

21 *This is the greeting with my own hand, Paul.*

22 ¶ If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Come, O Lord.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be with you.*

24 My love *be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

cate its origin. However, it was written by Sosthenes while Paul dictated it (1:1). **22 Accursed:** This Greek word (*anathema*) means to be destroyed (See Gl 1:8,9). The Holy Spirit is serious about our love of the Lord. All those who do not obediently love the Lord will eventually be destroyed from the presence of the Lord (Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). Therefore, there will be no hope for those who do not turn to God in order to be obedient to His will. **Come, O Lord:** This is from two Greek words (*marana tha*). The phrase is a short prayer that the Lord come (Jd 14,15; Rv 22:20). As all faithful Christians,

Paul was looking for and desiring the coming of the Lord (2 Pt 3:14). If one is not looking for the coming of the Lord in order to deliver us from this world, then he is attached to this world. His mind is on things of this world (See comments Cl 3:1-3). **23,24** Paul concludes the epistle as he often introduces his messages to the churches. All is centered around the work of God through His grace (Rm 16:20). It is because of God's grace that we are who we are. Therefore, our gratitude is to Him for His gift of grace.

Paul's Letter Of 2 Corinthians

Author

The author of this letter identifies himself in 1:1. "*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God*" The apostle Paul wrote this letter in order to follow up on things that he had written in 1 Corinthians (See "Author" in introduction to Rm).

Date

A delegation of brethren from Corinth had already come to Paul in Ephesus to report concerning problems that had taken place in Corinth since his departure after the initial establishment of the church (At 18). Paul wrote the 1 Corinthian letter in order to correct these problems. 1 Corinthians was possibly taken to Corinth by these men or Titus (1 Co 16:17-19). Paul also sent Timothy to Corinth in order to exhort the brethren to repent before his coming. He did this in order that he not have to come to them with the rod of discipline (1 Co 4:17; 16:10,11). Timothy's return to Paul with reports concerning the unrepentant attitude of some of the disciples to the apostolic authority of Paul motivated the writing of this letter (2 Co 1:23 - 2:1; 12:14 - 13:6).

The 1 Corinthian letter was written from Ephesus during Paul's two to three year visit there, possibly at the end of his stay (At 19:1-10). Therefore, 1 Corinthians was probably written between A.D. 54 and 55 while Paul was on his third missionary journey. This letter was written about one year after the writing of 1 Corinthians. It was written while Paul was in Macedonia on his third missionary journey. At the time, he was on his way to Corinth to personally correct some problems in the church, as well as collect the Corinthians' contribution for the famine victims of Judea (1 Co 16:1-4). Since the letter was probably written about a year after 1 Corinthians, the date of writing would be in the autumn of A.D. 56 when Paul intended to stay the winter with the Macedonian churches (See 8:10; 9:2). He was on his way to Corinth. However, some brethren needed to repent before he arrived. If they did not repent, this third visit would be one over which he would mourn because he would have to exercise the power of a Christ-sent apostle in order to discipline them (12:21).

Theme

Since there were those in Corinth who were challenging the apostleship of Paul, this letter was written to contrast the arrogant leadership of these false apostles to the humble nature of the servanthood of the apostles of Christ. The theme of the letter, therefore, is to proclaim the humble perseverance in affliction of the true servants of Christ (See 6:4-10; 11:16-33).

Purpose

Timothy had returned to Paul after exhorting the Corinthian church to repent and follow the in-

structions that Paul had written in the first letter. Timothy reported concerning the repentant attitude of the majority of the church. However, there were still some who were defiant, and thus, opposed the apostolic authority of Paul. Paul thus writes this letter before his third visit to Corinth in order to stimulate repentance on the part of those who persisted in their unrepentant and arrogant attitudes (1:23 - 2:1).

The problems in the Corinthian church were in reference to certain arrogant false apostles in the midst of the church who refused to repent. Paul had sent Titus with a strong letter of admonition in order to correct the problems before he arrived and had to exercise his apostolic authority of physical discipline of some in the church (2:3; 12:14 - 13:6). What he communicated in the letter with the visit of Titus seemed to correct some of the problems (See 2:12,13; 7:5-7,13-16). However, the persistent false teachers among them continued to greatly influence the disciples.

In a few months from the time of this writing, Paul planned to be in Corinth. Since the visit of Titus had accomplished the repentance of the Corinthians as a whole, this reconciliatory letter was written for at least five reasons. (1) Paul reminded the Corinthians of his recent trials and travels as a servant of Jesus (1:1 - 2:13). (2) In defense of his ministry in reference to those in Corinth who opposed him, he defined the nature of true servanthood discipleship (2:14 - 6:10). (3) He exhorted them to maintain fellowship with all those who would separate themselves from sin (6:11 - 7:16). (4) He reminded them of their commitment to contribute to the famine victims of Judea (8:1 - 9:15). (5) He defended the authority of his Christ-sent apostleship in reference to those in Corinth who denied such, and then warned that he was coming in order to correct the problem of the defiant false apostles (10:1 - 13:10).

Chapter 1

1 ¶ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

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

3 ¶ Blessed *be* God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our tribulation so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Chapter 1

GREETINGS

1 **An apostle:** As in the first epistle, Paul reaffirms his apostleship which was being challenged by some in Corinth who were false apostles (1 Co 1:1). He writes this letter with the authority of a Christ-sent apostle who was personally called by Jesus (At 9:1-9; see Rm 1:1; Gl 1:1). He did not call himself into apostleship, neither was he called by any man (Gl 1:11,12; see comments At 14:4,14; Gl 1:19). **Timothy:** Since Timothy is now with Paul after returning from Corinth, we would assume that he returned with a report concerning the Corinthians' response to the letter of 1 Corinthians (1 Co 16:10). This letter was written in response to the good report that Timothy brought concerning the response of the Corinthians to the immoral situation in the church (See 1 Co 5). However, Titus also brought news that there were still some in the church in Corinth who remained defiant to the apostleship of Paul. **Church of God:** Though they had digressed to the point of needing the stern letter of 1 Corinthians, Paul still considered them the church of God (1 Co 1:1,2). Before we would consider any church apostate, we should first consider the nature of the Corinthian church with which Paul remained in fellowship. **Saints ... in all Achaia:** This letter was probably written no more than a year after the writing of 1 Corinthians. Therefore, the church had been in existence for six to seven years by the time this letter was

written. From the initial beginnings of Paul's preaching in At 18, the church had grown throughout all Achaia. This church had thus realized its responsibility to evangelize their own area without the aid of Paul (See comments 1 Th 1:6-10). 2 **Grace ... peace:** This is Paul's common greeting (Rm 1:7). It is the result of God's grace that we have peace with God through the cross of Jesus (Ti 2:11).

COMFORT IN TIMES OF AFFLICTION

3 **Father of mercies ... comfort:** Paul's praise of God is here motivated by His mercy that He has bestowed on us. His mercy and grace brought comfort to all those who realize the futility of their lives in sin. Though one is hopelessly lost in sin and cannot redeem himself by his own good works, God is rich in mercy because of His great love for all men (See comments Ep 2:4-10). 4 **Comforts us:** In times of trial and persecution, true comfort comes when one realizes that God is the one who will eventually deliver us out of this world (See 7:6,7,13; Is 51:12; 66:13). **May be able to comfort:** Our own individual comfort is manifested in our consideration of others in times of tribulation (See At 9:31). God's comfort, therefore, is not simply for the sake of individual members. It is for the purpose of communicating comfort within the body of Christ, the church of God. Enduring trials give one knowledge and compassion whereby he may minister unto others the comfort of God. 5 **The sufferings of Christ:** Because Christians have submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ, they

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our comfort also abounds through Christ. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation.

6 Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation that is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings that we also suffer.

7 And our hope for you *is* firmly grounded, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so *you will be* also of the comfort.

8 ¶ For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our trouble that came *to us* in Asia, that we were excessively burdened beyond strength, *to the point* that we despaired even of life.

9 Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead,

10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver; in whom we trust that He will still deliver *us*,

11 you also helping us together through your prayers so that thanks may be given by many people on our behalf for the gift bestowed on us through *the prayers of many*.

12 ¶ For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that in holiness and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

13 For we write no other things to you than

take upon themselves the same persecution of the world that was launched against Jesus (See 4:10; Mk 10:39; Jn 15:20; At 9:4; Ph 3:10; Cl 1:24). **Comfort:** This is the same word that is translated "comfort" in the preceding verses. Paul's point is that the more we endure the sufferings of Christ because of living the Christian life, the more comfort we receive because of our sufferings (Compare Js 1:2,3; 1 Pt 4:16; see comments 1 Pt 1:6-9). Paul sees trials in this life as necessary in order to prepare one for the life that exists after the end of this world (See comments At 14:22). **6 If we are afflicted:** Paul's suffering to preach the gospel produced endurance (Rm 5:3). His deliverance from persecution gave him confidence in God who delivers, and thus, he had more comfort from his confidence to continue preaching the gospel. His confidence in God to deliver him resulted in his preaching the gospel to the Corinthians (See 4:15; 12:15; Ep 3:1,13; 2 Tm 2:10; see comments At 18:9-11). The Corinthians, therefore, could not question Paul's sincerity in preaching the gospel to them, for it was because of his endurance in the face of sufferings that he preached. The sincerity of one's preaching is manifested in his willingness to preach regardless of persecution and hardships. **7 Partakers of the sufferings:** Paul was confident that the Corinthian saints would remain steadfast. Since they willingly suffered with Christ, they would also partake of the result of their suffering. They would receive the comfort of God in this life and eternal life to come (See comments Rm 8:17; 2 Tm 2:12). Their suffering at the hands of wicked men manifested that they were living the life of Christ (2 Tm 3:12).

8,9 At the time Paul wrote this letter, he had already passed through Asia. He was in Macedonia and on his way to Corinth. **Trouble ... in Asia:** Paul does not inform us concerning the exact nature of this persecution. However, from the statements he made in other contexts, it is evident that his life was in danger (See At 19:23; 20:1; 1 Co 15:32; 16:9). He was in danger to the extent that he could not of his own choice and powers deliver himself. Therefore, his deliverance was the result of the work of God to spare his life in order that he continue with His Christ-appointed destiny of preaching the gospel (See At 9:15). **Not trust in ourselves:** Paul

saw the occasion of death in Asia as an opportunity to trust in God who had the power to deliver us from such situations (Jr 17:5,7). We may not perceive how God would deliver us from situations of danger, but we trust that He is able simply because Paul was delivered on the occasion about which he here speaks. **10 Who delivered us:** In some way, God delivered Paul from death in Asia. God worked in the situation whereby Paul was set free from danger, and thus, allowed to continue his ministry (2 Pt 2:9). God's deliverance of Paul gave him confidence that He would continue to deliver him until his ministry was completed (See 2 Tm 4:6-8). **11 Helping ... through ... prayers:** There were many prayers made on behalf of Paul that he be delivered from the sentence of death in Asia. God answered those prayers. Paul now encourages the Corinthians to thank God for his deliverance (See Rm 15:30; Ph 1:19; Pl 22). We must be confident, therefore, that God answers our prayers on behalf of others. However, God's answers are according to His work in the lives of those who have set themselves to do His work. He has chosen not to deliver some. Though we do not understand why he has not delivered some from death, we trust that He is working in our lives to do His will in this world. Servants of God who have dedicated themselves to the work of God, therefore, must have confidence in God that whatever happens, it is according to the work of God in answer to our prayers.

GOD'S WORK IN PAUL'S LIFE

12 Regardless of the warnings of the first epistle, there were still in the church some who enviously persisted to attack Paul's apostolic authority. In this context, he continued his defense against false apostles who were in the midst of the Corinthian church (11:13). **Boasting:** Because of the boasting of his accusers, Paul answered with boasting in reference to God working in his life. However, his boasting is done with integrity. He does not set himself apart from others or manifest a trust in his own works. He boasts in order to reveal that his life was heaven motivated and not worldly motivated (Compare 1 Co 2:4; 3:19). He boasted in his weaknesses in order to manifest that God made him strong. **Testimony of our conscience:** Paul did not

what you read or understand. And I hope you will understand even to the end,

14 as also you have partially understood us, that we are your boast as you also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

15 ¶ And in this confidence I intended to come to you before so that you might have a second blessing,

16 and to pass by you *on my way* to Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea.

17 Therefore, when I determined this, did I *do so* lightly? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh so that with me there should be “Yes, Yes” and “No, No”?

18 But *as God is faithful*, our word toward you was not “Yes” and “No.”

19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silas and Timothy, was not “Yes” and “No,” but in Him was “Yes.”

20 For all the promises of God in Him *are* “Yes,” and in Him, “Amen,” to the glory of God through us.

21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, *is* God,

22 who has also sealed us and given the guarantee of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 ¶ Moreover, I call God as a witness to my soul, that to spare you I came not again to Corinth.

allow others who judged him to determine his work. He was assured within himself that he was doing the will of God (See 2:17). He worked in order to please God, not man (Gl 1:10). **13,14** *We write no other things*: Paul means what he says in his letters. There are no hidden agendas. There are no false motives. He is direct and precise, and thus not deceitful. His admonition here is that they will continue to study what he writes in order that they understand the will of the Lord concerning these matters. *We are your boast*: The obedience of the Corinthians to the revealed gospel was Paul's witness to the accuracy of his preaching (1:11; 5:12). When all things are concluded, it will be revealed that he both preached the truth of the gospel and they obeyed the one true gospel (See Ph 2:16; 1 Th 2:19,20).

15 *I intended to come*: In the 1 Corinthian letter Paul had promised to come to them (1 Co 4:19; 16:5-9; see At 19:21). However, his good judgment in relation to the circumstances in Asia forced him to change his plans. This change of plans may have led some of the arrogant false teachers in Corinth to accuse him of being weak because they assumed that he would not come to Corinth and defend himself. His not coming at the time they thought he should may have emboldened them to speak out against him. *Second blessing*: Regardless of the circumstances that hindered Paul from going to Corinth according to his first plans, he was now on his way (See Rm 1:11; 15:29). **16** *Helped by you*: The word here is *propempeo*. It is the word that is used to refer to brethren financially making it possible for the evangelist to continue on his journey (See At 15:3; 20:38; 21:5; Rm 15:24; see comments 3 Jn 6-8). In this statement Paul sought their financial support in order that he might continue on his journey to Judea, though he would not accept their support while he was in their presence (12:13-15; 1 Co 16:1-4). **17,18** *Lightly ... according to the flesh*: There were those in Corinth who were accusing Paul of being fickle concerning his journeys, and especially his coming to Corinth. They accused him of making his plans according to worldly desires. But such was not true. Though he had delayed in going to Corinth, he was going at an opportune time that was according to the will of God. *God is faithful*: What Paul had promised, he was going to fulfill according to

the faithfulness of God (See 1 Jn 5:20). **19** Paul was assured that God knew he did not change his plans without serious consideration. His confidence was in God who was working in his life. *In Him was yes*: The manifestation of Jesus was evidence that God keeps His promises (Hb 13:8). Therefore, Paul would keep his promises because he was the messenger of God on behalf of Jesus. The conduct of his life was determined by the necessity of the preaching of the gospel. It was not determined by his personal desires or according to worldly ambitions. **20** *In Him are yes*: All that God had promised through the prophets concerning the coming Messiah was fulfilled in Jesus (Rm 15:8,9; see comments Lk 24:44). Paul's life, therefore, was based on the principle of carrying out the promises of God to proclaim the message of the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). Through his proclamation of the gospel, God was glorified. **21,22** It is God the Father who establishes and anoints. It is in Christ that we are established and anointed. It is the Holy Spirit who is given as a guarantee of that which is to come. *Establishes ... anointed*: Paul affirms that he, Silas and Timothy have been established in Christ with the Corinthians (Gl 3:28; see comments Rm 6:3-6). They had been commissioned (anointed) to preach the gospel (Compare Lk 4:18; At 10:38; 1 Jn 2:20,27). *Sealed us*: The seal of their commissioning was the miraculous confirmation of the Holy Spirit (See 12:12; see comments Mk 16:17-20; Gl 3:5; Hb 2:3,4; compare Ep 4:30; Rv 2:17). *The guarantee*: The miraculous presence of the Holy Spirit was a guarantee that God was working in and through them (See 5:5; Rm 8:16). **23** It is here that Paul gives the reason why he delayed going to Corinth. He was giving them time to repent so he would not have to discipline them with the “rod” (2:3; 12:20; 13:2,10; see comments 1 Co 4:18-21). It was for their benefit, therefore, that he not come early. The writing of these two letters would give them time to repent so he would not have to exercise his responsibility to deliver some unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Tm 1:20). **24** *Rule over your faith*: Paul was not dictatorial or domineering over the churches which he established (See 1 Pt 5:3). He wanted the Corinthians to correct their own internal problems. Churches must be allowed

24 Not that we rule over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy. For by faith you stand.

Chapter 2

1 ¶ But I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.

2 For if I make you sorrowful, who then makes me glad, but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

3 ¶ And I wrote this very thing to you, lest when I came I would have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confi-

dence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love that I abundantly have toward you.

5 ¶ But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but *grieved* all of you to some extent; not to put it too severe.

6 Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment that *was inflicted* by the majority,

7 so that on the contrary you *ought* rather to

to correct their own problems without the proclamations of church dictators. Through the struggles that are necessary for churches to correct their problems, they spiritually grow within themselves. **By faith you stand:** Their faith to stand must be in God and not in man. Paul's delay in coming, and thus delay in his apostolic disciplinary action, proved that they were trusting in God to work in them and not in his authority (See Rm 11:20; 1 Co 15:1).

Chapter 2

PAUL'S DELAYED VISIT

1,2 Not come again ... in sorrow: Paul's statements here must be understood in the context of his apostolic power to deliver one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (See 1 Tm 1:20; see comments At 5:1-6; 13:10-12). The Christ-sent apostles' power was more than the authority of revealing the word of God. It included the physical discipline of those in the newly established churches who worked contrary to the will of God. If Paul would have gone to the Corinthian church before their repentance, then he would have had to exercise his power in correcting the unrepentant among them (12:14 - 13:6). **Again:** This word indicates that Paul had made a second visit to Corinth after the initial visit of At 18 when he established the church. The statements of 12:14 and 13:2 indicate that Paul visited Corinth at some time that is not recorded in Luke's record of Acts. It is not certain when he made this visit. He could have taken this short visit while he was two years in Ephesus on the third missionary journey (See At 19:8-10). The visit was made for disciplinary reasons. He did not want to make another visit as that visit. So he first sent Timothy to them. However, sent Titus with the stern letter of 1 Corinthians in order to promote their repentance (7:8,9,13,14). Paul has delayed the visit about which he speaks in this context in order that certain arrogant members in the church repent. If he had to discipline them again, they would have been made sorrowful. There would have been no joy in his heart concerning the establishment of this church if he had to discipline them again in reference to their sinful attitudes and practices. But when Titus returned, he brought great news of the Corinthians' repentance (7:13,14). **3 I wrote:** The purpose for the letter to which he refers here was to promote repentance so he would not have to come to them with the rod of discipline (See 1 Co

4:18-21). It was his hope that the Corinthians would repent in response to the first letter (8:11; Gl 5:10). Some Bible students believe that he does not here refer to the 1 Corinthian letter, but to a letter that was later grafted into 2 Corinthians, specifically 2 Co 10-13. However, most Bible students affirm that he refers to the 1 Corinthian letter. **Confidence in you:** Paul had initially lived in Corinth for at least a year and a half. He knew the Corinthians. He thus had faith in those in the church who would correct the matters about which he wrote in the 1 Corinthian letter (12:21; 1 Co 4:21). **4 Affliction and anguish:** Paul knew that he was going to Corinth, and thus wrote the letter of warning in order to stimulate repentance. The sternness of the letter was necessary, though it was written with a heavy heart. Such is the case with preachers who must preach the truth to churches who are in sin and must repent. Though the preacher may preach in affliction and anguish, he must deliver the word of God to those whose souls are in danger (See comments 2 Tm 4:1,2). **Know the love:** The point is that if a preacher does not preach those things that promote repentance in the lives of those who are sinning, he does not love those to whom he preaches. The preacher's love for the church, therefore, is manifested in his correction of the church with the word of God. Members who discourage preachers from preaching what is needed to correct problematic attitudes and actions in the church, are members who do not understand the God-ordained work of the evangelist to preach the word of God in order to rebuke those who sin (2 Tm 4:1,2; Ti 2:1-10). Preachers are under a commitment to God to preach the word of God. Those who would claim to be children of God should certainly seek to listen to God's word.

FORGIVING THE REPENTANT

5 From what Paul says here, it is apparent that someone in the Corinthian church had caused him much grief. The grief may have been caused because of personal attacks against Paul or attacks against the principles of moral conduct, or both. Some Bible students believe that this may have been the immoral person who was living with his father's wife (1 Co 5:1). Paul does not name this person. **6 By the majority:** It was the responsibility of all the disciples to take action against the immoral brother (1 Co 5:4,5; 1 Tm 5:20). In other words, the action was an action of the disciples as a group, though there was a defiant minority that did not

forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be overwhelmed with too much sorrow.

8 Therefore, I urge you to reaffirm *your* love toward him.

9 For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

10 To whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also. For indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven in the presence of Christ for your sakes,

11 lest Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his ways.

12 ¶ Now when I came to Troas to *preach*

the gospel of Christ, and a door was opened to me by the Lord,

13 I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find Titus my brother. But taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.

14 ¶ Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ and manifests the aroma of His knowledge through us in every place.

15 For we are to God a sweet fragrance of Christ, in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing.

16 To the one *we are* the aroma from death to life, and to the other the aroma from life to life. And who *is* adequate for these things?

agree with the action. In matters as these, the church should be led by the majority who desire to comply with the word of God. The rebellious minority should not be allowed to run the church. In matters of doctrine and morality, the majority whose beliefs and lives conform to the word of God, should be allowed to lead the church. In this context, the majority of the church decided to disfellowship the sinning brother. Subsequently, the immoral brother repented (See Lk 17:3). **7 Forgive and comfort:** The purpose of the disfellowship was accomplished. The immoral brother repented. It was now a time for the church to forgive and comfort the brother (Ep 4:32; Cl 3:13; compare Gl 6:1). If there were no forgiveness and comfort on the part of the church who carried out the after he sought to repent. **8 Love:** This is the foundation upon which all church discipline and repentance is based. The church disciplines because of its love for the sinner. When repentance occurs, it is love that restores the once sinful brother to fellowship. **9 Put you to the test:** Paul gave the inspired instructions in 1 Co 5 in order to test the obedience of the Corinthian disciples in reference to their willingness to obey God through his apostolic authority (7:15; 10:6). Churches that do not follow his inspired teaching in these matters are not obedient to the Lord. Churches must remember that the law of exclusion from the fellowship of the church comes from God. Therefore, sinning members become the opportunity for the obedience of the church to be manifested. Those disciples who do not disfellowship those who are sinning against the word of God, are not obedient disciples. **10,11** The Corinthian disciples had enacted the disciplinary action on behalf of the inspired decision of Paul (1 Co 5:3,4). They carried out the discipline in obedience to Paul in this matter. Titus had reported that the immoral man had repented. However, it was evident that some among the disciples were not forgiving the brother. Paul informed them of his forgiveness of the brother, and thus sought to motivate every disciple to also forgive the brother. They must forgive as God forgave us lest the brother be discouraged (See comments Mt 18:21-35). **Lest Satan should take advantage:** If all the disciples did not forgive, then the church would develop an unforgiving spirit. In such a state of unforgiveness, the church would become hardened, and thus,

the seeds of division would be planted among the disciples. An unforgiving church is hardened with pride and arrogance in their own self-righteous religiosity (Compare Cl 3:12-17; 2 Tm 2:25,26).

VICTORY OF THE GOSPEL

12 Open door: The great open door for evangelism about which Paul spoke in 1 Co 16:9 possibly took place in Troas. We do not know what special opportunity he had to preach the gospel, but we are informed here that the opportunity was made possible by the work of the Lord. **13** Upon his departure from Ephesus, Paul was hoping to meet Titus in Troas upon his return from Corinth. When he did not meet Titus in Troas, he was worried that the Corinthians did not favorably respond to his letter. He thus departed from the Troas brethren and went into Macedonia. **14 God who always leads us in triumph:** "If God is for us, who can be against us" (Rm 8:31). "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rm 8:37; see Ph 4:13). It is God who works in our lives in order to give us victory by the gospel over the powers of evil. **Manifests the aroma of His knowledge:** The Christian is the vessel through whom God propagates the aroma of the gospel of Christ (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). The Greek word here for "fragrance" (*osman*) can be translated "aroma." It refers to a smell that is given off which affects those who smell it. The preaching of the word of God is the aroma that is given off from the Christian. It is a sweet smelling aroma to those who favorably respond to the preaching of the gospel (See 1 Co 1:18; 15:1-4). It is sweet smelling because the gospel is the opportunity for the sinner to be redeemed from sin. **15 Sweet fragrance of Christ:** When the Romans returned triumphantly from battle, they would burn the incense of victory. Some of the captives were set free, while others were executed. The fragrance of their incense, therefore, meant life to some and death to others. However, the fragrance of the aroma of the Christian is life. **16** The gospel is life to those who are under a sentence of condemnation because of sin (Rm 6:3-6). However, to those who reject the gospel, it is a sentence of condemnation (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pt 4:17). What Paul is here saying is that there is no hope for those who do not obey the gospel which is preached

17 For we are not like many who corrupt the word of God. But as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Chapter 3

1 ¶ Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some, letters of recommendation to you, or *letters* of recommendation from you?

2 You are our letter written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

3 being manifested that you are a letter of

Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

4 ¶ And such confidence we have through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to think anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy *is* from God,

6 who has also made us able servants of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

throughout the world (Compare At 4:12). For those who choose to remain spiritually dead, and thus unreceptive, the preaching of the gospel is the occasion where their spiritual death is manifested. On the other hand, for those who are spiritually alive because of their searching hearts, the gospel is life, for when they hear, they respond (See comments At 18:9,10; see Rm 9:18; Ph 1:28; 1 Pt 2:7). **Who is adequate:** Paul here infers that no one on his own power or ingenuity is qualified for the ministry of God's word (Compare 1 Co 15:10). The power is in the gospel that is preached (Rm 1:16), not in the messenger who preaches. **17 As from God:** Some were preaching for the benefit of financial support (2 Pt 2:3). They saw preaching as a job whereby they could receive support from the church. Such was the case with the false teachers in Corinth. However, Paul and those with him were preaching because they were commissioned by God. Because they had been commissioned by God according to His grace and power they could preach the word of God with power (See 1:12,21,22; 4:1; 1 Co 15:10; Gl 2:7; 1 Th 2:4; 1 Pt 4:11). They were ministers of truth because their lives had been brought under the control of the word of God, and not the desire to preach for money. Herein is manifested the motivation of those preachers who are committed to the preaching of the word. They will preach regardless of support. Hirelings preach when they are supported. True preachers of the word as Paul will preach regardless of the support.

Chapter 3

MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT

At this point in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul described the nature of a true evangelist in his work. **1 Letters of recommendation:** It seems that the false apostles who were criticizing Paul had come to the Corinthian church with letters of recommendation. They were coming as hirelings (See 2:17; 11:12,13). Letters of recommendation were a common practice among the first century churches (At 9:2; 15:23-29; 18:27; Rm 16:1,2; 1 Co 16:10,11). However, in this case the practice was abused. Paul did not need such letters with the Corinthian church. He had established the church, and thus, they personally knew him (See 1 Co 9:2). Paul is not denouncing the use of letters of recommendation. He is only stating that the hireling preachers were using such in order to take advantage of the Corinthian

church. **2 You are our letter:** The existence of the Corinthian church was the testimony that Paul had come to them with the gospel. Their very existence was his recommendation (1 Co 9:2). **Read by all men:** Everyone could see that the existence of the Corinthian church was proof that Paul was preaching the gospel of Christ and not himself because their obedience to the gospel is what established them as a church of Christ. **3 Letter of Christ:** If they denied the sincerity of Paul in his ministry to proclaim the gospel, then they would have to deny their existence as a church of Christ. Since they were the product of what he preached, then any denial of what he preached was a denial of who they were. Since the Corinthian church was founded upon Christ and Him crucified, then they must affirm that Paul preached the same message (1 Co 1:23). **Tables ... of the heart:** In contrast to the Old Testament law that was written on tables of stone (vs 7; Ex 24:12; 31:18; 32:14; 34:1), the law of the new covenant was written on the responsive hearts of men to the cross of Christ (Compare Ps 40:8; see comments Hb 8:7-13; 10:8,9).

4 Paul answers the question of 2:16. His answer is that his sufficiency and confidence as an evangelist were based on his commissioning by God through Jesus (See 5:18; 1 Co 15:10). **5** Paul's accusers trusted in themselves (3:1) and their own abilities of speech and works (11:6; compare 10:12). In contrast to such arrogance, Paul trusted in Christ who strengthened him (See comments Ph 4:13; compare Jn 15:5). **6 The letter kills:** Our sufficiency as ministers under the new covenant is not determined by our performance, for by works of law no man will be justified before God (See comments Rm 3:20; 11:6; Gl 2:16). Our inability to perform the law flawlessly manifests our insufficiency. If one seeks to be justified before God on the basis of his performance, therefore, the letter of the law brings death (See comments Rm 7:9-12). Since no one could perform the law without sinning, the law brought death (Rm 8:2; see comments Rm 4). **The Spirit gives life:** In contrast to the law that brings death because no one could keep it perfectly, the new covenant revealed through the Spirit brings justification and life (Jn 6:63; Rm 8:2) through the grace of God that was revealed on the cross (Ti 2:11; see comments Ep 2:1-10). It seems that the Jewish accusers of Paul were resorting to their legal system of religion in order to boast of their own accomplishments before the Corinthians. He is thus arguing that these accusers (11:22) have digressed to a

7 ¶ But if the ministry of death written *and* engraved on stones was glorious, so that the sons of Israel could not intently look on the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which *glory* was to be done away,

8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

9 For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness exceed in glory.

10 For indeed that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect because of the glory that excels *it*.

11 For if that which is passing away *was* glorious, much more that which remains *is* in glory.

12 ¶ Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech,

13 and not as Moses *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not

ministry of a dead law (See comments Gl 5:4). Or, they may have digressed in their arrogant performance of the law of Christ in order to keep it after a legal manner of obedience (See introductory remarks to Gl).

7,8 Paul here contrasts his ministry of the new covenant with the ministry of the Old Testament covenant and law that was given on Mount Sinai. **Ministry of death:** It was impossible that the blood of animals under the Old Testament law take away sins (Hb 10:1-4). Since the sacrifices could not take away sins, those who administered the sacrifices administered them with no effect in producing in and of themselves justification for sins. The Old Testament law, therefore, was a ministry of spiritual death (Ex 34:1,29-35; Dt 10:1; Rm 7:10). Nevertheless, the Old Testament law was glorious for it accomplished the purpose for which it was given, that is to bring man to Christ (See comments Gl 3:13-29). **Glory ... done away:** When Moses received the law on Mount Sinai, he came down from the mountain with a radiant face (Ex 34:29). However, after a period of time, the glory that was radiated from his face soon passed away. Paul uses this event in the life of Moses to illustrate the passing of the Old Testament law and covenant (See comments Hb 10:9,10). **Ministry of the Spirit:** Since the old law was written on stone and was given through a mediator whose glory passed away, then Paul reasons that the new law and covenant that is written on the hearts of men through the mediatorship of the eternal Son of God is more glorious (See Gl 3:5). **9** Since the old was an administration of death, then the new is an administration of life. God gave the ten commandments on Mount Sinai. Paul uses these commandments to represent the whole law that was given to Israel. The ten commandments, with the entire Old Testament law, were glorious. However, since they could not bring justification through perfect obedience, they were a law of sin and death (See comments Rm 8:1,2). The law was a law of sin and death simply because no man could keep the law perfectly (Gl 2:16,21; 3:11,12). Therefore, since the Old Testament law could not justify because no man could keep it perfectly, God never intended that it continue without end. It was thus done away in order that all men be married to the law of Christ (Rm 7:1-4; Hb 10:9). Justification now comes through the cross, not the meritorious works of law (Rm 3:20-24). It is by grace through faith that one is now saved (Rm 1:17; 3:21; 4). **Exceed in glory:** If the first law and covenant were glorious, then their glory magnified the glory of the second law and covenant. **10,11** The glory of the new law and covenant overshadowed the glory of the old covenant and law (See Hb 1:4; 6:9; 7:7,18,22; 8:6; 9:23;

10:34; 11:16). In fact, Paul here proclaims that there is no comparison between the glory of the second in relation to the first. In other words, one cannot compare the justification that comes from the sacrificial incarnate Son of God with the sacrifices of animals. **Is passing away:** It has been argued by some Bible students that the Old Testament law was in the process of passing away at the time Paul wrote this letter. Such could be affirmed by his use of the present tense "is passing." However, it is better to understand that the Jews' obedience to the principles of the law were passing away. The legal binding of the law passed away at the cross (Cl 2:13,14). Nevertheless, obedience to certain ordinances of the law, as the Sabbath, was continued by some Jewish Christians for some time after the establishment of the church. It could be that Paul had in mind in this context that from the cross in A.D. 30 to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the forty years between the two events was transitional in the sense that God gave this period of time for Jews by faith to be called out of Israel to the cross through the preaching of the gospel. In this sense, therefore, the Jews would be in the process of receiving the kingdom of God that could not be shaken as the kingdom of Israel (See comments Hb 12:28). The Old Testament law could never justify through the offering of animal sacrifices. It was an administration of death. It was thus nailed to the cross (Cl 2:14). Therefore, through the preaching of the cross of Christ, Jews were called out of Israel during the forty years of transition from the cross to the destruction of Jerusalem in order that they might be justified by the blood of Jesus. Those who obeyed the gospel were thus made dead to the law by the sacrificial body of Christ, though God was patient with newly converted Jews as they transitioned out of the culture of the Old Testament law (See comments Rm 7:1-4).

12 We use great boldness: Because of the hope of the new covenant that is based on the blood of the sacrificial Lamb of God, Paul had greater boldness. His boldness or confidence rested not in his performance of law, but in the power of the gospel of Jesus (Rm 1:16). He was confident in his ministry, therefore, because of the One for whom he ministered (vs 4; 7:4; At 4:13,29; Ep 6:19). **13 The end:** Moses used the veil in order to conceal the fading of the glory which radiated from his face (Ex 34:33). Paul proclaimed that the fading glory represented the fading glory of the old law and covenant (Rm 10:4; Gl 3:23). The fading glory of the old, therefore, magnified the glory of the new. **Was fading away:** Israel did not understand that the law which they received would eventually pass away. They did not per-

intently look at the end of what was fading away.

14 But their minds were hardened. For until this day the same veil remains in the reading of the old covenant, which *veil* is done away in Christ.

15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is on their heart.

16 Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are

changed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Chapter 4

1 ¶ Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.

2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness or handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

ceive that the fading of the glory from the face of Moses signified that the law which he brought down from Mount Sinai would eventually vanish away (See Ex 34:33-35). In contrast to the fading of the old law and covenant (Rm 10:4; Gl 3:23), Paul is confident in the new law and covenant which will not pass away (See Mt 24:35; 1 Pt 1:23-25). **14** *Their minds were hardened:* Because the Jews were unwilling to accept the passing of the old law and covenant, they hardened their hearts against accepting the new (4:4; Is 6:10; 29:10; At 28:26; Rm 11:7,8). *The same veil remains:* Paul here uses the veil to symbolize their hardened minds. They could not accept the fact that the law was fulfilled in Christ (Mt 5:17,18). Because of their unbelief, the Jews misunderstood the fulfillment of the Old Testament law in the law of Christ. But the veil of a stubborn mind is done away when one comes into the freedom of Christ (Gl 5:1,2). **15** At the time Paul wrote, the hardness of the hearts of the majority of Israel continued. However, if the Jews would turn to the gospel, the veil would be removed (See comments Rm 9-11). In this context, as well as Rm 11:23-26, Paul expressed his concern for the hardening of hearts in Israel against Jesus and the cross (See comments Rm 9:1-3; 10:1). **16** *Turns to the Lord:* When one is converted to Jesus, he understands the purpose for which the Old Testament law was given (See comments Gl 3). No Jew, therefore, who persisted in keeping the Old Testament law could understand the purpose for which it was given. The same is true of all who would seek to live by the Old Testament law today. The veil of misunderstanding continues to linger in the minds of thousands throughout the world who do not understand the purpose for which the law of commandments was given to Israel on Mount Sinai. **17** *The Lord is the Spirit:* The Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit work as one in order to bring freedom from the necessity of perfect law-keeping (See Rm 6:18-23; 8:2,13,21; Gl 4). When one comes to the grace of God through the cross of Christ, he is set free (See comments Gl 5:1,2,13; see Jn 8:32). Therefore, where there are those who have obeyed the gospel, and thus have submitted to the instructions of the Spirit through the word of God, there is liberty from the necessity of perfect law-keeping. One is justified by faith and grace, not by a meritorious keeping of law (Rm 5:1,2). **18** *The glory of the Lord:* Christians have unveiled themselves

from the Old Testament law. They thus are able to perceive the glory of Jesus (4:4,6), and by this, continually grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (2 Pt 3:18). Their lives are being transformed into the image of Jesus by their obedience to His will (Rm 8:29,30; 12:1,2). Paul concluded his argument of his proposition by stating that his ministry, as well as the ministry of all Christians, is far superior to the ministry of those who continue to hold to the Old Testament law and covenant.

Chapter 4

GOD'S WORK THROUGH FALLIBLE MAN

1 *Do not lose heart:* The motivation of the evangelist is that he knows that what he preaches is the only hope of the world. He knows that there is salvation only in Christ (At 4:12). The Christian knows that unless one obeys the gospel, he cannot be saved (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pt 4:17). If there is another means by which one can be saved, then it is unnecessary for evangelists to risk their lives in the propagation of the gospel. If there is salvation through the meritorious works of the Old Testament law or through the merit of good works, then there is reason to lose heart in one's efforts to evangelize the world. However, because the gospel is the only means by which men can be saved, those who preach the gospel work against all opposition in order to give men the opportunity to obey the gospel (See comments 1 Pt 4:17; see 4:16; Lk 18:1; Gl 6:9; 2 Th 3:13). **2** By maintaining his integrity in answering his accusers (1 Th 2:3), Paul identified the dishonest and cunning practices of those false teachers who were preaching and teaching for hire (2:17). *To every man's conscience:* Paul knew that those who truly knew him, knew that he preached with sincerity (5:11). Those who were falsely accusing him evidently did not know him. Therefore, he trusted that those in Corinth who knew him would bear witness to the fact that he was sincere in his preaching. He expected them to defend him in his absence. **3** *To those who are perishing:* There are those who are not receptive to the preaching of the gospel. These are the ones who are in a state of condemnation. They will not choose to escape from their condemnation because they do not have a love of the truth (2:15; 1 Co 1:18; see comments 2 Th 2:10-12). **4** *The god of this age:* Satan is the god of this world

4 in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, so that they cannot see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

7 ¶ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels so that the excellence of the power may

be of God and not of us.

8 We are afflicted on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 always carrying about in the body the death of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of the Lord Jesus might also be manifested in our body.

11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake so that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death works in us, but life in you.

because it is his work that men choose to do evil instead of serving the one true and living God (Ep 6:12; see Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ep 2:2). **Has blinded:** Men's minds are blinded to the truth when they desire to fulfill the lust of the flesh, pride of life and lust of the eyes (See comments Js 1:13-15; 2:15; 4:4). When one is blinded to the truth, his heart is hardened against the word of God (Jn 12:40; Rm 1:21; 11:7,25). **Light of the glorious gospel:** It is the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope that give us direction for eternal salvation (3:8,9; Jn 8:12; 1 Jn 1:6-10; see comments Rm 6:3-6). **The image of God:** Since God is spirit (Jn 4:24), it could only be through the incarnation of God in Jesus that we could behold the glory of God (Jn 1:14,18; 12:45; 14:9; Ph 2:6; Cl 1:15; Hb 1:3). Therefore, we know God through the person of Jesus. Paul's opponents in Corinth had been deceived, or blinded by their worldly attitudes and actions. Satan works through the desire of men to be proud and arrogant in order to keep men from humbly submitting to the gospel. Only through humility will one accept the gospel, and thus, those who are arrogant and proud keep themselves from obedience to the gospel (Mt 18:1-5). **5** It seems that some in Corinth were preaching themselves. The subject of their preaching was themselves, whereas the subject of Paul's preaching was Christ and His crucifixion (3:1; 1 Co 1:23; 15:13). Therefore, the power of his preaching did not rest in his abilities or human wisdom, but in the power of the gospel (Rm 1:16). He did not resort to human authority for what he preached, but on divine authority (Gl 1:11,12; see At 2:22-37; 13:26-47; Ph 2:11). **Bondservants:** The Greek word here (*doulos*) refers to one being born into slavery (See 1 Co 9:19). Slaves have no cause to exalt themselves. The evangelist who is the slave of Jesus certainly has no reason to exalt himself above the message of the gospel which he preaches. **6 Commanded the light to shine:** Paul here identifies the God of creation who is the authority behind that which he preaches (See Gn 1:3). The light of the God who created all things has now been manifested in the hearts of those who have submitted to the gospel. Through our knowledge of Jesus who is the image of God, we are enlightened through the gospel (See Lk 1:78; Jn 1:14; Cl 1:16; Hb 1:3; 1 Pt 2:9; compare comments 2 Pt 1:19).

preached themselves (vs 5). They commended themselves to the church and one another (3:1). But here, Paul confesses his humanity, and thus his frailty by referring to himself and other faithful evangelists as pots made of clay (5:1). The value of the pot is not the pot itself, but what it contains. It is the power of the gospel that is important. The gospel is exemplified by the fragile nature of the earthen pot who is the medium through which it is proclaimed. As the other apostles, Paul was an ordinary fallible person. It was because of the grace of God that the gospel was entrusted to the hands of human messengers as Paul whose strength was limited to their humanity (Jg 7:2; 1 Co 2:5). Because of the power of God, the messengers of God went forth with power regardless of their human fallibility. Paul's opponents were commending and exalting the clay pot of the frail messenger, whereas Paul here proclaims that the power is in what the messenger preaches. **8,9 We are afflicted ... perplexed ... persecuted cast down:** "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tm 3:12; see comments At 14:22). Paul here describes the destiny of those evangelists who would commit their lives to the preaching of the gospel. Though they suffer such persecution and trials, it is God who gives the strength to endure (Rm 8:31,37; Ph 4:13). God never leaves or forsakes His messengers (Ps 37:24; 129:2; Hb 13:5). **10 The dying of Jesus:** When one bears the cross of Christ (Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23), he accepts the burden of the cross of Jesus (Rm 6:6; Ph 3:10; see comments Gl 2:20). He thus willingly suffers the hardships that come with bearing the cross of Christ (At 14:22). In bearing the cross, one recognizes his humanity and dependence on God for survival in Christ (1:8,9). Therefore, it is through trials and persecution that one is driven to depend on God (See comments Mt 5:10-12). **The life of Jesus:** The life of Jesus is manifested in the one who willingly suffers for the name of Jesus when preaching the gospel (Rm 8:17; Gl 2:20). **11 Delivered to death:** Paul views the trials of the evangelist as an opportunity to live for Jesus (Rm 8:36). One's sufferings on behalf of Jesus, therefore, are not for the self-exaltation of the individual, but for the cause of Christ to preach the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). Those who are faithful to the preaching of the gospel, though it may mean death (Rv 2:10), manifest in their lives that Jesus is their King and Lord. Their commitment to remain faithful in persecution is a witness to the intensity of their belief. **12**

REMAINING COMMITTED

7 Treasure in earthen vessels: Paul's opponents

13 ¶ But having the same spirit of faith according to what is written, *"I believed, and therefore, I spoke."* We also believe and therefore speak,

14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will present *us* with you.

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace that is reaching many people may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

16 ¶ Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction that is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,

18 while we do not look at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen *are* temporary, but the things that are not seen *are* eternal.

Chapter 5

1 ¶ For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tent is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands *that is* eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this *house* we groan, earnestly de-

Because of his determination to bring the life-giving gospel to the Corinthians and others, Paul lived under the constant sentence of death (See At 15:25,26). Because he was willing to suffer persecution, the Corinthians had the opportunity to live in Christ (Jn 8:12; Rm 6:4,5). This is the motivation of the true evangelist. He is willing to suffer death in order to bring life to those to whom he preaches.

13 The same spirit of faith: Paul had the same faith as the psalmist who wrote Psalm 116:10 in the face of persecution. **Believed, and therefore speak:** In this quotation of Psalm 116:10, Paul emphasizes the courage of the one who has the faith to speak forth in the midst of persecution. He thus defines true faith. If one truly believes, then he will speak forth the word of God (Compare comments Mt 10:32,33; Rm 10:9). **14 Raised us up:** This is the confidence of the bold preacher of the gospel who works in the midst of severe persecution. God raised Jesus from the dead (Rm 4:24; 8:11; 1 Co 6:14; 1 Pt 1:21). The evangelist's faith in the power of God to raise the dead thus motivates him to trust in God to raise him from the dead if he might die when preaching the gospel (At 21:13; Rv 2:10). **15 For your sakes:** Paul and all faithful evangelists were willing to undergo all trials for the benefit of the Corinthian church. This is the nature of true evangelists who give themselves for the sake of the church (See Cl 1:24; 2 Tm 2:10). **Grace ... reaching many people:** The grace of God was revealed through the cross (Ti 2:11). Therefore, the more the cross was preached, the more the people would respond with thanksgiving to the grace of God (See comments 1 Co 15:10). **Thanksgiving to abound:** Herein is manifested the true motivation of Christians to be obedient, as well as to do good works in the name of Jesus. True motivation in Christ is not based on a meritorious effort to earn one's salvation. Christians are motivated by thanksgiving for what God has done for them through the cross. They are thus motivated because of what they already have in Christ. Therefore, when the gospel is preached and people obey the gospel, there is more thanksgiving in the world for the grace of God (See Ph 4:20).

16 Do not lose heart: What motivated Paul to continue was the fact that thanksgiving to God was produced in the lives of men by the preaching of the gospel (vs 15). What gave him hope was the fact that God would raise him from the dead if he died for preaching

the gospel (vs 14). Therefore, his hope in the future and results from his preaching encouraged him to continue through all adversity to preach the gospel (4:1; Gl 6:9). **Outward man is perishing:** Paul's difficult ministry was wearing down his physical body. However, the results of his preaching were building up his spiritual inner self (See Is 40:29,31; Cl 3:10). He was being spiritually and mentally renewed every day as a result of the effect the gospel was having on the lives of men (Compare 3 Jn 4). **17 Light affliction:** When comparing the glory of heaven that is yet to be revealed, the afflictions that we might suffer in this life are considered light (See comments Rm 8:18; see Mt 5:12; 11:28-30; 1 Pt 1:16). When one realizes the glories that will be revealed to the Christian, he is motivated to continue the Christian race (Rm 8:24; Ph 3:13,14; Hb 12:1). **For a moment:** When compared with unending existence in heavenly glory, the duration of our life on earth is only for a moment. Therefore, one should not focus on the moment of life to the neglect of the eternal life that is yet to come. Neither should the Christian endanger the glory that is to come by being caught up in the moment of existence of things of this world. **18 Temporary ... eternal:** The faithful Christian will concentrate on the things that are eternal and not on the things that are of this world (Rm 8:24; see 2 Co 5:7; Hb 11:1,13). His mind sees beyond this world to the existence of the new heavens and earth that is yet to come (See comments 2 Pt 3:13). Therefore, he is not willing to sacrifice the eternal for the enjoyment of the temporary (See comments Js 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15).

Chapter 5

Paul continues in the first ten verses of this chapter with the same discussion he began in 4:16. Therefore, there should be no chapter division between the preceding discussion and 5:1-10. **1** This verse abounds with metaphors in order to lift our minds above our physical body of this world. **Earthly house:** Paul speaks of our body as not the real self. We dwell in our body as someone would dwell in a house (See 4:7; Jb 4:19; 1 Co 15:47). **Tent:** In comparison to the spiritual and glorious body that is to come, this present earthly body is fragile as a tent. **Building from God:** Our earthly body is fragile because it originates from that which is of this earth. However, the habitation in which we will

siring to be clothed with our house that is from heaven,

3 if indeed being clothed, we will not be found naked.

4 For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, so that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now He who has prepared us for this very purpose *is* God, who also has given to us the guarantee of the Spirit.

6 ¶ Therefore, *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the

body we are absent from the Lord.

7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

8 We are confident, *I say*, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

9 ¶ Therefore, we have our ambition, whether present or absent, *that* we may be pleasing to Him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that every one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord

dwelt in eternity will originate from God (See comments Ph 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2). It will not be a body crafted after the manner by which men make houses (Mk 14:58; At 7:48; Hb 9:11,24). It will be a body that is suited for eternal dwelling. **2 Earnestly desiring:** Our hope of being clothed again with a body from God motivates inward expectation. Christians wait in anxious expectation to be transformed from the earthly body in which they now dwell into the heavenly body that will dwell painlessly in eternal heaven (See Rm 8:23; Ep 1:14; Ph 3:21; 2 Pt 3:11,12). **3 Not be found naked:** It is not the final goal of the Christian to be disembodied in the presence of Jesus. It is always the desire of spirits to be embodied. Therefore, it is the final goal of the Christian to be embodied with our habitation from heaven in order that we be not naked of a body (See Mt 22:11; Rv 3:18). **4 Being burdened:** The greater one's perception of eternal heavenly dwelling, the more he understands the burden of the earthly body that confines us to this world. Those who feel comfortable in this present dwelling do not fully understand the glory that will be revealed to us (Rm 8:18). The Christian who has his mind on things above (Cl 3:1-3), groans to be relieved from the confinement and limitations of this world (See comments 2 Pt 3:11-14). **To be clothed:** It is not our desire to be disembodied. It is the Christian's final goal to be embodied with a body of immortality (See comments 1 Co 15:35-57). **5** The teleology of this verse is most profound. When one considers the very existence of the world, the cross and the church, he must understand that this world is only temporary. Paul says that all that has happened in time has happened for the purpose of bringing redeemed saints into eternal dwelling in the presence of God. All has been prepared by God to transition the faithful into a glorious body for eternal existence. **Guarantee of the Spirit:** It is God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who has commissioned the Holy Spirit for the benefit of those who are living after the Spirit (Rm 8:23; Ep 1:14). The Spirit has been given as a "down payment" on that which is yet to come. Seated in the first century with the miraculous work of the Spirit among them, the Corinthian church had a visible testimony through the miraculous gifts concerning the presence of the Spirit among them. The Spirit's work among them, therefore, was the guarantee that God was working in them in order to bring them into eternal dwelling. They experienced the supernatural environment of eternal dwelling by the miraculous work of the Spirit (See

comments Hb 6:4,5). Therefore, the Spirit's supernatural work was a guarantee of an existence wherein we will eternally dwell with an immortal body.

6 Absent from the Lord: The Christian can never, while in this earthly body, be present with the Lord as he would like. This physical body separates him from the closeness with which he would be with Jesus. **7 Walk by faith:** We walk by faith that we will eventually be relieved of this body in order to be embodied again with a habitation that is from God (Compare Rm 8:24; Hb 11:1). **Not by sight:** Christians are not empirically directed. Guidance by the senses will never take one beyond the limits of the material world. Only through faith can one escape the confines of this world in order to be directed in life by that which is beyond this world. **8 Rather to be absent:** Through faith, Paul's mental attitude was lifted above the limitations of this world (See comments Ph 1:23,24). This is the emotional and mental goal of every Christian. We would rather be delivered from this physical body in order to enjoy to the fullest our being in the presence of the Lord. We would conclude, therefore, that when the Christian dies, he is immediately present with the Lord. Though this is not the final goal of the Christian, because one is disembodied in the presence of the Lord. However, it is enough hope to motivate anticipation on the part of every believer (See comments Lk 16:19-31). Our groanings are to be embodied again with a resurrected body that will be prepared for us at the end of time and in which we will be with the Lord (See 1 Th 4:13-18).

9 Whether present or absent: Whether in the world or present with the Lord after death, it is the will of the Christian to do the will of the Father (See Rm 12:1; Ep 5:10). One free-morally chooses to serve God in this life. When he dies, he does not give up his free-moral agency, but seeks also in the presence of the Lord to be well-pleasing to the Lord. **10 Appear before the judgment seat:** The biblical world view maintains that each man will give account of himself before God. The motivation for being well-pleasing to the Lord in verse 9 is explained here. When one realizes that he will give account of his actions before his Creator, then he is motivated to do the will of the Creator. Paul here emphasizes the fact that we will all be judged (Rm 2:6-8; 14:10). God will judge all men (Mt 12:36; Rm 14:10). He will judge all through Jesus (Jn 5:22,27; At 10:42; 17:31; 24:25). **According to what he has done:** We do not presume that judgment will be on the basis of

we persuade men, but we are manifested to God, and I trust also we are manifested in your consciences.

12 ¶ For we do not again commend ourselves to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, so that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.

13 For if we are beside ourselves, *it is* for God. If we are of sound mind, *it is* for you.

14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge that if one died for all, then all died.

15 And He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

16 ¶ Therefore, from now on we know no man according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no more.

meritorious works. Good works are the result of one's response to the grace of God (4:15; 1 Co 15:10; see comments Ep 2:10). Paul's statement here, therefore, is written for our benefit. Our only means by which we can know if one has a heart of thanksgiving is by his works. We can know one only by his fruits (See comments Mt 7:15-20; Js 2:14-26). However, God does not have to keep an account of works in order to determine the destiny of the individual. He knows our hearts, and thus our attitudes and motives.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

11 *The fear of the Lord:* Some translations have rendered this verse in a manner to make the terror (*phobon* - "fear") to refer to God's attitude in reference to those whom He will judge. Others have made the statement and verse refer to man's "reverential fear" of the Lord. Whichever position is taken, both are true in the broader context. In our reverential awe and devotion to the Lord, we persuade men to submit to God who will judge justly and without respect of persons (At 17:30,31; Hb 10:31; 12:29; Jd 23). Since the Christian realizes that there is a judgment to come, he is motivated to preach the gospel in order to prepare men for judgment (See At 24:25). The deduction is that if one is not working in persuading men to obey the Lord, he neither fears the Lord nor understands the fact that the Lord will judge all men. ***In your consciences:*** Because there were those in Corinth who personally knew Paul, he assumed that they knew his true motives in preaching the gospel. By understanding his pure motives, he hoped that they would accept him as he knew God accepted him (See 4:2). ***12 Boast in appearance:*** Though there were those in Corinth who personally knew Paul, there were also those who had not personally met him. It seems that those who had not personally met him were boasting after their manner of performance before the church, while at the same time criticizing Paul whom they did not personally know (See 3:1; 4:2; 6:4). In this letter, Paul gave the church personal information concerning his trials and ministry in order to aid those in Corinth who would defend him before those who made accusations against him (1:14; Ph 1:26). ***Not in heart:*** Those who are legalistically arrogant in their religiosity often stoop to judging others after the outward performance of law and deeds. In their self-righteous religiosity they are blinded to the point that they are unable to consider the heart of those they criticize. In this context, Paul gives a testimony to these self-righteous accusers in those areas of life and ministry in which they commended themselves. If they wanted to compare works, therefore, Paul says consider his life

of suffering for the sake of the gospel. ***13 Beside ourselves:*** The word from which this phrase is translated was also used by Jesus' opponents who accused Him of being mentally deranged (Mk 3:21). It is evident that Paul's accusers were stating that he was mad (See 11:1,16; 12:11; At 26:24). Paul simply states that if he is not of a sound mind, then he has still worked on behalf of God. If they have judged him to have a sound mind, then they should accept his ministry to them in Corinth as a ministry that originated from God. ***14 Love of Christ compels:*** "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). Herein is the motivation of Christianity and the identity that separates Christianity from the host of man-made religions of the world (Rm 5:5; 8:28-31). Disciples of Christ are known by their love of one another (Jn 13:34,35). One is motivated by love in Christ to serve others. He is compelled by God's love for him through the cross to move with the same attitude toward others (See comments Mt 18:35; Js 2:13). ***Died for all:*** Jesus died for the sins of all men because all men have died because of sin (Rm 5:15; 1 Jn 2:2). The fact that Jesus died on the cross for the salvation of all men is evidence that all men need the atonement of the cross for sin (Rm 3:9,10,23; 6:23). ***15 Live ... for Him:*** The testimony of Paul's sacrificial life is the commentary of what he stated here (See comments Gl 2:20). When one comes out of the waters of immersion into Christ, he comes into a new life (See comments Rm 6:3-6). He not only has a new life because he has been washed of sin (At 22:16), he walks in life for the benefit of others. Thus in living for others, he manifests his love of the Lord (Rm 6:11).

16 According to the flesh: Paul's opponents compared themselves according to the works of the flesh. However, when one is in Christ, he is no longer motivated by comparing performances of either law or works as meritorious standards by which to judge others. In Christ, Christians do not consider one another after the human standards of either performance, abilities or social class (See Gl 3:28; Cl 3:11). ***Known Christ according to the flesh:*** We all have a knowledge of Jesus when He lived on this earth. Through a knowledge of the records of the ministry of Jesus we know Jesus "according to the flesh." However, He is not now in the body of the flesh of this earth, but at the right hand of God as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). He is the resurrected Son of God who has authority over all things (Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22). We now know Jesus as God over all things (Cl 1:16). As we know Jesus after the spirit, we should know one another. Christians, therefore, should know one another according to the heart, not according to the outward

17 Therefore, if any man *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creature, old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

18 And all things *are* of God who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 that is, that God was in Christ re-conciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them. And *He* has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 ¶ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us. We beg *you* on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

21 For He has made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on behalf of us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Chapter 6

1 ¶ We then, *as* workers together *with Him*, urge *you* also that you not receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says, "*I have heard you in an acceptable time, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.*" Behold, now *is* the acceptable time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

3 ¶ We give no offense in anything, so that

appearance of the flesh. **17 In Christ ... new creature:** One is new in Christ, not only because he has been cleansed of sins (At 22:16), but also because of his perspective of life after obedience to the gospel (See comments Rm 6:3-6; see Gl 6:15; Ep 4:24). Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" to refer to the covenant relationship that one establishes with Christ at the time of immersion. Since one is baptized into Christ, then he comes into this relationship with Christ only at the time of baptism (Rm 6:3; Gl 3:26,27). **All things have become new:** In Christ, one does not consider things according to the flesh, but according to the spiritual nature of one's brothers and sisters in Christ. **18 Of God:** It is God who originated the scheme to redeem men from sin, and thus reconcile them unto Himself through the cross. No man meritoriously earned the grace of God (Rm 3:24; Ep 2:3-9). **Reconciled us:** Since we could not reconcile ourselves to God through meritorious works of law or good deeds, then God had to initiate the scheme of redemption in order to provide atonement for our sins that separated us from Him. Therefore, through the cross the alien sinner has the opportunity of being restored to a correct relationship with God (Rm 5:10; Ep 2:16; Cl 1:20; see Is 59:1,2; Cl 1:21; Rm 5:1). **Ministry of reconciliation:** The message of the gospel has been entrusted into the hands of those who proclaim to the lost the means by which they can be reconciled to God. The opportunity for reconciliation to God is not in the power of the messenger, but in the power of the message he bears (Rm 1:16). The messenger simply provides the opportunity for the hearers to respond to the gospel, and thus be reconciled to God. **19** It was the work of God through the atonement of the cross to reconcile the world to Himself. The cross was not a debt that God paid in response to the meritorious behavior of man. The problem was that all men had sinned, and thus had fallen from God (Rm 3:9,10,23). It was only because of God's grace that the event of the cross took place (Ti 2:11). Therefore, no man can claim that the reconciling effect of the cross in his life is the result of earning the gospel. **Word of reconciliation:** It is the responsibility of the redeemed to preach the message of the cross to the world. God thus works through the messengers in order to get the message to the lost (Compare comments At 8:26,29). If the message is not preached, then it is the fault of the messengers who should have

preached the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). **20 Ambassadors for Christ:** The Christian is the representative of God to the world on behalf of the cross (See Mt 2:7; Ep 6:20). It was through Paul and evangelists like him that the gospel was first preached to the Corinthians and to all people of the first century (6:1; Cl 1:23). It will be through evangelists today that the same message will go into all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). **Be reconciled to God:** Paul here exhorts the Corinthians to put away any behavioral practice of sin that would separate them from God (See comments Hb 12:1,2). They must take the initiative to refrain from sin (See 1 Jn 1:6-10). **21** Before the cross, men were under the curse of sin in that they could not deliver themselves from spiritual death through meritorious law-keeping or good works (Gl 2:16; 3:11-13). Therefore, as a result of God's grace the sinless Son of God was offered as a sacrifice for sin (Mt 4:1-13; Jn 8:46; Hb 4:15; 1 Pt 2:22). Jesus thus bore the sins of all humanity on the cross (Is 53; Jn 1:29; Rm 3:25; 1 Co 15:3; 1 Pt 2:21-24). **The righteousness of God:** Jesus died in order that we might become the justified sons of God in Christ (Rm 1:17; 1 Co 1:30; see comments Rm 3:21-31). It is because of His death that we are able to be righteous before God. Since we cannot establish our own righteousness on the basis of perfect keeping of law or meritorious good works, then all men must be drawn to the cross in order to be justified of sin. It is at the cross that we are justified by the grace of God (Ep 2:8).

Chapter 6

1 Not receive the grace of God in vain: Paul preached the grace of God that was revealed through the cross (Ti 2:11). The Corinthians responded to the grace of God by their obedience to the gospel (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). However, their acceptance of the grace of God had to continue lest they fall from grace. They could not be once saved by the grace of God, then be unconditionally saved for eternity. They were conditionally saved by grace by their obedient response to the gospel. The condition to remain within the grace of God was their continued response to the grace of God by their obedience to the will of God (See comments 1 Jn 1:6-9). **2** Paul's quotation of Isaiah 49:8 is in refer-

the ministry not be blamed.

4 But in all *things* approving ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in turmoil, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings,

6 in purity, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

7 in the word of truth, in the power of God, in the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true;

9 as unknown, and *yet* well-known; as dy-

ing, and behold, we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed;

10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

11 ¶ O Corinthians, we have spoken freely to you. Our heart is wide open *to you*.

12 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained by your own affections.

13 Now as a fair exchange – I speak as to *my* children – you also be open.

14 ¶ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what fellowship has light with darkness?

15 And what agreement has Christ with

ence to God who has heard the pleas of those seeking His salvation. God thus heard the pleas of the Corinthians and responded by the preaching of the gospel to them through Paul (See comments At 18:9,10). Though many obeyed the gospel while Paul was in their presence, they must continue to walk in the light of the gospel lest they fall away. Every day, therefore, is a day of salvation to the Christian, for in one day one can turn his back on the free gift of God's grace, and thus lose his soul. **The day of salvation:** This dispensation of time since the cross is a time of salvation for all men, for we live this side of the good news of the cross and resurrection. There is thus urgency in Paul's message that the gospel be preached to all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15).

HARDSHIPS IN PAUL'S MINISTRY

3 As a representative of God for the preaching of the gospel, Paul conducted his life in a manner that did not present a stumbling block to others who were seeking to obey the gospel (See Rm 14:13; 1 Co 9:12; 10:32). It is the responsibility of evangelists to so live as to be an example to others concerning the message they preach (1 Tm 4:12). **4,5 Servants of God:** In these two verses Paul presents the life of the minister of God. Those in Corinth who were opponents of Paul commended themselves (See 3:1; 11:5,12,16,18,22). However, their self-commendation was not evidence that they were either preaching or behaving the truth. What Paul here affirms is that the trials of a true minister at least manifest his sincerity in what he believes. If one would follow in the steps of Jesus, he will suffer as Jesus (4:10; 1 Pt 2:21). Walking in such tribulations teaches one to trust in God and not in one's self. In contrast to the comfortable life-style of his opponents, Paul explained his discipleship in the sufferings of Christ (See 11:23-33). **6-10** The ministry of Paul was a ministry to the service of others. He had crucified the old man of selfishness (Gl 2:20). He thus lived as Jesus would among the people in order to represent his Savior in all things. With the preaching of the message, came the turmoil of life by those who rejected the gospel. Through sleepless nights and deprivation of food, he endured beatings and imprisonment. However, through the strength

of God manifested through the Holy Spirit, he was willing to be dishonored and slandered. He was willing to undergo poverty, sorrow and discouragement in order that others enjoy the riches of the grace of God. He was willing to go without all things in order that those who obey the gospel would inherit all things in eternity.

11 Spoken freely: As Paul, evangelists must speak straight to the churches concerning those things that must be said. All truth must be spoken to churches that are in danger of turning from the grace of God, or have already turned aside unto fables (See comments 2 Tm 4:1-5). Churches that rebuke preachers for preaching against sin are churches who have already fallen into sin (See comments 1 Th 5:19,20). **Heart is wide open:** Since he has spoken directly to them concerning the error of the behavior of some in the church, he is at the same time open to their repentance. Though they may have withheld their affections from him, he would not do the same to them (7:3). **12** Paul's opponents in the among the disciples of Corinth had deceived the church into thinking that he was not sincere in his ministry. They had slandered him in an effort to gain the following of the church (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). Therefore, the Corinthians' affections toward him were restrained. Nevertheless, Paul did not allow his affections for them to be restrained by retaliating. He here manifests the true spirit of love by not retreating from them because they were withdrawing from him. True love is not repelled by the slanderous accusations of one's opponents. **13 You also be open:** Paul challenged them to return his loving affection to him. They were his sons in the faith since he had preached the gospel to them. Therefore, it would be their courteous gesture to return the love of a loving father.

MAINTAINING SEPARATION FROM SIN

14 Unequally yoked: In the context, Paul is calling on those who are faithful among the disciples not to continue to yoke themselves with those false teachers who denied fundamental teachings. Not only did some deny the resurrection (1 Co 15), they also denied the apostolic authority of Paul. It seems that Paul considered the false teachers unbelievers in the sense that they denied the resurrection of the dead. They were

Belial? Or what part has he who believes with an unbeliever?

16 And what union has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, just as God has said, *"I will dwell in them and walk in them. And I will be their God and they will be My people."*

17 *"Therefore, come out from among them and be separate,"* says the Lord. *"And do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."*

18 *"And I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters,"* says the

Lord Almighty.

Chapter 7

1 ¶ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 ¶ Accept us. We wronged no one. We corrupted no one. We defrauded no one.

3 I do not speak to condemn *you*, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.

thus blinded because of their denial of the truth (4:4; 11:3; 13:5,6). In a broader sense, the Christian should certainly not contract himself with any non-Christian who would lead him into compromising his principles. Unequally yoked means to align oneself with another wherein Christian principles and values are subjugated to the morals and behavior of the unbelievers (Compare Dt 7:2,3; 22:10; 1 Co 5:9). **15 Belial:** Reference here is to Satan. In asking this series of questions, Paul assumed that the Corinthians knew the right answers. **16 Temple of the living God:** The church of believers is God's spiritual temple (Compare 1 Co 3:16,17; 6:19; Ep 2:21; Hb 3:6; 1 Pt 2:5,9). The church that knew the one true and living God should never place herself in a compromising situation where those who have given themselves over to idols are encouraged. **Dwell in them:** Paul's quotation is from the Old Testament wherein God dwelt in Israel (See Ex 29:45; Lv 26:12; Jr 31:33). He dwelt in the Israelites insofar as they walked according to His commandments. As God dwelt in obedient Israel, so He now dwells in the spiritual Israel of God (Jn 14:23; 1 Jn 4:12,15,16; Rv 21:3). This point is the answer to the preceding questions. Since God dwells in those who have obediently responded to His will, then they can have no fellowship with those who have not submitted to His will. **17 Come out:** As Israel was commanded to come out from the influence of unbelievers (Nm 33:51-56; Is 52:11; Ez 20:34; Rv 18:4), so the church in Corinth must come out from the influence of false teachers and idol worshipers. We must keep in mind that Paul's definition of those who would be false teachers are those who have denied fundamental beliefs as the resurrection and the denial of his inspiration. He is not discussing those with whom one might disagree on matters of opinion or personalities (See comments 1 Co 1:10). **18 Be a Father:** Those who separate themselves from that which is evil will find a father in God (See 2 Sm 7:14; Jr 31:1,9; Rv 21:7). Those who have found fatherhood in God have thus been made sons and daughters of God (See Jn 1:12; Rm 8:14; Gl 4:5-7).

Chapter 7

CHURCH REPENTANCE

1 This verse concludes the thoughts of 6:14-18. **These promises:** The promises refer to God being our Father and to us who are His sons and daughters (6:18). In view of the great promises of God, Paul here calls on

the Corinthians to voluntarily purify themselves of the sinful attitudes and teachings that have been allowed to enter into the church (See Hb 12:1,2; Js 5:8-10). **Cleanse ourselves:** They would cleanse themselves by walking in the light wherein the blood of Jesus continually cleanses the faithful (1 Jn 1:9).

2 Paul here pleads with the Corinthians to extend love toward him and the other evangelists who are working with him. He reminds them that neither he nor Titus and Timothy have worked deceitfully or dishonestly with them. He never coveted their money (See At 20:33). Paul's plea here infers that the arrogant opponents to him in the church had slandered him so that the church was shutting the door to his return. It is the nature and practice of those church leaders who seek to dominate churches to slander those they do not want to come to the church they subjugate to their dictatorial control. Slander is practiced for the purpose of convincing the church to side with them against evangelists as Paul, Timothy and Titus. Dictatorial leaders will resort to slander in order to keep away from those they feel will threaten their control (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). This was what happened in the Corinthian church. It is a common occurrence throughout the world that arrogant men will seek to steal the sheep of God by using the church as an occasion to exercise their dominance over their fellow man (Compare comments Mk 10:35-45). **3 To die ... and to live together:** Paul and the Corinthians had died together by immersion into Christ (5:14; Rm 6:3-6). They now lived together in Christ because they no longer lived according to the selfish lusts of this world (5:15; Gl 2:20). Therefore, his statements here to exhort them to receive him are not written in order to pronounce a condemnation upon them because of their actions. Paul knew that they had been deceived by those among them who had slandered the evangelists. He was thus patient with the church until they grew out of the innocence of being children who were led about by arrogant leaders (6:13; 1 Co 13:11). **4 Boldness of speech:** In situations as these, Paul and all evangelists must speak frankly and with directness. Churches that allow themselves to believe slander, and thus shut out evangelists, must be spoken to with direct speech. In this case, Paul had confidence in them that his direct speech would not turn them away from either him or the Lord. He had boasted to others concerning their repentance to disfellowship the immoral member discussed in 1 Co 5 (1 Co 1:4). **Exceedingly joyful:** The repentance of the church in reference to his instructions in

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you. Great *is* my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

5 ¶ For when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; outside *were* conflicts *and* within *were* fears.

6 Nevertheless, God, who comforts those who are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

8 ¶ For though I caused you sorrow with a letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it,

for I perceive that the same letter made you sorrowful, though only for a while.

9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that your sorrow *led* to repentance, for you were made sorrowful after a godly manner so that in nothing you might suffer loss by us.

10 For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation *that is* not to be regretted. But the sorrow of the world brings forth death.

11 For behold this very thing, that you sorrowed after a godly manner. What earnestness it worked in you, *what* vindication of yourselves, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* desire, *what* zeal, *what* avenging of wrong! In all *things* you have approved yourselves to be pure in this matter.

12 Therefore, though I wrote to you, *it was*

the first letter brought great joy to him because he realized that the Corinthian church would not be a church of "wood, hay, stubble" (See comments 1 Co 3:12-15). Their repentance thus brought him comfort (See Ph 2:17; Cl 1:24).

5 Troubled on every side: Paul continued here with the historical notes that he started in 2:13 concerning Titus' coming to him in Macedonia from Corinth. Paul had sent Titus to Corinth to precede his coming by delivering the 1 Corinthian letter. At the time Paul was in Asia. When he went into Macedonia, he encountered great opposition (2 Co 4:8). **6 God who comforts:** In this context Paul explains at least one means by which God comforts those who are discouraged (1:3,4; Is 49:13). When Titus met Paul in Macedonia with good news concerning the Corinthians' repentance, he was greatly comforted (vs 13; 2:13). **7** Paul was not only comforted by the report of repentance on the part of the Corinthian church, he was also comforted by their acceptance of Titus. When Paul first sent Titus to them, he was apprehensive about their acceptance of him because of the slanderous false teachers among them. However, they not only accepted Titus, they also repented in response to the 1 Corinthian letter. **Zeal for me:** Paul is not referring to their personal acceptance of him as opposed to accepting the arrogant teachers among them. This was not a matter of personalities. Their acceptance of him was a matter of accepting him as an inspired Christ-sent apostle who was the representative of God. If they would have rejected them, they would have been rejecting God, for it was through Paul that the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to them.

REPENTANCE THAT BRINGS JOY

8 The first letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthians was stern. Paul did not regret writing the letter because it had to be direct in order to produce repentance (2:2-4). Because of his God-ordained commission and responsibility as a Christ-apostle, he did not regret having to write the letter. There are times when the evangelist must preach a stern message. He regrets having to do

such because of his love for the church. However, he must preach the word of God (2 Tm 4:2). He is duty bound as an evangelist to deliver the word of God to the church of God. **Only for a while:** Once the Corinthian brethren had carried out the action of disfellowshipping the immoral brother (1 Co 5), then they were overjoyed when he repented. **9** The disfellowship had accomplished its purpose. The sinning brother repented, and thus brought joy to the Corinthians and Paul. Paul rejoiced because their obedient actions to disfellowship the immoral brother accomplished the purpose for which it was intended. **A godly manner:** The letter stimulated their repentance toward God. It did not cause them to have hard feelings toward Paul, and thus endanger their relationship with him. **10 Godly sorrow works repentance:** Regardless of the false teachers in the church who were opposing the directions of Paul, the majority of the church carried out Paul's instructions. They did so because they recognized that Paul's instructions were from God, not from man as were the instructions of the false teachers (Compare 2 Sm 12:13; Ps 32:10; Mt 26:75). When one understands that the word of God originates from God and not man, then he will respond to the word of God without reacting to the messenger who preached the word. Churches, therefore, who react with condemnation and judgment of the preacher who preaches the word of God, are churches who are falling into apostasy from the truth. They do not have the spirit of godly sorrow because they refuse to listen to the word of God. They will refuse to repent because they have no respect for the word of God. They maintain a carnal mentality, and thus are moving away from the word of God (See Pv 17:22; 1 Co 6:9,10; Gl 5:21). **11** The repentance of the Corinthians is clearly defined in this verse. The eight words that Paul uses to describe the Corinthians' repentance reveals what happens in the process of repentance. **Sorrowed:** Before one will repent, he must mourn over his sin (See comments Mt 5:3-10). Godly sorrow is the foundation upon which all true repentance is established. **Earnestness:** They were quick and earnest in their desire to carry out

not for the sake of the *one* who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of the *one* who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might be made known to you.

13 ¶ Therefore, we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced even more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boast-

ing, which *I made* before Titus, proved to be true.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.

16 I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

Chapter 8

1 ¶ Moreover, brethren, we make known to

the disfellowship of the immoral brother in order to comply with the commandment of God through Paul. **Vindication:** They had a sincere desire to keep the church pure of sin, and thus, they manifested their desire to be obedient to God (2:5-11; 1 Co 5:6,7). **Indignation:** They had not been desensitized to sin, and thus, they had not condoned the sin. They were only timid in working against the will of the false teachers who had evidently intimidated them into conforming to their wishes. Paul's letter gave the majority confidence to carry out the action that was in their hearts. **Fear:** They carried out the action in fear of God. They learned to fear God more than any man. They realized that as a church they were sinning because they allowed the immoral brother to go unchecked. **Desire:** They sincerely wanted to reestablish their relationship with God and Paul. They were not willing that the sin of the immoral brother cause a rift between them and God. **Zeal:** Once they had the confidence that was provided by the inspired letter of Paul, they acted quickly to disfellowship the immoral brother. **Avenging:** By disfellowshipping the sinning brother, they vindicated themselves from being a church that condoned sin. **Pure in this matter:** When churches decide to do the will of God instead of conforming to the wishes of those who would condone sin, they identify themselves as a church of Christ (2:5-11). Such was the desire of the majority of the Corinthian church. Because of the confidence that came with the 1 Corinthian letter, they chose to ignore those among the disciples who sought to condone the sin. They chose to obey God rather than man, and thus clear themselves of being an apostate church. **12** Paul's statement here indicates that the needs of the many outweigh the sin of any one member. In other words, the restoration of the entire Corinthian church was more important than the need of the one remaining in fellowship with the church. His conclusion would be that churches who condone one sinful brother within their fellowship will identify the entire church to be in sin. The church will be in sin because the members are not carrying out the command of God to keep the church pure. The church sins by being disobedient to the command of God to disfellowship sinning members. **Our care ... made known:** Paul had to write the inspired instructions in order to manifest his own care for the church (2:4). It was Paul's ordained work as a Christ-sent apostle to deliver the word of God to man. If he had failed in this work, then he would have sinned against God.

13 Comforted: Once the Corinthian church had carried out the instructions to disfellowship the immoral

brother, and the brother repented, the members were comforted. This brought comfort to Paul. **Titus ... refreshed:** Though Titus must have had great apprehension on his way to Corinth with the 1 Corinthian letter, his return to Paul was one of great joy. He was greatly encouraged by the repentant attitude that was manifested by the Corinthian church. **By you all:** It is worthy to note that the majority of the Corinthian church who carried out the action of disfellowshipping the immoral brother, is considered the church of God. Paul did not include in this those arrogant false teachers from whom they should separate themselves (6:14-18). Paul's statement here thus refers to the repentant majority who finally saved the day for the Corinthian church by being obedient to the commandment of God concerning the sin in the church. **14 Boasted to him:** Before Titus left for Corinth with the 1 Corinthian letter, Paul boasted concerning the true attitudes of the meek majority in the church. The church was not to be judged according to the arrogant minority who were opponents of Paul. Once Titus visited the church, the boasting of Paul concerning the Corinthians was found to be true. **15 The obedience of you all:** Though Paul used the word "all" to refer to the church, we could assume that some of the arrogant false teachers did not repent. Nevertheless, the church was now led by those who were of a humble heart. **Fear and trembling:** Since Titus' visit to Corinth, his affections and appreciation for the church were as Paul's before his visit. The repentant attitude of the church had changed his thinking concerning the church as a whole. Therefore, it is wise not to judge a church by the slanderous proclamations of a few whose voices can be heard, but whose hearts are ungodly. **16 Confidence in you:** Paul would certainly be putting the arrogant false teachers to shame by exalting the righteous behavior of the majority of the church. The church knew those who had opposed Paul. Therefore, Paul's commendation of the majority of the church who obediently responded to his letter, would silence his opposition through the righteous behavior of the majority of the church. The righteous behavior of churches should be commended in order to encourage them to continue in their work (See 2:3; 8:22; 2 Th 3:4; Pl 8,21).

Chapter 8

EXCELLING IN CONTRIBUTION

The following chapters 8 & 9 are a follow-up appeal to the Corinthians concerning the Judean famine

you the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia,

2 that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty, abounded in the riches of their liberality.

3 For I testify that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability *they gave* of their own accord,

4 begging us with much urgency that we

would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And *this they did*, not as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

6 So we urged Titus that as he had begun, so he would also complete in you this same grace as well.

7 But as you abound in everything, in faith

relief contribution of 1 Co 16:1-3. Paul had already taken a collection from the Gentile churches of Macedonia (vs 1; 9:2). He was now headed for Corinth to gather the collection they had promised to make a year before. His purpose for gathering the contribution was first to bring relief to the famine stricken victims of Judea. However, he also wanted to let the Jewish disciples in Judea know that the Gentile disciples cared for them. The generous contribution of the Gentile churches would produce unity between the Jewish and Gentile disciples (Compare vs 13-24; Rm 15:26-31; Gl 6:6). The historical context of Paul's statements in the first few verses of chapter 8 are made to spur the Corinthians on to making the contribution by letting them know what the Macedonian churches had already done. The Macedonian churches would at least include the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea.

1 The grace of God: The word "grace" (*karis*) in this passage would better be translated "favor." It would have reference to the favor of God that was showered down upon the Macedonian churches as a result of their sacrificial contribution (Compare Rm 15:25,26; 1 Co 16:1,2). The word "grace" is not used in a salvation context here, but in the sense that God was well-pleased with the sacrificial actions of the church in making the contribution out of an economic situation of great poverty (See comments 3 Jn 5-8). **2** By informing them of the positive response of the Macedonian churches, Paul wanted to encourage the Corinthian brethren to contribute. **Great trial of affliction:** What made the Macedonian's contribution exceptional was the fact that they gave out of an economic situation that was very difficult. Though the times were hard for them, they still gave to the need of others. **Joy:** They gave with a joyful spirit. It was not a grudging gift. **Deep poverty:** They were poor churches, and yet, they did not use their poverty as an excuse not to give. Too often, poor churches complain about their economic situation, and thus, they neglect to manifest the spirit of giving by the contribution of what they have. However, those churches that realize the tremendous gift of grace that God has given to them and the eternal glory that is yet to come, will give out of their poverty (See comments Ph 4:10-18). The spirit of giving is based on the concept of Jesus that freely we have received God's gifts, freely we should give to others (Compare Mt 10:8). If we violate this principle, then we will not grow spiritually in the favor of God. There is no favor of God extended toward churches that do not sacrificially contribute. **Abounded:** The Macedonian churches gave generously. They refused to allow their poor economic conditions to hinder them from doing that which was required in response to God's generosity to them through His grace (See comments Mk 12:41-44). **3 Beyond their ability:** There were those

churches that gave what they could. However, the Macedonian churches went beyond what would be an acceptable contribution. They sacrificed on their part in order to make a contribution. They gave up material things in order to make it possible for a contribution to be made (See comments At 2:44,45; 4:32-37). **They gave:** The poverty stricken churches of Macedonia had learned the spirit of Christianity. They had learned the spirit of giving that will produce inward joy and spiritual growth. God's gift of grace had moved them to willingly respond to the needs of others. As God responded to their need of salvation through His free gift of grace, they learned that godliness responds in the same way to the physical needs of others. Christians who do not sacrificially contribute do not understand what they have received through the cross of Jesus nor what they will receive in eternal glory (Rm 8:18). **4 Begging us:** The word here should be translated "begging us." Paul and his company would naturally refuse to accept a contribution from such poverty stricken brethren. Therefore, the Macedonian brethren begged Paul to accept their gift. The spirit of their giving was thus exemplified by their actions to do that which was right in reference to the famine victims of Judea. **Fellowship of the ministering:** Not only did the Macedonian churches want to give to the famine victims, they wanted to participate in the fellowship of all churches. In other words, they knew that they had to give in order to be in fellowship with all other churches. If they had refused to contribute, then they knew that they would have disfellowshipped themselves from all other churches who were making a sacrificial contribution. The example of their giving and the giving of all other churches concerning the Judean famine, was that churches worked with one another in a unified effort to contribute to a specific cause. Therefore, the working together of churches to carry out projects that necessitate the contributions of many churches indicates the fellowship that exists between churches. Those churches that would refuse to financially work together in such a manner have disfellowshipped themselves from the universal brotherhood to do the work of world benevolence and evangelism (See 9:1; At 11:29,30; 24:17; Rm 15:25,26; 1 Co 16:1-4). **5 First gave themselves:** Sacrificial contributions will happen when people first commit themselves to God. When we give our entire lives to Jesus, contributions will follow (See comments Rm 12:1). When this happens in the life of an individual, then the totality of his being is given to others. The one who is motivated by the mercy of God that results in the giving of God's grace will not see how little he can give (4:15). He will concentrate on how much he can give. **6 Complete .. this same grace:** Paul had sent Titus to Corinth in order to inform the Corinthians concerning the contribution that needed to be made

and utterance and knowledge and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love for us, *see* that you abound in this grace also.

8 ¶ I do not speak by commandment, but as proving through the diligence of others the sincerity of your love.

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor so that you through His poverty might become rich.

10 ¶ And in this I give advice: For this is advantageous for you who were the first a year ago not only to do, but also to desire to do *this thing*.

11 But now finish doing *it* so that as *there* was a readiness to desire *it*, so *there* may be also a completion out of what you have.

12 For if there is first a willing mind, *it* is acceptable according to what one has *and* not

according to what he does not have.

13 ¶ For *I* do not *mean* that others be eased and you burdened;

14 but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their need, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality.

15 As it is written, "*He who gathered much had nothing left over and he who gathered little had no lack.*"

16 ¶ But thanks *be* to God who puts the same earnestness for you into the heart of Titus.

17 For indeed he accepted *our* appeal, but being more earnest, of his own will he went to you.

18 And we have sent him with the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches,

19 and not only *this*, but who was also cho-

(8:17; 12:18). Paul here refers to the giving as a grace. It is a grace because it is in response to God's saving grace in our lives (4:15). Contribution, therefore, is giving after the manner by which God extended grace toward us. Grace was free and given out of the initiative of God to save us. Our contribution to the needs of others is also free and the result of our initiative to help others. It is truly a contribution of grace because we do not expect anything in return. True contribution is given when one does not expect anything in return. **7 Abound in this grace also:** The Corinthians had received all that they had as a result of the grace of God. They abounded in the blessings of God (Ep 1:3). Therefore, Paul here urges them to bountifully respond to the Judean need by contributing to the Famine Fund of Judea (9:8).

GIVING OUT OF PURPOSE

8 Paul is not giving a commandment concerning their contribution. The test is concerning their love. If they obeyed by commandment, then they would not be motivated by brotherly love to care for the victims of the famine (See 1 Co 7:6). Paul expects them to voluntarily make the contribution out of a heart of love for God and their Jewish brothers. **9 The grace of our Lord:** Though Jesus was on an equality with God, He sacrificed Himself in order to offer Himself for the salvation of all men (Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58; Ph 2:5-7). By understanding our salvation by God's grace, we should be motivated to give to others. **10,11** The Corinthians had determined a year before to make a contribution for the famine victims. If their determination to make the contribution was stimulated by the writing of 1 Co 16:1-4, then we would assume that the 2 Corinthian letter was written one year after 1 Corinthians. **A completion:** The year before this writing, they had the desire to make the contribution. It is possible that the opponents of Paul discouraged them from carrying through on their promise. Therefore, Paul now encouraged them to carry out their

intentions to make the contribution, and thus remain in fellowship with all churches who were also contributing (vs 4). **12 According to what one has:** God does not expect us to give according to what we do not have. He expects us to give what we can (See Mk 12:43,44; Lk 21:3,4). **13** Paul did not expect them to give in order to relieve others of what they should contribute. On the other hand, they should understand that others were not giving in order to relieve them of their responsibility.

14,15 By an equality: Their contribution would not just be a sharing of material things as was the case in At 2:44,45 and At 4:32-37. It would be a manifestation of an equality with the Jewish Christians who had preached the gospel to the Gentiles (Rm 15:27). **Their abundance:** The Corinthians were probably more financially able to contribute than the Macedonians. Paul quoted Ex 16:18 in order to illustrate economic sharing among Christians. No Christian should be left in a crisis situation where he is destitute of food and shelter (Compare comments 2 Th 3:10). Reference is not that all Christians should normally have the same amount of material possessions or money. The point is that in crisis situations every brother is cared for in the areas of having that which is necessary for living (See comments At 6:1-7).

RECOMMENDATION OF TITUS

16,17 Because of his concern and care for the Corinthian church, Titus voluntarily went to Corinth in order to aid in the spiritual development of the church. **18** Two other brethren accompanied Titus to Corinth (vs 22). **The brother:** Paul does not identify this brother or the brother who is mentioned in verse 22. Some Bible students believe that one of these brothers could have been Luke, or possibly one of the brothers who are mentioned in At 20:4. **19-21** The church had selected two brothers to go with Paul to collect the contribution for the famine of Judea (See 4:15; At 14:23; 1 Co 16:3,4). The wisdom of the money being handled by

sen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* your readiness,

20 avoiding this, that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; **21** providing for honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 ¶ And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent because of the great confidence that *we have* in you.

23 As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker concerning you. As for our brethren, *they are* the apostles of the churches, *the* glory of Christ.

24 Therefore, show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

Chapter 9

1 ¶ Concerning the ministry to the saints, it is not needful for me to write to you,

2 for I know the willingness of your mind, of which I boast of you to those of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago. And your zeal has stirred up the majority.

3 But I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting about you should be in vain in this case, so that, as I said, you may be prepared;

4 lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we – not to speak of you – should be ashamed in this confident

more than one person encouraged churches to give because everyone knew that the contribution was secure (See Rm 12:17; Ph 4:8; 1 Pt 2:12). The churches asked Paul and his company of two brothers to travel among the churches in order to raise the contribution for the famine. Such is a good example of churches cooperating in order to accomplish a good work (Compare comments Gl 2:1-10).

22 The brother who is mentioned here is not identified, though he was well known among the churches. The purpose for the company of brethren being sent was not only for security, but also to guard Paul against accusations by those who were carnal in their thinking. There are those brethren who still have a dishonest mind, and thus assume that others are dishonest. They are often quick to accuse others who are handling the contributions of the church of being dishonest with such financial responsibilities as they would be. **23 Apostles:** The Greek word here is *apostolos* ("apostles"). Titus and the two brothers with him were church-sent apostles. Since the generic meaning of the word *apostolos* is "one sent," these brethren were sent out from the churches for a specific purpose (At 14:4; Ph 2:25). They did not have the power of the Christ-sent apostles who were personally sent out by Jesus to be witnesses of His resurrection (See comments At 1:15-26; 8:18). It is important to make this distinction between the church-sent apostles and Christ-sent apostles. The Christ-sent apostles were the special witnesses to the life and resurrection of Jesus (Lk 24:48; At 1:8; 1 Pt 5:1). Church-sent apostles were simply messengers of the church to carry out the desires of the church. **24 Proof of your love:** Paul urged the Corinthians to receive Titus and the two brothers in order that the rest of the churches know the loving fellowship the Corinthian brethren wanted to maintain among the churches (vs 4). In their reception of these brothers, Paul's boasting to the other churches would not have been in vain (7:4,14; 9:2). The practical lesson that Paul teaches is that churches should be eager to receive evangelists from other areas. Those churches who refuse to receive evangelists would do well to study John's exhortations in 3 John (See com-

ments). In his efforts to maintain control of the church, Diotrephes was one who refused to receive John and the traveling evangelists.

Chapter 9

GIVING THAT GLORIFIES GOD

1 Ministry to the saints: This discussion is concerning the churches' contribution to the famine stricken victims in Judea (8:4; At 11:29; Rm 15:26; 1 Co 16:1; Gl 2:10). The Corinthians were truly willing to contribute to the Judean churches. Paul and the brothers were on their way to collect the contribution. He knew that they wanted to contribute. He thus writes in order to encourage them to carry out their desire to contribute. **2 Willingness of your mind:** They were willing to contribute, but possibly were discouraged from doing so because of the negative influence of the false teachers among them (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). **Those of Macedonia:** Reference here is to the many churches of Macedonia, specifically Berea, Thessalonica and Philippi. These churches are not portrayed as individual groups of disciples who functioned separately from one another in such things as cooperation in contributing to the famine in Judea. They were viewed as the church, and thus functioned as one church of Christ to carry out the work of the church. **Achaia:** From Paul's reference to the Macedonians as one church, though meeting in different locations, we would assume that there were also several churches in the province of Achaia at the time of writing, not just one group meeting in the city of Corinth. Though the members of the church may meet at different places on the first day of the week, they are still the one church. **Stirred up the majority:** The Corinthians' willingness to contribute was announced to other churches. As a result other churches were inspired to also contribute (8:19). **3 You may be prepared:** Paul had boasted concerning the Corinthians' willingness to make the contribution for the famine victims. At the time of writing, he sent Titus and the other two brethren on to Corinth in order that the contribution be made before his arrival (8:6,16-18,23; 1 Co 16:1-4). **4 Should**

boasting.

5 Therefore, I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren so that they go before to you and make up beforehand your previously promised generous contribution, so that the same might be ready as generosity and not as one grudgingly given.

6 ¶ But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

7 Let each one *give* according as he purposes

in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you so that you, always having all sufficiency in everything, may abound to every good work.

9 As it is written, "*He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.*"

10 ¶ Now He who provides seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply

be ashamed: Paul had already boasted to the Macedonian churches concerning their willingness to contribute. He sent the brethren in advance in order that neither he nor some accompanying Macedonian brethren be embarrassed when he arrived and they had not yet made the contribution. **5 Generosity and not as an obligation:** Titus and the other two brothers would remind the Corinthians that they had made a promise to make the contribution. Therefore, if they willingly made the contribution without Paul's presence, then they would make it with generosity and not out of obligation. He did not want them to have to submit to a guilt-producing fund raising campaign from either himself or others. Paul is again testing their sincerity. They had made all the talk of promises concerning the contribution, now it was time for them to walk the promises they talked. Too many times churches behave as the Corinthians concerning their work for the Lord. People are quick to talk and make plans, but slow in carrying out those plans in their lives.

6 Reap sparingly: The principle Paul quotes here is from the Old Testament (See Pv 11:24; 22:9; Gl 6:7-9). **Reap bountifully:** Paul does not indicate that they will reap material things for their generous giving. In view of 8:14 and verse 11 in this chapter, the reaping has more to do with the spiritual blessing of eternal glory. This was the promise of blessing that was given to the Philippians for their sacrificial contributions to evangelism (See comments Ph 4:14-19). Paul would not be teaching here that one must expect to materially prosper as a result of his contributions. Such a concept would produce selfish reasons for contributing. Contribution is not an investment strategy. Contributions must be made without expectation for material benefit. Sacrificial contribution is not made in expectation that God will materially bless one with more money or things. The sacrificial contributions that are made by poverty stricken brethren throughout the world is evidence that God does not work in this manner in reference to contributions. Tens of thousands of brethren live in Third World environments of the world today, though they are sacrificially giving to the Lord. However, they are still in a Third World environment, and still poor. Nevertheless, they are still sacrificial givers as the widow during Jesus' ministry who, according to percentage of giving, gave more than the wealthy (See comments Mk 12:41-44). The teaching "the more money you give God the more He will give you" is a theology, that if true, proclaims that God has no concern for brethren in Third World economies of the world who still remain poor, though

percentage and sacrificial wise, they are often giving more than the wealthy brethren of the industrial world.

7 As he purposes in his heart: Contribution in Christianity is based on the concept, "freely you receive, freely give" (See comments Mt 10:8). Christians have freely received the gift of God's grace. Therefore, they are motivated to freely give whatever they can of their lives in thanksgiving to God (See comments Rm 12:1,2). Every Christian, therefore, gives of his own free will without reluctance and without feeling compelled to give. Christians are compelled by the grace of God in their hearts. They thus seek to see how much they can give, not how little they can give. If Christianity were a legal system of religion created after the religious inventions of men, then they would seek only to give that which was established by the religion. They would be seeking to give only that which is required. However, since Christians are grace-motivated, they give out of thanksgiving to God for saving them by His grace (See comments 1 Co 15:10). Grace-motivated Christians are thus cheerful givers. Legalistically motivated Christians are grudging givers. Grace-motivated givers spiritually grow every time they have an opportunity to give (Compare 8:12; Ex 35:5; Dt 15:7,10; 1 Ch 29:17; Pv 11:25; Rm 12:8). **8 Grace abound toward you:** Reference here is to the contributing (8:1,4,19). God expresses His bountiful favor to others as a result of sacrificial giving. God has not promised to match the contribution with riches of this world. He has only promised that He will take care of us in this world (See comments Mt 6:19-34). Christians must keep in mind that in the world to come, their possessions of this world will in no possible way be compared with that which they will receive (Rm 8:18). Since few that are rich of this world either gain or maintain their faith, it seems that God would not make one rich because of contributions (See comments 1 Tm 6:6-10). However, those who are materially blessed, and yet contribute well, should use their gift of making money by contributing to the glory of God (See comments 3 Jn 2-8). **Abound to every good work:** Some brethren have the gift of making money. Those who do should be exhorted to use their gift in order to benefit the work of God through themselves. **9 Given to the poor:** The context of Psalm 112:9 that Paul quotes here is in reference to the one who fears God. Therefore, the Christian who is faithful will give to the poor. If the Corinthians would fear the Lord, therefore, they will give to the poor famine victims of Judea.

10 It is God who provides the seed of righteousness in our hearts from which our contributions abound

your seed for sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness;

11 being enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us causes thanksgiving to God.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abundant through many thanksgivings to God,

13 because through the proof of this ministry they glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all *men*,

14 and by their prayer for you, who long af-

ter you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.

15 Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift.

Chapter 10

1 ¶ Now I, Paul, myself appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* lowly among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you.

2 But I beg *you* that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence by which I propose to be bold against some who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not

to others. We thus give because He first gave to us (Compare comments 1 Jn 4:19; see Is 55:10). **Fruits of your righteousness:** The result of the righteousness of God in our hearts is that it produces the fruit of righteousness in the lives of others. In other words, the result of the justification of the Christian by the grace of God is that Christians give to help others (See Hs 10:12).

11 For all liberality: The Corinthians had already been enriched with the things of this world that gave them the ability to contribute. God did not make them rich in the five to seven years they had been Christians. They were now Christians, and thus must direct their riches toward the good works of their faith. What they had consumed on their own lusts before they were Christians, was now to be directed to the help of others. Therefore, when one becomes a Christian, his standard of living comes down in the sense that his riches, which he formerly consumed on himself before he became a Christian, are now prompted by the grace of God to be directed toward others (See comments Rm 12:1,2; Gl 2:20). When one so directs his material blessings toward others, then God spiritually blesses this one in his giving (See comments Mt 6:19-21; see Pv 23:5).

12 Thanksgivings to God: Not only would the contribution benefit the famine-stricken victims of Judea, such would also cause men to thank God for working in the lives of men. They would see that Christians believed in the one true and living God because His grace in them moved them to lovingly consider others before themselves (See comments Jn 13:34,35; 1 Jn 4:19). Therefore, every time a contribution is made, God is to be thanked for working in the hearts of men.

13 Proof of this ministry: The contribution the Corinthians were making was evidence of their sincere obedience to the gospel (Compare Mt 5:16).

Confession of the gospel: They believed the gospel, and thus, they obeyed the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4; Rm 6:3-6). Others were glorifying God because of their obedience to the gospel, and now, they were glorifying God because of their contribution to the Judean brethren.

Liberality: When one becomes a Christian, he comes into a fellowship of sharing (See comments At 2:44,45; 4:32-37; see Hb 13:16).

14 Grace of God in you: The grace of God in them was manifested by their willingness to serve God. Paul wanted

the Corinthians to know that other brethren were praying for them and wanted to meet them. It seems that the Corinthian church had become a well-known church in the first century because they came out of the idolatry of the Corinthian society through their obedience to the gospel. **15 Indescribable gift:** The gift of God that is beyond human explanation is His grace that He manifested to man through the cross for the salvation of man (See Jn 3:16; 4:10; Rm 6:23; 8:32; Ti 2:11; Js 1:17). Men do not normally behave as God did through grace. He loved us when we did not deserve loving (Rm 5:8). Jesus died for us when we deserved no gift because of our sin against God. Therefore, it is by grace that we are saved (See comments Rm 5:1,2; Ep 2:1-10).

Chapter 10

SPIRITUAL WARFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN

It is in this discussion that Paul now warns some brethren among the Corinthian church that he is coming. And when he comes, he will exercise his authority of discipline if some continue in their denial of his apostolic authority. He had already preached the stern sermon through these two Corinthian letters. Now it was time to use the rod of a Christ-sent apostle (1 Co 4:21).

1 Urge you: Paul pleaded with them to correct the defiance of some in order that he not have to come to them with the rod of discipline. **2 Bold toward you:** As a Christ-sent apostle with the authority to deliver to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, Paul would have to exercise the work of his apostleship when among them (See 13:2,10; 1 Co 4:21; 1 Tm 1:20).

Against some: The problem is with the entire group of disciples only in the sense that the whole church was putting up with the arrogant defiance of just a few brothers. The 1 Corinthian letter motivated the majority to act on Paul's instructions concerning matters of immorality in the church. However, in reference to the defiance of some against the authority of Paul's apostleship, the church was still unequally yoked with those who opposed Paul (6:14-18).

According to the flesh: Those brothers with fleshly minds assumed that everyone else lived and thought according to their carnal thinking. Those who are dishonest think all men are dishonest. Therefore, Paul's opponents in Corinth assumed that he was walking ac-

war according to the flesh.

4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but powerful through God for the pulling down of strongholds,

5 casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

6 And we are ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is complete.

7 ¶ Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again in himself, that just as he *is* Christ's, even so we *are* Christ's.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority which the Lord has given us

for edification, and not for your destruction, I will not be ashamed,

9 so that I may not seem as if I would terrify you through my letters.

10 "For *his* letters," they say, "*are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak and *his* speech contemptible."

11 Let such a person think this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *we will be* also in deed when we are present.

12 ¶ For we dare not class or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

13 But we will not boast of things beyond

according to worldly desires because they were so walking. **3** In this world we must live in a physical body. However, this does not mean that our desires are directed toward satisfying the lusts of the flesh. Our warfare is spiritual, and thus, we fight a spiritual war with Satan, though we live in the flesh. **4 *Weapons of our warfare:*** Since the Christian's battle is against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places, the weapons of his warfare are spiritual (1 Co 9:7; 1 Tm 1:18; See comments Ep 6:11-16; 1 Th 5:8). The strength of the Christian is strong against the works of Satan because the power of his weaponry originates from God, not man (vs 8; 13:10; Jr 1:10; At 7:22; 1 Co 2:5). **5 *Casting down imaginations:*** Through the power of the word of God one is able to cast down false philosophies and theologies of men (1 Co 1:19; 2 Tm 4:1-5; Hb 4:12). Error is cast down when men seek truth (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). The Christian is in a war with the deceptive beliefs of witchcraft, false science, false religions and man's ignorance of the truth. It is the work of the spiritual leaders of the church to build up the church in truth in order that members not be tossed to and fro by the onslaught of false teachings that prevail in the minds of the deceived (See comments Ep 4:11-16). **6** When Paul would arrive in Corinth, he would unleash punishment on all those who would not submit in obedience to Christ (1 Co 4:21). Such would be accomplished after the obedient in Corinth were made known. The Corinthians' obedience would be complete when they disfellowshipped from the church those opponents of Paul who refused to repent of their arrogance against God's representative.

7 If they would judge by seeing the obvious, then they would see that Paul is speaking the truth (See 5:12; 1 Co 1:12; 14:37). ***We are Christ's:*** Paul was living the sacrificial life, and thus, manifested that he had given his entire life to the Lord (1 Co 3:23; Rm 12:1,2; Gl 2:20). **8,9 *Authority ... for edification:*** The "rod" of power that the Christ-sent apostles had for the purpose of disciplining the church was given to the apostles for the purpose of building up the church, not tearing it down (13:10; see comments 1 Co 4:4; At 5:1-11). If an unrepentant Christian was delivered unto Satan for the de-

struction of the flesh, then he would be taught that God is serious about faithfulness to one's commitment to Christ (1 Tm 1:20). However, the authority of the apostles in these matters was exercised only when members manifested defiance of God's appointed authority of the apostles. Therefore, if Paul had to come to Corinth and exercise his authority as an apostle of Christ, he would not be ashamed of having to exercise what he was commissioned to do in reference to disciplining those who defied God's authority through the apostles. ***Terrify you through my letters:*** It was not Paul's desire to frighten the faithful majority of the Corinthian church. However, he intended to frighten those who were defiant against God's ordained authority which was represented on earth through Paul and the other apostles. **10** The opponents of Paul accused that his letters were stern. However, they mocked by saying that his personal presence was weak (1 Co 2:3,4; Gl 4:13). They misinterpreted the meekness of one who maintained control of the power that was invested in him through the will of God. However, those who questioned his authority to unleash the power of God on defiant men, were sorely wrong in their estimation and determination of Paul to correct the Corinthian situation. Paul here reassures them that he is able and willing to exercise all his God-given power to save the Corinthian church from the clutches of dictatorial leaders. No one individual will be spared the judgment of God in order to preserve the faithful majority of the church. **11** The warning here is to those who would assume that Paul's coming would be as it was in the past. If they understood that his letters were stern, then they must understand that his presence among them will be stern in reference to those who were defiant against the authority of God. They would suffer the sternness of the power of God.

12 It is the nature of those who have constructed their own religion to establish their own standards by which they judge one another (See introduction to Gl). Since the thinking of the legalistic religionist is based on the performance of law and good works, then those who adhere to such a belief tend to be competitive. They tend to be competitive with one another concerning conformity to the established standards by which all adher-

our measure, but according to the measure of the realm which God has appointed to us, a measure to reach even as far as you.

14 For we are not overextending ourselves as though we did not reach to you, for we came as far as to you with the gospel of Christ.

15 *We are* not boasting of things beyond *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labors, but having hope that when your faith is increased, we will be enlarged by you even more in our realm of work,

16 to preach the gospel in the *regions* be-

yond you, *and* not to boast in another man's realm of accomplishment.

17 ¶ But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

18 For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but *he* whom the Lord commends.

Chapter 11

1 ¶ I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness, and indeed *you are* bearing with me.

ents must conform in order to remain loyal to the system of religion (Compare comments Mk 7:1-9). In churches where power struggles exist and personalities clash, there is envious competition between those who would presume to be leaders. Throughout the maneuvers of church politics, carnally minded members seek for positions of control, and thus end up stealing the sheep of God away from the one Lord Jesus Christ (See comments At 20:29,30; 1 Pt 5:1-5). Paul's answer to such legalistic thinking and carnal behavior is not to involve oneself in such matters. Those who would are simply not wise. They have manifested their lack of wisdom by turning the fellowship of the church into an opportunity to play political games in power struggles. The wise member will refuse to participate in such spiritually immature behavior and worldly mentality by focusing his life on humbly serving God. **13 Not boast ... beyond our measure:** In order to defend his work, Paul says that he will confine his report to the works of his life. He will not report the works of his life in a competitive spirit, nor with a boastful attitude. Since he is judged only by God, then he neither needs to compete with others, nor ask for the approval of others for his works (Compare comments Gl 2:6-10). He thus mentions the hardships of his work in order to proclaim how God had worked in his life. **As far as you:** Paul's boasting would include the very existence of the Corinthian church. It would include the Corinthians because God worked through Paul to bring the Corinthians into the membership of the family of God. At the time Paul wrote this epistle, they were members of the family, and thus, they were involved in the work of Paul. **14 Not overextending ourselves:** Paul and those who worked with him, would not report of those accomplishments that were outside their personal efforts. Paul would not try to exalt his work by adding to his reports the accomplishments of others. He could report concerning the accomplishments of others, but on the basis of giving honor to whom honor is due (Rm 13:7). Keep in mind that Paul's work and leadership were not localized with one church as the Corinthian church. He did not work as the self-appointed false leaders of Corinth who were intimidating the church to conform to their standards of performance. As a Christ-sent apostle, he maintained a ministry that extended to many churches, of which the Corinthian church was only one. **Gospel of Christ:** Paul preached the death of Jesus for the sins of man and His burial and resurrection for our hope (3:5,6; see comments 1 Co 15:1-4). **15 Enlarged by you:** Though

Paul's opponents boasted in other men's labors, he confined his reporting to what he had personally accomplished (1:14; 9:3; 12:1; compare Rm 15:20). The spiritual and numerical growth of the Corinthian church, therefore, would expand his boasting because the church in Corinth was the result of his preaching the gospel in Corinth (1 Co 1:23; 15:1,2). **Your faith is increased:** When the faith of churches increases, they will do what Paul hopes they will do as explained in the following verse. **16** As the Corinthian church assumed its responsibility to evangelize the world through their growth in faith, they would support Paul in order to allow him to go beyond them to preach the gospel in other regions (See comments Ph 4:10-18). If they did such, then they would increase the realm of his accomplishments in preaching the gospel to the lost. **17,18 Boast in the Lord:** One should not glory in order to emphasize his own abilities to perform. He should glory on the basis that he is in the Lord, and thus, it is the Lord working through him (See Is 65:16; Jr 9:23,24; 1 Co 1:31). **Whom the Lord commends:** One is neither justified nor commended to the Lord on the basis of his own performance of law or good deeds (See comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16; Ep 2:1-10). One is not so commended simply because God cannot be placed in debt to either save or glorify on the basis of human performance (Rm 11:6). Those who glorify themselves before God on the basis of their performance are establishing their own standards, and thus, arrogantly asking God to accept their standards as sufficient for salvation. In comparison to the righteousness of the good God, there is no righteous person (Rm 3:9,10,23). No man can stand righteous before God on the merit of his own works of law or good deeds because no man can perform either law or good deeds in order to stand just before God. Therefore, we cannot appoint our own standards of performance, and thus, measure ourselves righteous or good before God on the basis of these standards. Commending of one's self before God on the basis of humanly devised standards is wrong (vs 12; 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; see Pv 27:2). One can boast only insofar as the grace of God has worked in his life to move him to respond to the will of God (Rm 2:29; 1 Co 4:5; see comments Gl 2:20).

Chapter 11

SACRIFICIAL PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

1 A little foolishness: Paul's defiant opponents in Corinth had established a political atmosphere among

2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband so that I may present *you as a pure virgin* to Christ.

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve through his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ.

4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have

not accepted, you put up with *him*.

5 ¶ For I do not consider myself *in any way* inferior to the most eminent apostles.

6 But though *I am* unskilled in speech, yet not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.

7 ¶ Have I committed an offense in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God without charge?

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *from them*, to serve you.

themselves in which they compared themselves with themselves (10:12-17). They thus sought to impress other disciples by their works. In the following discussion Paul portrays his works in the Lord in reference to himself and God. He is not seeking to join the political fellowship of the self-commending leadership among the Corinthians. He is individually portraying what each individual Christian should do in his personal relationship with God. However, it appears that he is somewhat embarrassed by having to so boast in order to shame the self-commending leaders among the Corinthians. Nevertheless, he feels that he should in order to refute the pride by which others were conducting themselves among the Corinthians. **2 Godly jealousy:** As their spiritual father who provided the opportunity for them to obey the gospel (1 Co 4:15; see Ep 5:26), Paul sought to hover over them in order to protect them from the evil conduct of those who would take advantage of their innocence (Gl 4:17). He sought to continue his teaching influence of the church in order to present them before God without blemish by the blood of Jesus (Cl 1:28; Jd 24; see Lv 21:13). **Betrothed:** As a father would present his daughter for marriage, so Paul, through the Corinthians' obedience to the gospel, espoused them as a pure virgin to God (Hs 2:19; 1 Co 4:15). **3 Eve:** Eve was deceived by Satan to eat of the forbidden fruit (Gn 3:4,13; Jn 8:44; 1 Th 3:5; 1 Tm 2:14). It is worthy to note that Paul here affirms the existence of Adam and Eve and the fall of man through the deception of Eve. If one would deny the Genesis account of these events in the beginning of human history, then he must deny the inspiration of Paul. Philosophies as the evolution of man deny the creation of the first man and woman and their fall through sin. Such false sciences deny the inspiration of Paul and all inspired writers who confirm the creation account of Genesis. **Corrupted:** The Corinthians were in danger of accepting without question the deceptive lies of Paul's opponents (See Ep 6:24; Cl 2:4,8; 1 Tm 1:3). If they did, then their minds would have been corrupted (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). **4 Another Jesus ... a different gospel:** Those who preach salvation by works of law and good deeds are actually preaching another Jesus and gospel. They are preaching the insufficiency of the grace of God by affirming that meritorious deeds must supplement the grace of God (See comments Gl 1:6-9). **Put up with him:** Legalistic religion is appealing in the sense that it is a quick fix to satisfy one's religiosity. If one compares himself with the accepted standard of legal requirements that are

established by a legal system of religion, then his confidence is in his performance of his own standard. However, if we seek to establish our own religious standards, we often digress in our standards to reject the law of God (See comments Mk 7:1-9). The legal system of religiosity that was presented to the Corinthians by Paul's opponents was appealing to the Corinthians because they could measure their performance by the standards of the legalistic teachers (See 10:12-16; see comments Rm 3:20; 11:6; Ep 2:1-10). **5 Inferior:** Paul was not inferior in reference to any Christ-sent apostle simply because it was the same God who worked through all.

Eminent apostles: There were Christ-sent apostles in the church and church-sent apostles. The eminent apostles were the Christ-sent apostles who were personally called by Jesus to be His special witnesses to the world. In this context Paul is possibly being sarcastic in reference to those false apostles in Corinth who claimed the authority of a Christ-sent apostle. He was not less than them because of what he states in the following verse. **6 Not in knowledge:** Though he might not have been the most eloquent speaker, Paul's authority as a Christ-sent apostle was based on the inspiration of what he said (2:14; 4:6; 10:5; 1 Co 12:8; Ep 3:4). **Thoroughly manifested:** Through the miraculous works of God that were manifested in the life of Paul while in Corinth, the Corinthians clearly knew that God was with him (12:12; see comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). They could not question the divine approval of his apostleship.

7 I have preached ... without charge: Paul handed out no invoices to the Corinthians for his ministry. He humbled himself by supporting himself while preaching the gospel to the Corinthians (See 12:13; At 18:1-3; 1 Co 9:18). The false apostles in their midst were evidently extracting pay for their work among the Corinthians. There seems to be irony in how Paul here rebukes both the false apostles and the church. He asked them if he should be considered a sinner because he supported himself while preaching the gospel to them.

8 I robbed other churches: This was certainly a devastating blow to any pride the Corinthians may have had in reference to their own introverted concern for themselves. While they were concerned about their own well-being by supporting themselves and false apostles among them, other churches sacrificed in order that the gospel be preached to them. On Paul's initial evangelistic visit to Corinth one can understand the principle of not taking contributions from newly established churches

9 And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one will stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Why? Because I do not love you? God

knows.

12 ¶ But what I do I will continue to do so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading themselves as apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder, for Satan masquerades

(See comments 3 Jn 7,8). Paul did not take contributions from the new converts of Corinth on the initial visit in order that he not be accused of preaching for money. However, he stayed in Corinth at least a year and a half on the first visit (At 18:11). He had possibly visited the church at another time previous to the visit he is about to make. At some time during their initial conversion five to six years before the writing of this epistle, they were involved in church robbery by not supporting him, Timothy or Titus on their visits to edify them as a church. Churches, therefore, who allow the preachers who minister to them to continually be supported by churches outside the local region are thus robbing other churches in the matter of support. If a local group of disciples fosters the support of their preacher by other churches, then Paul is saying that such is church robbery. Preachers who allow such to carry on are discouraging the spiritual growth of local churches to accept their financial responsibilities (See comments 1 Co 9:7-13; Gl 6:6; Ph 4:10-18; 1 Tm 5:17,18). **9 Present with you and in need:** Paul continued to shame this church for their introverted selfishness. When he was in their presence he was in need of physical sustenance. However, they did not care for him, for he did not want to be a financial burden to them (See At 20:33). **The brethren ... from Macedonia:** When in Corinth Paul worked with his hands in order to provide for his own physical necessities. What he lacked in making tents, brethren came from the churches in Macedonia with contributions to support him (See comments Ph 4:10-17). It seems that Paul's system of support was that he supported himself by the making of tents when in a local situation (At 18:3; At 20:33; 2 Th 3:7,8). What he lacked was often made up by other churches and individuals who supported him. **I will keep myself:** Paul was coming again to Corinth. In order to emphasize his point, he here states that he will not take their support when in their presence. If they wanted to support him while he preached to others outside their local area, then they could. However, while he was in their presence he would not foster their desires to spiritually introvert by benefitting from his personal presence. There seems to be a good lesson here for churches. Those churches who support only those teachers who minister unto those who support them, should seriously consider the principle that Paul here practiced with his own life. When he was preaching to the lost, he accepted the support of churches. However, when he was locally preaching to the Corinthians, or the Ephesians (At 20:33), he supported himself. **10 This boasting:** Because of his practice of not allowing local brethren to support him while in a local situation, the self-appointed false teachers among the Corinthians

could not argue against the sincerity of his work in Corinth. Those who support themselves locally while they preach, therefore, have a great witness to their sincerity. They cannot be accused of preaching for money. Paul never boasted concerning the receiving of payment for preaching, though he had a right to receive payment (1 Co 9:14). He only boasted when he preached while supporting himself. The indication is, therefore, that honor is deserved by the preacher who preaches the gospel while supporting himself. **11** Paul was not concerned about the judgment of others concerning either his work or motives. His personal relationship as a Christ-sent apostle was with God alone. And so it should be with every evangelist. One's work as an evangelist is not determined by men who know nothing or little about being called by God to do the work of an evangelist. The evangelist is called by his free-will commitment to accept the commission of Jesus to preach the gospel to the world. Those who have not accepted such a destiny for their lives do not understand such commitment. It is for this reason that the evangelist understands that he is sent out by God, not man.

12 Continue to do: Paul was coming to Corinth. On this trip he again would not receive their support. He would not in order to keep his accusers in the same uncomfortable situation they were at the time of his writing. They claimed to be sacrificially serving as Paul, and yet, they were being supported by the Corinthian church. They accused Paul of preaching for hire, and yet, they were doing the same (See 1 Co 9:12). Paul made tents and they made accusations. **13 False apostles:** These self-proclaimed apostles were neither commissioned by Jesus nor by the church. (See At 15:24; Rm 16:18; Gl 1:7; Ph 1:15; 2 Pt 2:1; Rv 2:2). **Deceitful workers:** They manifested a religiosity that came forth from a heart of evil motives (Ph 3:2; Ti 1:10). They professed to be leaders of the church when at the same time they were accusing the true leaders of the church as Paul, Timothy and Titus. **Masquerading themselves as apostles:** They were classifying themselves in the category of the Christ-sent apostles, and thus assuming the authority of the Christ-sent apostles. The truth was, however, that they were neither church-sent nor Christ-sent apostles because of the very fact that they had never gone forth to preach the gospel. They stayed at home in Corinth and soaked up the support of the church, while at the same time, made accusations against the true apostles of the church who were going forth preaching the gospel to the lost. **14 Satan masquerades himself:** This is the same Greek word that is used in verse 13. It is not that Satan was incarnating into the flesh of man. Paul metaphorically ex-

himself as a messenger of light.

15 Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his ministers also masquerade themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

16 ¶ I say again, let no man think me a fool. If otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, so that I may boast a little.

17 What I speak, I do not speak as the Lord, but as in foolishness in this confidence of boasting.

18 Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.

19 For you gladly tolerate fools, seeing you *yourselves* are wise.

20 For you tolerate *it* if *one* brings you into bondage, if one devours *you*, if one takes *from you*, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face.

21 To *our* shame I say that we have been too weak. But in whatever anyone *else* is bold – I speak foolishly – I am bold also.

22 ¶ Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I.

23 Are they ministers of Christ? – I speak as a fool – I *am* more, in far more labors, in beatings above measure, in prisons more frequent, often in danger of death.

24 By the Jews five times I received forty *lashes* minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my own* countrymen, *in* perils by the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils

plains that Satan uses men through whom he works to deceive others (Mt 24:24; 2 Th 2:3-12). Therefore, Satan was using the self-proclaimed religiosity of the false apostles in Corinth as an opportunity to deceive the Corinthians. **15 His ministers:** The false apostles were actually the servants of Satan. Brethren who have been deceived by their own self-righteousness and appointment as leaders, are evil workers whom Satan is using in order to deceive the church (See Rm 16:17,18; 1 Pt 5:8). **Whose end:** If one uses the church as the occasion to exercise his desire to lord over men, and thus misdirect the flock of God according to his own religious traditions, then his end will be the same as the one he is actually following, that is, Satan (See Mt 25:41; see comments Mt 7:21-23). Leaders must caution themselves about leading the flock in a manner that they are stealing the sheep of God (See comments At 20:29,30; 1 Pt 5:2,3).

PAUL BOASTED IN HIS WEAKNESSES

16 Paul's purpose here is not to boast in order to compare himself with the false teachers, and thus gain acceptance from the church. His purpose is to manifest the true life of all those who would be the true apostles in the social environment in which they had to carry out the great commission of Jesus (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). If one were a true apostle – whether Christ-sent or church-sent – then his life would be as that which Paul here explains of his own. The conceited false apostles were boasting of their sufferings before the Corinthian church in order to exalt themselves. Paul mentions the turmoil of his life in this context in order to manifest the foolishness of their sufferings in comparison to the sufferings of a true apostle of Christ. To do such was somewhat embarrassing to Paul. Nevertheless, such had to be done in order to shame those who proclaimed themselves to be apostles of Christ but were not. **17,18 I do not speak as the Lord:** This was the manner by which the Lord attacked those who accused

Him. However, in this situation the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use his life as a testimony against those who claimed to be Christ-sent apostles. He wanted to stop the mouths of those who had exalted themselves to be apostles of Christ. **19 Gladly tolerate fools:** The Corinthian members possibly prided themselves in the fact that they overlooked the error of some (See 1 Co 5). However, they were being indifferent to sin and false teachers, and thus, they were not wise. They claimed to be wise in order to make proper judgments in reference to who were true apostles of Christ. On the other hand, they put up with the foolishness of those false teachers among them who claimed to be apostles, and yet, were attacking the true apostles (See 1 Co 4:10). **20 Brings you into bondage:** They were being brought into the bondage by the intimidation of the false apostles who bound on them that which God had not bound (See comments At 15:10; Rm 16:17,18; Gl 5:1,2). **21 I am bold also:** The false apostles among them were bold to affirm that they were apostles of Christ. They boasted of their own infirmities. However, Paul wanted to remind them of his personal life, as well as, the life that he lived as a Christ-sent apostle.

22 Paul was more than all the claims by which his opponents exalted themselves in their assumed positions among the Corinthians (At 22:3; Rm 11:1 Ph 3:4-6). **23,24 Labors:** See 1 Co 15:10. **Stripes:** See At 9:16. **Prisons:** See 6:5; At 16:23ff. **Deaths:** See At 21:31. **25 Beaten:** See At 16:22 (Compare Dt 25:1-3). **Stoned:** See At 14:5,19 (Compare Lv 20; Dt 13,14; Ex 19). **Shipwreck:** We do not know when this shipwreck took place in the ministry of Paul. The incident of At 27:1-44 took place after he wrote this epistle. **26 Perils:** See At 9:23,24; 13:45,50; 14:5,19; 17:5,13; 20:3; 19:23; 1 Th 2:15. **False brethren:** See Gl 2:4. **27 Weariness and hardship:** See 1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:8. **Sleeplessness:** See 6:5; At 20:31. **Hunger and thirst:** See 1 Co 4:11; Ph 4:12. **Fasting:** See At 9:9; 13:2,3; 14:23. **28 Concern for all the churches:** One of the

in the sea, *in perils among false brethren*;
27 in weariness and hardship, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.
28 Beside those external things, that which comes on me daily, my concern for all the churches.
29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led to stumble, and I do not inwardly burn?
30 ¶ If I have to boast, I will boast of the things that concern my weakness.
31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus who is blessed for evermore, knows that I am not lying.
32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to apprehend me.
33 But through a window, I was let down in

a basket by the wall and escaped his hands.

Chapter 12

1 ¶ Indeed, my necessity *to continue* to boast is not profitable. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.
2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body, I do not know; God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven.
3 And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know; God knows –
4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words which it is not lawful for a man to speak.
5 Of such a one I will boast, yet of myself I

major burdens of the evangelist is his concern for the faithfulness of the churches that he has established (2:12,13; 7:12; 12:20; At 20:18; Gl 4:11; 1 Th 3:10). **29** Paul states that he feels empathy and great concern for those who are still weak as new Christians (1 Co 8:9,13; 9:22). If someone stumbles as a result of the puffed up or unloving attitudes of some brethren, then he suffers indignation. **30,31** Paul affirmed that his sufferings only manifested his weakness (12:5,9,10). They manifested his dependence on God to protect him. He was not boasting about things which he had not experienced. God knew his sufferings (See At 9:15). **32,33 In Damascus:** At the very beginning of Paul's ministry, there were plots to kill him (See At 9:19-25). However, God protected him throughout his ministry until he had accomplished his mission.

Chapter 12

1 Not profitable: In the previous discussion, Paul spoke of the hardships of his life during his mission journeys. He did so because of some arrogant false apostles in the midst of the Corinthian church who were boasting concerning their trials. Paul here states that such boasting does not produce spiritual growth. However, his reporting of the nature of his apostleship in the preceding and following contexts does put to silence those who would compare their lives with Paul for the purpose of dismissing his apostleship. **Visions and revelations:** Paul now turns to special visions that were given to him from the Lord (At 16:9; 18:9; 22:17,18; 23:11; 26:13-15; 27:23) and revelations of truth that were to be preached (At 9:3-6; 1 Co 14:6; Gl 1:11,12; 2:2; Ep 3:3-6). **2,3 I know a man:** Paul speaks of himself as another man who had this experience in order to humble himself to God who brought him into the vision. **Fourteen years ago:** The date of this visionary experience would probably have been between A.D. 40-42. **Whether in ... out of the body:** The vision was so real that Paul could not determine if he was actually taken in bodily form unto heaven and into paradise. If he did not know whether

he was in bodily form or in a mental state of exaltation, then certainly we would not know. **To the third heaven:** The Greek word *heos* is here translated "to." The meaning is that he was caught up "even to" the heavenly realm of the dwelling of God. We would be cautious about saying that this is a place or location. God is omnipresent as spirit (Jn 4:24), and thus, He does not dwell here or there as we would. We would have to assume that Paul uses these words in a metaphorical sense because God's realm of dwelling is not as ours, for we are confined to physical bodies. Therefore, whatever "caught up to" would signify we must consider the fact that Paul is discussing a transition from the physical realm of dwelling of man to the spiritual realm of dwelling of God. **Third heaven:** According to the theology of the Jews, the third heaven was the realm in which God dwelt. The Jews had the concept of three heavens. There was the first heaven of the birds and clouds. The second heaven was the place of the sun, moon and stars. The third heaven was the dwelling of God. Paul was thus "caught up" unto, but not into, the third heaven. **4 Into Paradise:** The Greek word for "into" is *eis*. Paul was brought into the realm of Paradise, though he was only "caught up" unto the third heaven. Paradise is the realm of dwelling of the disembodied saints (See Lk 23:43; Rv 2:7). It is the realm of dwelling with the Lord in His presence (5:8; Ph 1:23; see comments Lk 16:19-31). Paul's experience concerning this personal event cannot be questioned, though we do not understand the nature of what he experienced. **Inexpressible words:** He passed from our realm of dwelling, which can be defined by the words of our dictionary, into a realm that cannot be described by the words of our world. Therefore, there was no possible way for Paul to describe what he experienced or saw. God, therefore, told him not to try. He could explain that he experienced something that was beyond this world, but he could not explain what it was. **5 Of such a one:** Since the vision did not happen as a result of Paul's will, nor was he under his own control throughout its occurrence, he could not take any credit for it. He was totally under the control of God throughout the

will not boast, except in my weaknesses.

6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be foolish, for I will say the truth. But *now* I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees *in* me or hears from me.

7 ¶ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I implored the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will

rather boast in my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

11 ¶ I have become foolish in boasting. You have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you, for in nothing am I behind the very eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were worked among you in all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

13 For in what were you inferior to other

entire experience. On the other hand, he had some control over the personal experiences of his life. He had taken the initiative to preach the gospel to the world, and thus, he accepted the credit for what transpired as a result of his preaching. **6 Say the truth:** Paul would not speak of himself in a manner by which he would exaggerate concerning his personal experiences. He would speak exactly what happened. However, he was cautious about this lest he exaggerate concerning his experiences to others. He seeks to relate to the Corinthians, therefore, only those experiences which manifested his weakness. If there were any exaggeration, then his weaknesses would be exaggerated.

7 Thorn in the flesh: We are not told what this physical infirmity was. Numerous possibilities have been presented by commentators. However, the point is not what it was, but the fact that Paul affirms that it persisted in his flesh by the will of God in order that he not exalt himself because of his choices to undergo great hardships in preaching the gospel. The thorn in the flesh kept him humble. Paul considered it a "messenger" (*angelos*) of Satan that would buffet him lest he be exalted beyond what he should. Thus, God allowed Satan to inflict Paul with this thorn in the flesh. Satan was the true source of the infliction, though God allowed such to happen. The world is under the control of God, but God will allow Satan to inflict suffering. In the end, however, the suffering prepares characters of gold who will inhabit heaven (1 Pt 1:6,7). **8 Implored the Lord:** Sometimes our prayers are not answered. Paul made three specific requests that his physical infirmity be relieved, but God did not relieve him (See Dt 3:23; Mt 26:44). After the third prayer he ceased prayers for relief. Such physical infirmities remind us that we live in a physical world, but are looking forward to a realm of dwelling wherein there will be no pain (Rv 21:4). If there were no pain in this world, then we would not desire a heavenly realm of dwelling that is free of pain. **9 My grace is sufficient:** This one statement concerning the grace of God manifests God's sufficiency to deal with all aspects of man. God is able to deliver us from this physical world. God is able to deliver us from the power of sin and death. Therefore, whether in the midst of physical suffering or mourning over our sin, we must trust that God is able to deliver us. Such trust in God's grace will

carry us through times of hardship. Paul learned, therefore, to trust in God's power to deliver. He did not trust in his own ingenuity as did the false apostles in Corinth (11:30). **Boast in my weaknesses:** When Paul spoke of his infirmities, he was actually glorifying the power of God who was able to help him live with his infirmities (1 Pt 4:14). If we boast concerning our accomplishments, then we have the tendency to glory in our own ability to perform. **10 I take pleasure in weaknesses:** The point is not that he sought persecution and hardships. The lesson is that his weaknesses and infirmities glorified the name of Jesus. **I am strong:** Through his hardships his weaknesses were manifested (See Rm 5:3; 8:35). However, when his weaknesses were manifested, the power of Christ was also manifested because it was through the power of Christ that he was delivered (13:4). Therefore, when he was weak through his infirmities, he was made strong through the power of Christ. He was made strong because the infirmities and hardships drove him to trust in God, not himself, for deliverance.

11 Compelled me: The faithful majority in Corinth should have been defending Paul in the face of his opponents in the church. Because they were intimidated to keep silent, Paul had to make his defense through this letter. Therefore, the silence of the majority allowed the minority in Corinth to reign over the church, and thus, move Paul to defend himself through this epistle. Good brethren must take the initiative to defend good brethren who are under attack by those who are politically motivated with selfish ambition. **Eminent apostles:** Reference here would be to the twelve original apostles. Except for possibly Peter, none of the Corinthians had met the original apostles (See 11:5). **12 Signs of an apostle:** These were the miraculous signals of God that would confirm a Christ-sent apostle. Those Christians on whom a Christ-sent apostle's hands had been laid could also work miracles (See Mk 16:17-20; At 8:18; 1 Co 12:9-11; Hb 2:3,4). However, God gave special miraculous authority to the Christ-sent apostles in order that they be proved to be personally sent from Christ. Since the word "signs" is here in the plural, we must assume that there was more than one sign. These signs would include the ability to impart the power to work miracles (At 8:18). They would include the power to deliver one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1

churches, except that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong.

¶ **14** Behold, for this third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden to you, for I do not seek your possessions, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls, though the more abundantly I love you the less I am loved.

16 ¶ But be that *as it may*, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you

by cunning.

17 Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I have sent to you?

18 I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent a brother with *him*. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? *Did we not walk* in the same steps?

19 ¶ Again, do you think that we are defending ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edification.

20 For I fear, that perhaps when I come, I

Co 5:3-5; 1 Tm 1:20), strike blind (At 13:6-12), and possibly strike dead (See At 5:1-11). They would also include raising one from the dead (At 9:36-42; 20:9-12). They would include special miracles (See At 19:11,12). The Corinthians knew the special powers that were manifested among them through the authority of Paul. They could not question his power. The false apostles among them could not do what he could. **13** Since the Corinthian church was established by a Christ-sent apostle, then the members of Corinth were not inferior to any church in the matter of possessing the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. **Not a burden:** Because of the nature of the Corinthian society to support hireling teachers, Paul did not allow the Corinthians to support him while in Corinth. He possibly knew also of the situation that would arise in the Corinthian church. The situation that arose was the presence of hireling false apostles in their midst. Since he did not receive support from them while in their midst, then he had the opportunity to challenge these false apostles to also work with their own hands as he did in order to preach. **This wrong:** The principle of supporting the teacher is both an Old Testament and New Testament principle. It is the responsibility of the ones who sit at the feet of the preacher and teacher to financially support the preacher (See 11:7-9; 1 Co 9:12-14; see comments Gl 6:6). Paul says he wronged the Corinthians by not allowing them this opportunity, for he supported himself in Corinth by making tents (At 18:3). However, he did such because it was expedient. The Corinthian society was corrupt with hireling teachers. Paul knew that the problem of hireling preachers would arise. Since it was his common method of work to support himself when located for a period of time in one location, he did such in Corinth in order to cut off accusations against him. His decision to support himself proved correct in Corinth.

PAUL'S COMING VISIT

14 Third time: The first visit of Paul to Corinth resulted in the establishment of the church (At 18:1). He made a second visit that is not recorded in the book of Acts which he referred to as a "painful visit" (See 2:1; 12:21). On that visit he seems to have disciplined the church with the authority and power of a Christ-sent apostle. He is now coming for a third time. **Not be a burden:** On this trip he will still not take their financial support (See At 20:33; 1 Co 10:24-33). He wanted them and the false apostles in their midst to know that he did not preach for money. On the contrary, he would be

coming as a father who cares for his children (1 Co 4:14; Gl 4:19). **15 Gladly spend and be spent:** Paul willingly gave the totality of his life to the preaching of the gospel and edification of the church (See comments Gl 2:20; see 1:6; Jn 10:11; Rm 9:3; Ph 2:17; Cl 1:24; 1 Th 2:8; 2 Tm 2:10). **Less I am loved:** This was meant to be sarcastic. What Paul is saying is that the more he sacrifices his own life for the edification of the Corinthians, the more their lack of love for him seems to be manifested. The statement was made to shame them. However, this would not be the case with the majority of the church, but with the minority that attacked both his character and work (6:12,13). **16,17 I caught you by cunning:** Some had accused that if Paul did not personally take money from the disciples, he would send others to take money. But this did not happen. **18** When Paul sent Titus to them with the first letter, he did not take support from them (8:6,16-18). Therefore, the answer to the series of questions in these verses is "No." Paul did not personally take support from them, neither did he send others to take it for him. Therefore, because some accused him of preaching for money – which he actually did not – the ungodly hearts of the accusers were discovered. **19 We speak before God in Christ:** Paul was not in this context seeking to justify himself before God. He knew that God knew his heart and work. His life had been given to the preaching of the gospel to the lost and edification of the church (1 Co 10:33). Therefore, he did not need the approval of the Corinthian church nor any other church (5:12). He was assured of his right standing before God, and thus, he was confident in his work (11:31). No man could find fault in his behavior in reference to the establishment of the Corinthian church. He manifested great wisdom in not taking support from them on his initial visit. He manifested great wisdom in not taking support from them as new converts. The fact that he had not taken support from them has given him the powerful argument he here uses in order to rebuke those among them who have evil minds that are quick to charge others with the same evil that is in their own hearts. **20 As you would not wish:** It was Paul's worry that on this third visit he would come to them and find a minority among them who were defiant and unrepentant. He would thus have to discipline them with the "rod" of a Christ-sent apostle (See comments 2:1,4; 13:2,10; 1 Co 4:21; 5:3-5; 1 Tm 1:20). In order to give them the opportunity to correct those who had attitudes that needed discipline, he describes in this verse the character of those who will be disci-

will find you not as I wish, and *that* I will be found by you to be as you would not *wish*; lest *there be* strife, jealousy, wrath, disputes, slanderings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; **21** lest when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I will mourn over many who have already sinned, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness that they have practiced.

Chapter 13

1 ¶ This is the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses will every word be established."

2 I have told you before, and foretold you as if I were present the second time, and being absent now I write to those who have sinned

before, and to all the rest, that if I come again, I will not spare,

3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

4 For though He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we will live with Him by the power of God toward you.

5 ¶ Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test your own selves. Do you not know your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you are disqualified?

6 But I trust that you will know that we are not counterfeits.

plined when he comes. **21 God will humble me:** As a Christ-sent apostle it was not Paul's choice concerning the use of the authority which God had invested within him to discipline sinful brethren in the church. As with the case of two Christians who dropped dead before Peter in At 5:1-6, so in this case God would carry out through the apostle physical discipline of sinning brethren through Paul. The occasion would cause even Paul to mourn (2:1,4). Therefore, Paul writes this letter in order to urge them to repent before his coming (13:2). Those who would suffer would be those who practiced the immorality of uncleanness, fornication and lewdness. When Paul came to Corinth, therefore, it would be the brethren who practiced these and similar sins who would suffer the judgment of a Christ-sent apostle. The occasion would not be a time of rejoicing, but one of mourning because of those who would not repent.

Chapter 13

EXAMINE YOURSELVES

1 Third time: There is no record of the second visit of Paul to Corinth (12:14). He established the church during the visit of At 18. The only other possible time he could have visited the church was during his two-year stay in Ephesus on the third missionary journey on which he now was when writing this letter and the 1 Corinthian letter (At 19:8-10). **Two or three witnesses:** Paul was on his way to correct any remaining problems that persisted in reference to the false apostles (12:20). When judgments were made in the Old Testament, two or three witnesses confirmed the judgments (Nm 35:30; Dt 17:6; 19:15; Mt 18:16; Jn 8:17; Hb 10:28). This practice was continued in reference to judgments in the church. **2 I will not spare:** Paul was finished with writing letters of warning. Now it was time to exercise the authority of a Christ-sent apostle upon those who would not repent (1:23; 10:11). The spiritual safety of the many outweighed the few defiant individuals among them who would not submit to the authority of God (See 10:2; 12:20,21). **3 Seek a proof:** The proof that Paul was a Christ-sent apostle was about to be made known again

in the church in Corinth. However, this time it would not be the result of miraculous confirmation to the unbelievers (12:12). It would be miraculous confirmation to the believers as a result of Paul's delivering some brethren unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Tm 1:20).

4 He lives by the power of God: Jesus submitted in His humanity to the will of man to crucify Him (See At 2:22-24; Ph 2:6-8; 1 Pt 3:18). However, Jesus was raised to have authority and power over all things (Rm 1:4; 6:4; 1 Co 6:14; Ep 1:20-22; Ph 2:5-11). Paul uses the example of Jesus' power after the resurrection as King of kings and Lord of lords to exemplify the power that He has invested in the apostles. **Live with Him by the power of God:** This statement surely sent emotional tremors through the minds of some in Corinth who understood the authority of a Christ-sent apostle over the realm of the supernatural. Though Paul's humanity, and thus weakness, was manifested through the persecutions he endured (10:3,4; 11:30), his power would be manifested by God's working through him to discipline the defiant false apostles of the Corinthian church (1 Tm 1:20). **5 Examine yourselves:** Since Paul was coming to Corinth for the purpose of judgment, before he came he exhorted each member to examine themselves in reference to what he has already written. They must determine for themselves if they are the servants of Christ, or the representatives of Satan in the midst of the church. **That Jesus Christ is in you:** This is a question. Each disciple must determine if Jesus rules in his heart (Rm 8:10; Gl 2:20; 4:19; Cl 1:27; 2:7). His point here is that Jesus would reign in their hearts insofar as they submitted to Paul's instructions through the inspired writings of his epistles. Paul has written to them the Spirit-inspired standard by which they must examine their lives. He is coming to determine if they measure up to the standard. If they do not, then they will be found to be counterfeit Christians (See 1 Co 9:27). **6** His actions in judgment in the coming visit will prove that he is qualified as an apostle. They will witness the proof of his apostleship by the discipline that will be carried out.

7 Do what is honest: Paul exhorted them to re-

7 ¶ Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honest, even though we may appear as counterfeits.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this we also pray, that you may be made complete.

10 Therefore, I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness according to the authority that the Lord

has given me for edification and not to destruction.

11 ¶ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be made complete. Be of good comfort. Be of one mind. Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13 All the saints salute you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, *be* with you all.

pent in order that they not have to witness the proof of his apostleship by his exercising of his disciplinary authority among them. He is willing to forego the proof of his apostleship in the area of church discipline if they would repent before he comes. They must do what is right, therefore, because such is what God desires. He was willing to appear disqualified as a Christ-sent apostle if they would only repent so he would not have to prove his apostleship by the exercising of disciplinary power. **8** Since the authority to exercise the power of God originated from God, all that the apostles did in exercising their authority was for the preaching and defending of the truth of the gospel. **9** Paul and the apostles were willing to be perceived to be weak for the sake of the church (1 Co 4:10). As long as the churches remained spiritually strong, and thus disfellowshipped those who would destroy the church, then the apostles would not have to exercise their God-ordained authority of disciplinary power. Therefore, Paul chose to appear weak while the Corinthians maintained their spiritual strength. **10** Paul's purpose for writing is here defined. He wrote in order to produce repentance among those who were false apostles, and thus were leading the Corinthians away from the authority of Christ by the denying of the authority of the Christ-sent apostles (12:20; 1 Co 4:21).

Sharpness: This does not refer to a stern sermon. Reference is to the authority to deliver one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Tm 1:20). **The Lord has given me for edification:** The purpose for the disciplinary authority of the Christ-sent apostles was not for destruction, but for the establishment of the church in the beginning generations of the first century. Through our understanding of how God dealt with the early church through the apostles, the church today understands the seriousness by which God considers matters of sin. As God dealt directly with the punishment of sin in the beginning of the nation of Israel when the Israelites came out of Egyptian captivity, so He dealt immediately with sin in the early church. Therefore, since God does not deal with the church today in handing out immediate judgment, we must not be deceived into believing that He will not eventually hand down judgment upon those brethren who sin (See Jn 5:28,29).

FINAL EXHORTATIONS

11 Comfort ... one mind: See Rm 12:16-18; 1 Co 1:10. When Christians live as one mind in peace with one another, they comfort one another. If there is turmoil among disciples, there will be no comfort with one

another. It is for this reason that all things must be done in love (Cl 3:14,15). **Live in peace:** See Rm 15:33; Ep 6:23; Cl 3:12-17. The peace of God would continue with them as long as they determined to live at peace among themselves (Mt 5:9). Christians must not only live in peace with one another, they must work for peace. Peace comes when everyone is working together to preserve peace among members. Blessed are those brethren who work for peace among brethren (Mt 5:9). Every Christian must make every effort to work for peace in the church. **12 Holy kiss:** This affectionate greeting manifested the close fellowship that was maintained among the disciples of the early church (See At 20:37; Rm 16:16; 1 Co 16:20; 1 Th 5:26; 1 Pt 5:14). Though Paul makes this an imperative, he is not binding a common custom of the first century on the church. He is binding that which is signified by the custom. That which was signified was that brethren receive one another. They must receive one another regardless of their differences of opinion (See comments Rm 14). **13,14 Lord Jesus ... God ... Holy Spirit:** The Godhead is manifested through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Though God is one, there have been three manifestations of God throughout history in order to carry out the eternal plan of God to save man. Jesus manifested grace toward man through His sacrifice on the cross (Ti 2:11). The Father manifested love to man through the giving of His only begotten Son (Jn 3:16). The Holy Spirit has manifested fellowship through the inspiration of holy writers to inscribe Holy Scripture upon which fellowship could be maintained (1 Jn 1:3). Because God has manifested Himself in three areas of work in order to bring about the eternal redemption of man, we must not be confused by that which we do not understand. It is not impossible for us to understand how God can manifest Himself as three, and yet, be one God. There is no earthly illustration to picture fully the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one God. We accept His oneness simply because God says that there is one God. God could have manifested Himself through many manifestations. However, He chose only three in order to carry out the scheme of redemption, and to nurture His children until the end of all things on earth. We must, therefore, be careful about using human terminology and experiences to define God. God is beyond the definition of the words of our dictionary. He is beyond the full comprehension of man. If He were not, then He would be no greater than our imagination. If He were no greater than our thinking, then He would be a god we have created.