, three ordinances.

Finally, this passage needs to be applied. Instead of taking our cues from the world, we need a reformation—a back to the Bible movement. Men are required to remove their hats when they worship God in public—a practice most men will gladly accept; Women are required to veil themselves with a hat or scarf or veil when they approach God in the meeting of the saints—a practice pious woman will gladly obey. But, for those women who challenge the custom, I suggest men bring a Bible and a pair of sharp scissors to church!

See: The Validity of Head Coverings

See: Women's Dress

[1] Ontological: the nature of being of existence.

[2] Androgyny is a term derived from the Greek words *ανήρ*, stem *ανδρ-* (*anér*, *andr-*, meaning man) and *γυνή* (*gyné*, meaning woman), referring to the combination of masculine and feminine characteristics.

[3] Cosmological: the nature of the origin of things.

[4] Teleology: the study of the purpose and design of things.

[5] Celestial: Having to do with things in heaven or the unseen world known only to the Creator.

Notes:

David Gooding (In 1 Corinthians 11:4, how is the Greek 'kata' to be translated?):

"I personally think that verse 4 means that every man praying or prophesying, having something covering and falling down from his head, dishonours his head. In holding this view, I gather confidence from the next verse: 'every woman praying or prophesy-ing with her head unveiled dishonours her head, for that is one and the same thing, as if she were shaved'.

The distinction between what the woman does and what the man does seems to me to be highly significant. The woman is to pray or prophesy with her head covered; for if she prays with her head uncovered, she dishonours her head, for that is one and the same thing as if she were shaved. I hold therefore, as you see, the commonly accepted view of the Greek."

[David Willoughby Gooding (16 September 1925 Ipswich – England 30 August 2019) was a British lecturer, author, and professor of Greek at Queen's University, Belfast. B]

Are Head Covering Cultural?

Q: Are Head Coverings a Local Corinthian Custom or an Ordinance for the Church to Practice in Every Generation? (for part of the answer look at Christian art).

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Many apprentice Bible interpreters argue that Paul's sixteen verse admonishment about headship and the practice of women veiling their heads was merely a trivial Corinthian custom; that these 16 verses really don't apply to the modern super church.

Our beloved John McArthur adopts this view. He does an excellent job exegeting 1 Corinthians 11 and in the final minutes of his presentation says this was a cultural problem in Corinth and doesn't apply to modern men (John McArthur on 1 Corinthians 11). Note: John was a young preacher in a growing church when he preached and wrote on this chapter.

There are many convincing reasons this passage should not be interpreted as a Paul's pulpit-pounding promotion of some local, cultural tradition.

History of the Corinthian Church:

The cultural argument appears to assume the Corinthian church had decades of church tradition under its belt.

Young interpreters fail to apprehend the Corinthian church was born in a political storm (Acts 18), and that it was only a few months old when Paul wrote his letter to them. They were too young to have traditions, too young to know what a good church tradition looked like, and too young to rebel against apostolic authority. The apostle informs them that removal of hats and veils worn by women had a solid tradition in churches around the Mediterranean – a dogmatic practice the Apostle wanted the Corinthians to imitate.

Defining Normal:

Young churchmen really don't know how to define normal. Most look around them, to the left and right, to construct a yardstick of normal. Since modern churches do not practice male cap removal or woman veiling themselves, "normal" looks veiless with woman sporting a timeless and sophisticated Hair Bob.

It is difficult for young men to adopt a Biblical ordinance that is not practiced in "churches" around them. Doubt, ignorance, and fear freeze their volition. Thus, the first challenge in Biblical hermeneutics is for the interpreter to overcome his own cognitive dissonance when approaching contested subjects like Head Coverings.

Paul defines normal on this subject: "But if any man seems to be contentious (about the practicing the ordinance of Head Coverings), we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

Normal means men remove their hats in prayer (church), and women veil themselves as a sign she acknowledges God's law-order. For a man to wear a cap in church and for a woman to go unveiled shows immense disrespect for Christ and God's law-order. What naked is to mankind a veiless woman is to angels.

Context:

This passage is closely associated with the Lord's Supper, and the apostle does not showcase the Lord's Supper as a local custom. In fact, Paul's sandwiches the subject of headship and Head Coverings between two passages on communion (Chapter 10 and Chapter 11:17ff).

Notice the context: Communion (10:16), headship-Head Coverings (11:1-16), and rules for Communion (11:17ff). Moreover, this is the only book where the apostle provides direct teaching on the Lord's Supper. We take his instruction on the Lord's Supper as authoritative and sufficient. Why don't churchmen see

his dictates on Head Covering authoritative and sufficient? Why the mammoth disparity?

Moreover, the apostle praises the Corinthians for keeping the “traditions” (paradosis) he taught them, and then instructs them about headship and Head Coverings as if he expected them to put this into practice immediately.

Why are churchmen so shy about the practice of Head Covering traditionally associated with participation in the Lord’s Supper? Is it because they are intellectually superior to all the scholars that came before them or because they have been beaten down by a finger-shaking, head-wagging critical feminists?

Ordinance:

Paul calls the practice of men removing their hats and women veiling their heads an “ordinance” (paradosis) in verse 2. The Greek word is plural. There are three ordinances of the church: baptism, Head Coverings, and the Lord’s Supper – a three legged stool and not a two legged stool to stand on. In this day of apostasy when permissive churches neglect the practice of the Lord’s Supper, it should not be a surprise they don’t reverence the ordinance of Head Coverings.

Dogmatic Sign:

There are three symbols mentioned in this passage: Head Coverings, bread, and wine.

The Head Covering are a symbol of authority (11:10) not Corinthian societal propriety. Biblical symbols provoke remembrance of important doctrines. If his body and blood are important enough for the Lord to memorialize in the bread and wine as symbols of His redemption, it is just as important that churchmen revere the veil as a sign of authority . . . a sign of His headship -- a sign the whole church acknowledges His law order -- a sign of God’s roles for men and women. If Head Covering are cultural, are fielding the bread and wine also cultural? Is baptism cultural? Is singing cultural?

Symbol of headship:

Is the authority of Christ important? Is recognition of his law-order for male and females important?

Veils are a sign, a symbol, and an icon of the authority of the man over the woman. Are those who say Head Coverings are cultural also saying that the traditional roles of men and women in marriage are also cultural? Americans are so apostate they don’t even recognize a difference between men and women.

Proof of claim.

You don't need to quote primary source material to support a trivial custom. For example, no one needs to cite Supreme Court authority for using a fork instead of a spoon.

The apostle quotes principles from Genesis to support the ordinance of Head Covering (11:9); that is, he supports his position from the authority of the Book of Genesis. This is no minor matter! People don't use a hammer to swat a fly, and it would be ludicrous for the apostle to pull out the "big guns" of Scripture to support a frivolous, negligible, local custom.

Moreover, the context is "church" and not the market place.

Consistency:

While women do not wear Head Coverings in modern so called "churches," it is generally the custom of men to take off their hats in prayer in church.

If not wearing a Head Covering by women is now acceptable, maybe the men in the church should start wearing cowboy hats or yamakas to be like the Jews.

Since so many sophisticated pastors encourage women to go unveiled in church, maybe they should encourage men and boys to wear their baseball caps in church. Since cowboy churches wear their ten-gallon hats to church, why shouldn't urban men wear their latest Bronco cap to church?

Maybe the exhortation for men to remove their headwear in church because they are made in the image of God is also cultural tradition only practiced in Corinth. If so, we should do away with this rule in modern American churches. Why not encourage men to wear the latest Gamboa-Panama hat to church?

Cultural Propriety:

In attending athletic games or large gatherings of people where organizers offer a prayer or sing the national anthem, men in the crowd will remove their caps and women will keep their hats on as a symbol of respect and as a matter of tradition. Where did this tradition come from? Maybe the church needs to learn something from the pagans?

As liberal as England has become, the queen wore a hat in church, and men removed their top hats when coming to church. Do American churchmen need to learn something from the English? Or, from Luther and his promotion of Head Covering in Lutheran Churches?

Even Moslem women wear a veil when praying. Maybe, churchmen have something to learn from Muslims.

Unity of the church:

The church of Jesus Christ is bigger than America. America is a young country and hardly the standard for anything spiritual – except its Puritan beginnings.

Women in Russia, Greece, and Armenia veil themselves in church. Moreover, these countries have not bowed to the fists of feminists parading nude down the street.

Who is more correct, (1) the conservative eastern churches with two thousand years of history faithfully executing allegiance to the ordinance of Head Covering, or the young American churches under siege by chin-up feminists, Sodomites, and drag queens?

Where are the humble women in churches who can say with Mary, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” – Luke 1:38?

Bad presumptions:

Some argue that Paul ordered Christian women to wear long hair because he did not want Christian women to look like prostitutes in Corinth . . . that a woman’s naturally long hair is her spiritual covering. Where is the proof that prostitutes shaved their heads in first century Corinth? This is nonsense. The text says nothing of the sort. Isn’t this eisegesis and not exegesis? If this was the reason for women veiling themselves, the apostle would have said so. A hermeneutic argument from silence is as worthless as throwing a drowning man a glass of water.

Note: those who claim they believe in the sufficiency of Scripture fail terribly as they approach this passage. Why do these good men go outside of Scripture sifting through Corinthian speculative-garbage to properly interpret this inspired text? Why don’t they believe the Spirit provided everything necessary to interpret this passage correctly?



Church History: The Apostle implies women veiling their heads was the practice in all “the churches of God” and that only the contentious (those fond of strife) resisted the custom (11:16).

Since it has been the tradition for men to remove their headwear in church and for women to wear a covering over their heads for two-thousand years, why are churchmen disparaging the tradition in America? How could this trend be healthy?

America’s Cultural Revolution: Women started removing their head wear in the middle of a feminist revolution. History informs us Christian women covered their heads until 1960.

What changed? In 1960's the feminist revolution skipped into full swing. Clothes came off, bras came off, nudity appeared in magazine and on film, mini-skirts were in and Twiggy was the rage.

It was during this period that young churchmen, under pressure by their vogue feminist wives, proposed Head Coverings were no longer needed . . . that the practice of Head Covering was merely a cultural practice resident in Corinth. Head Coverings came off, clothes came off, teen pregnancy skyrocketed, hippies multiplied, and abortion smacked America in the face. Lesbianism and Sodomy went main stream. Feminism swamped the church.

Today Modern society doesn't know the difference between boys and girls. In the past, people distinguished between males and females . . . until churchmen rebelled against God's Word. Today, drag queens read Bible stories to children in some churches.

Since when did social revolution and going vogue become a Biblical value?

Churchman holding to the view that "Head Coverings are cultural" must be blind to the impact of feminism upon the church and the rise of female deacons, elders, and pastors – a radical, movement hell bent on mocking veiled women -- hell bent on abolishing traditional roles of Christian men -- and hell bent on abolishing the distinctions between the sexes – hell bent on replacing male pastors with heretical women wearing pink pant suits.

Gospel:

Veiling is part of gospel instruction to churches as much as the doctrines of justification and sanctification. Few things are more derelict than the notion the Bible teacher is at liberty to cherry-pick the gospel and to choose doctrinal positions that please him. The uncomfortable truth of men removing their hats in church and women veiling themselves is just as important as the comforting truth of eternal security.

Counter Revolution:

Christianity has always been a counter-revolution movement . . . at least till women stopped wearing veils in churches. A hundred years ago Christians understood what it meant "to come out from among them and be ye separate," but no more. Modern churches look more like a Hollywood screen set than a holy sanctuary. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between a church women and street joggers; or, between a churchgoers and fans on their way to a sports stadium.

Politics:

Politics should not play a role in hermeneutics, but it does. Pastors seemed addicted to church growth. "The bigger, the better" churns within the minds of

preachers. It's not easy to minister in the shadow of a mega 501 c 3 religious organization. Because pastors fear they will lose church members by teaching the truth on 1 Corinthians 11, they shrug off the holy ordinance and dismiss it as merely a cultural practice at Corinth. This is particularly true among Baptists who worship at the feet of super-churches who didn't grow big because they taught angels are pleased with Head Covering.

A Command to Obey:

Note seven imperatives in this section:

1 Corinthians 11:2 . . . keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

1 Corinthians 11:6 . . . let her be covered.

1 Corinthians 11:13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

1 Corinthians 11:24 . . . do in remembrance of me.

1 Corinthians 11:28 But let a man examine himself . . .

1 Corinthians 11:33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

1 Corinthians 11:34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home;

Conservative church leaders are emphatic about applying these commands in their practice of the Lord's Supper. Why are churchman so reluctant and wishy washy about applying the command in verse six, "Let her be covered" in church services? Why the double standard?

Church discipline:

Paul ordered church men to take the rebellious woman who would not wear a Head Covering and to shave her head. If this is a joke, it is the only joke in the Holy Scriptures. Biblical hermeneutics demand we take this discipline seriously and to cut off the rebel's locks. Using the clippers has been a practice all throughout history. The French cut the hair of Frenchwomen who consorted with the Nazis as recent as 1943.

With the rise of feminism in the church, isn't it time for churchmen to man up and to invest in a pair of shears?

Bring back the practice of Head Coverings now and save society.

Clement of Alexandria wrote between A.D. 192 and 202 of Christianity's foremost institution of learning. He stated it is unseemly for clothes to end above the knee

"nor is it becoming for any part of a woman to be exposed."

A Christian woman was to be “entirely covered, unless she happen to be at home. For that style of dress is grave, and protects from being gazed at. And she will never fall, who puts before her eyes modesty, and her shawl; nor will she invite another to fall into sin by uncovering her face.”

Clement also pointed out that “it is prohibited to expose the ankle ... it has also been enjoined that the head should be veiled and the face covered; for it is a wicked thing for beauty to be a snare to men.”

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11

Remembering Christ and His Glorious Accomplishments

Q: Is it not true that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be practice in God-honoring churches?

The Lord's Supper



Figure 7: Courtesy of Freepik

At the Last Supper took place during the Passover meal the night before the Lord was crucified. The Lord took the middle *matza* and declared that this was his body broken for us. Following this, Jesus took the third cup, the cup of redemption, and infused it with new meaning [Luke 22:20]. Since then, the bulky Passover ceremony was dropped, and Christians have retained the simple essence of what Jesus taught by regularly celebrating the Lord's Supper and reflecting on Christ and His accomplishments.

The authority of the Lord's Supper

"for I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you . . ." [1 Corinthians 11:23].

Christ instituted the Lord's Supper for the benefit of His people. The word "Lord" is mentioned seven times in Paul's account indicating that the Lord's Supper was not instituted by men, but by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The historical practice of the Lord's Supper

Originally, Christian came together to fellowship and enjoyed a full meal together in remembrance of Christ. These became known as "Agape Feasts" or "Love Feasts." These simple feasts continued in parts of the world for about 400 hundred years. Eventually, the Lord's Supper became more liturgical and formal as Christianity was adopted as the official religion in the Roman Empire.

The meaning of the Lord's Supper

Christians have not been united as to the meaning and significance of the Lord's Supper.

Roman Catholics accept the view known as transubstantiation. Traditionally, this view holds that the bread and the wine are infused by the presence of Christ to mystically become the actual body and blood of the Savior. According to this tradition, the cup and the bread take on salvific significance.

Lutherans accepted a similar view of the Lord's Supper called consubstantiation which asserts the bread and wine are not the actual body and blood of Christ [Catholicism], but that the bread and wine are actually infused with the presence of Christ. Lutherans understand the Lord's Supper to be a means of God mediating grace from heaven to earth through the instruments of bread and wine. Grace comes from the presence of Christ in the elements.

Baptists and Presbyterians and those of like faith take a symbolic view of the Lord's Supper and understand the bread and wine to be symbols of the body and blood of Christ. Grace comes, not because of some mystical presence of Christ in the elements, but because of the sweet thoughts about Christ that are stirred when reflecting on the Lord and His accomplishments at Calvary.

Meaning of the symbols

The bread is a symbol of the body of Christ. If God could have forgiven sin apart from the death of his son, He would have done so. Because He was a man with a real human body He could truly represent us and suffer on our behalf [Hebrews 10:10]. The wine is a symbol of the blood of Christ. It is Jesus' death, not his life, that saves and redeems men from sin [Hebrews 13:12].

The Purpose of the Lord's Supper

- It is a proclamation of the historical death of Christ: "you do show the Lord's death till he come." [1 Corinthians 11:26].
- It is a proclamation of the meaning of his death: "this is my body which is broken for you."
- It is a proclamation of the individual's participation in the death of Christ: "Is it not the communion of the body of Christ." Eating and drinking is more than a memory of past events, it involves participation in the body and blood of Christ [10:21]. Furthermore, since judgment is connected with unworthy participation, God is somehow present in this rite in a unique and wonderful manner.
- It is a proclamation that all believers co-share in the accomplished work of Christ and are therefore one body: "for we are all partakers of that one bread."
- It is a proclamation of the believer's devotion to Christ: "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat."

- It is a proclamation of the Lord's return: "You do show the Lord's death till He come."
- It is a proclamation of judgment to come: Paul says believers are judge if the partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. Thus, we have an eschatological judgment breaking in on the Lord's Supper. Since the Lord took our sins, and was judged in our stead, we have a proclamation of judgment in regards to the Eschaton.

Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me . . ."

The Lord's Supper is not a memorial, but a remembrance service where affectionate hearts recall and reflect on the beauty of Another. Jesus did not ask his disciples to set up a memorial, a one-time act. Rather, he requested that his disciples "remember" Him. Remembrance is much more precious than a monument.

The Lord's Supper is a time to remember His wonderful name [Song of Solomon 5:10, 16], to remember his redemptive work [1 Chronicles 16:12], to remember his suffering for us [1 Peter 2:22-24; Lamentations 3:19], to remember His love [1 John 4:19; John 15:8-13], to remember His glorification [Ephesians 1:22-23; Revelation 1:10ff], to remember His mercies [Romans 3:24-8:34], to remember His words and teaching [Acts 20:35; Colossians 3:16] and to remember His promise to come again [John 14:1-3].

The Lord's Supper is primarily a worship service designed to reflect, thank, and remember the Savior for Who He is and what He accomplished for us at Calvary. Due to these sweet reflections, grace comes to our hearts.

Participants in the Lord's Supper

Christians have taken one of two courses in relationship to the feast: [a] open communion, or [b] closed communion. The issue arises in part because of the church's understanding of the purpose of the Lord's Supper, and in part because of one's understanding of where Judas was located during the time the Lord infused the third cup with meaning. Most scholars believe Judas was absent during the Lord's instruction about the matter.

The Importance of the Lord's Supper

First, it is important to the Father that we remember His gift to the world [John 3:16]. This gave His only begotten Son.

Second, It is important to the Son. As Lord, He commanded it [John 14:21]. As a friend, he requested it [John 13:14]. As a dying man, it was his passionate plea [Luke 22:15].

Third, it is important to the Spirit. The Son is the joy and delight of the Spirit. When Christians remember Christ, they are fulfilling the purpose for which the

Spirit created them [Psalm 45:1-3]. Fourth, it is important to the church. It is one of four disciplines practiced by the early church [Acts 2:42; 20:7]. The church is energized and renewed as it reflects on the glories of the Savior.

The Lord’s Table v. the Lord’s Supper

There is a difference between the Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Table:

1 Corinthians 10:21ff The Lord’s Table; 1 Corinthians 11:17ff the Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Table

The Lord’s Supper

In the heavenlies

On earth

A salvation feast for kings;

A salvation feast for pilgrims.

Majestic

Humble

Permanent

Temporary

All Citizens are present

Some members are missing

Christ is seen in His perfection

Christ is seen by faith

Perfect unity

Some disunity

Participation by conversion

Participation by obedience

No judgment possible

Judgment for sin possible

Participation by grace

Participants receive grace

There is a “cup of demons”--a witch’s brew full of toe nails, frog’s tails, and cat’s eyes which the modern Christian would do well to avoid.

Observe the contrast between the Lord’s Table and the Table of Demons (10:21) where we have a powerful disparity between good and evil, righteousness v. wickedness, Christ v. Satan, faith v. flesh, Biblical doctrine v. Satanic deception, truth v. the counterfeit:

Among the counterfeits of our time there are counterfeit gifts, fake faith healers, psychic prophets, new age practices, psycho heresy, unholy laughter, Sophia worship, gay clergy, matriarchal leadership in the church, devotion to the state, gender neutral Bibles, pornography, much of the entertainment industry, ecumenical movements, catholic celibacy, mysticism, magic, and the entertainment church.

The Baptism of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 12



Figure 9: Courtesy of Freepik

Q: Is it not true that all believers are baptized in the Spirit?

1 Corinthians 12 is about the diversity of gifts, but individual gifts are not what make the man.

The central truth of this chapter is the oneness all believers possess because of their unification with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have

been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The word “baptize” is not referring to water baptism or to some dynamic infusion of the Spirit after one becomes a Christian. There is no such thing as a “Second Blessing” that sends rivets of Divine pleasure from the top of your head to the bottom of your toes. These are modern spurious theological inventions to justify cultic indulgences.

The word “baptize” (baptizo) means “to place into.”

It does not refer to a human choice or an existential experience.

It refers to an operation of the Spirit whereby the Spirit takes the new believer and places him in the body of Christ to enjoy the benefits of his victorious history (See Romans 6:1-14) – an operation of the Spirit that is true for every believer.

Believers need to be filled with the Spirit; and, there may be many fillings of the Spirit; but, there is only one baptism of the Spirit.

It is not derived, felt, gained, acquired, encountered, or developed in the Christian life. It is positional truth – a change in status in the mind of God – a marvelous standing to be enjoyed by faith all through life.

This change in position is true of the old and young, rich or poor, African or American.

The Character of God's Love for You

1 Corinthians 13



Figure 11: Courtesy of Unsplash

Q: Is it not true that God's love for you is illustrated by the word descriptions of love found in this chapter?

A friend expressed his aggravation about a series of sermons in his church.

In asking him why he felt this way, He explained, "I am tired of being chewed out every Sunday."

Immediately, I knew exactly what he meant.

In an effort to make a church better, preachers tell congregations how bad they are and what they need to start doing to be better. The message is do, do, do.

Some feel that if they beat the sheep enough, they will improve; that the more they yell and holler, the better the congregation will be.

In my friend's case, he felt beat up and unloved. No man can live without love. We can survive without nice houses and fancy cars, but who can live without knowing someone cares for their soul? This man needed to be directed to the love of God: "

"May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ" (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

Next to holiness, love is the most beautiful flower in God's garden of virtues.

Let's consider God's love and how much He loves us from I Corinthians 13.

You can glorify God in your life by enjoying God's love for you.

LOVE IS PATIENT

Have you ever considered how patient God is with you?

The word "patient" is a translation of the Greek word "macrothumia," which means "long suffering." It is the ability to count down before blasting off.

Patience is the ability to turn frustration into stepping stones and hardship into happiness.

We are trained to perform in order to be accepted. Because we are impatient with others, we think God is impatient with us. Seeing ourselves as not doing enough, we believe God is not happy with us.

We speed down the highway, honk the horn in traffic, rush from store to store, anxiously watch the clock, and lose our cool when meetings are not on time. But, our Lord is not like this. He is not in a rush and He does not tap His fingers when we are slow to learn or blow a fuse when we fail.

He is loooooong suffering toward us.

Patience is different than mercy in that the latter shows goodness to the weak. But patience shows mercy toward the undeserving; that is, God is not only patient with us when we are weak, but when we are wrong.

Peter tells us that God “waited” in the days of Noah. One hundred and twenty years the LORD endured the rebels that neglected and taunted Him (2 Pet. 3). Paul tells us He endured with much patience the vessels of wrath (Rom. 9:22).

Think for a moment how patient God is with you.

Have you ever watched a little girl thread a needle? As she misses the eye of the needle, aren't you tempted to take that needle and thread it yourself? But, God is not impatient with you. He waits for you to seek Him; He waits for you to grow in your knowledge of Him; and, He waits for you to obey Him. He knows there is value in struggling and that you would never grow if He interrupted that process. In all your struggles, God is lo00ng suffering toward you.

LOVE IS KIND

Do you have people in your life who are irritating and mean-spirited? If you are above ground, you do.

I know of a collegiate wrestler who carried a box of nails in his front seat. When an oncoming car neglected to dim its lights, he would grab a handful of nails and throw them out the window. God is not like this. Though it is His duty is to judge evil, judgment is called his “strange work” (Isaiah 28:1).

One time when General Robert E. Lee was fleeing from advancing Yankee troops, he dismounted his horse and calmly walked over to a nearby tree, picked up a baby bird, placed it gently back in its nest, walked back to his horse, mounted it, and fled like lightening to avoid being hit by thundering musket fire. In this act, Lee was so much like the Savior.

Dr. Hunter McGuire, Stonewall Jackson's personal physician during the Civil War, noted about Jackson, “As I look back on the two years that I was daily,

indeed hourly, with him, his gentleness as a man, his great kindness, is tenderness to those in trouble and affliction . . . impressed me more than his wonderful prowess as a great warrior." Can't you say the same about Christ in His dealing with you?

At a wedding in Cana, the Lord Jesus used his power to provide a buttery wine to a poor bride and groom. Days before He refused to use His power in the wilderness to provide necessary bread for Himself, He did not hesitate to use his power to provide luxuries for others.

Christ is good, the greatest good, and the standard of good. He is kind to all His creatures, great and small, rich and poor, young and old (Ps. 119:68). He causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. He gives us all good things to enjoy. But, it is better than this. Not only did our Lord give a good gift, he gave extravagantly. If each water pot contained between 20-30 gallons of water, we are talking about 150 gallons of the finest wine.

And, if He withholds something from us, it must be for a greater good.

LOVE DOES NOT ENVY

Envy is like an ulcer caused by the inflammation of the "wish" bone. Love looks through a telescope; envy looks through a microscope.

Though we live so much better than the Savior, our Lord has no envy of us.

We have huge homes. But, Jesus said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nest, but the Son of man has no place to lay his head."

We have closets full of clothes, but Jesus only had one garment. We have comfortable, padded shoes, but Jesus walked thousands of miles in a pair of sandals.

Every day, we drive around in nice comfortable cars, but Jesus rode on a donkey, and that only once. Jesus' diet was limited to wheat and barley and a small variety of food common to the Mediterranean. But, we enjoy European delights, French delicacies, Mexican food, Chinese wonders, Texas size steaks, and Southern Bacon and Bleu Cheese Burgers.

He had no opiate in His death, yet very few of us will die without morphine. Not only does He not envy us for our luxuries, he provides these things for our comfort.

LOVE IS NOT PROUD

The word "vaunt" means "to boast." The success of achievers not only goes to their head, but also to their mouth.

Jesus, however, is not a boaster. Though He was God and had much to boast about, He was the most humble of men. He was God on earth, yet only a

handful of people knew about His unique birth. He was a member of a royal family of David, yet he was raised in the hillbilly country of northern Israel. He was a king, but He was known as a carpenter's son. He owned the cattle on a thousand hills, yet owned only one robe. He was God Almighty, the Son of God, but was called a "Samaritan." He commanded angels, yet forbid any of them from rescuing Him from the Roman cross.

If God loved Jacob who was called a worm (Isaiah 41:14), surely he loves you. Do you feel as insignificant as a maggot? God loves small creatures like you and is not ashamed to be your God.

LOVE DOES NOT BEHAVE IMPROPERLY

Americans have notoriously poor table manners. We are an embarrassment to the British and considered unsophisticated by the Chinese. We slurp our soup, chomp our cookies, spill our salt, and belch after a good meal. And while all this slurping, chomping, spilling, and burping can be seen as quaintly humorous, we are no longer living in little wooden shacks in the Ozarks where we prop up our feet on the table and scoot aside to make room for our 19 cats, dogs, and pigs.

It was said of Stonewall Jackson, "Jackson's personal character was absolutely without blemish. His habits were the manliest that a Puritan could wish, his honor clean, and his courage superlative; while as a gentleman in expression and action, he had no superior." (Stonewall Jackson's Book of Maxims, p. 94).

General Lee had one rule at Washington College: "Every student must learn to be a gentlemen." (The Maxims of Robert E. Lee, p. 50).

Being a gentlemen to Lee was never more tested than when the strong have power over the weak, magistrate over the citizen, employer over the employed, the educated over the unlettered, the experienced over the naïve, and the clever over the silly—the forbearing or inoffensive use of power and authority reveals the gentleman in pure light (p. xxi).

The word "proper" means suitable to a purpose. Propriety stays within a purpose. This is another way to say that our Lord is a perfect gentleman in His dealings with us. He has absolute power over you and me, yet He is not harsh or course with us. He is not a tyrant or a dictator, nor is He crude and rude. He does not misuse His power or position. As Lord, he behaves like a king. As a Savior, He is always good and heroic. As our Head, He is always stately. He never raises His voice when a quiet word will do. In all His dealings with us, He is always the Royal Gentleman.

LOVE SEEKETH NOT HER OWN

Perhaps you have heard of the man who did not like to read books because reading took his mind off himself.

A man who is all wrapped in himself is overdressed.

When on earth, Jesus served humanity. When He spoke, it was to encourage His sheep. When He was quiet, it was for the benefit of people. His silence and speaking ministered to men.

The Scripture tells us that, "He daily loads us with benefits." His miracles were performed for the good of men, but not once did He perform a miracle to meet His own needs. There was no water, or food, or comfort on the cross, yet He went there for you and me.

Even at this very hour sitting enthroned in glory at the right hand of the Father, Jesus seeks your best, your edification, and your success. Even now, "all things are working together for good to those who love God and are called by His purpose" (Romans 8:28). This is not to say everything that happens to us is good. But in evil times, He is at work bringing good out of evil.

LOVE IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED

How often do you lose your cool, blow your stack, and express frustration when things don't go your way?

Our precious Lord never smolders with red-hot anger over your clumsy carnal ways.

The word "easy" is not in the text. Love is plainly not provoked.

We are easily offended and agitated because we are not perfected in love. Our family members immediately know when we are irritated. They are familiar with our tirades when we are miffed. Our frowns and flared nostrils reveal our imperfections.

Are you familiar with the word, "knucklehead?" It refers to a youth who does such stupid things that his parents knuckle him in the skull to get his attention when he misbehaves.

When our sins come before God, he doesn't get emotional. He doesn't knock us in the side of the head to get our attention or because He is angry with us. Moreover, He does not call us "knuckleheads," but "beloved children." Though He may discipline us for our good, He does not us tie us to the masthead, and whip us with a cat of nine tails within an inch of life for wrongdoing.

We are easily provoked because we have high expectation of people. We complain and gripe when our spouses don't jump to meet an urgent need.

It was said of General Lee that He did not expect men to be better than they are, because he understood original sin. Though he expected obedience, He did not expect perfection from his men. He sought excellence, but never demanded perfection. He did not lose heart when the odds appeared to be against Him, because He trusted in providence to turn things right because the Word of God

taught Him to hope—and no Christian should be bereft of hope (The Maxims of Robert E. Lee, p. xix).

LOVE DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A WRONG SUFFERED

The word “account” is a business term. It refers to record keeping. . . . accounting . . . and ledgers. Too many of us are in the business of keeping lists of wrongs suffered. We can remember in great detail every offense against us. When our mate offends us, they are likely not only to hear about the recent incident, but receive a whole laundry list of wrongs every time they offend our sensitivities.

Not only do we keep lists of wrongs, we withdraw love when we are hurt. We pout . . . withdraw . . . and plunge into self-pity. When wronged our well of love dries up like a white sheet hanging in the sunshine. Not so with Christ. When hurt by our sin, His galvanized love ordered Him to the cross to pay for our sins.

Because we keep records of wrong, some of us see God as a Sin Accountant. “Ah ha, you did it again!”

We see Him as the Great Record Keeper in the Sky making lists of sins, which He intends to painfully punish at the right time.

But, our God does not keep records. He does not make lists. He is not an auditor. In fact, the Scripture tells us, “He does not remember our sins and iniquities” (Hebrews 10:17). God is not the Great Record Keeper, but the Great Forgetter!

LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH

We love bad news, don’t we? The media has learned that bad news sells more newspapers than good news.

Because some members of our race, are cruel does not mean God is cruel. While modern terrorists may delight in cutting off the heads of Americans, God does not derive sadistic pleasure from our pain. Not only does God not take pleasure in our suffering, He does not rejoice in the fall of the wicked.

Have you ever noticed how many movies are about sweet revenge where the bad guy gets what he deserves in the end or where a mafia figure gets gunned down or a cruel mate dies from his own weapon? We love sweet revenge movies, but He is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 2:9). While His holiness demands justice, His love and grace aches to express kindness—even to His enemies.

The human eye is the most sensitive part of the human body. Even a hair in the eye can inflict excruciating pain. The Scripture tells us that He who touches

you touches the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2:8). Even the hairs of our head are numbered (Matthew 10:30). And, if a sparrow doesn't fall to the ground without His knowledge, He is not out of touch with our trials and traumas.

Though we are often confused by His silence, He takes no pleasure in our pain and heartaches.

God loves truth and hates deceit. We love playing tricks on one another. The bank robber who has mastered deceit and escapes with tons of cash intrigues us. God, on the other hand, is not a trickster. He does not play holy pranks on people. He does not turn obnoxious people into toads. He loves truth because He knows that lies ruin people. He is totally redemptive in His purposes and He plans nothing except good for our lives.

LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS

We know that we are to believe in God, but do we know that God believes in us?

As a father, I would go to every game or concert or choir performance where my children were involved. I was the zealous father in the stands yelling, screaming, and pulling for my children agonizing over every play. Do you think God is any different?

He wants us to succeed. He wants our marriages to be happy. He wants us to be pleasant parents. He wants us to do well in school. He is the great Cheerleader in Heaven wanting the very best for you and me.

He is called "the God of Jacob" (Psalm 20:1) -- a title of grace. God helped the man when all others used him. When his enemies tried to impoverish him, God made him rich. When his uncle Laban tried to trick and enslave him as an indentured servant, God rescued him.

At one time Jacob said, "all these things be against me," but he could not have been more wrong. Joseph was alive, Benjamin was safe, and the land of Goshen awaited the privilege of his arrival.

In his death, the man nobody loved receive more respect and more honor than other man in the Bible (See Genesis 50).

If you are discouraged, let your faith tap into this truth: "This I know, that God is for me" (Ps. 56:9).

LOVE HOPES AL THINGS

Hope is a virtue that swings into action when all visible signs of success have vanished.

God is the Great Hoper . . . the encouraging Father Who wants only the best for His children.

Even when we show no signs of cooperating with His plan, God hopes. He hopes we will succeed, that we will obey, that we will do what is right. God simply loves us and can do nothing else. He is a God who never stops seeking us. God is good and never changes his attitude toward us. He does not forsakes us when difficulties arise or sin knocks on our door (Hebrews 13:5).

Before Abraham left Mesopotamia or obeyed his voice or had children, the Great Hoper said, "I will bless you ... and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3).

Saint Paul's understanding is clear: "Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). Far from being a simple wish for the future with no guarantee that it will occur, the Christian hope is the presence of divine love in a person, the Holy Spirit, a current of life that carries us to the ocean of the fullness in fellowship with His love.

LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS

Some of us need enduring. We are hard to live with. Many of us are cranky and crotchety, wrinkled and warped. Getting close to us is like trying to hug a porcupine. We give up on people because they are not easy to love . . . but . . . God?

Though we are as abrasive as sand paper and as course as carpenter's file, God does not give up on us. Nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8: 30ff). He endures our sins, our weaknesses, our failures, our temper tantrums, our skepticism, our unbelief, our fits of sensuality, our arrogance, and our stupidity. His perfect love endures all our human imperfections.

Do not hear, however, what is not being said!! In His boundless love, God is not a permissive Father. He will, in His love, discipline us for our good. Out of love, he sends us to the School of Hard knocks to learn the tough lessons needed to succeed as human beings (Hebrews 12:1-13).

HIS LOVE NEVER FAILS

Despite what we think this says, love does fail! Many a son has rejected the unfailing love of a mother or father. Many a darling has walked away from true love. Having done the best they could to win a heart, many a beau has been rejected. Our prisons are full of people who did not respond to love.

When the text says that love never fails, it is not talking about results, but the source and supply!

God's love does not fail, because God's reservoir of agape springs from the artesian well of His eternal character. His love does not have a shut off valve. It does not quit or dry up. It does not stumble. It does not stagger. His love is

inexhaustible, unending, and totally committed to love us when we are good and when we are bad; that is, in dealing with us, God does not fail by choosing to love us.

In taking the path of love in shepherding us, God does not fail. We may quit on God, but God will not quit on us. He will love us to the very end even though some of us may never respond correctly to His love (John 13:1).

In conclusion, John Piper reminded us that God is never more glorified than when we delight in Him.

I am not here to tell us to be better and to do more, but to somehow with the eyes of faith to grasp the unfailing love of God for us.

God is not a groupie. He loves us individually, warts and all.

We will indeed be better and do more, but not until we understand how much we are loved and accepted by Him.

Let us not forget that God can give without loving, but God did not love without giving.

If you are tempted to doubt God's love in the midst of your trials, remember that God so loved you that He gave His only begotten Son for you. When you believe Him, you can enjoy that love.

Rules for Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 13:8 – 14:20



Figure 12: Courtesy of Unsplash

Q: Is it not true that love is eternal and gifts are temporal?

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

"Love never faileth" -- love does fail in some relationships, but in choosing the course of love rather than revenge one never fails.

Love is forever; but gifts are temporary. Love is eternal, but spiritual gifts edify the church on earth . . . and some of those gifts faded in the first century.

Tongues is a spiritual gift that consist of the ability to learn and speak foreign languages quickly. God gave the gift to the early church in order to expedite the gospel to the world.

Tongues refer to foreign languages, and not gibberish -- to the ability to intelligently and responsibly communicate the gospel to men in a language other than one's mother tongue, and not to private tommyot to God in the prayer closet.

Acts 2:8-11 "and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

"tongues shall cease" refers to the supernatural ability to speak a sensible message in a foreign language without years of schooling.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

The knowledge of every man is only partial. Likewise, authoritative Bible preaching only communicates partial truth. Few preachers have fully developed theology. "therefore, when this dispensation ends, and the complete dispensation is brought in, these imperfect gifts shall cease" (Ellicott).

The gifted farmer uses his skills to plant the seed of the gospel. At harvest time the fruits will be perfected and remain in God's kingdom forever.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

The word "perfect" informs us when the gift of tongues would cease. What is that which is perfect?

The word "perfect" (teleios) means "perfect, complete, whole, or mature." We know from chapter 14:20 that the cessation began after the early church matured. The word "in understanding be men" is a translation of the word teleios in 1 Corinthians 14:20; that is, the childish gifts of tongues faded when the first century infant church began to bloom in the Lord.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

The word translated "child" (nepios) means "infant." Tongues are compared to the gurgles and coos of a baby – a type of childish communication. As the child matures into manhood, foolish talk is replaced by mature eloquence.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

A "glass" refers to a polished brass mirror common in the first century – a metaphor for our murky faith peering at the perfect Christ.

The apostle perceived a day when he would see Christ perfectly even as men with 20/20 vision saw the Apostle in his day. People around Paul saw him more accurately than Paul saw himself in a polished brass mirror.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

"Faith will vanish into sight,
Hope be emptied in delight,
Love in heaven will shine more bright,
Therefore give us love;" (Cited by Ellicott)

"now" is not referring to time, but to the logical necessity connected with the whole argument. Gifts will pass away, but faith, hope, and charity endure into eternity.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

Paul addresses the Corinthian church.

Chapter 13:8-13 is a parenthetical discourse. In 14:1, Paul returns to his main argument – that love is superior to all gifts.

Paul is not saying to major on love and ignore spiritual gifts; rather, he saying both are necessary for the building up of the body of Christ: pursue love without neglecting the development of gifts.

“that ye may prophecy” – Modern man limits prophecy to an act of fortune telling -- where men have an obsession with being able to predict trends and future events; but, the first century believes used the term broadly; that is, as a mature man's ability to discuss Biblical truth . . . theology . . . the will of God on matters of controversy.

“The word here does not appear to mean foretelling things to come, but rather opening and applying the Scriptures, and discoursing on divine things in an edifying manner (Benson).

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

Paul speaks in third person.

"an unknown tongue" is not a prayer language.

An “unknown tongue” is not gibberish, but a human language unknown to the speaker. A man may speak perfect Taushiro (Peruvian), but if no one knows the language, only God can understand him; i.e. the dialogue from a human perspective remains a mystery – something impossible to comprehend.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Prophecy would be a Bible-based message that feeds the understanding of men, prodding them to do good, and comforting them regarding the dreariness around them.

Paul is not upholding a private prayer language and down braiding prophecy. Quite the opposite. Prophecy is good when men understand the message.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

The apostle is not encouraging the exercise of gifts for the purpose of “self-edification;” but an exhortation to speak a scripturally based message that builds up the church. The goal of church is not to build upon one’s ego, but to

edify the congregation. Further, Paul is not encouraging Christians to retreat to a prayer closet and chatter like a child. He wants mature men speaking a developed Bible truth.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Speaking in first person ("I"), Paul doesn't want to be misunderstood. He is not against a linguist who can speak in several languages; rather, he is "combating the undue exaltation of the gift of tongues to the depreciation of other gifts" (Ellicott).

A gift that edifies the church is better than the exercise of a gift that instructs no one. Speaking is one matter; interpreting the oration is another. Chose translation . . . clarity . . . coherence . . . and intelligibility over the energetic showmanship of a gift.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

Paul was invested in spiritual development ("profit"), not the sparkle, shine, and shimmer of a gift. Men grow when they increase "knowledge," receive insights into "revelation," or are exhorted through powerful, authoritative preaching (prophesy) to obey God's Word.

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

Paul provides an illustration. People appreciate music when instruments make a distinction in sounds. No one likes to hear dogs bark and chickens crow. Who understands a dog's bark or a cow's moo? But everyone loves the sounds of a violin, guitar, or trumpet because of numerous variations of musical notes.

Who understands or responds to a one note trumpet? During military battles messages were communicated by varied bugle calls: reveille, assembly, taps, charge, retreat, wake up, be alert, march forward, etc.

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

This is Paul's way of telling the church not to be a "Johnny one note" that enjoys hearing himself toot his own horn. Maybe he understands his own honking, but no one else does. The objective of communication in the church is understanding . . . insight into the truth of the gospel that enables one to reach

spiritual maturity. 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

There are many sounds, languages, and voices in the world. All have significance, but they only have meaning when spoken at the right time to the right person in a language that is meaningful to both parties.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

Paul states a simple truth: If I don't know the language of foreigner, how can I understand him. If he doesn't understand me, how can we communicate? Likewise, in a church~ If I don't know the language spoken, it is meaningless.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Paul commends those seeking spiritual gifts, but more important than the gift, is communication that schools the church because members understand the language spoken.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

Paul speaks in the third person.

Greater than speaking, is the ability to interpret; that is, to listen with understanding and translate the speech into the people's mother tongue.

A man speaking in a foreign tongue needs the gift of interpretation or he will only bewilder the body and wear down the patience of the people.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

Paul speaks in the first person.

Even an apostle could not edify, unless he spoke so as to be understood by his hearers (Matthew Henry).

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Yes, praying in the Spirit is important, but praying with understanding is better. Singing is good, but singing with meaningful words is the superior skill. Singing, "da, da, da da da" may sweeten the soul of the singer, but it adds nothing to the knowledge and understanding of the church.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

“thou” is second person. Apparently, being a sea port community, blessing other believers in foreign languages was common in Corinth.

You can say, “Bd’te zdorovy” (God bless you in Russian), but if the hearer does not know Russian, how can he say, “Amen?”

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

This is Paul’s way of informing us that giving thanks is good, but if the audience doesn’t understand your utterance how can they be improved?

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. 20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

Paul returns to his discourse to the first person. Paul does not devalue the gift that he upbraids for its misuse in this chapter – a gift that he exercised to some degree for edification of the body. Yet, in the church he would rather speak five words that edify the body than have the ability to speak ten thousand words that nobody understands.

The goal of speaking is not to show off one’s knowledge, vocabulary, flare, oratory ability, or clever puns, but to be an agent of edification by speaking clear, coherent, comprehensible string of words.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

Three classes of people are mentioned: infants, children, and men (the mature). Members of a church need to be mature and competent in knowledge. Only in the area of evil are Christians permitted to be childlike. Believers need adult maturity in the faith to glorify God, but a healthy innocence in regards to existential evil is not only permitted but greatly encouraged.

Rules for Church Meetings

1 Corinthians 14



Figure 14: Courtesy of Unsplash

Q: Is it not true that God's rules are good for the church and applicable for today?

As the gospel was preached, New Testament churches cropped up all over the Roman Empire.

These assemblies of believers were not as rigidly organized as modern churches with their professional pastors, liturgies, order of services, and the like. They felt more like a "free-for-all" than a planned, orchestrated worship service we are familiar with in today's world.

In some cases, churches behaved like a third-grade classrooms where students pop up and down and speak without permission to talk.

Consequently, Paul, as the church planter, had to set down some basic rules to bring order and integrity to this gathering of believers.

The Problem of Disorder in the Church

1 Corinthians 14:23 *If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad (mainomal)?*

The Corinthian church, a multilingual, multiethnic body of believers was very much alive and glowing. These Christians were excited about coming together and to share with others what God was doing in their lives and what the Lord had taught them that week. A gifted church, the people were motivated to exercise their gifts; that is, these people were not "spectators" being entertained, but c0-participants in the worship service.

With so many wanting to speak in their native tongue (glossa - a Mediterranean language), meetings tended to be long and confusing. This disorderly practice, however, could bring criticism from visitors who might conclude the saints were crazy (mainomal - not in their right mind).

As the apostle listened to reports about the progress of the church in Corinth, he identified practices in the assembly that needed to be corrected. Paul needed to lay down some simple rules that would bring order to the church so the purpose of gathering could be achieved.

These rules apply when the "the whole church be come together into one place" and do not necessarily apply to auxiliary meetings, mission teams, or home Bible studies.

The Goal of all Church Meetings

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

The word "prophesy" (propheteuo) had more to do with sharing "the mind of God" (Scripture) with conviction, certainty, and clarity than "predicting" the future.

That there are prophets / prophetesses today that can predict the future is a cultic movement within the culture associated with the divining cults who desire to control the future. Such claims among Christians merit a forceful challenge.

"convinced of all, he is judged of all:" As a spirit-filled man shared the Word of God, the assembly would listen to see if his perceptions were accurate and relevant. In so doing, God was glorified, and the audience was edified.

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

A marvelous mark of Christianity compared to other religions is that the Word of God addresses issues and concerns common to all men throughout time; that is, it does not contain esoteric, cabalistic mysteries common to the cults.

As history testifies, wherever the gospel is clearly preached, men fall down on their "face" metaphorically speaking, and worship the one true God.

Rule One: All activities in the church service must be done for the purpose of edifying the church.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

The actions taking place in this church are mentioned here: "hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation."

A church meeting can become bogged down and undisciplined if everyone in the church has an announcement, a report, a favorite song they want sung, a liturgy to read, and a Bible thought to share.

"Let all things be done unto edifying" demands order and discipline. Churches must limit the number of speakers, announcements, and reports so that the main purpose of gathering (edification) can be achieved. An overenthusiastic, detailed announcement maker for a small church can dominate a meeting and severely intrude on the pastor's sermon time which he has spent all week preparing. Churches are not in place to share announcements, but to hear the Word of God.

Rule 2: The number of participants in a church service must be limited so that people are truly edified and not burdened down by multiple agendas.

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret

The problem that needed to be addressed was the multilingual character of this seaport community. The process of translating and interpreting every message / report to each ethnic groups bogged down the service testing everyone's patience.

The remedy for this multi-lingual community was not censorship but order that comes by limiting participation. Paul did not try to limit the needed translation work, but to limit the number of speakers in the church. Individual, peripheral concerns had to be eliminated because the clutter of personal interest bogged down the church. The rule of silence had to be applied to church gathers. Not everyone should be speaking, but everyone should be listening.

Rule 3: If there is no interpreter, the preacher must remain silent.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

If edification is the objective, then speakers must speak in the native tongue of the congregation unless there is a competent translator present. If there is no translator present, silence is the order of the day for that sanguine man.

Church is a place where men and women can silently speak to God. God hears the prayers and wishes of the silent.

Rule 4: Limit the number of preachers, and let the audience remain silent.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

The Biblical word for preacher or teacher is the term "prophet" -- a relevant term for the apostles transitioning out of geo-political Israel to establish New Testament ecclesias (assemblies) or "the new Israel" also called the church or temple of God.

NT assemblies were privileged to have more than one gifted man who studied the Word. As blessed as these churches are, the church must limit the number

of speakers and the rest of the congregation must remain silent while the speaker(s) delivers his message.

Modern churches tend to excel in this rule of order.

Rule 5: Those church members with an impromptu, relevant thought must remain silent and not interrupt the main speaker.

30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

In this passage, the Apostle teaches this "jack-in-the-box" congregation to be courteous and not to interrupt the presenter.

Rule 6: The church must develop a procedure for congregational participation, but in an orderly, sensible manner.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

This is a warning against over regulating a church. All member of the church are important and should be given an opportunity to utilize their gift for the edification and comfort of all.

Rule 7: Exercising self-control and silence is the duty of all members of a church.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

While individuals may feel their message to the congregation is of the Spirit and relevant to the topic discussed, they must also feel the duty to exercise self-control and be silent.

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

In case people did not under the rules of order, Paul reminds this enthusiastic congregation of Biblical theology -- that God is not the author of confusion but of peace; that is, if there is disorder and chaos taking place in a church, it is not of God.

Rule 8: Women must remain silent.

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

While this rule is a disturbing for those trained in the secular feminist movement, it is nevertheless God's imperative for churches.

This rule has its foundation in the Old Testament that orders men to lead and disallows women to rule over their husbands (Genesis 3:16). This command by

the Apostle addresses the curse - the nature of women to take control. Even was the agent of sin in the original creation and her fruit does not fall far from the tree. Consequently, God did not appoint women to be kings, priests, or hold the office of a prophet in ancient Israel. These rules are carried over into the church, the new Israel of God, to keep estrogen out of the pulpit. God calls men to lead in the family, church, and nation. Neglectful men and dominate women fall short of the glory of God.

While sisters are often the best servants in a church, God limits their ministry. Women are not permitted to teach men or exercise authority over adult males IN THE CHURCH. Moreover, they are commanded to wear a Head Covering as a symbol they, along with the whole church, recognize God's law order as it pertains to the roles for men and women in the family and church. (See 1 Corinthians 11; Ephesians 5:24; and 1 Timothy 2:8ff).

If this rule is not satisfactory, consider the fact that God requires most men in the church to be silent. In fact, in Timothy 2:8, Paul limits male participation in the duties of prayer to holy men.

Paul does not address exceptions to the rule of silence because he is squashing disorder and setting down rules for general church order. The rule of silence for women is not absolute nor is it the law of the Medes and Persians. There is a place for a woman's testimony and, or mission reports where it would be appropriate for a women to share the progress of the gospel in a given mission. But there is no place for disruption of a service to satisfy a woman's curiosity or a man's for that matter.

Rule 9: Women are to reserve their questions and save them for their husbands at home.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Ask any lecturer and they will tell you they save the question time to the end of their seminar because spurious questions (1) disrupt the lecture, and (2) most questions will be answered by listening to the lecture.

The apostle is laying down rules for church services. The main rule that establishes order is silence: silence for the majority of the congregation; silence for the majority of men in the congregation; silence for men with a prophetic gift pressing for exercise; and, silence for women. Silence is a courtesy Christians extend to the preacher so the body can be built up in the faith.

Furthermore, it is our task to understand the spirit of the law and not the letter of the law. In no way is the Apostle attempting to belittle women or hinder their growth. Growth comes by listening, not by talking.

He is not laying down this rule because women are inferior to men, or because men are more talented at speaking than women, but because God wants men and women to accept their roles as God's will for their pilgrimage here on earth. Disorder in a church hinders that purpose. Women leading hinder God's plan for the sexes.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

In case any might accuse Paul of being a first-century misogynist, he reminds the church that these rules are the commandments of the Lord applicable to all churches during the Christian era. Paul doesn't hate women nor is he trying to frustrate gifted men. He is a man of God being faithful to the law of God -- laws that require men to lead and women to follow.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Some men and some women prefer to be ignorant of God's law-order. If they are willfully ignorant, let them be ignoramuses say the Apostle. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink."

Q: What if a woman has a theology degree and has been trained to be a pastor?

Answer: Resign! The apostle said, "Let your women keep silence in the churches!"

Q: What if my husband isn't very spiritual and doesn't know the Word of God?

Answer: Sadly, this is too often the case. Nevertheless, just do it: 'if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home' humbly and respectfully.

Consider the problems that have arisen since the Women's Suffrage Movement in the 1920's: The following problems rightfully deserve to be laid at the feet of male and female feminists: voting, rising hem lines, split families, divorce, teen pregnancy, abortion, AIDS, women forced into the work place, loss of income for males, lesbianism, transvestism, delinquency, teen suicide, and the like.

But, God's law-order will be restored to the family and church, and when it is, many of these social problems will disappear in Christian families and churches.

Until then, let us commit ourselves to the edification of the church.

Resist Feminism in the Church

1 Corinthians 14

A Rebuttal of “Should Women Really ‘Keep Silent’ In Church?” Understanding 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY DALE CHAMBERLAIN IN BLACK

REBUTTAL BY DR. BROOKY STOCKTON IN RED

The question above exposes the mission of Chamberlain's article which is to convince Christians this passage does not mean what it says. Because the doctrines of feminism pervade society, and because the influence of feminism has infiltrated the church, feminists are driven to “readjust” traditional interpretations of Biblical passages that condemn their subversive agenda.

Moreover, Chamberlain appears to look at his experience in the American church as normal and the practice female subordination in the family and church as abnormal. But, the American church with its 501 c 3 status, ordination of women and homosexuals, run-away teen pregnancy, gender-confusion, high divorce rates, and its subjective foundation is not THE STANDARD FOR NORMALITY.

For two-thousand years the church has been built on the leadership of men and supported by subordinate women. But, fems tell us church history was wrong on this issue and that the family and church would be better if we had women elders and female pastors with soprano voices shouting at men telling these male nincompoops what to believe and how to behave.

This drive to edit God's Word is nothing short of apostasy. Why not go all the way and start calling God our Heavenly Mother Who Art in Heaven, Hallowed by Thy Name?

Because Chamberlain promotes feminism, his “adjusted” interpretation of women’s roles in the church need to be analyzed so congregations will not be lead astray by femes "who privily bring in damnable heresies" neutralizing testosterone in the church.

One of the fundamental beliefs of the Protestant Reformation was that the bible, at its heart, is understandable. But that doesn’t mean that every passage of scripture is as clear as the rest. Case in point is 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

This passage is only unclear to those with a feminist agenda, and those who do not understand Eve’s curse (Genesis 3:16).

Now, some passages of scripture are hard to understand, but their interpretation one way or the other doesn't make a fundamental difference to how churches operate. For example, most churches aren't going to split over the finer points of interpreting the apocalyptic prophecies in Daniel or Revelation. But 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, wherein Paul apparently calls on all women to remain silent, is not one of those passages.

That a woman's role in church is not a major "point" of church doctrine or that this passage is disputable is a mark of men who lack understanding that the Scriptures, including their references to gender, are inspired by God (2 Timothy 2:16).

How we understand Paul's words here has a dramatic impact on our churches' leadership structures and worship gatherings.

Yes, it does. It has a dynamic impact on whether or not one is a Biblical church or a liberal government, fem-driven 501 c 3 c religious organization.

The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)

Notice that Chamberlain does not address passages in the law that support Paul's prohibition against women speaking in an official gathering of the whole congregation. The whole of Scripture prohibits women to rule over their husbands, to rule the church, or to hold the office of a king, judge, priest, or pastor. 1 Corinthians 14 is perfectly consistent with the will of God on this matter.

On the face of it, you might be wondering what the interpretive challenge is. Paul seems pretty clear. Women should be silent in church. If they have questions, they should ask their husbands about it when they get home.

Yes, this is exactly what Paul says.

In fact, that's how some church leaders interpret this text. As a result, women are never allowed to preach in mixed company. **Correct!** Some churches try to be as consistent with the text as they possibly can, even disallowing women from giving announcements, praying, or reading scripture to the congregation when men are present. This is a correct application of this passage. **Correct!** **Holy men should lead and holy women should follow.**

But something about that doesn't feel quite right. It only doesn't feel right to feminists. Not just because it's different from the culture of our day, but because it seems different from Paul's own leadership culture. It's incongruent with what we know about how he worked with women in the book of Acts and has spoken about them in his other various letters. No it is not. Paul loved his

sisters in the Lord, but also gave instruction to them to take a subordinate role in the church consistent with what all of Scripture teaches.

In fact, it doesn't even square with what he has said about women in this very same letter.

No, this is not a fact. And, yes it does square with what the rest of Corinthians has to say about order in the church. Silence by men . . . and women . . . in the presence of God is always in order (2 Chronicles 2:18; Habakkuk 2:20).

While our precious Lord Jesus Christ set women free from bondage to despotism, He did not exalt them to positions of authority over men.

In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (another notoriously difficult passage), Paul talks about how women should clothe themselves when they pray or prophesy in the church. Not if—when. And Paul seemingly endorses the practice.

No, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is NOT another difficult passage. It is very clear that men are to remove their head-wear in church and that women are to cover their heads as a sign that the church follows God's law-order. Head Covering is one of three ordinances of the church. This passage is only "notoriously difficult" for those seeking to build churches on woke-feminism that reared its ugly head after the Women's Suffrage Movement in the 1920s.

But how can women pray and prophesy (offer a word of exhortation and encouragement from the scriptures) while at the same time remaining utterly silent? Therein lies the interpretive challenge, and one that's highly consequential to how we treat women in the church.

The Apostle does not exhort women to "pray" and "prophesy" in the church. He exhorts them to put on a Head Covering when in a church gathering. There are two commands in 1 Corinthians 11:6 - Let a woman wear a Head Covering or let her be shaved.

To alleviate the difficulty, some interpreters have read into the text, speculating that there must have been something in the immediate context of church life in Corinth.

Agreed! This is a common approach by many.

Did they have a couple rabble rousing women in their midst that were so disruptive that Paul just needed to put a moratorium on them speaking unless spoken to? Was it too hard to get through a service without one woman or another interrupting the preacher?

Maybe, but I'm not sure that's the best interpretive option.

Agreed! What Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 11, he taught in all the churches (11:16).

And then there is the issue of the half sentence that comes in verse 33.

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:33-35)

When Paul talks about God being a God of peace, he's referring to the instructions he gave in the previous verses about how the church should conduct itself when Christians in their midst begin speaking in tongues.

The trouble is the following phrase, "as in all the churches of the saints." In the original Greek, it isn't entirely clear which sentence it belongs to: "God is a God of peace," or "women should remain silent." If it is the latter (as the ESV has rendered above), then this command isn't specific to this one church in Corinth but rather all churches for all time.

It seems only "unclear" to the Chamberlain, but it has been very clear to churchmen for the last two thousand years of church history. Paul's rules for church order have been applied similarly in all churches throughout church history on every continent around the world.

It is my belief that the phrase belongs at the end of the previous sentence, like this:

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. The women should keep silent in the churches.

And really, the second sentence here should be at the start of a new paragraph. The reason I say that is because I believe that all the confusion surrounding this passage of Scripture amounts to bad English punctuation.

It is true that Paul uses the phrase "peace" as his justification for the rules he laid down in the previous verses. It is not true that His "peace," "law," and "order" does not apply to the rule about women being silent; that is, women's silence in church is a rule of order the Apostle establishes in this text. It is also the rule for most men . . . and children. Linguistic or grammatical manipulation is not the way to address the issue at hand.

Interpretation Begins With Translation

In the Greek manuscripts, there are no chapters or verses. There is no punctuation. In fact, for the most part, there aren't even spaces between words.

All of this needs to be interpreted by translation committees before they can render the text into English. And sometimes the grammar and punctuation choices they make are highly consequential.

What I would like to offer you is an interpretation of this text that isn't dependent upon speculation about what might have been happening in Corinth at the time of Paul's writing, but actually just adjusts the English punctuation to help make all the puzzle pieces fit.

This interpretation isn't new to me. A number of bible scholars have set it forth.

It just isn't the most popular interpretation in evangelical spaces. But it is the one that makes the most sense to me. It just requires adjusting the punctuation, which was not part of the inspired text and has to be added in the translation process for our own clarity.

It is true that to make an interpretation, scholars must secure the text. But, Chamberlain appears to be adjusting the rules to fit his feminist agenda in the church. It would be better to see Paul's instruction as a corrective to radical, impulsive feminism swamping the church. But, Chamberlain disallows the passage to be corrective to the errors of suffragettes in this age.

With 50% of graduates from seminary being women . . . and, all looking for a job as a "pastoress," the fems are all driven to find an interpretation for this passage to fit their agenda and to justify their ambition to rule over churchmen.

A man's leadership duties and woman's subordinate role in the family, church, and nation is so grounded in Old Testament instructions, it hardly needs comment . . . unless, of course, one is addressing neophytes in Biblical studies.

Throughout Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he quotes things that the Corinthians have said back to them. We aren't sure where Paul is getting those quotes, but it was presumably from a letter Corinth had previously sent to Paul.

The "quotes" come from "Sosthenes our brother," who was a former synagogue ruler who gave his report to Paul (1 Corinthians 1:1)

If not that, these were just things that Paul knew the Corinthians were prone to say after having spent some time with them.

Nonsense! Paul started this church and was very familiar with the people and the challenges facing this congregation -- a church born in a political storm -- a church with struggles not unlike other Greek / Roman churches. See Acts 18.

So in his theological explanations, Paul quotes what the Corinthians might have said were they in the same room having a conversation with him, and then responds to those imagined interjections, whether by agreeing, correcting, or

simply nuancing what they have said. Examples include 1 Corinthians 6:12-13, 8:1, and 10:23.

This is called "speculation" or "eisegesis" -- a reading into the text what is not there.

I believe that's what he's doing here in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. And on that basis, here's how I think 1 Corinthians 14:31-40 should be rendered.

Chamberlain is outlaying his thinking which is opposed to the thinking of the Apostle Paul.

For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

"The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."

Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things should be done decently and in order.

When punctuated this way, it seems that Paul isn't telling the women to be silent but actually rebuking the men who are disallowing them from speaking in tongues during worship gatherings.

Nonsense! Paul instructed the women to be silent along with all the energetic speakers who wanted to voice their insights impromptu. Changing the punctuation serves only to promote Chamberlain's feminist agenda.

Paul tells the Corinthians that all can prophesy one by one, and they naturally object,

No, Paul limited the number of speakers to two or three so as not to exhaust the patience of the people. Not only were women to be silent so were the majority of men!

Admittedly, the first-century format of the Corinthian church is not completely known . . . at least it was different than today's highly structured church service.

"Even the women? Shouldn't they just be silent and ask their husbands about it when they get home?"

This appears to be a facetious question mocking the original intent of the Apostle.

To which Paul responds, "Did the word of God come only to men?" And he goes on to reiterate that no one should be forbidden from speaking in tongues. It should just always be done in an orderly manner, as he outlined earlier in the text.

The author mistranslates verse 36 by inserting "men" for "you" (humas) to deliberately, and intentionally mislead the reader.

Not Everything Is As It Seems

In this interpretation, Paul isn't silencing the women. He's actually giving them a voice. In short, I believe we have been interpreting this passage the exact opposite of what it actually says.

False: Paul orders the women to be silent as well as other sanguine members of the assembly! And, "NO!" he is not giving them a voice . . . nor is he giving all men a voice. He desires all take the position of learner and to put their "ears on." Learning happens when people listen, not when people have their mouth open.

But the puzzle pieces fit, particularly when we consider that Paul respected and worked alongside women with authority such as Chloe and Lydia, and he even commended his letter to the Romans to be delivered and read by Phoebe.

"No," this is not a puzzle, and "Yes" the author is hammering the text to fit his bias.

That Paul worked alongside these beloved sisters in the Lord does NOT sanction their speaking or preaching in the church. Paul does not even allow all men to pray. Not all males are qualified to lead worship services. Leadership in public prayers is limited to holy and happy men only (1 Timothy 1:8).

Admittedly, however, "giving a missions' report" is not the same the same thing as authoritative Bible teaching in the church; that is, even the most conservative churches make room for and provide a place for mission reports by couples returning from the mission field. Paul is not advocating absolute silence but silence as a rule of order for most congregants in most services. An orderly missions' report is not what is being sanctioned in 1 Corinthians 14.

It also fits Paul's words in this very same letter about the manner in which women should pray and prophesy in mixed gender gatherings. It seems fairly obvious.

No, this is not obvious! The author draws a conclusion that tickles the ears of feminists – a conclusion that contradicts the apostle and all of Scripture.

The reason why we have failed to see it is because we have been informed by our (often patriarchal) cultural assumptions, which then limit our understanding of the text—from its translation from the original languages to how we apply it in our churches.

More nonsense! This author is forcing a feministic interpretation on this passage because the whole culture is drowning in a sea of radical feminism. It is not traditional interpreters that have "cultural assumptions," but Chamberlain and his feminist associates that are inundated with modern suffrage "cultural assumptions."

Now, this doesn't mean that Paul was necessarily a full blown egalitarian in terms of how he saw church governance. There are other New Testament passages to consider, and that's a different article for a different day.

Agreed! Paul was not "a full blown egalitarian." Nor, was he a partial egalitarian.

But in the case of this passage, what we can learn is that women should be able to use their spiritual gifts—and specifically here, the gift of speaking and interpreting tongues—to encourage the church just as much as men are. And that men should not inhibit them from doing so.

It is true that our beloved sisters have spiritual gifts and should use them in the church particularly in ministries directed toward women and children.

It is not true that women are free to preach, teach, instruct, speak in tongues, prophesy, or rebuke men from the pulpit. This would be an assault on God's law-order and create confusion in the church. We simply do not need more women contending with men and telling them what to do (Proverbs 21:9; 30:23).

Brooky Stockton, Ph.D. (retired pastor and seminary professor).

The Five Pillars of the Gospel

1 Corinthians 15:8

Q: Is it not true, the church was created by preaching the gospel and that to avoid apostasy churchmen must refresh their minds with the essence of the gospel message?

The Gospel



Figure 15: Courtesy of Unsplash

1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

The gospel is not a country song nor is it the whole Bible. The gospel is about the person of Christ and His marvelous, victorious history. It is good news that Christ that Christ is the Son of God; that He died for our sins and literally, physically, actually, tangibly, and historically rose from the grave. It is good news that death can be defeated.

The Gospel is about the Person of Christ

3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ

The gospel is the good news that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The name “Jesus” is the OT name for Joshua (Yhshou/). “Joshua” (Yhshou) means “Jehovah is salvation.” The term “Yeshua” is built on the OT name of “Joshua.”

The word “Christ” is not “Jesus” last name. There is not a Mr. & Mrs. Christ. The Greek word for “Christ” (Cristou/, , Christos) means “anointed one.” The Hebrew term for “Christ” is the Hebrew word *machiyach* (Ax*yvim) or “Messiah” (See the term “Anointed” in Psalm 2:2). Hebrews anointed their prophets, priests, and kings with oil to signify their special, holy calling.

Anointed ones could not hold all three offices in Israel. Only a very special person could serve all three. The Jews, therefore, looked forward to the day when God’s Messiah—the perfect prophet, priest, king would rule in Israel. He would be David’s greater Son—the One who would usher in the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 9:6-8; 11:1-6).

The designation “Son of God” is found in Psalm 2 and Isaiah 9:6. The term “Son” is laden with theological significance. It does not mean Jesus was created or procreated. His was a seedless conception. His Sonship is a declared relationship between God the Father and God the Son. As Son, He partakes of the divine nature. As a man, he partakes of human nature. Jesus is the God-man, Israel’s Messiah—fully God and fully man—two distinct natures without confusion or amalgamation.

Thus, the first pillar of the gospel is the Person of Christ. The gospel declares that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. His royal personage includes such prestigious titles as “Son of Man” (Matthew 9:6), “Savior” (Luke 2:11), “Logos” (John 1:1), “Firstborn” (Colossians 1:15), “Creator” (John 1:2-3), “Lamb of God” (John 1:29), “King of Israel” (John 1:49), “Mediator” (1 Timothy 2:5), “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Notice the last three titles.

“Is Christianity the only way to God?” The answer is “NO!” Christianity is not the only way to God. Christ is the only way to God! Jesus is not a way to *Theos*, but The Way! He is not a truth, but the Truth! He is not a way to life, He is The Life. Jesus is the only Mediator that can unite man to God. He is God’s only locus of salvation. The task of discipleship is to help “faithful men” to apprehend the uniqueness of the Son so they can find God and find life (1 John 5:12, 13).

While there is only one way to God, there are many ways to Christ. Every individual Christian has his unique testimony of how Christ found him.

The Gospel is about the History of Christ

1 Corinthians 15:1-3 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand . . . For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

First, it is good news that Christ existed . . . that He was a real man with a real history.

Notice the three terms that describe the history of Christ: death, burial, and resurrection. It is good news that Christ died, was buried, and rose again. But, why is this good news? Would it be good news if your father or mother died? Was it good news when Einstein died? Why is it good news that Christ died?

Religion is about man's fundamental problem. Man's fundamental problem is that he is going to die. Can death be overcome? Every religion from Arabian Islam to Zen Buddhism seeks to answer the question, "Is there life after death?" Even atheists have beliefs about man's origin and destiny. All have answers. But are any of their answers true? What is the evidence? What counts as evidence? Where's the PROOF?

As you study religion including evolutionary atheism, you will notice a major difference between Christianity and all other religions. All other religions are philosophical propositions about life and death. None offer empirical proof their assertions are true, and indeed cannot.

Christianity does not begin with a philosophy, but a fact!

It is not just about the moral teaching of Jesus. Christianity is an historical account of the God-man who physically died, was buried because he had died, and who physically, literally, tangibly came back to life. Over 500 witnesses saw, heard, and touched him. If Christ died and rose again, he solved man's fundamental problem! This is good news indeed; that is, if Christ defeated death, he can solve your death problem.

But, what counts as proof? When it comes to solving man's fundamental problem, we are not interested in theories or hypotheses, or mathematical axioms. We want synthetic proof--legal proof. We want something that will stand up in a court of law. In a courtroom, the judge wants to know: "What did you hear? What did you see? What did you feel?" He is not interested in speculation or opinion or hearsay, just the facts! The Scripture records that over 500 hundred men experienced the resurrection event: "We saw him did. We saw him alive! We touched him. We heard him." That was their testimony (1 John 1:1-4).

Acts 1:3 To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking

of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

It is good news that Jesus died. If he did not die on the cross, but swooned, then he did not defeat death. He only cheated death. If he were not buried, there would be reasonable doubt that he really died. The Roman soldiers, Joseph of Arimathea, and the women knew Jesus was dead. That is why they buried him.

God left investigators with many infallible proofs that death can be defeated (Acts 1:3). The gospel, therefore, is the good news that one man died, was buried, and rose from the grave and proved it in the courtroom of the Roman theater. It is good news His history is certain and true.

The Gospel is about the Meaning of Christ's History

Unlike the life and death of ordinary people, the entire history of Christ has meaning that affects us for good.

3 . . . Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

The preposition “for” tells us the meaning of His history. “for” informs us that Christ’s death was substitutionary. He was not dying for himself, but for others . . . as a Redeemer paying the cost for the sins of sinners. He died for us, and since He died for us, He paid for all our sins. Since He died for our sins, there are no more sins for us to pay for. Believers are forgiven! And, this is good news.

The Gospel is about the Marvelous Effects of His History Upon those Who Believe

2 By which also ye are saved . . .

The word “saved” informs us of the salvation benefit of his death, burial, and resurrection.

It is good news that Christ’s history showers the believer with benefits. When a man believes in the Savior, he is marvelously impacted by our Lord’s accomplishments. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that Christ death “saves” them from sins according to the Scriptures.

Four effects are mentioned in the Book of Acts: forgiveness (5:31), Holy Spirit (2:38) eternal life (11:18; 13:48), and justification (13:39).

Through His death he accomplished the purposes of redemption. From his enthroned position at the right hand of God, He gifts the believer with the Holy Spirit. Many benefits are mentioned in the letters of Paul: “justification” (Romans 5:1), “redemption” (Ephesians 1:7), “reconciliation,” (Romans 5:9, 10), “regeneration” (Titus 3:5), “identification” (Romans 6:3-5), “adoption” (Romans 8:15), “freedom from law” (Romans 6:14), “election” (1 Peter 1:2),

“predestination” (Ephesians 1:5), “baptism into his body” (1 Corinthians 12:13), “eternal security” (Romans 11:29), and “glorification” (Romans 8:30).

When a person believes in the Savior, the benefits of salvation are bestowed in a first fruits way. The full harvest will occur at the *parousia* (coming) of our Lord. This is the now, not-yet concept of theology.

The Gospel is about How God Wants Us to Respond to Christ

Notice the word “gospel” in this section (1:11).

1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

It is good news that we know how to respond to God.

In ancient times, men did all kinds of despicable acts thinking they were pleasing God. The prophets of Baal cut off fingers and castrated themselves believing this would please Baal (1 Kings 18). Manasseh burned his children as a sacrifice (2 Chronicles 33:6). Balaam taught people to fornicate with temple prostitutes (Numbers 25: 1-6). Pharisee tithed mint and cumin (Luke 11:42).

Today, Hindus lay on beds of nails hoping to excite one of their 330 million deities. In Mexico, Roman Catholics crawl up mountains on bleeding knees seeking to capture the heart of Virgin Mary. Animistic Indians dance and chant around campfires hoping to catch the attention of the eternal spirit. Jews avoid shellfish and pork. Islamic sects have members that commit suicide hoping to obtain Allah’s favor. Some people in the Baltic States walk on hot coals in an effort to prove their faith. Some vampirettes drink blood. Other religions sacrifice goats or pigeons in an effort to appease some god. New Agers practice astrology, meditation, and channeling. Do any of these things capture the heart of God?

The gospel does not leave us guessing as to what pleases God! What pleases Him is repentance toward sin and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Faith pleases God and those who believed are “saved” from their sins. And, this is good news.

In summary, the Corinthians want the American churches to know that God’s Gospel has five pillars: The Person of Christ; the History of Christ; The Meaning of His History; The Effects of His History for those who believe; and, The Response Required to Please God. If you understand these pillars, you can be an effective, accurate teacher of God’s Word.

The Last Enemy

1 Corinthians 15:22-30

Q: Is it not true that death is the last enemy to be destroyed?



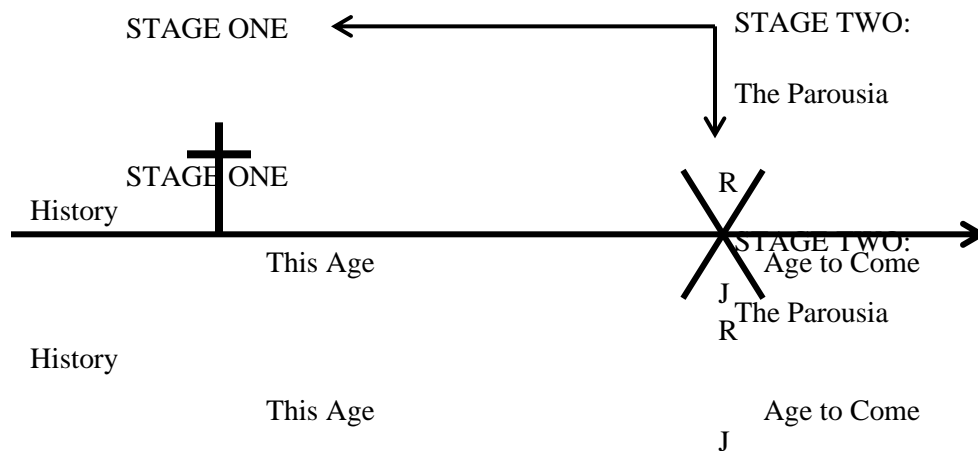
Figure 16: Courtesy of Unsplash

The victory over death is accomplished in at least two stages, (Christ' first coming and at the Parousia of Christ).

Ladd, a strong premillennialist, saw three stages of the defeat of His enemies (Christ first coming, the Parousia, and the defeat of Christ's enemies after the alleged millennial reign). Ladd came to this conclusion by separating the following three phrases: (1) "Christ the first fruits"; (2) "Christ's at his Parousia"; and, (3) "then cometh the end." Ladd inserted a thousand years between the Parousia and "the end."

But, a natural reading of the text would support the view that "the end" follows the Parousia. His second coming contains salvation for the righteous and final judgment of the wicked. After reading 1 Thessalonians chapter four and five one would conclude that the ominous wrath of God upon wicked men follows the rapture; that the rapture, the second coming, and the resurrection are essentially the same event—an event that cannot be exegetically supported by a thousand year separation.

38.1.1.1 Figure 11: Two Stages of the kingdom (Stockton KOG Manual)



22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

For: The word "for" (gar) is conjunctive unifying Paul's discussion in the first twenty-two verses with this section.

In Adam: Adam is a type of humanity under the dominion of sin and death. Since all men are sons of Adam, all die; that is, we can trace our physical ancestry back to the first family. When Adam as our federal head sinned, death began its cruel work in the human race. Death is man's fundamental enemy. All get sick. All die. Religion is about man's fundamental problem – the grip of death on body and soul. Is there any tangible proof that death can be overcome? That the grave is not the end? That death is not lord of mankind? The marvelous answer is "Yes!" Christ delivered the initial blow to death in and through His death, burial, and resurrection. If Christ defeated death, He solved man's fundamental problem (Hebrews 2:14).

In Christ: "In Christ" is a type of new humanity that shares the blessings of the kingdom of God. "Shall be made alive" is a future indicative which is the mood of reality. Since our Lord was raised from the dead, those who believe in Him shall experience the blessedness of resurrected life in to the Age to Come (cf. Luke 20:35).

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Order: The word "order" (tagma) speaks of things that are arranged or placed in some kind of logical order.

Christ the first fruits: Christ is the head of a new humanity destined to share in the benefits of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the rule of God and the reign of life. The resurrection of Christ was an eschatological event belonging to the Age to Come. In Christ the Eschaton had arrived in history, but the consummation awaited the end of the age.

He is the "first fruits" of the Eschaton, but the full harvest awaits His Parousia. The harvest is the blessed resurrection of believers in the Eschaton. The Spirit that will create a new heaven and a new earth regenerates men as "new creation" now when they come into relationship with the Son (John 3:3, 5: 7:38; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Those who experience the eschatological powers of regeneration of the spirit now will experience the eschatological regeneration of the body when Christ returns at the end of the Christian era.

Two great events are in view here: The resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of the eschatological harvest; and, the Parousia, the full harvest of redeemed humanity. The Parousia marks the end of history and the beginning of the Eschaton.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

The End: The conquest of man's enemies began with the mother promise in Genesis 3:15 which is referenced in this text. The "end" is *the terminus ad quem* of history where the enemies of God are defeated and His friends are saved. The adverb "when" is a time marker indicating consummation of the conquest of Christ in His mission to defeat Satan, sin, and death.

The kingdom of God: The meaning of the kingdom of God is the reign of God through Christ destroying the enemies of God's reign. However, the conquest of God's enemies is not accomplished in a single act. Christ is the first fruits of the Age to Come. Two more resurrections will follow: the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. In Christ's resurrection we see the Christ as the first fruits of a harvest of to come (Ladd, *The Gospel of the kingdom*, 1959; Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 1974).

Put down: The subjunctive aorist verb "put down" means "to nullify," and it is a reference to the future abolishment of all human rule and authority. A day is coming when the Christ will return and unveil his authority as King of the Universe. When He appears, He will squash, nullify, abolish, and demolish man's institutions and the proud men ruling over them.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The kingdom of God means the defeat of the enemies of God--the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ until all His enemies are put under His feet. Since Christ has risen from the grave out of death, his triumph has begun. Sitting at the right hand of God, His reign is now . . . and not something postponed to an alleged millennium. The reign of the Lord Christ is in session by virtue of his exaltation and glorification in heaven (cf. Acts 2:32-34; 7:56; Revelation 5).

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Enemy: the kingdom of God is about the defeat of God's enemies. The OT described enemies in political terms as in Isaiah 8 & 9 and Zechariah 12-14, but the defeat of national adversaries were only a type of Christ's ultimate conquest over man's real enemies: Satan, sin, and death. The battlefield was the cross. There our Lord crushed these powers by virtue of his death, burial, and resurrection. The final realization of the defeat of death awaits the consummation at the end of the age.

Death: Man's fundamental problem is death. Can death be overcome is the great question of religion? The gospel announces our Lord's tangible, visible, physical triumph over our greatest enemy, but we await our Lord's return for our personal victory over this enemy. His historical resurrection is legal proof

of claim. No other religion on earth has legal proof that its claims are true. Other religions only offer suppositions. They have no historical, legal evidence their claims are true. ONLY Christianity offers undisputable, irrefutable legal proof of claim.

The kingdom of God is real and true. The powers of the kingdom were being manifest in and through Jesus' ministry. The first stage of the kingdom was open for public inspection and cross examination. Men could enter the kingdom and experience its powers, but the full, dynamic, irresistible, universal manifestation of the kingdom awaits the end of the age. It was present in and through Christ in advance of its climatic conclusion in judgment.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

Under his feet: This is an idiom for victory. The image is that of a champion putting his heel on the head of a vanquished enemy. The image reminds us of the serpent under His heel.

All things under him: This is reference to Psalm 8:6 and Psalm 110:1 wherein God put all things under the foot of man, specifically the Son of Man. Historically this promise was not realized until the historical triumph of Christ at the cross. The verb "put under" is a perfect, passive indicative indicating this is an accomplished fact. The fact that He rose from the dead and was received at the right hand of God is evidence that His work for man's redemption was accepted by the Father and that He is now the King with all things in subjection to Him.

Manifest that he is accepted: This phrase should be translated, "Except the one (God) Who did subject the 'all things' to Him (Christ)." We have here a rendition of Christian theology at its best. Christianity clearly teaches there is one God in three persons without mixing or confusing the personalities. God place all things, even His enemies under the feet of Christ. Christ is the supreme authority in the universe. However, the apostle is careful to note that the "all things" under His feet does not include the Father Himself.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Scripture anticipates a day where Paradise will be restored, and the original creative order reinstated: That order is stated perfectly in 1 Corinthians 11 wherein the practice of Head Covering memorializes the truth of God's order: the Father, Christ, man, woman, all of creation. On the day of consummation, all will see God as the Supreme Being, and His Son, the Head of redeemed humanity, in subjection to the Father. The supreme desire of Son, the God /

man, is that His Father may be "all in all;" i.e., on that day when Paradise is restored the wonder and greatness of God and His amazing work of redemption will capture the wonder and devotion of every creature.

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? 30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

Else: "Whence" or "Since" builds upon the preceding deliberation. The apostle just codified the greatest historical event in history and explained its ramification from the garden to Paradise and now takes a deep breath before proceeding.

Baptized for the dead: There are no less than thirty interpretations on this verse.

As a Christian apologist, the apostle engages a *reductio ad absurdum* argument wherein a proposition is disproven by following its implications logically to an absurd conclusion.

The reasoning is as follows: If Christ is dead and not risen from the dead, then it is ridiculous to be baptized for a dead Christ. Why would any sane man place his ultimate hope in a dead man who promised victory over death but who could not provide proof of claim; i.e., victory over death by a physical resurrection. How could a reasonable man worship a dead corpse believing the dead person could save him from death? To say, "I believe in So-in-So who is dead is a reasonable proposition. But, to conclude this So-in-So, a corpse, can save a man from death is ridiculous. Why would any man endanger his life ("jeopardy") for such an argument?

The good news, however, is that Christ did die, but unlike all the false religious leaders in history, Christ provided proof of claim that He could save men from death by personally, physically, tangibly, evidentially rising from the dead. The fact that normal living men and woman saw, heard, and touched the risen Christ, is proof that death was defeated. To trust that this Christ as the Savior Who can save them from death is not a *reductio ad absurdum* argument, but a reasonable, rational, logical conclusion by sane people; i.e. trust in Christ is the result of inductive reasoning. Therefore, Christians profess their trust by obeying the Risen Lord in water baptism. In so doing, they announce that they are co-participants in the benefits of His triumphant history--a history to be consummated at the last trump.

Thomas was such a man. When his fellow disciples declared they had seen the risen Christ, Thomas did what any empiricist ought to do: to question the claim.

John 20:25 We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into

the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

To label Thomas as a "doubter" is a grievous misnomer. Thomas was not a skeptic. He was a reasonable man, an empiricist that believed that knowledge comes only from sensory experiences. He had just heard an eyewitness testimony of the impossible: Jesus, who was crucified and buried, was now alive. He demanded to go into the court room and have the proponents of the claim provide proof of claim. Further, he wanted a chance to cross examine the eye-witness testimony. He wanted legal, tangible proof; direct evidence; material evidence. He wanted to see, feel, touch, and hear this so-called "risen Christ." And, he got it!! Jesus appeared before him. After examining the evidence, Thomas turned to Christ and said, "My Lord, and my God!"

Jeopardy every hour: ~ a reference to the suffering of the apostles in the Mediterranean world due to their proclamation of the gospel of the risen Christ.

Jesus Rose to life

If Jesus be dead, in the grip of a tomb,
There'd be nothing for us but fear and doom.

Life would be sad, with no way to cope.

Death would reign all, without any hope.

If Jesus be dead, in the grip of a tomb,
We'd have no future, only dark and gloom.

No life after death, no eternity in sight,

No hope, no joy, no Savior, no light.

But.... (And aren't we thankful there is a "but")

But thanks be to God, Jesus rose to life.

The debt all paid, though sin was rife.

His body lay in the tomb three days,

Then up from the grave his life was raised.

Yes, thanks be to God, Jesus rose to life.

He conquered death, all sin and strife.

To those who believe, from death set free.

With hope, with joy, their Savior to see.

A poem by John R. Cross
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The Last Trump

1 Corinthians 15:50-58



Q: Is it not true there are two resurrections for the believer?

Jesus spoke of two resurrections: the resurrection of the soul wherein the believer is transformed in the inner man by the powers of the Eschatological Spirit due to his faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. This is the first resurrection mentioned by John. It is also called "the new birth" or "the new creation."

The second resurrection is the redemption and transformation of the body associated with the Parousia of Christ and the arrival of the Age of Regeneration. Before us is the final victory of redemption (cf. John 5:24-29; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Now this I say, brethren": This is Paul's summation of his argument regarding the significance of Christ's resurrection in history and its future implications for believers. "Brethren" is an affection reference to Christians who believe Christ.

Flesh and blood: This expression refers to our mortal body which is subject to corruption and death.

The kingdom of God: The kingdom of God belongs to the Age to Come (the Eschaton) and is contrasted with this age (an age of corruption). In this age, death reigns; in the Age to Come, life reigns.

While Christians do taste the first fruits of Eschaton when they believe (Ephesians 1:13-14), they will never experience the full blessings of God's kingdom in this life until the Parousia (coming glory of Christ). The fullness of the kingdom belongs to an age beyond history. The kingdom will never be fully realized apart from the personal, glorious, triumphant return of Christ in the clouds to meet His saints.

Corruption v. Incorruption: These mortal bodies poisoned by sin and subject to death cannot inherit the glories of the Eschaton. To enter the Age of Regeneration, one must have a regenerated soul and possess a regenerated body. Salvation is an eschatological gift wherein believers experience the first

fruits of the Eschaton (justification, regeneration, reconciliation, and eternal life) by faith. Though believers are saved and born again, their bodies are not born again. The salvation and regeneration of the body awaits the arrival of the Eschaton at the Parousia of Christ.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

Mystery: A mystery is a truth not fully developed in the OT, but which has been made known in the NT era by revelation.

Sleep and changed: Sleep is a metaphor for death because a dead person looks like they are sleeping. When Paul said "not all sleep," he is referring to the fact that while all believers die in history, a generation of believers will be alive when He returns; that is, the living saints will experience the redemption and transformation of the body at His Parousia. Not all believers will die, but all will be changed (allasso).

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

What will happen at the Parousia? At the Parousia, the dead will rise and the living will be raptured into His presence. His Parousia announces the arrival of the Eschaton and the consummation of salvation promises. At this marvelous moment mortal bodies will be wonderfully regenerated and transformed by His resurrection powers.

The Spirit condescends to explain the wonders of the resurrection in terms our humanity can understand. We are told that at the Parousia, there will be a piercing sound, a trumpet blast that will wake the dead. In a split second, in the blink of an eye, masses of believing humanity will glowingly escape the chains of death, the dark caverns of the cemetery, and the horrors of the tomb. Bodies with bones, arms, and feet shall be summoned from the four corners of the earth to meet their Champion.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Must put on incorruption: the term "must" states an absolute, irrefutable, and undeniable truth. The "corruptible" is this precious but flawed body. Though the body is weak and affected by sin, it is not trash. God's plan of redemption not only includes the salvation of the soul, but the salvation of the body. "Incorruption" is a reference to the quality and character of the glorious, powerful, regenerated, imperishable, spiritual, immortal body promised by our Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:42-49).

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

The victory of victories is announced! When these corruptible houses will be transformed into incorruptible mansions; and, these bodies clothed in rags mortality will one day be dressed in glorious robes of immortality, then from home on earth to home in heaven released prisoners cheer, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Death has proved to be man's most fierce, invincible foe. With all our diets, technology, and pharmaceuticals, death remains the victor still. But, death is not lord. We have a Champion that entered the brutal arena on our behalf to contest death's terrifying, cold grip on our humanity. Wounded but triumphant, Calvary's darkness gave way to Sunday's light. From heaven's walls, he will descend in the clouds to call our name. Into His presence we shall ever be, and there we will shout, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Death is compared to the poison injected by the serpent near the Poisonous Tree. The grave is personified as a thief that's been caught and forced to return stolen goods. The query is taken from Hosea 13:14 in reference to the Messianic Age. It's as if the saints, who were captured by the enemy, have been rescued from an Auschwitz-like death camp by the mighty army of their Commander. With their heels on the necks of their enemies, they taunt the conquered foes: "Now, death, where is your power? Now, grave, where is your boasting? (cf. Hosea 13:14).

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

With amazing brevity and simplicity, Paul summarizes the entire subject of harmatology, Biblical jurisprudence, and soteriology. Sin is portrayed as a venomous serpent having fangs of death. Here the bitten sinner in his delirium is depicted as a Saturday-night thief with stolen fruit from the Poisonous Tree standing in court confronted by witnesses of his crime. One by one the witnesses testify of the horrors of broken law. Violation after violation is stated enabling the court to pronounce the sinner guilty as charged. But, God has provided a remedy.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

How can a guilty sinner escape the terrors of death and eternal punishment?

Into the courtroom walks a Friend of the Court with wounds in hand and feet: "I've already paid for this sinner's crime with my own blood. Set him free!"

Lifting his chin off his chest, the tearful sinner suddenly realizing that he has

been vindicated by the victory of Another. Jumping up, he shouts, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Beloved Brethren: Paul affectionately refers to the Corinthians as "beloved brethren:" i.e., he reminds them that they are objects of God's love in Christ. Set free from condemnation and destined to share in the ultimate liberation at the Eschaton, Paul lays on the redeemed a duty:

Be steadfast: "Be" is an imperative ordering the believers, in light of their eschatological hope, to take responsibility for their own growth in the faith. He wants them to be strong and muscular, firm and steady in the faith; i.e., not to give into doubt or a personal weakness that might make them vulnerable to the blows of the enemy. For doubt is the mother of all sins!

Unmovable: Paul does not want the Corinthians to be shaken or flustered in the faith by the peevish doubts of others. "Life is argument; and, argument is the art of living" (Gerry Spence). When a person does not believe in Christ, they itch to rattle and shake the faith of Christians. Paul does not give the believers permission to be a victim of the skepticism and unbelief of opponents of Christianity; that is, Paul does not want the Corinthians to give adversaries power over their minds.

Always abounding in the work of the Lord: A cure for anxiety and doubt is gospel work. "Always" means continuously; and, "abounding" means "to overflow and cause to increase." Paul is saying, "Don't stop serving Christ! Don't quit! Don't take a vacation! Don't retire! Keep on serving, loving, and sharing the faith.

Not in vain: The reason the apostle exhorted believers to be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding and expanding their ministry is because God is careful to remember every effort to please Him and to reward them for it; that is, one day their work will be their crown and their joy. Not all work will be rewarded. But, that service "in the Lord" (to Christ) will not be forgotten by Him (cf. Hebrews 6:10).

Remember the First Day Sabbath

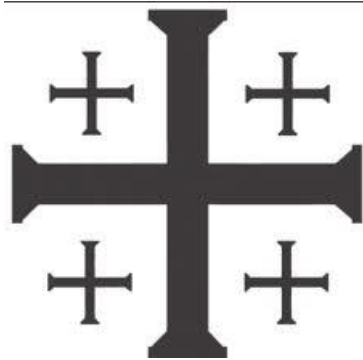
1 Corinthians 16

Q: Is it not true that Christ rose from the dead on Sunday and that this day is sacred to Christians?

Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet>



Celebrating the Christian Sabbath on Sunday was an established tradition even in the first century. It proclaimed freedom under God's rule.

But, the importance and significance of the Sabbath has been clearly translated away! The Greek word "Sabbaton" is translated "day" or "week" by modern translators and thus clouds its significance. The First Day Sabbath; i.e., the term Sabbath (Sabbaton) is used in the following text demonstrating that Sunday was

clearly considered a Christian Sabbath early in the church:

Matthew 28:1 "first day of the week" = mi,an sabba,twn or First Day Sabbath

Mark 16:2, 9 "first day of the week" = mia/| tw/n sabba,twn or first day Sabbath

Luke 24:1 "first day of the week" = prw,th| sabba,tou or First Day Sabbath

John 20:1 "first day of the week" = mia/| tw/n sabba,twn or First Day Sabbath

John 20:19 "first day of the week" = th/| mia/| sabba,twn or First Day Sabbath

Acts 20:7 "first day of the week" = th/| mia/| tw/n sabba,twn or First Day Sabbath

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 "first day of the week" = mi,an sabba,tou or First Day Sabbath

Paul ordered the Corinthians to set aside an offering on the first day of the week (Sunday) for the saints in Jerusalem. The word “week” is the Greek word *sabbatou*.

The genitive *sabbatou* is the attributive to *mian* which should be translated “first day”; i.e., “the First Day Sabbath” or “the first day of the Sabbath.”

The imperative *titheto* {to set aside) is definitely connected with collections, but one has to assume that the early Christians under Paul’s care had already established the first day of the week as a Sabbath. To connect “orders” in verse one with the “Sabbath” in verse two has an indirect but logical connection. While it is not a silver bullet, it certainly does strengthen the concept of the “Lord’s day” in conjunction with Revelation 1:10.

Since the Lord was raised on this blessed day, the Christian Sabbath was separated from the Jewish Sabbath and superseded it in importance by virtue of the “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Since the Christian Sabbath is connected with Israel’s three feasts (the wave offering, Pentecost, and feast of tabernacles), Sunday commemorates the LORD’s work of creation, redemption, and sanctification by virtue of our Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection on and in behalf of believers.

The goal of history is a Sabbath rest, the Kingdom of God.

The Christian Sabbath is not the same as the Jewish Sabbath. The Hebrew Sabbath remains a shadow while the Christian Sabbath is the substance (Colossians 2:16ff). The Hebrew Sabbath typified the hope of Christ’s redemptive rest while the Christian Sabbath tastes the first fruits reality of that rest. Had not the Christians made a clean break from the Jewish Sabbath [established discontinuity] Christianity might have only been another Jewish cult. This discontinuity from the Saturday Sabbath fostered spiritual maturity in the church. Christ’s resurrection bolted to the top of the list of the most important events in human history.

On the Jewish Sunday, Christ conquered man’s fundamental problem [death]. He was God’s wave offering; God’s First fruits; God’s holy One; and God’s New Creation. In Christ, the holy God and sinful man find redemptive rest.

Consequently, it was quintessential that Christians separate themselves from the Jewish Sabbath and remember God’s greater creative work in Christ on Sunday, the First-Day Sabbath. And, it appears it was so ordered by apostolic command in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. Thus, powerful discontinuity severed the Jewish Sabbath from the Christian Sabbath. But, there is also continuity. Both the Jewish holy day and the Christian holy day are called a Sabbath. Both days were a day of rest. Both days were holy. But, celebration of the Christians Sabbath forecast a higher order and deeper significance.

Facts on the Sabbath

The meaning of the word “Sabbath” means “cease” or “desist” or “rest.” “The pattern of the Sabbath is God’s creative rest; the goal of the Sabbath is man’s redemptive rest” [Rushdoony, p. 128].

There are three kinds of Sabbaths: the creation Sabbath, the Hebrew Sabbath, and the Christian Sabbath. The Christians Sabbath is called “The Lord’s Day,” “the First Day Sabbath,” or “the Eighth Day Sabbath.”

There is no evidence Hebrew people observed any type of Sabbath prior to the Exodus (Exodus 16). To the Hebrews, the Saturday Sabbath meant the following:

- It was a day of rest and cessation from work (Exodus 16:14-36; 20:8-11; 34:21; Deuteronomy 5:12-15).
- It was a remembrance of God’s original creation and His rest.
- It was a time to remember their deliverance from Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12-15); “Remember” was political reflection on Israel’s former enslavement in Egypt and deliverance from bondage by redemption. The Sabbath was not primarily for worship, but for rest and reflection [Deuteronomy. 5:12-15].
- It was a time to remember their covenant with God.
- It was not, however, a day of worship.

No record of Sabbath keeping emerged before the Exodus. The Saturday Sabbath attained significance sometime after Israel’s departure from Egypt [Exodus 16:23, 35, 26, 29]. Thus, when God said, “Remember the Sabbath,” it was not something Israel was unfamiliar with at Mt. Sinai.

Under bondage, Israel worked 365 days a year for Pharaoh. The Sabbath charted blessedness to the nation as a result of their redemption from slavery. The flag of freedom blew in the winds over Israel; and, to protect that freedom, Sabbath keeping reviewed God’s redemption from tribute, slavery, and bondage.

Severe laws enforced the Sabbath [Exodus. 20:8-11; 34:21; Leviticus. 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Jeremiah 17:22]. Gates had to be shut [Nehemiah 13:19]; no burdens could be carried [Jeremiah 17:21] or wine pressed [Nehemiah 13:15]; no sticks could be gathered [Numbers 15:32-35]; no fires could be kindled [Ezekiel. 35:3]; no harvesting [Nehemiah. 13:15]; no food could be sold or bought [Nehemiah. 10:31; 13:15]. However, life could be saved and necessities performed [Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9; Matthew 12:10-13; 12:11; Luke 14:5].

The Day of Resurrection that introduced Christians to God’s redemptive rest surfaced on Sunday.

[Note: The Hebrew Sabbath followed the lunar calendar or Egyptian calendar of 12 months of 30 days, and therefore, could not possibly correspond to our modern Saturday which follows a solar calendar. Not only is Saturday keeping the wrong date for the Jewish Sabbath, it stings with theological blunders].

Meaning of the Christian Sabbath

The brightness of the First Day Sabbath rest fulfills the shadow of the Hebrew Saturday Sabbath; that is, it restores the original Sabbath (Genesis 1) and reestablishes God's order for the world.

It is superior to the Hebrew Sabbath just as spiritual circumcision is superior to physical circumcision [Colossians 2:11].

The Christian Sabbath is the Queen of holy days while the Hebrew Sabbath operates as a mere handmaid of royalty. Just as gold is more precious than copper, the First Day Sabbath is more treasured than the Hebrew Sabbath. It cost God a lamb to redeem Israel out of bondage to Pharaoh, but it cost God His Son to save his people from their sins [Matthew 1:21].

God made Adam and Eve on the sixth day and instructed them on the dominion mandate.

God rested on the Seventh Day. The Seventh Day was man's first full day and man was to share in that rest.

When Adam rejected God's law-order on that day, God's rest was interrupted. Man's rest ceased as sin entered the world; that is, the Seventh Day became man's first day of labor / burden.

In His grace, God gave Adam and Eve a promise of a Savior that would destroy sin and death, and restore the Creative Rest.

In Exodus, man was commanded to rest on his seventh day of work in anticipation of the coming of Christ and the ultimate Jubilee. When Christ rose from the dead on the first day, his redemptive work was finished and his victory over Satan, sin, and death complete.

Therefore, to celebrate Sunday as the true Sabbath is a celebration of the accomplishments of Christ and His restoration of the original order. So, the Sunday Sabbath rest established by Christianity now coincides with God's original creative rest.

The First Day Sabbath commemorates the Lord's resurrection from the dead (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; Acts 20:7). On this day, He demonstrated His defeat of Satan, sin, and death. Thus, celebration of the Lord's Day as a Sabbath is far superior in its excellences to the Hebrew Sabbath. Likewise, its penalties!! Violating the Hebrew Sabbath warranted the death penalty, while the neglect of

Christ and the meaning of the First Day Sabbath results in eternal condemnation and death (John 3:36).

The First Day Sabbath excels as a day of worship and rest and instruction in God's Word-- a day of joy and celebration of our Lord's triumphs over sin and death; of the "new creation" of which Christ is the First fruits.

The First Day Sabbath operates for the development of holiness or sanctification. The concept of holiness is carried forward. While Christians are called to develop holiness every day, one day is commanded to be set aside because of human weakness.

The First Day Sabbath commemorates the Christ event and the marvelous benefits available in the gospel. In taking of the bread and the cup, we remember the incarnation, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and session of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessings of the Age to Come has been thrust into our experience to enjoy in a first fruits way.

According to Deuteronomy 5:12-15, the goal of the Sabbath was freedom for man and beast via a reflection on political freedom; mighty redemption, the maintenance of freedom through obedience to God's law; the defense of freedom through war; and, the defeat of political enemies.

The Christians Sabbath reflects on Christ's victory over Satan, sin, and death. God's law forbids a Christian to be a slave of man (1 Corinthians 7:23). Thus, honoring the First Day Sabbath is a safeguard against being man's servant and a government slave.

God intended the First Day Sabbath to be a time to repair broken fellowship and renew our vows and commitment to the risen Savior. The remembrance of the New Covenant of His blood and man's duties to Christ shines as the lofty purpose of the Christian Sabbath.

The Christian Sabbath breached the legal status of the Hebrew Sabbath.

The penalties connected to the Hebrew Sabbath are not carried forth into the practice of the Christian Sabbath. There is no penalty attached to laxity or even betrayal of the First-Day Sabbath. But, you would think that something that carried the death penalty attached to it would have some relevance to the Christian era. The neglect of the First-Day Sabbath does solicit death to work in the heart of the believer; and, indicates Christian surrender to the advancement of paganism in the culture.

Neglect of Christ and the rest He offers results in eternal condemnation for the unbeliever. Obedience means life; disobedience means death. To the Christian, He is the Vine; we are the branches. Apart from him we can do nothing. The Christian Sabbath, therefore, trains the believer to abide in Christ.

The Hebrews worked six days and then rested; the Christian rests on the First Day Sabbath and then works -- not to earn salvation, but to live out a life of grateful obedience to God's law through a life of love.

The Sabbath meant rest, restoration, regeneration, forgiveness, cancellation of debt and restoration to the weary [Deuteronomy 15:1-6].

The Christians Sabbath is also a day of restoration, regeneration, and forgiveness--a day of cancelling debts, a day of announcing God's jubilee through the proclamation of the gospel.

The Sabbath meant respect for family, for servants, for animals, for the land, and for freedom from debt.

The Christian Sabbath reminds us that: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" [Galatians 3:28].

The first Sabbath, God's Sabbath, had no evening. It was interrupted by Adam's sin. Thus, God's seventh day rest became man's first day of work and only intensified as death settled over creation.

A weekly day of rest is unknown in other cultures. The wicked have no rest [Isaiah 57:20-21].

"Remember" the Sabbath took Israel back to the original creation with God as the model of work and rest. The wicked search for rest, but will never find it outside of God's law. The proletarianization of man promised wealth and rest, but the idealism of Marxism [Stalin and Mao] killed and enslaved more men and women than any political system in history. Few revolutions compare with the cruel bloody slaughter of millions of Russian Christians.

Quotes by the Church Fathers

..every Lord's day, hold your solemn assemblies, and rejoice: for he will be guilty of sin who fasts on the Lord's day, being the day of the resurrection... (Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 7, pg. 449).

"And on the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is the Lord's day, meet more diligently, sending praise to God that made the universe by Jesus, and sent Him to us, and condescended to let Him suffer, and raised Him from the dead. Otherwise what apology will he make to God who does not assemble on that day to hear the saving word concerning the resurrection...?" (Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 7, pg. 423).

"But every Lord's day, do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your

transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one that is at variance with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord..." [Matt. 5:23-24] (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Chap. 14:1, Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 7, page 381).

"On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's day, assemble yourselves together, without fail, giving thanks to God, and praising Him for those mercies God has bestowed upon you through Christ, and has delivered you from ignorance, error, and bondage, that your sacrifice may be unspotted, and acceptable to God, who has said concerning His universal Church: "In every place shall incense and a pure sacrifice be offered unto me; for I am a great King, saith the Lord Almighty, and my name is wonderful among the heathen, [Malachi 1:11, 14]" (Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 7, pg. 471).

"they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to (do) any wicked deeds, never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of good food – but food of an ordinary and innocent kind" (Pliny, Letters to Trajan, Book X, in The Loeb Classical Library, eds E. Capps,, T.E. Page, W.H.D. Rouse, Pliny Letters II, translated by William Melmoth. [London: William Heinemann, MCMXV], p. 403.)

"Moreover God says to the Jews, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure.' You see how he says, 'The present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but the Sabbath which I have made in which, when I have rested from all things, I will make the beginning of the eighth day which is the beginning of another world.' Wherefore we Christians keep the eighth day for joy, on which also Jesus arose from the dead and when he appeared ascended into heaven. (15:8f, The Epistle of Barnabas, 100 AD, Ante- Nicene Fathers , vol. 1, pg. 147).

" . . . those who have persecuted and do persecute Christ, if they do not repent, shall not inherit anything on the holy mountain. But the Gentiles, who have believed on Him, and have repented of the sins which they have committed, they shall receive the inheritance along with the patriarchs and the prophets, and the just men who

are descended from Jacob, even although they neither keep the Sabbath, nor are circumcised, nor observe the feasts. Assuredly they shall receive the holy inheritance of God”(Dialogue With Trypho the Jew, 150-165 AD, Ante-Nicene Fathers , vol.1, page 207).

“But if we do not admit this, we shall be liable to fall into foolish opinion, as if it were not the same God who existed in the times of Enoch and all the rest, who neither were circumcised after the flesh, nor observed Sabbaths, nor any other rites, seeing that Moses enjoined such observances... For if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the observance of Sabbaths, of feasts and sacrifices, before Moses; no more need is there of them now, after that, according to the will of God, Jesus Christ the Son of God has been born without sin, of a virgin sprung from the stock of Abraham.”(Dialogue With Trypho the Jew, 150-165 AD, Ante-Nicene Fathers , vol. 1, page 206).

“There is no other thing for which you blame us, my friends, is there than this? That we do not live according to the Law, nor, are we circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers, nor do we observe the Sabbath as you do.” (Dialogue with Trypho 10:1. In verse 3 the Jew Trypho acknowledges that Christians 'do not keep the Sabbath.')

“But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day of the week and Jesus our saviour on the same day rose from the dead.” (First apology of Justin, Ch 68).

“The commandment of circumcision, requiring them always to circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision by which we are circumcised from error and evil through the resurrection from the dead on the first day of the week of Jesus Christ our Lord. For the first day of the week, although it is the first of all days, yet according to the number of the days in a cycle is called the eighth (while still remaining the first)” (Dialogue 41:4).

“We are always together with one another. And for all the things with which we are supplied we bless the Maker of all through his Son Jesus Christ and through his Holy Spirit. And on the day called Sunday there is a gathering together in the same place of all who live in a city or a rural district. (There follows an account of a Christian worship service, which is quoted in VII.2.) We all make our assembly in common on the day of the Sun, since it is the first day, on which God changed the darkness and matter and made the

world, and Jesus Christ our Savior arose from the dead on the same day. For they crucified him on the day before Saturn's day, and on the day after (which is the day of the Sun) he appeared to his apostles and taught his disciples these things." (Apology, 1, 67:1-3, 7; First Apology, 145 AD, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, pg. 186).

Importance of the Christian Sabbath

The NT lacks a command to keep the Sabbath unless it is 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. Unlike the other nine Commandments, the command to obey the Sabbath lacks a moral prerogative, a direct reflection of some moral virtue attached to the character of God—unless that attribute is holiness.

Since the Ten Commandments are a summary of the entire law, it seems fitting to place the ceremonial laws, dietary laws, and festival laws under the Sabbath law; that is, unlike the law of murder, there is nothing inherently right or wrong, harmful or malignant, about observing a particular 24 hour period of the week in preference to another; i.e., no direct harm to mankind occurs by resting on Wednesday as opposed to Saturday (or Sunday).

Sixth-day Sabbath breaking was only right or wrong because God ordained this law for a season in Israel's history for a typical purpose.

Even Paul, a radical rabbi with ultimate respect for God's Law—word abandoned the Saturday Hebrew Sabbath in careful deference to the First-Day Sunday Sabbath without a violation of conscience. But, even here there seems to be a tremendous amount of freedom on how this day is celebrated.

Having said this, the Christian Sabbath was a firm practice in the NT.

The term "ordered" in 1 Corinthians 16:1 is closely associated with laying aside collections for the saints ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE SABBATH (SUNDAY).

Surely, something that had the death penalty attached to in the OT should have an important application in the NT.

If Paul under the inspiration of the Spirit ordered the church to collect an offering on the *first sabbatou* of the week, setting aside Sunday as the Christian Sabbath has merit and force.

Therefore, I conclude the Christian Sabbath was critical to development of the church, for instruction in the gospel, for fellowship, for communion, for the development of holiness. To treat Sunday like an ordinary day violates Scripture.

The rest of Hebrews 10:25 meant confidence in God's work at Calvary. By keeping the Christian Sabbath, believers remember the person of Christ, His historical resurrection, the meaning of His history, the effects of Christ's

accomplishments on the cross for us, and our duty to be sanctified unto Him — thus, in keeping the First Day Sabbath, we remember the glories of the gospel.

Sabbath keeping was so important; the death penalty was attached to its violations. Thus, even though the death penalty is not attached to a neglect of the First Day Sabbath, the death penalty attached to breaking the Hebrew Sabbath reinforces not only the benefit of honoring the Sunday Sabbath, it informs us in its shadow form that death stalks those who neglect the Christian Sabbath (Christ). Neglect of the Christian Sabbath not only invites death to work in the individual heart, its neglect assists the advancement of corruption in the culture.

In the NT era, Sabbath regulations were amended and penalties dropped [Colossians 2:16-17]. No penalties were in effect after the resurrection; that is, the legal status changed. The extent of a Sabbath rest was left to the individual conscience, and not civil or religious authorities.

The Christian Sabbath is important, but not all important. The Sabbath of Israel was retired.

A Christian state cannot and should not mimic ancient Israel's Saturday's Sabbath. However, a humanistic state that worships productivity and work by alien law is an assault on the Christian order. When man is reduced to economic man in the utopian mind, man becomes utilitarian.

The Sabbath typified the rest God wants all believers to have in the redemptive work of Christ and salvation by grace. The Hebrew Sabbath foreshadowed the true Christian Sabbath [Hebrews 4:9]. The Christian Sabbath not only incorporates the creative rest, but redemptive rest. On the Christian Sabbath, believers celebrate Christ's victory over death, his redemption at the cross, God's new creative work of regeneration to be completed in our physical resurrection, and the need to be holy and separated unto God now in this life.

To neglect the First Day Sabbath is to reject Christ's redemption and to seek salvation by another illegitimate way. *To go back under the Jewish shadow is to deny the reality of the Corpus. **Just as being circumcised is a fall from grace (Galatians 5:1-6), so Saturday Sabbath-keeping is a departure from the gospel.***

So strong was Sunday Sabbath keeping that early church Fathers considered Saturday Sabbath keeping apostasy.

“Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace... If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but

living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death (which some deny), through which mystery we received faith, and on account of which we suffer in order that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher, how shall we be able to live apart from him for whom even the prophets were looking as their teacher since they were his disciples in the spirit?... let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days of the week. It is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end. for where there is Christianity there cannot be Judaism.... These things I address to you, my beloved, not that I know any of you to be in such a state; but, as less than any of you, I desire to guard you beforehand, that ye fall not upon the hooks of vain doctrine, but that you may rather attain to a full assurance in Christ..." (Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, ch 9. Ante-Nicene Fathers , vol. 1, pg. 62-63.). Emphasis added.

The goal of the Sabbath was a debt free society as well as a guilt-free society. It is significant that on the Christians Sabbath (1 Corinthians 16:1- 2), believers took up a collection to pay ministers, church workers, and to help saints laboring for the Lord around the world. Thus, the Christian Sabbath creates life. The Jewish Sabbath meant a cessation of work; the Christian Sabbath spawned good deeds and created hope for the afflicted.

Some Sabbaths, like the Sabbath Feasts, were seasons of feasting and celebration. God wants His people at rest, full of joy, and celebrating life. The Christian Sabbath was a day of feasting, a day of celebrating new life in Christ. In fact, in early America fasting was strictly prohibited on the Lord's Day.

Sabbaths were holy [Ezekiel. 44:24]. Man was to delight in the sovereignty and will of God. God willed that man might work, be productive, and enjoy freedom. Christ is God's new creation and consequently as a result of our new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), we are created to do good works in conformity with His law (Ephesians 5:10; Romans 13:8ff). Thus, the Christian Sabbath is a day devoted to the development of sanctification: "Be ye holy as I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Christians adopted the Sabbath principal and applied it to Sunday [Acts 20:7]. John called it "the Lord's Day" [Revelation 1:10]. Sunday has been a day of rest and reflection for Christians for two thousand years of history. It is sad to see believers today all wrapped up in soccer games, tennis matches, and swimming meets on Sunday morning. The lack of conviction about the Lord's Day is one of the reasons the nation plunged into humanism. Needed are Christians with

convictions that will confront the secularist and refuse to participate in regular Sunday recreational activities.

“Moreover God says to the Jews, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths 1 cannot endure.' You see how he says, 'The present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but the Sabbath which I have made in which, when I have rested from all things, I will make the beginning of the eighth day which is the beginning of another world.' Wherefore we Christians keep the eighth day for joy, on which also Jesus arose from the dead and when he appeared ascended into heaven. (15:8f, The Epistle of Barnabas, 100 AD, Ante- Nicene Fathers , vol. 1, pg. 147).

“But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day of the week and Jesus our saviour on the same day rose from the dead.” (First apology of Justin, Ch 68).

"We solemnize the day after Saturday in contradistinction to those who call this day their Sabbath" (Tertullian's Apology, Ch 16).

"[T]he day of his [Christ's] light . . . was the day of his resurrection from the dead, which they say, as being the one and only truly holy day and the Lord's day, is better than any number of days as we ordinarily understand them, and better than the days set apart by the Mosaic Law for feasts, new moons, and sabbaths, which the Apostle [Paul] teaches are the shadow of days and not days in reality" (Proof of the Gospel 4:16:186).

Many Messianic communities are practicing a strict Sabbath principal from Friday night to Saturday night. While it does no physical harm, it does call for a spiritual rebuke. While Saturday Sabbath keeping appears to be innocuous, it is not! Many messianic teachers apply the ceremonial aspects of God’s Law in strict, binding forms—even teaching that their observance of the supposed Sabbath law is superior to Christian’s worship on Sunday. Does the term *Judaizers* ring a bell? These teachers bind other men’s consciences to their Judaistic biases [See Romans 14] at the expense of not “holding the head” and His accomplishments on resurrection Sunday [Colossians 2:19].

Colossians 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days [Jewish/Hebrew Sabbath traditions]:

The Christian Sabbath not only incorporates the principle of physical rest, but commemorates our redemptive rest by virtue of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Christ is our Sabbath; our Passover; our Redeemer; our Wave Offering; our Pentecost; our Feast of Tabernacles. In Him we celebrate the first fruits of the Kingdom of God and anticipate it’s unveiling in history.

The early church clearly adopted the Sunday Sabbath in the first century which they called the "First Day Sabbath." The term "week" in Matthew 28:1, Luke 24:1, and Acts 20:7 is the Greek word "Sabbaton."

So strong was this view the early church considered it apostasy for anyone to keep the Saturday, Jewish Sabbath. They clearly saw the Jewish Sabbath as a shadow of the Christian Sabbath and refused to go back to it!!! Historically, going back to circumcision, Saturday Sabbath keeping, and a celebration of Jewish festivals was clearly heresy a digression in spiritual maturity, a faithless act, an illicit response to the gospel, a denial of the person and work of Christ!!

For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you is justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4-5).

For I testify again to every man that is a Festival Keeper, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you is justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

For I testify again to every man that is a Saturday Sabbath keeper, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you is justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

For I testify again to every man that is wearing a yarmulke, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you is justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

For I testify again to every man that is wearing ribbons of blue, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you is justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

"Christians should not Judaize and should not be idle on the sabbath, but should work on that day; they should, however, particularly reverence the Lord's day and, if possible, not work on it, because they were Christians"(360 A.D. Council of Laodicea, canon 29).

"You have put on Christ, you have become a member of the Lord and been enrolled in the heavenly city, and you still grovel in the Law [of Moses]? How is it possible for you to obtain the kingdom? Listen to Paul's words, that the observance of the Law overthrows the gospel, and learn, if you will, how this comes to pass, and tremble, and shun this pitfall. Why do you keep the sabbath and fast with the Jews?" (Homilies on Galatians 2:17).

"The rite of circumcision was venerable in the Jews' account, forasmuch as the Law itself gave way thereto, and the sabbath was less esteemed than circumcision. For that circumcision might be

performed, the sabbath was broken; but that the sabbath might be kept, circumcision was never broken; and mark, I pray, the dispensation of God. This is found to be even more solemn than the sabbath, as not being omitted at certain times. When then it is done away, much more is the sabbath" (387 Ohn Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians 10).

A Political Perspective on the Christian Sabbath

Man, by nature, prefers slavery to freedom; security to liberty; franchises with bonds than duty with risks; self-interest to God's interests. First-Day Sabbath keeping is the cure while its oversight is the disease. Sabbath keeping contains keys to locked doors while its neglect contains bonds and chains.

The goal of history, said Augustine, is a Sabbath with no evening [St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XXII, Chapter xxx]. The Promise Land was foreshadowed by the Kingdom of God, a type of Sabbath [Hebrews 4:9].

So important was freedom and rest that God ordained this lesson for man, for sons, for donkeys, for oxen, for maidservants, and for the land, which Israel rented from God.

The key to understanding God's love of freedom is a study of the Sabbath.

To Stalin, there was no God. Under communism, man must work to become his own savior. He enslaved more men than any other man in history. A proper application of the Christian Sabbath will nail the coffin shut on slavery -- slavery by humanists who offer of franchises that bind man to socialistic systems. To neglect the First Day Sabbath is to turn the day over to the enemy. Man will either be ruled by God and His law or by man and his statutes.

After deliverance from slavery from the tyrant Pharaoh, God ordained a sabbatical rest for God's people [Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5:12-15]. Of all the nations of the world, only Israel had a Sabbath; only God's people were free to rest. All other nations were slaves to work, to taskmasters, to debts, and to governments. Sabbath keeping contained the weekly duty of contemplating the meaning of freedom.

Likewise, the Sabbath is unique to Christianity. The First Day Sabbath is a jubilee—a proclamation of freedom from the bondage of sin and the call of man to seek political freedom.

The purpose of the Sabbath was for God's people to reflect on their enslavement in Egypt and their deliverance from bondage. Every seven days, Israel enjoyed their liberty and renewed their commitment to freedom by remembering their enslavement by an alien power, the misery of that servitude, and the cause of their imprisonment. The Sabbath reminded them of the evil of involuntary servitude. Sabbath reflection remembered God's

deliverance, the necessity of His intervention, the cost of that intervention [blood], the power of that redemption, and the purpose of that redemption. Fifty-two weeks a year the Israelite man had to think about political freedom.

Likewise, the principle became a cornerstone of Christianity. First-Day Sabbath keeping is not only release from work, but a day to reflect on freedom. Blue laws are the result of early Christian influence in this country. Sunday Sabbath-keeping was an important fabric weaved into the historical blanket of this country. So much so, the canons of freedom thundered from the pulpits of this country prior to the revolutionary war.

The rise of big government is directly proportional to the neglect of First-Day Sabbath keeping in America. Maybe this is the reason why Americans are enslaved through the tax system today. They do not consider the 4th Commandment and its implications. Consequently, we have more man-made laws and more people in prison than any country in the world. At best, most Americans only think about freedom once a year and most don't know the difference between freedom and the illusion of freedom.

God's loves freedom so much, He ordained a Sabbath every week; a special monthly Sabbath; three festival Sabbaths; a seven year Sabbath for debts; and a year of Jubilee so that man might be free to celebrate and enjoy His freedom under God's Law. Any dwelling on the evils of the past like the civil rights movement or the Indians of the American west keeps men in bondage and stifles their ability to cope with the future.

Involuntary servitude was forbidden. Humanists working through a de facto government have declared war on God's law and on the freedom of man by designing a debt based system that enslaves a man's labor for life. Capitalists that view people as human resources or human assets as means of wealth production are clearly criminal.

Sunday 30th May is the date for UK taxpayers to raise a glass and celebrate Tax Freedom Day, the theoretical point in the year at which we stop working for the government and start working for ourselves* .

http://www.tiscali.co.uk/money/features/tax_freedom_day.html

Under God's laws debts could not last more than six years. No man had a right to mortgage his future indefinitely and no man or institution has a right to enslave a man perpetually. God wanted his people free and wealthy and able to lend to other nations. Because our society and bankers in particular have sinned against God by rejecting His Word, Americans find themselves in perpetual debt for houses, cars, and the necessities of life.

"Christians cannot become slaves voluntarily; they are not to become the slaves of men [1 Corinthians 7:23], nor 'entangled' again with the yoke of bondage' [Galatians 5:1]. The road of

pseudo-security, of pseudo-liberation in slavery, socialism, and welfarism, is forbidden to the Christian. The Christian Sabbath is not the slavery of socialism" (Rushdoony, 1973, p. 137).

Modern humanistic man thinks nothing of putting a man in prison for five, ten, twenty or thirty years of his life. Such human trafficking via the court and prison system in this country is not only against the laws of God, it is exceedingly cruel—a violation of the very principles of the Sabbath.

This author is not suggesting a reinstatement of Hebrews Sabbatical law in any nation, but he is suggesting the principle of the Sunday Sabbath-keeping should be practiced wherever Christ is proclaimed; that men accept the Lordship of Christ and reject enslavement by man-made governments; that freedom be the ambition of every man; that Christians resist the tyranny of their age by States hell-bent on controlling men from the womb to the tomb, from the cradle to the grave.

God calls us to freedom. "Resistance to tyranny is service to God" [Thomas Jefferson].

Remembering the Sabbath is resistance to capitalistic tyranny as well as political tyranny. Freedom is despised by the greedy and the oppressive; therefore, Christians must demand the right to observe the Sabbath. Christians must resist the tendency to make Sunday a holiday instead of a holy day. Parents would do well to insist that sporting events for kids be scheduled for Monday through Saturday, but not on Sunday. Just as the Sabbath was a covenant sign to Israel [Exodus 20:10-13], Christians should reverence Sunday and sanctify it. It is, after all, a remembrance of the new covenant in Christ.

In conclusion, the Law is a direct reflection of the character of an eternal God and is binding on all men for all of time. Discontinuity of law centers on temporal, ceremonial enactments. The Torah must be rejected as a mediator and source of justification, but it must become the model of Law for a Christian society and the foundation of civil government. The Christians Sabbath is God's gracious gift for the health of man and for the sanctification of His people. To neglect the First-Day Sabbath is to waste one's soul; to follow the Hebrew Sabbath is clearly apostasy and a rejection of Christ and His accomplishments on the 8th Day Sabbath.

Applied Nomos (law)

God's Law is not only good for Christian men; it is good for all men and all of man's institutions. Not only must every Christian obey God's Law, so must every lawyer, banker, judge, and politician!

In modern times, believers embrace God's law privately, but politically leaders spurn God's law under the doctrine of separation of church and state. Believers

have retreated into a shell of private religion instead of wielding the Sword of the Word against opponents in the amphitheater of political contests.

Theonomy, meaning "God's Law," insists on the following applications of God's Law publically:

- That the Bible is the foundation of law, and that the God of the Bible is the Source of law.
- That not only are individuals accountable to God's law, so are civil rulers.
- That God's Word must become the standard of legislation.

Theonomists do **not** want a "voice at the table," or "equal time." They want godless promoters of pornography, abortionists, and sodomites who shameless display their rude acts rounded up and punished according to God's Word. The whole idea that Christians must tolerate Sodomites and transvestites in the work place is offensive to the canon of Law. Civil law must have some standard to judge behavior. That standard will either be the sure Word of God or the capricious, derelict opinions of men. Legislation must be consistent with the principles in God's law-source.

- That the Christian religion is the key to regenerate men, not law. When God puts his laws into the hearts of men they will love his law and obtain the power to keep it. Change must come from the bottom up; that is, change must come from people who advocate responsible self-government.
- That law has limitation and cannot regenerate society.
- That Christians prefer Christians as their civil servants. Either the godly or the ungodly will serve as our rulers. Men with a conscience instructed according to God's law are preferred as civil servants.
- That lawyers and judges must receive instruction in nomos theology from the Word of God as part of their training; that the commercial nature of judicial corporations must be eliminated; that is, no profit-motive must be allowed in the system.
- That jail sentences and the commercial nature of the prison systems, for-profit corporations, must be replaced with Biblical punishments: restitution to victims, corporal punishment, and capital punishment. God is just. What has changed in America is that Americans have become suspicious of Biblical law; that is, it is not God's law that needs changing but the American mind about God's law that needs changing.
- That the Department of Education be dismantled, taken away from the federal government, and returned to the control of parents in local

communities. The state is not the final moral authority nor should the federal government have authority over states or families. The godless State can never be the final arbitrator of matters pertaining to moral law. The family and the church must bear the responsibility for training children. The incorrigible must be punished by the community. Families must pay restitution for irresponsible acts of children, not the state; that is, state subsidies for teen pregnancy, for the education of unwed mothers, alcoholism, and for the recalcitrant must be eliminated.

- That government purposes be restrained to the limited purpose of the protection of the republic and the punishment of evil doers [1 Peter 2:14]. Welfare programs must shift away from the government and return to the church and to the private sector where it belongs. Taxes on personal income must be eliminated. The state must stay within its limited purpose.
- That the State's power to restrict Christian discourse be abandoned.
- That freedom of speech is properly defined in order to eliminate pornography as a "protected right." The cursing God, blasphemy against God's law-source, slander, and irresponsible speech must receive appropriate sanctions. The Christian God must be honored. False gods must be exposed.
- That the "Money," and the "economic system" be reformed so that it [A] it has a uniform standard, and [B] that the system benefits responsible families and not "big bankers" and "big government." FRNs must be replaced with a constitutional currency.
- That treason is defined as rebellion against God's law-source; and, not rebellion against the godless actions of a civil government.

In conclusion, the believer is set free from legalism, but he is not set free from a duty to obey Christ. The challenge of Law is one of continuity v. discontinuity. This problem can be solved when we realize that God is absolute and because His moral law is a reflection of His character, His moral law is absolute and binding on all men and their institutions.

The Minister and His Cry-Baby Church

2 Corinthians



Figure 17: Courtesy of Freepik

Q: Is it not true the second letter to the Corinthians is a defense of Paul's apostleship?

The Corinthian Church was born in a storm of debate, court battles, and radical division (Acts 18). Titus brought the stinging report about how the Corinthians scorned Paul (10:10). Thus, the apostle found himself the target of bitter criticism, smoking accusations, and slander.

Consequently, this self-defense letter is full of emotion, fiery rhetoric, satire, and swinging ax hammers.

State of the Church

Corinth was a carnally minded cry-baby church bragging about who baptized them, about their tolerance of immoral behavior, with a mouthful of complaints about how Pastor Paul was not like the smooth orators and fancy lawyers in Corinth.

"There was in the Corinthian Church a party, probably Judaizers, which denied his authority and said bitter things about his character" (MacLaren).

This church contained spurious believers with a vague gospel, with vague mercy, with vague faith in a vague Christ with a vague hope of salvation. Further, it contained "hostile urban Jews" masquerading as God's chosen people.

Further, this cry-baby church was full of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance. Under many circumstances the traits would be a honorable, but in this case self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance kept them from knowing God and growing in Christ.

Self-confidence is a virtue for the man who has surrendered himself to the authority of Christ and accepts responsibility to live accurately in a maximum liability universe. But, it is a vice for the self-made man because it prevents him from humbling himself and repenting of his sin in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Thus, the apostle had to shatter their delusive self-image, pop their inflated balloon, and force them to cry out in tears saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Ignorance of the Lord Jesus Christ led to indifference about the Savior and a critical spirit toward their pastor.

The Authority of Paul

First, Paul had to correct their thinking about his personal suffering and apostolic rejection in the Mediterranean theater - "having the sentence of death in ourselves." Financial destitution and ministerial hardship was not due to sin and a lack of favor with God (1:5-12). Rather, in spite of his poverty and the criticism against him, his ministry was evidence of his apostleship and his genuine trust in the grace of God.

Second, Paul had to defend himself against the accusation of being double-minded and two-faced.

2 Corinthians 1:18 But *as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. 20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. 21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;*

Since Christ is God's truth incarnate and all of God's promises are "yes in Him," the apostle had no authority from God but to be a true man and to preach a true gospel. His delays in returning to the Corinthians were not due to being "flaky" and two-faced, but due to unforeseen circumstances which were out of his control.

Thus, the rest of this book is Paul's volcanic self-defense before the unsubstantiated claims of the discontented against him.

A Sample of Paul's Defense

2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you:

2 But I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

Paul speaks in the tone of suppressed irony which shows itself in a keen incisive irony. The temper described by the latter is that of one who does not press his rights, but acts in the spirit of equitable concession (Ellicott).

His critics accused him of being weak and unimpressive, and Paul in his ironical, satirical defense concedes: "I beseech you in the meekness and gentleness of Christ . . . who in presence am base among you."

The Jewish attackers accused Paul of warring in the flesh, and this invective set the apostle on fire.

"In answer he pours out quick, indignant questionings, sharp irony, vehement self-vindication, passionate remonstrances, flashes of wrath, sudden jets of tenderness. What a position for him to have to say, 'I am not a low schemer; I am not working for myself.'" (MacLaren).

Though very common among modern men, these tiny crawling insects could not believe that Paul was a true man . . . a hero of the age, a genuine single-minded Christian that lived a true life of self-sacrifice and self-denial for the good of the church.

Paul was **not** double-minded and unstable in all his ways.

He answers his critics by agreeing with them that he was a man of the flesh in the sense he was man like every other man that had to put his sandals on one foot at a time. But, he was different in that He did not soldier for Christ in the energies of the flesh, but in the energies of the Spirit. He did not make up his own sinful rules in life's battles nor did he arm himself with weapons of the flesh: pride, self-determination, rhetoric, or sophistry.

Paul expands the metaphor with fiery passion.

4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

"Casting down" is a military term for destroying entire cities – a verbal metaphor for battles at the city gates.

"imaginations" refers to "reasonings" (worldly beliefs and propaganda) that defy Christ's authority and wage war against the gospel.

Paul saw men as rebels against the authority of Christ much like King John resisted the rightful rule of King Richard during the days of Robin Hood (circa 1200 A.D.). He saw his critics as dissidents hiding in fortresses where revolutionaries conceal themselves from the gospel – a gospel that humbles men so they can experience the mercy and salvation of God.

"The first effect of any real contact with Christ and His Gospel is to reveal a man to himself, to shatter his delusive estimates of what

he is, and to pull down about his ears the lofty fortress in which he has ensconced himself" (MacLaren).

The requisite for proud men to experience salvations is to lay down their weapons and surrender their precious all to King Jesus.

Until proud men, that think they are competent to judge pastors, humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, remove their fig leaves, and confess they are wretched sinners, they cannot enter the kingdom of God.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not **enter** into the **kingdom** of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

The Christian's Treasure

2 Corinthians 4:6-7



Figure 18: Courtesy of Unsplash

power may be of God, and not of us.

Q: Is it not true, the gospel is a Christian's greatest treasure?

Feeling poor? Consider the Apostle's glorious announce:

2 Corinthians 4:3, 6 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: . . . For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the

Paul announces that Christians possess a great treasure.

A treasure, according to Webster's is "wealth . . . something of great value esteemed rare or precious."

This treasure is "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" as possessed by the Apostle and all believers who know the gospel.

Ellicott informs us that "it was the practice of Eastern kings, who stored up their treasures of gold and silver, to fill jars of earthenware (clay pots) with coin or bullion;" that is, this treasure is contained in our frail bodies made of dust -- of which the apostle calls an earthen "vessel" -- a frail, weak body made of dust.

This treasure is the glorious gospel of grace believed and received by every Christian -- a gospel regarding the person and work of Christ that cleanses, forgives, justifies, redeems, and sanctifies the believing man-- a gospel that saves a man from eternal judgment -- a gospel that purifies and beautifies the inner man -- a gospel of incalculable wealth and value.

Like all treasures, this treasure is hid under the lies and distortions of history because Satan has blinded the minds of them that believe not (4:4).

A treasure within that must overcome (nike) enemies within: "the corruption of nature, the prejudice of education, the love of false religion, unbelief, the love of sin, and of the world." (Benson)

A treasure within that must overcome (nike) enemies without: "the contradiction of philosophers, of heathen, Jewish, or Christian priests and magistrates; of sinners of all descriptions; persecutions from Jews and Gentiles, and the carnal part of mankind in every age; reproaches, spoiling of goods, imprisonments, racks, tortures, and martyrdoms" (Benson).

This is a treasure that was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.

A treasure with greatness of power "that can only be estimated by the greatness of the obstacles which it had to remove, and by the greatness of the effects which it then produced" (Macknight).

8 We are troubled (pressed) on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed (without resources), but not in despair;

9 Persecuted (made to flee), but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Feeling rich?

Christ "for us" not "in us"

2 Corinthians 5:21



Figure 19: Courtesy of Unsplash

Q: Is it not true that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God?

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 ". . . Christ died for our sins . . . "

The gospel is not about Christ "in us" (Roman Catholicism), but about what Christ did "for us" at Calvary (real Catholicism).

Roman Catholicism teaches "Christ rose from the dead to live His life again in us." (catholicexchange.com)

But, the holy Christian faith teaches . . .

He was born for us.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. "
Isaiah 7:14

Christ was born as Hope for all; when born a tiny baby in a stall,

He was born as the Savior of men, in the tiny town of Bethlehem.

He was born in a quiet place, as The King of God's chosen race.

He was God's Gift to all men, for it was by God that He was sent." (Poem by Bob Gotti)

He was set apart for us (John 17:17-19)

He suffered for us (1 Peter 4:1)

He was made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13)

He became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21) (Note the paradox of redemption: God did not treat Him as a sinner . . . or a sin offering, but as sin itself -- John 3:14)

He was punished for us (Isaiah 56:4-6, 8; Ephesians 5:2)

He died for us (Romans 5:8; 8:32; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 2 Corinthians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; 1 John 3:16)

He was buried for us (Isaiah 53:5; Hebrews 2:14-15)

He rose again for us (Romans 4:25; John 14:2)

He ascended into heaven to make intercession for us (Romans 8:34)

He lives in Heaven where He has provided a way for us to enter the Holy Sanctuary (Hebrews 7:25; 9:12; 10:18)

And, when He finally returns, He will come again "for us" (John 14:3).

Yes, Paul talks about "Christ in us" - "the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). But, this is the hope of the gospel at work in the hearts of God's people.

The "you" is plural, not singular.

The context is "the church" (1:24) and not the human heart; the "Lord's people" (NIV) as a whole, and not the individual Christian.

As a Divine Person, our Lord lives in Heaven. He is "sitting at the right hand of God" (Acts 2:34). He lives among the people of God because of their faith and hope in Him and in the sense He gives His Spirit to comfort His people (Acts 2:38).

When the rich young ruler came to Christ and asked him, "What must I do to have eternal life," our Lord did **not** say, "Invite me into your heart."

Let us not forget. The gospel is about what Christ has done extrinsically "for us" at the cross (first), and less about what He does intrinsically in us through His Spirit (second). Let us not confuse the two works of salvation, justification and sanctification.

We rest in His finished work at Calvary in His accomplishments "for us" (perfect standing) even though the work of holiness by the power of the Spirit is unfinished and incomplete in us (imperfect condition).

Shalom (Romans 5:1)!

Appendix



The Pastor Search

From the Chairman of the Board of Deacons at First Church

Date: 62 A.D.



Figure 20: Courtesy of
Freepik

To the Deacon Board of First Church:

As you know, our search committee has been trying to locate a pastor for our 501 (c) 3 organization-- a pastor of whom we can be proud—a man who can preach, teach, write, sing, lead music, administrate, visit, pray, evangelize, tell jokes, cook, counsel the hurting, and pet the sheep.

On my trip to Macedonia, I met a preacher who wants to establish a church in our area and he asked about the opportunities. I did not know what to say. Please advise me as to how I should answer.

He is a short man in his sixties who was raised a Jew, but he converted to Christianity while in his mid-thirties. He has a speech impediment and a loathsome eye disease. His astounding resume' includes three missionary tours. Some say he is one of the greatest Christians of our time, but I'm not too sure about that. Though he has been instrumental in establishing over 25 churches, he has split many synagogues in the area.

The man is opinionated and controversial. Sometimes he refuses to take money for his preaching, and supports himself through his blue-collar craft – an insult to Jews.

Some say he is a negative man because he preaches against circumcision. Others believe the man is a heretic because he preaches against the law as a means to salvation. The vegetarians were angered because he said they were no longer under the law, and the Greeks were disturbed because he rebuked them for eating ham sandwiches in front of the Jews at a church potluck.

Everywhere he goes there seems to be trouble. The man has been beaten, arrested, imprisoned, put in stocks, and stoned. By the scars on his back, it looks like he has received 39 stripes on more than one occasion. Early in his life, he escaped from King Aretas having been lowered over the wall in a large

fruit basket. He is obviously not submissive to civil authorities. While he was incarcerated in Philippi, He refused to yield his constitutional rights, and the Mayor of Philippi had to escort him out of the city personally.

In Thessalonica, he preached there was another king besides Caesar. This is bound to get him into political trouble. Even Felix and Festus imprisoned him for creating a riot in Jerusalem.

The talk around town is that Caesar is likely to indict him for treason against the State.

The Macedonians said he preached against Socrates and Plato. Many were offended because he said Jesus is the only way God. He is not only politically incorrect, he preaches against psychologists, the high priests of our society. He seems to have difficulty in getting along with others. The Galatian churches do not want him back, and highly-esteemed Demas will not have anything to do with the man. He and Barnabas argued in Antioch over a missionary candidate. One wonders about his relational skills! After all, if a man can't get along with Barnabas, who can he get along with?

Please advise me what to do. The man is insistent on coming to our area. His name is Paul the Apostle, sent not from men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father.

The Deac

P.S. A messenger from Corinth just arrived and reported that the brethren were disturbed by Paul's authoritarian approach to handling a young man who just married his father's wife. Maybe we should ask Demas to be our pastor. He'll obey the government and Caesar's laws. He is respected in the community, and he is a man of means. I know we would be proud to have him as our pastor.

Crisis of Headship

1 Corinthians 11

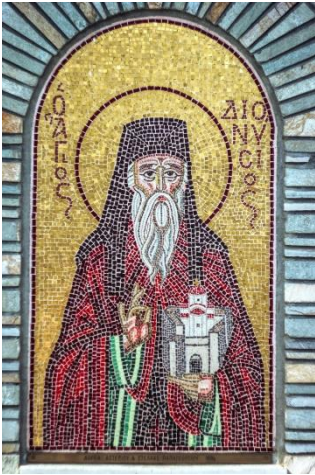


Figure 21: Courtesy of Unsplash

Q: Is it not true that the head of government 501 c 3 organizations is the IRS?

Q: Is it not true modern churches have compromised the headship of Christ by becoming government approved charity organizations?

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ” (1 Corinthians 11)

Christ is not only the head of every man in the church, He is also head of the church (Ephesians 1:22).

The Baptist Faith and Message reads as follows:

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate.

There is nothing wrong with this statement.

Unfortunately, the Southern Baptists do not practice their own faith and message because they are all 501 c 3 state created organizations. Thus, they are not “separate” . . . nor are they “free.” The Baptists are slaves to Congress hustling for members and money.

Southern Baptist Churches are not God’s churches operating under the headship of Christ, they are State Organizations controlled by, and regulated by the laws of the IRS. As one critic said, “The SBC is all about counting noses and nickels.”

Think about it! Gospel preaching Southern Baptist Churches are no longer God’s servants but NON-PROPHET organizations controlled by the State for the benefit of the State; that is, ALL BAPTIST “CHURCHES” are government registered, government controlled, government approved religious organizations.

For this reason and others, the Southern Baptists are in decline: “Southern Baptists Down to Lowest in 30 Years” (Christianity Today – May 23, 2019).

But, they are not alone. All carnal American denominations are incorporated.

Who is Your Master?

The Corinthians served “the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:3, 1:7; 1:8; 1:10; and 2 Corinthians 11:31; 13:14).

Until the mid-nineteen forties, few churches in America were private, locally operated churches unincorporated with the State.

But since the Johnson Amendment (1954), more and more churches started incorporating at an alarming rate when there was no need to do so.

The Letter to the Colossians warns against compromising the headship of Christ when it states,

“And this I say, lest any man should beguile (carry you away as booty) you with enticing words Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy (an intellectual movement) and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Colossians 2:4,8).

2:19 Let no one beguile you . . . while volunteering (to worship angels . . . or the State) . . . And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Jesus is not only the Head over all the physical creation He is head over the church , God’s spiritual creation; that is, a free church is under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in theory and practice, period (Colossians 1:15, 18)!

The Colossians compromised the headship of Christ when they voluntarily submitted to the world’s ordinances (2:20) – thus, the reason for the letter.

Colossians 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments (statutes) of the world (political order of man), why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (dogma: decrees, rules, and regulations) . . . ?

Paul raised a red flag for the millenniums when he saw the Christians at Colossae voluntarily submitting to the “ordinances, rules, and regulations” of the Greek political order.

All law is essentially religious. Law represents the values of the god that people serve whether it is the values of a pagan deity, a modern cult, or secular humanism. Laws change when society changes their gods. And, a change in laws is evidence the nation has changed its gods.

It is through law that the State gains control of the church, not because the State forces the church to obey their statutes, but because the church voluntarily surrenders to its jurisdiction.

Once a church surrenders to the jurisdiction of the State, it is no longer a church, but a 501 c 3 religious-charitable organization subject to the rules and regulation passed by CONgress.

Colossians 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (dogma: decrees, rules, and regulations) . . .?

Psalm 94:20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?

Politically speaking, a free church is a sovereign in a political sense; a 501 c 3 organization is a slave to the State in a political-legal sense.

Webster: A slave is a person held in forced servitude.

The term "internal" means "municipal", see 52A C.J.S. "Law", pgs. 741, 742. Slavery, being contrary to natural right, is created only by municipal law, see Dred Scott v. Sandford, 60 U.S. (19

Sovereigns tax inferior subjects. But, the State is not permitted to tax a free church because the State is not superior to the church; that is, both the church and the State are subject to Christ and neither is superior to the other; that is, the church has no duty to the State. But, if this is true, why do God's sovereign churches submit to the government as its slave?

Operating under the only true Sovereign, the church has authority to regulate its own affairs and to keep its financial records private and out of reach of State officers. Moreover, churches don't need to beg the government to keep its doors due to some plandemic "shut down" orders from totalitarian governors.

But, a church that voluntarily incorporates with the federal government surrenders its sovereignty and becomes subject to the statutes of the IRS, perhaps, the greatest criminal organization in the world.

The crisis of headship is seen in how the church handles their financial affairs.

For example: In the pulpit, pastors preach about giving, tithing, and offering money to the Lord.

But, once the offering is taken, the church is metamorphosed into a corporate accounting monster. Biblical language is exchange for corporate language. Gifts to God become "income" for the church. The love offering to the minister is now considered "wages;" the church treasures is considered an IRS "Withholding Agent;" and the minister is now viewed as a "federal employee" and CEO of a corporation (Title 26, § 3401(C)). The Bible calls this linguistic hocus pocus "sorcery" practiced by "mystery Babylon" (Revelation 18:23).

Instead of reporting to God, the 501 c 3 religious organization now reports to the State.

(c) Employee

For purposes of this chapter, the term “employee” includes an officer, employee, or elected official of the United States, a State, or any political subdivision thereof, or the District of Columbia, or any agency or instrumentality of any one or more of the foregoing. The term “employee” also includes an officer of a corporation

When a church incorporates, it transforms itself into a double minded, two-face hypocrite subject to sneers by the world. To say that Jesus is the Head of the church and head of the IRS religious organization is double-speak.

Consider how evil it is for God’s people to transform His church into a “religious organization” legally required to obey the government’s bad boy – the corrupt, criminal agency called the IRS.

Biblically speaking, the church owes its existence to God, not the State.

For God has “begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

A corporation owes its existence to the State and is, therefore, a dead, artificial entity created by the government. But, a church owes its existence to Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father.

The church has a right to exist and pursue its mission, not because the State gives its permission or supplies it with a license, but because Christ who has been given “all authority . . . in heaven and on earth” and orders His people to conduct kingdom business in the entire world (Matthew 28:18).

The church, therefore, does not need the permission of the State to engage gospel proclamation and to financially sustain it . . . nor does it need a license from the State . . . nor a permit from the State . . . nor a pseudo stamp of authority by the State to be a legitimate church or to conduct God’s business in the world!! It has the authority of the King of kings and Lord of lords to conduct its mission.

The church of Jesus Christ exists by the highest Authority in the universe. It is under command of the King of kings and Lord of lords. A 501 c 3 religious organization is under control of one the most corrupt, nefarious government organization on earth.

“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us” (Isaiah 33:22).

“The churches of America do not exist by the grace of the state; the churches of America are not mere citizens of the state. The churches of America exist apart; they have their own vantage point, their own authority. Religion is its own realm; it makes its

own claims. We establish no religion in this country, nor will we ever" (President Reagan at Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast, Dallas, Texas, August 23, 1984).

The church is NOT an artificial entity, an artificial person, a fictional corporation, or artificial creation of the State. It is a living organism, the body of Christ, operative on earth composed of real souls with a conscience . . . real people with bodies, arms, and legs (Eph. 1:23). And, it is empowered by and protected by the risen, ascended, enthroned Christ.

Corporations, on the other hand, are artificial entities, legal fictions, artificial "persons" without arms and legs, and seriously lacking a conscience. Corporations can't see, hear, or feel. Corporations see no evil, hear no evil, and speak only evil (CNN, MSBC, ABC, and CBS come to mind).

Corporations are not dependent on God for existence, but they are dependent on the State for existence, sustenance, and protection.

Black's Law Dictionary (6th Edition) states the following:

"Church: In its most general sense, the religious society founded and established by Jesus Christ, to receive, preserve, and propagate His doctrines and ordinances."

"Corporation: An artificial person or legal entity created by or under the authority of the laws of a state. An association of persons created by statute as a legal entity."

A body can only have one head and one master (Mt. 6:23; Col 1:18). If it has two heads, it is a two-headed monster.

If men in a religious organization say they can serve Christ and the State, they are "double minded" and unstable in all their ways (James 1:8):

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

What church leaders incorporate with the State, their religious organization tries to be subject to two sets of laws because it has two masters. A double minded "church" organization has divided loyalties. And, no organization can serve two masters.

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

How many times have you been in a church meeting seeking the leading of the Spirit and come up with an idea for a ministry and a member in the body raises the question, "Will the government allow us to do this?" Suddenly, the committee members are no longer studying the Bible to figure out what to do,

they are consulting lawyers and statutes to see if the ministry will please the State.

How State Law Hinder Ministry

Example # 1: This became real to me when a Methodist church group came to meet with an attorney and myself. Every Saturday, they went to a city park downtown and fed the homeless a hot breakfast. One day the health inspector came by and told them they could no longer do this because they did not use county approved serving wares and did not have an approved professional kitchen.

They asked if they could throw the food in the garbage. The health inspector said, "Yes." "Can the homeless come and take the food out of the garbage can?" they continued. Again, the inspector said, "Yes." Legally, the homeless could eat out garbage cans, but not off the clean paper plates provided by the church.

The church was in a quandary about what to do, and they were thinking about giving up this ministry. The lawyer suggested the church group submit to the regulations of the State inspectors. I suggested the church surrender its license back to the city, and continue to perform their Saturday hospitality ministry. The lawyer agreed this was an option and latched on to it. So, they surrendered the license, stopped communicating with the city, and continued to feed the poor. They never heard from the city again. Once the church was out of their jurisdiction, the city health inspector lost his authority over this ministry.

Example # 2: In December 2014, the Dallas city council enacted Ordinance No. 29595, which makes it illegal to serve food to the homeless without jumping through a statist myriad of bureaucratic hoops, including a fee, training classes, and written notices.

Dozens of volunteers from children to adults alike took to the streets of Dallas to hand out food, sleeping bags, clothing, and tents to the area's homeless.

As they took to the streets this weekend, many of the members of the organization openly carried their weapons. This was done—not out of an act of intimidation—but merely to assert rights as well as protect them.

The resultant heavily armed group of kind-hearted souls effectively staved off any attempts by police to shut down the charitable efforts.

Who is Your Master:

Christ or the State?

1 Corinthians 11



Figure 22: Courtesy of Cristo

Q: Is it not true that no man and no church can serve two masters, two laws, and two mandates?

1 Corinthians 11:3 “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ” (1 Corinthians 11)

2 Corinthians 7:15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

2 Corinthians 7:15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

Once a Church incorporates with the State, the State is its master.

The State always wins because the church is under contract, and when the church contracts with the State, it is no longer under the authority of Christ. The State knows it is sovereign over the church with a right to regulate and oversee its affairs.

The very nature of incorporation assumes the State is sovereign over the State-church organization.

“Sovereign: A person, body, or state in which independent and supreme authority is vested; a chief ruler with supreme power; a king or other ruler in a monarchy” (Black’s Law Dictionary, 6th Edition).

Corporations are not modern inventions. They can be traced back to Roman civil law.

Ever heard of “civil rights?”

Civil rights privileges given by a civil government. A corporation receives privileges in exchange for rights from the State because the State is sovereign

over the corporation. Christ cannot be the head of a corporation because the head of every corporation is the civil government. He is the Head of a living corpus, not a dead, state-created fiction.

A pastor may protest and say, "We never said the State was sovereign over the church." This may be true, but "Actions speak louder than words!"

Besides, once incorporated, it does not matter how a church sees itself. It only matters how the State sees the church. When in court, you can bet your bottom dollar the judge will use "corporate law," not the Bible to judge the actions of the incorporated religious (church)-organization.

"Corporations are citizens of the State by which they are created,"
("Citizen", Bouvier's Law Dictionary, 8th Ed., 1914).

Why then do churches become incorporated?

Simply put, pastors do not know Biblical law, family law, state law, or federal law.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," (Hosea 4:6).

"Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." (Luke 11:52).

Why do lawyers urge churches to incorporate?

First Lawyer Trick:

Lawyers study statutory law, not the Bible. Thus, they are statutors and not Biblical lawyers. They too are victims of a "lack of knowledge."

In talking with several lawyers about this issue, each told me the main advantage to be a corporation is that the corporation can be sued?" What? Whoopie-doo! At last, we can be sued!! I always wanted to be sued, didn't you?

"Corporation: The law treats the corporation itself as a person which can sue and be sued" (Black's Law Dictionary, 6th Edition)

Corporations, unlike natural persons, do not possess natural rights.

Only natural persons (living souls) possess natural, "God-given" rights. The natural person has been given rights by God and not rights granted by the State. Therefore, it is the State's duty to preserve, protect, and defend natural rights (See the Declaration of Independence).

The American people have God-given rights. The government has no rights; it only has power.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain

unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . .” Declaration of Independence, 1776.

Once a church incorporates with the State, it can no longer rely on the Constitution to protect its unalienable rights to exist as “the body of Christ.”

The 501 c 3 organization only has civil rights, rights / privileges granted by the State. The corporation, therefore, can sue and be sued in order to protect it . . . but really?

The problem with incorporation is that it reduces the church with God-given rights to a corporation with no rights. The individual or church can defend their rights in court, but a corporation has to admit incompetence and hire an attorney to defend them if sued.

When churches incorporate with the State they go back to Egypt with Pharaoh as the Head of the corporate slave population? Thus, the church ceases to be a church. It becomes an artificial corporation subject to the United States, Inc.

When the church surrenders its privacy to the State, it rejects the authority of Christ, and subjects itself to the rules, regulations, and “all-seeing eye” of the State.

Be ye not unequally yoked together (contracted) with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles (3 John 1:7).

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you (2 Corinthians 6:17).

“The individual may stand upon his constitutional rights as citizen. He is entitled to carry on his private business in his own way. His power to contract is unlimited. He owes no duty to the State or to his neighbor to divulge his business, or to open his doors to an investigation, so far as it may tend to criminate him. He owes no duty to the State, since he receives nothing therefrom, beyond the protection of his life and property. His rights are such as existed by the law of the land long antecedent to the organization of the State, and can only be taken from him by due process of law, and in accordance with the Constitution. Among his rights are a refusal to incriminate himself, and the immunity of himself and his property from arrest or seizure except under a warrant of the law. He owes nothing to the public so long as he does not trespass upon

their rights” Hale v. Henkel, 201 U.S. 43, 74 (1906).

Second Lawyer Trick:

The second reason lawyers give as a “benefit” of incorporation is a “tax exempt” status before the IRS.

But, why would lawyers say this when a church is already tax exempt?

The word “exempt” implies an obligation to do something that one is required to do in the first place. Churches do not need to become tax-exempt because WE THE PEOPLE never gave the government any power to tax a church in the first place!

Churches are simply “non-assessable.” Being non-assessable assumes the position that the government does not have any jurisdiction over the church – that the church is sovereign over its own financial affairs and owes NO DUTY to the civil government!!

When the government has no jurisdiction over a subject, it has no power to tax it.

A church has an unalienable right to conduct its kingdom business without interference from the civil government.

The true church cannot be taxed because it is not a creation of the State but a creation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It, is therefore, not exempt, but non-assessable.

Q: Why, then, would a church seek to be a “tax exempt” organization under the government when it is already constitutionally protected from the taxation power of the federal government?

Churches only become “tax exempt” when they apply to the civil government for the “privilege” of obtaining a tax-exempt license. This exemption presupposes a mindset that the government has acquired jurisdiction over the church in the first place. Nonsense!

Q: Is it necessary to have a license from the State to conduct God’s business?

A license is required to do something that would otherwise be illegal.

“License: “The permission by competent authority to do an act which, without such permission, would be illegal” (Black’s Law Dictionary, 6th Edition).

“Non-assessable. That on which no assessment can be legally levied for any purpose” (Cyclopedic Law Dictionary, 3rd Edition, 1940).

Q: When did doing kingdom business become illegal in this country?

Churches have always had a right to exist and proclaim the gospel by virtue of Biblical authority. Churches have always enjoyed Constitutional protections because of the restrictions on the civil government to meddle with church business including but not limited to its financial affairs and records.

Most churches object to the ACLU's hell-bent pursuance of ridding the land of any reference to God or the Ten Commandments on government property due to the doctrine of the separation of church and State.

But in reality, it is the church that fears "separation" and "independence from the government." Consequently, church leaders run to the IRS to seek statutory protection from the IRS by becoming "501 (c) 3 creature of the IRS."

Q: Why is it when churches have a right to claim separation of church and State they will not use it to their advantage?

Unlike Ezra who feared asking for the king's protection, today's churches show little or no embarrassment to ask for the king's protection and certainly do not fast to seek God's protection in their pilgrim journey in America (Ezra 8:21, 22).

22-23 "For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us."

Q: Why are churchmen asking for State protection instead of fasting to obtain God's protection?

What churches need to realize is that they are and always have been non-taxable.

No government has a right to tax God's business!! If they do, they will be in big trouble with the Only Sovereign!

Congress NEVER made a law to tax churches, IT IS PROHIBITED BY THE CONSTITUTION from doing so:

"Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . . " (1st Amendment).

"All church property . . . shall be exempt from taxation" (NM Constitution, Article 8, §3).

Further, according to IRS Publication 557 and IRC §508 churches are "exempt automatically" by virtue of their historical foundation in gospel proclamation and charitable activities: "exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes . . ." (IRC 107(c)(2)(b)).

Third Lawyer Trick:

Another reason given by lawyers as a “benefit” of incorporation is that members can give to the church and claim a “tax deduction.”

Christians need to realize that a church is not tax deductible because it is a 501 (c) 3 organization, but because it is a free church under God’s command!

Free churches are simply not taxable! Even the IRS admits this in IRS Publication 526, p. 2:

Organizations that Qualify to Receive Deductible Contributions

You can deduct your contributions only if you make them to a qualified organization. To become a qualified organization, most organizations other than churches and governments, as described below, must apply to the IRS [IRS Publication 526, p. 2 (Emphasis added.)].

“Let me recommend that churches that are presently set up under the Internal Revenue Service’s 501(c)(3) tax exemption requirements send the IRS a letter saying that they are no longer claiming exemption under this section of the Internal Revenue Code. This is because every church is automatically tax-exempt. No church has to ask permission of the U.S. government.” (Dr. Gary North, President of ICE, Institute for Christian Economics).

Further, whether licensed or not by the government, any contribution to a non-incorporated church or even a State incorporated church automatically qualifies as a tax write-off pursuant to Publication 557 and IRC §170 (c)(2)(B).

A free church does not have to be a nonprofit charitable corporation to be tax deductible or to receive “tax deductible” monies from individuals.

Furthermore, an individual does not need to give to a 501 c3 to claim a deduction. Giving to a free church counts as a deduction. A church, however, may want to clear its throat of corporate language when it distributes “tax receipts” and simply return a simple “Thank You” note to the giver acknowledging the gift to the church.

A Warning: Business men who give to the church hoping for a big tax write off should check their motives. Using the church to advance personal profit in order to claim deductions (government privileges) utilizes the church as a commercial center instead of a worship center.

Turning a church into a business for personal gain was the reason Jesus made a whip and charged the money changers in the temple with a conspiracy against the purpose of God (John 2).

Q: What if the IRS summons a free church to produce its records for an audit?

This is strictly beyond the authority of the IRS to do so. The IRS has no authority over the church and the church has no duty to obey an unconstitutional order. Simply, return the subpoena-we-want-to-harass-you letter.

This view was affirmed by the court recently in Quoting from the decision (Schulz v. IRS, Case No. 04-0196-cv),

“...absent an effort to seek enforcement through a federal court, IRS summonses apply no force to taxpayers, and no consequence whatever can befall a taxpayer who refuses, ignores, or otherwise does not comply with an IRS summons until that summons is backed by a federal court order.[a taxpayer] cannot be held in contempt, arrested, detained, or otherwise punished for refusing to comply with the original IRS summons, no matter the taxpayer’s reasons, or lack of reasons for so complying.” (Schulz v. IRS, Case No. 04-0196-cv), (Emphasis added.)

The Goal: Thus, it should be the aim of every Bible church to be a “free church;” that is, free from government control.

In conclusion, the church of Jesus Christ is under High Command from Him who is Head over the Church. The church does not need the approval of government to conduct its affairs, receive contributions from its members, or for members to claim charitable deductions given to a church.

When a church becomes a corporation, it creates a crisis of headship. Who is the church going to look to as its head—Christ or the civil government? What are its laws—God’s law or man-made statutes?

For sure, the civil government sees itself as the head of an incorporated church. When it does, the church becomes divided in its affections. A crisis of authority emerges between the Word of God and statutory law, between the precedent of prayer and the pull to surrender to statutory codes. All of this can be avoided by understanding the authority of Christ and the protection churches have under Constitutional law, the highest law in the land.

“There is not a shadow of right in the general government to intermeddle with religion. This subject is, for the honor of American, perfectly free and unshackled. The government has no jurisdiction over it” (James Madison).

Think of it! The State made it a criminal act to feed the poor. (Waking Times).

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