

# 1 Corinthians

**1:4.** “because of” (*epi* with the dative; see Lenski).

“**in Christ Jesus.**” This is the static “in,” and refers to a connection, a union, with Christ (See note on Rom. 6:3; Eph. 1:3). It is due to our union with Christ that we have been given grace, not because of our own merits. This verse might well be translated, “through your union with Christ Jesus.” Lenski writes: “All the divine gifts of grace which enrich the Corinthians and all the grace itself from which they flow are connected from beginning to end with ‘Christ Jesus.’”

**1:5.** “through *union with him.*” The Greeks simply says, “in him,” but it is referring to our connection with, our union with, Christ. (See note on Rom. 6:3; Eph. 1:3). The New Testament by Williams reads, “through union with him.” Some versions simply take the Greek word *en* (“in”) as an instrumental dative, and read, “by him,” but

**1:6.** This verse is a parenthesis, the figure of speech *Epitrechon*, a sentence incomplete in itself but thrown in for explanation. (cp. Bullinger, *Figures*; cp. Lightfoot, *Notes*).

“**The testimony about the Christ.**” This is an objective genitive (cp. Robertson, *Word Pictures*; Lightfoot, *Notes*). In this sense it means the testimony concerning (or “about” ESV) Jesus. The Corinthians learned about Christ from Paul, and now that testimony is confirmed in them as they are enriched by God.

**1:7.** “trailing behind the others.” (cp. Wuest, *Expanded Translation*). The Greek means that the Corinthian church was enriched so that they did not have less measure than others, be “left behind” (Thayer). Christ will enrich all Christians, if they will let him.

**1:8.** “that you may be blameless.” Cp. Lightfoot, *Notes*.

**1:10.** “made complete.” The thought is more than just “united,” as many translations have. There is a completeness (more literally, a perfection) in thinking the same thing. (Cp. NASB, Thayer; Lenski).

**1:19.** Quoted from Isaiah 29:14.

**1:23.** “deathtrap.” The Greek is *skandalon*, the trigger stick of a snare or trap. Christ is more than a stumbling-block, as if someone could trip and move along. He is the trap-trigger, a deathtrap to those who refuse to believe. (Cp. Lenski).

**1:26.** The figure of speech ellipsis is used powerfully here. Ellipsis emphasizes what is in the text, while de-emphasizing what has to be supplied (in italics). “Not many” of those who would be valued by the world are called, but God, by those He calls and works with, puts the world to shame.

**1:27.** “put to shame.” See note on Rom. 9:33.

**1:28.** “treat...with contempt.” From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

**1:31.** Quoted from Jer. 9:24.

**2:1.** We believe that “secret,” not “testimony” is the correct reading. The reading *musterion* (#3466 μυστήριον) seems better supported textually than *marturion* (#3142 μαρτύριον) (see Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*), and it has good contextual support. The next ten verses are about the Administration of the Secret.

**2:2.** “to know.” This is the figure of speech Heterosis (Intransitive for the Transitive; see Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). Paul decided not to “know anything among them,” actually, “make known [preach] anything among them” except Christ.

**2:9.** Quoted from Isaiah 64:4.

**2:11.** The word “things” is missing for both men and God, only the definite article “the” being in the Greek text (this is the figure *ellipsis*). The context shows that it refers to all the deep things: thoughts, motives, etc. We could say “heart,” but that would be too restrictive.

**2:16.** Quoted from Isaiah 40:13.

**3:5.** “ministers through whom you believed.” There was a problem in Corinth with the believers being divided over following certain leaders in the one Body (1:11-12). This verse, 3:5, explains the shift from including Peter in the list of 1:12 and 3:22, to only mentioning Paul and Apollos here in 3:3-11. It seems Peter did not actually go to Corinth to plant or water, only Paul and Apollos did. This is why they were the “ministers through whom you [Corinthians] believed.” Paul planted by starting the church and Apollos watered by ministering to them, and “he who plants and he who waters are one... God's fellow workers. You [Corinthians] are God's field, God's building” (3:6, 9). Peter is left out of these verses because the point of 3:3-11 is how the Corinthians should think of the ministers that *particularly* served them in the body of Christ. Hence he says, “Now these things, brothers, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes” (1 Cor. 4:6). Peter did not go Corinth so it makes sense that he would not be a part of this section. However, after dealing with this subtopic Paul gets back to the broader point of wrong-thinking about ministers generally (not just those who directly plant and water your church), concluding with, “So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas (3:21-22).

**3:13.** “Day.” The Day of Judgment. Every builder has a “day of judgment.” For those who are hired to build a house, for example, the day of Judgment is when the owner shows up to look at the finished product. At that time, the quality of the work will be evident, and the builder will be rewarded or will suffer loss (by having to redo the work, or not get the money he was expecting). God gives us our lifetime to build for Him. On the Day of Judgment, our work will be evident. If we have not built well upon the foundation of Christ, our work will be burned and we will enter the kingdom saved, but with no rewards.

**3:16.** “sanctuary.” The Greek word is *naos* (#3485 ναός), which means the inner sanctuary, and then, occasionally, by association, the temple building that houses the inner sanctuary. Then, by metonymy, the Greek word *naos* is used of the Body of Christ (Bullinger, Vine). In contrast, the Greek word *hieron* (#2411 ἱερόν) means the temple building along with its porches, outer courts, and all associated out buildings. Interestingly, the *hieron* is never used figuratively in the Bible, it is always literal. For more information, see the note on Ephesians 2:21.

**3:17.** “sanctuary.” See note on 3:16 above.

**3:18.** “deceive.” The word is *exapatao* (#1818 ἐξαπατάω), “thoroughly deceive” (See entry on 1 Tim. 2:14). We have translated the word simply “deceive” in order to avoid possible confusion. For one could read the verse to mean, “Let no one *thoroughly* deceive himself,” as though a little self-delusion was acceptable, but no one should be *thoroughly* self-deluded.

**3:19.** Quoted from Job 5:13.

**3:20.** Quoted from Ps. 94:11.

**4:1.** “Stewards.” The Greek is *oikonomos* (#3623 οἰκονόμος), and means, “The manager of a household or of household affairs; especially a steward, manager, superintendent

(whether free-born, or, as was usually the case, a freed-man or slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has entrusted the management of his affairs” (Thayer). In our case, we are *oikonomoi*, stewards or “house managers,” entrusted by Jesus Christ with the affairs of the *oikonomia*, the “Administration” of the Sacred Secret.

**4:3.** “man’s day” versus The Lord’s Day, when the judgment will be right, just, and final.

**4:4.** “Not a statement of fact, but an hypothesis to show the unreliability of mere complacent self-satisfaction. Note the use of *sunoida* (second perfect active indicative with dative (disadvantage) of the reflexive pronoun) for guilty knowledge against oneself (cf. Acts 5:2; 12:12; 14:6)... Failure to be conscious of one's own sins does not mean that one is innocent.” (Robertson, *Word Pictures*).

**4:6.** “puffed up” = the literal meaning of *phusioo* (#5448 φυσιόω), which is “a later substitute for φυσάω; it is largely limited to Christian literature... lit. ‘blow up, inflate’ from φῦσα” [*phusa*] (orig. ‘pair of bellows’, then var. ‘wind, blast’, etc.). Thus, figuratively, to cause to have an exaggerated self-conception, puff up, make proud. The Passive in an active sense, become puffed up or conceited, put on airs.” [BDAG]. Be arrogant. Six out of its seven usages in the NT are in 1 Corinthians. After saying that some are puffed up (4:18; 5:2), Paul notes that love is “not puffed up” (13:4).

**4:15.** This verse would have had more impact in ancient Corinth than it does today. The children of the wealthy were escorted to school by a “pedagogue,” a person who oversaw their safety, which is why some translations have “guardian” here, while we have “guide” (because eventually the pedagogue did more than just escort and protect, they did some guiding of the child). However, a child from a wealthy family would have many pedagogues, but still, only one father in the family. Paul is making that point, that any Christian will have many guides in their life, but he was their spiritual father, he founded the church at Corinth.

**5:5.** “to deliver such a one to the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” To deliver to the Adversary means to put out of the Church (see note, 1 Tim. 1:20). “Flesh” is the Figure of speech metonymy for “the desires of the flesh.” The person is excommunicated from the Church and put out into the world, where he is unloved, and (hopefully) his fleshly desires will come to an end (be destroyed) as he comes to realize the value of Christian fellowship. Thus his “spirit” (his attitude toward God and thus his rewards), “may” (the subjunctive expresses the possibility) be saved at the Return. The word “saved” is in the subjunctive mood, expressing the possibility that putting someone out of the church “may” bring him to repentance, but there are people who leave the Church and never repent, but become very worldly. God, however, opts for the greater possibility and expresses His desire for the person. Instead of kicking him out and saying he “may” stay worldly, He says that he “may” yet regain his attitude and rewards.

**“ruin.”** The Greek word translated “ruin” is *olethros* (#3639 ὄλεθρος), which occurs four times in the New Testament (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9; and 1 Tim. 6:9). The word means *desolation* or *destruction*, though literal annihilation is not always intended. The English word *ruin* is a good translation, especially because it reserves the translation *destruction* for the stronger word *apoleia* (#684 ἀπόλεια), which denotes a more irrevocable and harsh destruction than *olethros*.

**5:9.** “Associate” in the more formal sense of the word, to be in association, close company, with, or to mix together.

**“Sexually immoral men.”** The noun is masculine, and men are indicated by the context.

**6:4.** “have no standing.” From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20. This word is usually translated elsewhere as “treat with contempt.”

**6:7.** See Lenski on “loss.”

**6:9.** “unrighteous.” This verse, and verse 10, probably refers to people who are not saved (and are acting out their unrighteousness by flagrant sin). This is why verse 11 says that “some” of “you” were like the unrighteous people in this list. We know from reading both First and Second Corinthians that the church in Corinth still had lots of sinners. But the Corinthians were washed, sanctified, and justified, in other words, saved. The unrighteous people referred to here, who act out their unrighteousness with evil works are not saved. Someone might ask, “If this section is to the unrighteous (unsaved) why does it bother to list the sins, since no unsaved person will “inherit the kingdom” (be saved) anyway.” Actually, in some cases an “unrighteous” person, someone who is not born again, will be granted everlasting life at the Second Resurrection. At that resurrection, people will be judged by their works, but they will not be saved if their works are flagrantly unrighteous.

It is possible, but less likely, that the verses in this section are referring to Christians who are participating in flagrant sin. In this case, the word “inherit” refers to rewards, not salvation. The Christian’s salvation is secure, and that is stated clearly and in many different ways (See Appendix C, “The Permanence of Christian Salvation” in *The Christian’s Hope*; and Appendix A, “The Administration of the Sacred Secret” in *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*). In spite of the fact that our salvation is secure, our rewards are not. It is possible for a Christian to enter Paradise “naked” (1 Cor. 3:12-15) and ashamed (1 John 2:28; Mark 8:38). The Christian who practices flagrant sin has everlasting life, but will have no “inheritance” on the New Earth in the Millennial Kingdom. We must remember that the word “inherit” can refer either to everlasting life (cp. 1 Cor. 15:50) or to the inheritance as a reward in Paradise (Col. 3:24). The context will reveal which of the two meanings applies. There will be Christians who will enter into Paradise but not “inherit” it—they will have no reward. This will be terrible for those who experience it—and is a major reason why “the hope” is called the anchor of our souls (Heb. 6:19). This list of ungodly behaviors is not exhaustive but representative (cp. Lenski). Nevertheless, it is complete enough that Christians are to clearly understand that a Christian cannot live in opposition to God’s will and expect His blessings.

**“sexually immoral.”** The Greek is  *pornos* (#4205 πῶρνος), which is a masculine noun and technically refers to a man who is sexually immoral or a male prostitute. However, the masculine form was used in a broad sense that included sexually immoral women. A female prostitute or a sexually immoral woman was a *pornē* (#4204 πῶρνη), but whereas the masculine form was used to include women, the feminine form was not generally used to include men. In early Greek,  *pornos* and *pornē* referred much more specifically to prostitutes and prostitution. Greek (and Roman) morals were much looser than Christian morals, and so, for example, in both Greece and Rome slaves were the sexual property of whoever owned them, and a slave owner having sex with a slave was not only overlooked, it was pretty much expected. By the time of Christ, and especially in the Christian world, the words, and the neuter noun *porneia*, were not just used of prostitution but of sexual immorality in general.

**“idolators.”** The Greek is *eidololatrēs* (#1496 εἰδωλολατρῆς) and it means “image worshipper” or “idolater.” The primary meaning is a Christian who worships images. However, over time it was broadened to include other things that were considered idols. The first of the Ten Commandments is to not have any other gods beside the one true God. Anyone who gets “spiritual power,” “spiritual advice,” or “just worships” another god or thing is an idolater. Christians need to be very careful who they pray to for help and what they look to for spiritual help such as “lucky charms.” God is offended by them. Also, something that is usually overlooked in modern idolatry, is that ancient idolatry often had some kind of sexual immorality as part of the worship.

**“adultery.”** The Greek word is *moichos* (#3432 μοιχός), and it refers to someone who is married but having sexual intercourse with someone other than his or her spouse. In the Old Testament, and in both the secular Greek and Roman world, the definition of adultery was different. In the Old Testament, “adultery” properly referred to a married or betrothed woman having sexual intercourse with someone other than her husband. The Greek, Roman, and Hebrew concept of adultery was substantially the same, the infidelity of the husband did not constitute adultery. The New Testament specifically commands that each man and woman is to have his or her “own” spouse, and thus the New Testament definition of adultery is narrower than the Old Testament definition, including any married person having intercourse with someone other than his or her spouse. The world and its evil forces want to discount the evil in adultery, so it is called “an affair,” “cheating” or “indiscretion,” as if it were no big deal. But it is a big deal, and God has always firmly commanded that people do not commit adultery. Verses forbidding it are in the Old Testament (Ex. 20:14, *etc.*), the Gospels (Mark 10:19, *etc.*), and in the Church Epistles (Rom. 13:9, *etc.*).

**“passive homosexual partners.”** The Greek is *malakos* (#3120 μαλακός), and it literally means “soft” or “soft to the touch.” Although it had other uses such as “soft clothing,” it was the standard word in the Greek language for the “passive” one in the homosexual relation. In the Greco-Roman world, the “passive” partner was often a youth, and so, for example, the New American Bible says “boy prostitutes,” but *malakos* is general enough to refer to the passive person in the relationship. The masculine form of the Greek is used, but as it is used in this context it would also refer to the passive partner in a lesbian relationship.

**“homosexuals.”** The Greek is *arsenokoitēs* (#733 ἀρσενικοῖτης), which is from from *arsen*, “male,” and *koite*, bed, and describes a man who “beds” another man, *i.e.*, a homosexual. Although *arsenokoitēs* is sometimes used in a wide sense referring to all homosexuality, it also had a narrower sense, referring to the one who took the dominant or “male” role in the homosexual relation. Because 1 Corinthians 6:9 also specifically refers to the *malakos*, the use of *arsenokoitēs* in this verse refers to the dominant homosexual.

**6:16.** Quoted from Gen 2:24.

**6:19.** “of the holy spirit.” Genitive of content. Our bodies are sanctuaries that *contain* the holy spirit.

**“the holy spirit.”** The Greek puts “in you” between “the” and “holy spirit” making the article hard to recognize for beginning students, nevertheless, *pneuma hagion* (holy spirit) refers to the gift. This is clear because it is “in you,” and God is not “in us,”

and we have this holy spirit “from God.” God gives His gift of holy spirit, which is sealed “in” believers (Eph. 1:14).

“**from God**” is the genitive of origin, sometimes translated “of God.”

**7:1.** “Touch” is euphemistic in the Greek language for touch in a sexual way, especially sexual intercourse (the Hebrew language has the same idiom, cp. Ruth 2:9). This verse is referring to the sexual intercourse in marriage, since sexual intercourse outside of marriage is sin (and it would be superfluous for God to say that sinful sex is not “good”). The NIV picks up the sense of the verse when it reads, “...it is good for a man not to marry.” The question remains, then, as to why God did not simply state that people should not marry, why did He use the idiom? It is because the word “touch,” although used euphemistically, still has literal overtones. Just as most men are stimulated by sight (hence the huge market for women’s lingerie), women can be stimulated by being touched, being held. It is not good for men to touch women and get them emotionally distracted if the man has no intention of marriage.

“**woman.**” The word woman is in the genitive case, because it is a Greek idiom that words following touch are in the genitive (Lenski; Robertson, *Word Pictures*.)

**7:2.** “so much sexual immorality.” The Greek simply reads “immoralities” in the plural, but this is a plural of emphasis (Bullinger calls this “Heterosis of number,” (Bullinger, *Figures*). There was so much sexual immorality in Corinth (and in the world in general, which is still true today) that in order keep from being sexually distracted, each person should have his or her “own” spouse. Relief from sexual pressure is not the only reason for marriage, but it is an important one, others include companionship and children. This verse sets the standard for the New Testament, that God has moved away from the polygamy that was allowed in the Old Testament.

“**let each woman have her own husband.**” We translate this verse as “let each woman have” due to the fact that the verb “have” *echō* (#2192 ἔχω; “to have”) is in the present tense, active voice, imperative mood. The imperative mood is the mood of command, and here is an exhortation. The verse is not saying “Every man must have his own wife and every woman must have her own husband” in the sense that every person must be married. The context of this chapter makes it clear that is not the meaning. The point of the imperative exhortation is that there is so much sexual immorality in the culture that, if a person needs sexual release, the man must have his OWN wife, and the woman her OWN husband.

If this verse had just said, “Let every man have his own wife,” it would not have particularly caught anyone’s attention in the culture of the day. Although some of the Jewish men and other men of Middle Eastern descent in Paul’s audience had more than one wife, most did not, and having more than one wife was not a part of the Greco-Roman culture. However, the unspoken cultural norm for Paul’s audience was that men were free to have sex with many women besides their wives, while for a wife to have sexual intercourse with another man was “adultery.” For example, any household slave was the sexual property of the man of the house, and it was accepted that men had sex with their slaves. Also, for a man to have sexual intercourse with a prostitute was also accepted behavior. Furthermore, if a man was traveling and stopped at an inn, the proprietor would provide a slave woman (or a man for those with homosexual desires) for a fee. In fact, it was part of many Roman dinner parties that the host would provide

prostitutes after the meal (Instone Brewer; *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church*, p.177).

This verse changed what was accepted and godly behavior: Paul writes that God's command is that the woman had her OWN husband. Thus, the godly man was not free to have sexual intercourse with others besides his wife. The effects of this verse were very far reaching. First, it elevated the woman's position in the family and culture. It is a common Christian myth that Paul was somehow against women. Of course, given the way his writings have been mistranslated and misinterpreted, it is certainly could seem Paul was against women. However, when we properly translate this verse and others like it, we can see that the New Testament was a Magna Carta for women, giving them rights and privileges they had never had before. That a woman would have the sexual attention of her own husband and not share him with slaves and strangers was a huge advance for women (For other verses in the NT that elevate women's position in the culture, see commentary on 1 Cor. 14:34, 35; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; 3:2; 5:14; and 1 Pet. 3:7).

Another thing this verse did was it protected woman from the selfishness of men. Any man who professes to be a Christian must keep his hands off other women, even if in the culture in which he lived, he had a legal right to use them sexually, such as with the case of his slaves. A slave in the house of a committed Christian would be secure in the knowledge that the master of the house would make sure she would not be used by the men of the house or be passed around at one of his dinner parties.

Another effect this verse had was it separated Christian men from their non-Christian friends. The average man in the Greco-Roman culture would have thought it strange indeed not to fulfill one's desires by having legal sex with one's slaves and prostitutes, and thus this command in 1 Cor. 7:2 caused a division, and some suspicion, between the Christian men and the non-Christian Romans around them. Thus obeying this command of God was hard on many men, who had to choose between their culture and their God. Thankfully, eventually when the Roman world became Christian after the time of Constantine, this verse would define not only Christian behavior, but what was acceptable behavior for "good people."

There was one thing this verse did that we today would not expect: it placed women in a dilemma when it came to sex with their husbands. At the time of Paul, the average lifespan of a woman was in the low 30's, around age 32. This was in large part to the fact that between 5 and 10 percent of the women died in childbirth (some died as a result of an attempted abortion, trying to avoid the risk of childbirth). This fact was not lost on many women of the time, and thus many of them preferred their husbands to have sex with their slaves or a prostitute rather than risk their lives in childbirth.

Thus this verse, which is the very foundation of the Christian family, that "family" would be built upon a man and a woman in an exclusive relationship, also caused great difficulties for both the men and the women. The Christian life is simple, but rarely easy.

**7:3.** "obligation." If you marry, you are obligated to provide sexual intercourse to your spouse. The Greek word we translated "obligation" is *opheile* (#3784 ὀφείλη) and means, "that which one ought to do, *duty*" and also "that which one owes in a financial sense, *obligation*; as *debt*" (BDAG).

**7:4.** Both the husband and the wife have authority of their bodies before they get married. However, when one enters into a marriage covenant, he or she agrees to no longer have authority over his or her own body, but to give that authority over to the husband or wife.

**7:5.** “mutual consent.” The Greek word *sumphonos*, (#4859 σύμφωνος, which moved from Greek to Latin to our English word “symphony”) from the time of Homer, Plato, Aristotle, down, means *harmonious, accordant, agreeing*; by mutual consent, by agreement (Thayer). If the husband and wife are going to abstain from sexual intercourse, it must be only for a season, and they must be in harmony about the decision.

“that you may have leisure for prayer” This is literally the way the Greek reads (and also Lenski’s translation). It could also be translated “that you may give yourself to prayer” because the reason for the leisure was so that time could be given to prayer. “That you may devote yourself to” as in some versions, seems a little strong for the Greek. One needs to ask why God would word the verse this way. Why “leisure” for prayer? The answer is in the greater context of the chapter. The person who marries will have trouble in the flesh (v. 28) and has to be concerned for his or her spouse and marriage (vss. 32-35). In that context, if the couple can be apart for awhile, they have “leisure” to pray and focus on the things of God.

**“because of your lack of self control.”** This does not flatter our human nature, but it is an honest assessment of the situation. Most people do not have much self-control when it comes to sexual continence.

**7:6.** “I say this...” The word “this” is *touto*, which starts the verse in the Greek, and regularly refers to what has just been stated. Paul had stated that the husband and wife did not have authority over their bodies, their spouses did. However, then he said that they could “deprive” each other for prayer if it was by consent. However, this was not a command. The couple did not have to spend time apart. He does not command time apart, even for prayer. He allows it as a consent if the couple feels it is best.

**7:7.** “even as myself.” The Apostle Paul, though once married, was now single. What happened to his wife is a matter of speculation. The average life span of a woman in the Roman empire at that time was 32, many women died in childbirth or from myriads of other causes. It is also possible, but less likely, that his wife was from a powerful Jewish family and left him when he became a Christian.

**“gift.”** Here “gift” refers to the ability to live without sexual pressure being a hinderance to godliness. Some people feel the need for sex and companionship more acutely than others. If a person feels no need to get married, then this chapter is giving guidance that if he stays unmarried he will be able to serve the Lord without distraction.

**7:8.** “unmarried.” The term “unmarried” can be a general term, and here probably refers to the unmarried men. The Greek culture had a specific word for widows, but not a word for the male side, “widowers.” If “unmarried” was used to include unmarried women, then the more specific term “widows” would be added because the pressure to remarry would be especially strong for widows, who had a very hard time on their own in most ancient societies, and the Greco-Roman society being no exception.

**7:9.** “are not exercising.” The present indicative tense of the verb means that the action is happening at the time. The other use of this word (1 Cor. 9:25) is also in the present indicative tense and refers to athletes who are exercising self control in their athletic training. The people this verse refers to are not exercising self-control sexually—they are stepping over the morality line. This is not referring to people who strongly desire to have

sexual intimacy and are having a hard time waiting, it is referring to people who are not waiting, they are acting upon their sexual desires. These people should get married so they stop sinning. It seems foolish to us today to say that just because you cannot seem to control your sexual urges toward someone you should then marry that person, but that is the biblical mandate.

**“burn *with desire*.”** The Greek word means “burn” and can refer to burning with sexual desire (Thayer), but since burning with passion is derived from the context and not the word itself, we felt it better to put “with desire” in italics. Not putting it in, as in the NASB, has caused some to teach that if you sin sexually you will “go to hell” and burn. This is written to the Christian Church, whose salvation is assured, so that is not the meaning.

**7:10.** “command.” From the Greek *paraggello* (#3853 παραγγέλλω). Technically, to bring an order from one to another, thus some translate as announce, but the origin was an order, so command is best here and many other places.

“depart” From *chorizo* (#5563 χωρίζω). From Herodotus down *chorizo* means: *to separate, divide, part, put asunder* (Thayer). It has been used for, and can mean, divorce. However, in the Gospels the word “divorce” (sometimes translated “put away”) is properly *apoluo* (#630 ἀπολύω *apoluo*). It seems that if only divorce was being referred to, that is the word that would be used here. By using the word “*chorizo*,” the Lord places emphasis on the fact that the wife is not to separate from her husband, which would include divorce. However, as many marriage counselors will testify, many woman who are married are “separated” from their husbands in all but local proximity. As Christians, our marriages are to reflect Christ and the Church, and there is to be no separation between the people.

**7:14.** “brother.” The context makes it clear that this “brother” is the Christian brother of the woman, i.e., her husband.

**7:21.** “Do not be concerned about it.” A Greek idiomatic phrase (Lenski). A Christian slave would worry that his circumstances would keep him or her from serving much, or as he or she would want to. The Lord says he understands the circumstances and “not to worry.” This is a word of comfort to all of us. Mom’s may feel that all the responsibilities of family may keep them from the Lord, Dad’s may feel that work limits their ability to serve. The Lord knows that we must take care of obligations on earth.

“rather do *that*.” Some commentators and translators (Cp. NRSV) believe that having said that each one should remain in the calling in which they were called in verse twenty, a slave should remain a slave even if offered freedom. Yet the chapter has several examples of people changing from unmarried to married, bound to loosed, etc. Should not a slave be able to change also? Certainly. The point of verse 20 is that we should not labor at change for change sake, because the Lord can work with us in the situation we are in. However, if the opportunity to better oneself arises, then avail yourself of that (Cp. Lenski.).

**7:26** “Deem” to have an opinion. Similar to consider, but with more emphasis on judgment than reflection.

**8:2.** Lenski has a wonderful explanation of this verse. If a man has come to know about idols and meat offered to idols, yet if he stopped with just that knowledge, and never put the total picture together as it relates to living in the love of God towards the brothers, then he really does not know as he ought.

**8:4.** “We *all* understand,” there is agreement between Paul and the Church at Corinth on the subject of idols. “No idol in the world really exists.” The Corinthians were surrounded by idols, images of Zeus (Jupiter), Artemas (Diana), Hermes (Mercury), Aphrodite (Venus), etc. The primary definition of “idol” (#1497 εἶδωλον *eidolon*) in Greek writing from Homer forward is *an image, likeness*. 1. *The image of a heathen god*: Acts 7:41; 1 Cor. 12:2; Rev. 9:20 (Thayer). Thus, in reality there are no such gods as “Jupiter,” etc. Paul will later tell the Church that the realities are demons (10:20). The two phrases marked off in quotes follows the context and follows the style of the RSV, the NRSV, and the ESV. These were things that everyone knew, and apparently someone had said.

**8:5.** “So-called gods” as with Lenski, NRSV, NIV, ESV. Paul grants the “what if” to satisfy in doubters, but then stakes his claim that to us there is only one (true) God and one (true) lord. In the Greco-Roman religion, there were gods in heaven, such as the Olympian gods, and gods on earth, such as the forest dwelling gods, etc. Also, the word “lord” refers to human dignities as well. For example, Nero was called lord both in the Roman writings and in the Bible (Acts 25:26). See Deissmann, *Light*, p.353-355.

**8:8.** “bring us close to God.” From the Greek word *paristemi* (#3936 παρίστημι) See BDAG. Definition “e,” and cp. NIV, NRSV.

**“left behind.”** The Greek word means to fall behind, be inferior, to be left behind in a race (Thayer).

**“overflow of credit.”** The word is *perisseuō* (#4052 περισσεύω). Intransitive and properly, *to exceed a fixed number or measure; to be over and above a certain number or measure, ...to exist or be at hand in abundance...to abound, overflow* (Thayer), to be an excess of credit (Robertson, *Word Pictures*). This verse would have been hard hitting to the Corinthians, where wealth, luxury, and sports combined, and some men fell behind, while others had an excess or overflow. In the case of food, not eating does not cause us to be left behind with God, nor does eating give us an overflowing abundance of credit.

**9:9.** Quoted from Deut. 25:4.

**9:26.** “aimlessly.” The Greek is *adēlos* (#84 ἀδήλωος; pronounced “ä-day-los”), meaning, aimless, or without aim, i.e. not as one who has no fixed goal (BDAG). It refers to being without a special goal or purpose, to doing something without specific intention, to be “aimless.” It can be understood simply as “without having some goal” or “without some reason” or “without trying to accomplish something.”

**9:27.** The Greek word *hupopiazō* (#5299 ὑποπιάζω), like almost every word, has several meanings. BDAG Lexicon lists three primary meanings: 1) To blacken an eye; give a black eye, strike in the face. 2) To bring someone to submission by constant annoyance, wear down. A more appropriate rendering for a figurative sense would be browbeat. Blacken my face = slander, besmirch. 3) To put under strict discipline, punish, treat roughly, torment (1 Cor. 9:27 of the apostle’s self-imposed discipline. But the expression is obviously taken from the language of prize-fighting in vs. 26.

Of these three, number 3 is the most preferable given the context of 1 Corinthians 9:27 and what in fact we are to do to control our bodies.

**“disqualified.”** An adjective in Greek, thus we added the object in italics: “*for the prize.*”

**10:7.** Quoted from Exod. 32:6.

**10:13.** “common to man.” This translation explains the Greek adjective *anthropinos* (#442 ἀνθρώπινος), meaning “pertaining to being human.” Paul is saying no temptation has taken hold of you that isn’t *human*—that is, “such as comes to a human being, and such as a human being may endure” (Lenski). We translate this “common to man” to avoid the confusion that this refers to temptations that *originated by fellow humans*. This is not the meaning, for Satan is directly or indirectly behind every temptation.

**“but.”** The particle *de* (#1161 δέ) is usually used when there is a weak contrast, or a pause, but it is often better represented by “and” than “but.” Here *but* is more appropriate, to make clear the contrast between our temptation and God who does not tempt us (James 1:13). God is very much opposed to the temptation’s success. He will never allow the force of the temptation to exceed our ability to choose against it, and furthermore, not only will he assure this but “also” (*kai*) provide a way out. Therefore, man is without excuse. If he sins, he cannot blame God (James 1:13), nor can he claim the lure of the situation overpowered his will, nor that there was no other choice. If we sin, it is *always* our fault in that the choice was ours.

**10:26.** Quoted from Ps. 24:1.

**10:30.** “defamed.” The Greek verb *blasphēmeō* (#987 βλασφημῶ) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. (For more on *blasphēmeō*, see commentary on Matt. 9:3). Paul was being defamed, personally attacked, for behavior that was not sinful. This is done far too often in Christianity. We defame people and hurt their personal reputation over things that are our personal opinion (like what should be worn when, what hair styles are “right,” what cars people should drive, etc.). This is not the Christian way to behave. We have no right to defame others who are just living their own life.

**11:4.** “dishonors.” This is the Greek word *kataischuno* (#2617 καταισχύνω); see note on Rom. 9:33, “put to shame.”

**11:5.** . “dishonors.” This is the Greek word *kataischuno* (#2617 καταισχύνω); see note on Rom. 9:33, “put to shame.”

**11:10.** “symbol.” Something that represents something else, especially if the thing represented is immaterial or spiritual. A “sign” usually points to something else, not as much “represent” something else (as a road sign points to the condition of the road ahead, not “represents” the conditions, or the “signs” that Jesus did pointed to his Messiahship, not represented his Messiahship).

**11:19.** This actual meaning of this verse has been hotly debated. Figure of Speech: Irony. By this irony God hopes to “wake up” the Corinthians to the fact that He placed all of them in the Body as it has pleased Him.

**11:21.** “supper.” The Greek *deipnon* (#1173 δεῖπνον) means 1) the main meal of the day, 2) an elaborate dinner or feast for guests, or 3) a meal with cultic significance, such as the Passover or Lord’s supper. We have stayed with “supper” because “the Lord’s supper” is a part of Christian vocabulary, and in many places in the English speaking world, “supper” is the main meal of the day.

**11:25.** “new” The Greek *kainos* means new in quality. It is not just “new” in time, which would be *neos*, the New Covenant is new in quality. It was ratified at the last supper, and will be effective when Christ returns to earth and sets up his kingdom. Just because Christ ratified the New Covenant in his death does not mean it is in force. God gave Abraham the land by covenant, and yet he never saw it in his life, and in fact the Israelites never

had the full extent of the land God promised in covenant, but they will get it in the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, there can be a large gap between when a covenant is made and when it is fulfilled. That is the case today. All one has to do is study in the OT what God says will happen when the New Covenant is in force to realize it is not in force yet. We today are living in the Administration of the Sacred Secret.

**11:27.** “in an unworthy manner.” The context tells us what that is in this case: the people of Corinth were not helping each other out. The rich came and were stuffing themselves and getting drunk, while those who had “nothing” (v. 22) went hungry. Thus, because the “body,” (the Church) was not recognized as one body with many members, each as important as the other, some people were weak and sick, and others had died.

**11:29.** “body.” Many versions have “body of the Lord,” or “the Lord’s body,” but in this verse the text just reads “body.” The reference is almost certainly an Amphibologia (Bullinger: *Figures*. Double entendre). It refers to the body of Jesus which was broken as a sacrifice for others, and thus stands as an example of how we ought to live sacrificially for others; and it also refers to the fact that anyone who ate his fill and got drunk while another Christian nearby was starving did not properly discern the body, i.e., the Body of Christ, in which all people are members of one body, each of equal importance and each needed.

**11:31.** “accurately judged” is *diakrino* (#1252 διακρίνω), a word with many meanings. It is more than just “judge,” which is *krino* (#2919 κρίνω). We have to make an accurate judgment of ourselves. Where are we strong, where are we weak, how can we contribute, where are we in need of help or possibly in error? If the Corinthians were open to that kind of constructive criticism, and then did the hard work of self-correction, they would not be behaving in such an unChristlike manner as to not share their food with each other. “we would not be judged” (*krino*) i.e., by the Lord, and even by circumstances now.

**11:34.** “and the rest.” There is more than just what is mentioned in Corinthians that needs attention, but Paul will deal with that personally when he arrives, which indicates that it is not essential that it be handled immediately.

**12:1.** “spiritual *matters*.” The Greek text has the definite article “the” before “spiritual,” which may mean, as it seems apparent from the context, that the Corinthians had written Paul about spiritual matters even as they had about sexual matters (1 Cor. 7:1). Thus Paul would write about “the” spiritual matters, using the figure ellipsis to emphasize “spiritual.”

The word “spiritual” is *pneumatikos* (#4152 πνευματικὸς), which is an adjective, so most translations supply “gifts” as the noun that “spiritual” modifies. However, the context is much broader than gifts, so “gifts” is too narrow a word to supply as the noun in this particular context. “Things” usually refers more to concrete entities or objects, whereas “matters” refers more to ideas and concepts, so “matters” seems to be the best noun to supply in this context. In 1 Cor. 14:1, “things” is more appropriate than “matters,” because we diligently pursue spiritual things.

“Spiritual *matters*” or “spiritual *things*” fits the subject of Chapters 12-14, which are about spiritual matters, including “gifts” (12:4), “service” (12:5), “working” (energizings) (12:6) and “manifestations” (12:7-10). It is common for translators to try to get the sense of the context and supply a noun to complete the sense of *pneumatikos*. For example, in Romans 15:27, says the Gentiles share in the *pneumatikos* of the Jews. The NIV and ESV supply “blessings,” while the KJV and ASV say “things.” 1 Corinthians

2:15 uses *pneumatikos*, and the NIV supplies “man,” reading “spiritual man,” while the ESV supplies “person,” and reads “spiritual person,” and the KJV reads “he that is spiritual.” In 1 Corinthians 9:11, *pneumatikos* is used in the context of spiritual things that are sown into a person’s life, so the NIV supplies “seed,” reading “spiritual seed,” while the KJV supplies “things,” reading “spiritual things,” and the NRSV says, spiritual “good.”

The wide variety of spiritual matters being discussed in 1 Corinthians 12-14 dictates that “matters” or “things” be supplied to complete the sense of *pneumatikos* in 1 Corinthians 12:1, 14:1, etc. Those chapters are speaking about spiritual matters of many kinds, not just spiritual “gifts.” Adding the word “gifts” obscures what God had so clearly stated in the original text and causes people to be confused about the manifestations of holy spirit. (For more on “gifts,” see commentary on 1 Cor. 14:1).

**12:2.** “Mute” is a noun, not an adjective, and contrasts the mute idols with the living God. The difference between “led” (*ago*) and “carried astray” (*apagō*) is one of intensity. *Apagō* has the sense of forcefully carried off, and the context makes “carried astray” an acceptable translation.

The point that the verse is making is a powerful one. People trust their spiritual leaders to lead them to truth and right. However, Paul makes the point that when the Gentiles were led to idols, they were in fact being led astray. This happens today with many teachers, who lead their flocks astray and into hurtful and harmful doctrines and practices.

**12:3.** “**Make known to you**” (as per Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament*; etc.) sets the contrast with “I do not want you to be ignorant” in v. 1. The versions are divided as to the “*en*,” and whether it is an instrumental dative, “by” or should be translated as “in.” We feel that it is an instrumental dative, and have “by” in the verse.

“**speaking in union with the spirit of God.**” Speaking “in union with” the spirit comes from the preposition *en*, which describes a relationship (cp. commentary Rom. 6:3). Also, however, it can be instrumental and be translated “by.” The “the” is not needed before the word “spirit” because the preposition *en* can make the *pneuma* (spirit) definite without the article.

**12:4.** “**being distributed.**” The Greek word is *diairesis* (#1243 **δια**□**ρᾶσις**), it is plural, and it is generally used in reference to “distribution,” meanings that there is different distributions of the gifts, i.e., that different people are being given different gifts (See Lenski, C. K. Barrett, and Rotherham). That the gifts differ is too obvious to mention, and misses the point. The gifts differ, but the point is that the gifts are distributed to different people, so the whole Body of Christ working together is necessary if we are to have all the gifts of Christ working fully.

“**spirit.**” The word *pneuma*, spirit, must be studied carefully because the word “spirit” can refer to the gift of holy spirit, or to Jesus, or to God, depending on the context (both Jesus and God are called the “Spirit”) There are a few reasons that “spirit” could refer to the gift of holy spirit: the fact that “spirit” in verse 3 refers to the gift of holy spirit; the fact that verses 4, 5, and 6 would then have the gift of holy spirit, the Lord (Jesus), and God; and the fact that although there are many “gifts,” there is only one gift of holy spirit. However, there are also some reasons that “Spirit” can refer to Jesus or God. Verse 4 and 11 are almost parallel, with the “Spirit” distributing to people. If

“Spirit” in verse 4 refers to God, the word “Lord” in verse 5 refers to Jesus Christ, and “God” in verse 6 refers to God, then we have a chiasmic structure that is common in other parts of Scripture: “A--B--A,” in this case, “God--Lord--God.” The weight of evidence, however, seems to favor that “spirit” in verse four refers to the gift of holy spirit.

**12:6. “energizings...energizing.”** If anyone is going to do signs, miracles, or wonders, he must understand that he must, by faith, bring the power of God to bear on any given situation, but it is always God who provides the power, the energy, for the event to happen. See note on 2 Cor. 5:20, “ambassadors.”

**12:7. “manifestation.”** The word “manifestation” is the Greek word *phanerōsis*, (#5321 φανερῶσις), and it means, “to cause something to be fully known by revealing clearly and in some detail - 'to make known, to make plain, to reveal, to bring to the light, to disclose, revelation’” (Louw Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*). The English word “manifestation” comes from two Latin words, *manus*, meaning “hand,” and *festare*, meaning “to touch.” A “manifestation” is something concrete and tangible, that can be “touched with the hand,” so to speak. The gift of holy spirit is not tangible, because it is spirit. That is why Scripture does not promise that one will feel anything when he gets born again. God may accompany someone’s New Birth with a miracle in the senses world so that he knows it without a doubt, but that is rare and certainly not promised.

To understand this verse, indeed, 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14, it is vital to understand the difference between the “gift” and the “manifestation” of holy spirit. The “gift” is the holy spirit itself, and each Christian receives the “gift of holy spirit,” at the moment he is saved, born again (Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:13). The gift of holy spirit that is sealed in each Christian, cannot be detected by the five senses. No one can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch it. However, the gift of holy spirit inside each Christian can be manifested, brought forth into evidence, in the nine ways set forth in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

A “manifestation” is detectable by the five senses. Electric energy in a light bulb is manifested (made obvious) in the form of light and heat. A manifestation of the chicken pox virus, which cannot be seen, is a rash with small pimple-like sores.

The multipurpose “Swiss Army” knife (today there are many “multi-purpose” knives that are similar) is a good example of the difference between a gift and a manifestation. The traditional Swiss Army knife has a red handle, and many come with two blades (big and little), two screwdrivers (flathead and Phillips), a can opener, an awl, scissors, a file, and a pair of tweezers (nine manifestations!). If you receive one Swiss army knife as a gift, you can use (bring into manifestation) any or all of its implements, and cut, snip, tweeze, etc. The one gift of the Swiss knife has many manifestations. Similarly, the one gift God gives each believer is holy spirit, which can be manifested in nine ways.

**“of the spirit.”** There has been much scholarly discussion about the exact nature of the genitive, “of” in the phrase, “the manifestation of the spirit.” The confusion is in large part due to the fact that most theologians think the “Spirit” is God. The spirit in this verse is the gift of God, holy spirit, and the genitive is the genitive of origin or production. The gift of holy spirit is the source of the manifestations, and the phrase means, the manifestations that originate with, or are produced by, the spirit of God. A somewhat parallel phrase occurs in 2 Corinthians 4:2, which has “the manifestation of the

truth” (KJV, which has the articles accurately placed). One cannot see the “truth” in the apostle’s minds, but it is there, and it is the origin of their behavior, which can be seen by everyone. The gift of holy spirit and “truth” are invisible in a person, but they produce manifestations that can be clearly seen in the senses world.

**“common good.”** The Bible specifically says that the manifestation of holy spirit is for the “common good.” Benefits are missed, or consequence occur when Christians do not walk with the power of the manifestations of holy spirit. Imagine the Bible with no manifestations of the power of God—no record of Moses smiting the rock, or Joshua stopping the Jordan River, or Samson pushing down the pagan temple, or God telling Samuel to anoint Saul as king, or Elijah calling down fire from heaven, or God telling Jonah to go to Nineveh.

The Bible would be much less exciting, and would bring much less hope and blessing, if the power of God were absent from its pages. If Ananias had not walked in the power of the manifestations, he would not have had the blessing of healing Paul (Acts 9:10-18). If Peter did not walk in the power of the manifestations, he would not have had the blessing of being the first to lead Gentiles into the new birth (Acts 10:9-46). If Paul had not walked in the power of the manifestations, Eutychus would have remained dead (Acts 20:9-12). If a Christian does not speak in tongues, he misses out on its being a sign from God that he is saved (1 Cor. 14:22). Similarly, if the manifestations are absent or misused, there are consequences. If everyone in the congregation speaks in tongues at the same time, for example, an unbeliever may get the wrong impression (1 Cor. 14: 23).

**12:8. “For to one.”** This verse (and verse nine and ten), seem to indicate that each Christian gets only one manifestation, something that has confused many Christians. When we understand what the manifestations of holy spirit are, it becomes obvious that each Christians has the ability to manifest each of them. For example, 1 Cor. 14:5 says it is the will of God that every Christian speak in tongues, and 1 Cor. 14:23 gives an example of everyone in the Church in Corinth speaking in tongues. But if every Christian spoke in tongues, and each could only have one “gift,” then no Christian could have any other “gift.” That cannot be the case. For one thing, every Christian is encouraged to speak in tongues, and also to prophesy and interpret (1 Cor. 14:5). That means each Christian is encouraged to operate three manifestations, not just one! But there is more. The manifestation, “a message of knowledge” is God or the Lord giving knowledge to believers by revelation. Every believer can get guidance from the Lord via the gift of holy spirit inside them. But if each believer can only have one “gift,” then they cannot both speak in tongues and get revelation from the Lord. These examples should be very clear, and the evidence that each believer can operate all of the manifestations becomes even clearer as we study the subject. For example, every believer needs to have spiritually energized faith to accomplish God’s will in their lives. But since “faith” is in this list that many people says a person only gets “one” of, that would mean if a believer had this “faith,” that would be the only thing on the list he would get. Could it really be saying that if a person speaks in tongues, or prophesies, or gets revelation knowledge from the Lord, he cannot have faith? That makes no sense.

This verse is not saying that each person only gets “one” manifestation. It is teaching that God energizes different people at different times. At any given time or meeting, God energized different people in different ways. To make sure that things in the Church are done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40 KJV), at any given time the

Lord energizes different manifestations in different believers. Thus at a Christian meeting, one person will speak in tongues and interpret, another will prophesy, another will minister healing, etc. (For the difference between “to another” and “to a different one” see commentary on 12:9).

**“is given through the spirit.”** The manifestations of the spirit come via the gift of holy spirit. We must be clear that God can give knowledge or wisdom to people in many ways. For example, He spoke to Moses via a burning bush. He spoke to Gideon via an angel. He can send a prophet. Messages given in ways such as that are revelation, but they are not “manifestations of holy spirit.”

To be a manifestation of holy spirit, the revelation has to come from God or the Lord Jesus Christ to the Christian via the gift of holy spirit within him. In most cases in the Old Testament and the Gospels, when God wanted a person to prophesy or, like Joseph, to be a wise ruler, He put holy spirit on him so He could more fully communicate with him. Joseph had the spirit of God upon him so he could hear from God (Gen. 41:38). Moses and Joshua had the spirit of God (Num. 11:17; 27:18); the seventy elders of Israel had spirit upon them (Num. 11:25). God put his spirit on Bezalel so he could get the wisdom of God on how to build the Tabernacle (Exod. 31:1-5). Judges of Israel such as Othniel (Judg. 3:10), Gideon (Judg. 6:34), Jephthah (Judg. 11:29), and Samson (Judg. 14:19), had the spirit of God to help them rule and fight. King Saul had the spirit, and prophesied (1 Sam. 10:6). When the spirit of God came on Amasai, he heard from God and prophesied (1 Chron. 12:18). So did Azariah (2 Chron. 15:1 and 2), Jahaziel (2 Chron. 20:14), Zechariah (2 Chron. 24:20), and others. Furthermore, it was holy spirit that gave David the power to hear from God and get the plans for the Temple (1 Chron. 28:12). John the Baptist had the spirit of God upon him from birth (Luke 1:15). Thus, when we speak of “a message of wisdom” and “a message of knowledge” being manifestations of holy spirit, we are speaking of God or the Lord Jesus giving direct revelation to the person via the holy spirit born within that individual.

It is very important to realize that when the Bible says “manifestation of the spirit” it means exactly that—these are evidences of holy spirit, not natural abilities that God has given to the person. They are the presence of holy spirit being made visible. We make this point because some people treat these manifestations as if they were talents that some people have, with no specific connection to the gift of holy spirit they received when they were saved. It is true that God does give different people talents. Some people sing well; some people are very athletic; some are very intelligent; some people are great artists, etc. These are all God-given talents, but they are not manifestations of holy spirit. On the other hand, the manifestations of the spirit such as speaking in tongues, interpretation, prophecy, faith, gifts of healings, and miracles, require both the power of holy spirit and the cooperation and action of the believer involved. The manifestations of holy spirit do not operate apart from the free will of the believer. Take speaking in tongues, for example. The Lord will provide the words to say, but the believer must do the speaking. The manifestations are good examples of us being “fellow-workers” with God (1 Cor. 3:9).

**“message.”** The Greek word is *logos* (#3056 λογος). We translate these manifestations as a “message” because the Greek word *logos* means an intelligible communication. The first definition of *logos* in *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* is “a word, yet not in the grammatical sense (equivalent to *vocabulum*, the mere name of an object), but

language, *vox*, i.e., a word which, uttered by the living voice, embodies a conception or idea.” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*). The NIV uses “message,” and other versions, such as the RSV, NRSV, and NJB, use “utterance,” which would be fine as long as it is understood that it is the Lord who “utters” the message to the person and not that the person speaks a message of wisdom to someone else.

The translation “message” communicates accurately exactly what the Lord gives by revelation: a message. The message may come in many ways: an audible voice, a picture or vision, a physical sensation, an emotion, or a firm realization (an inner knowing). The King James Version says “word of wisdom” and “word of knowledge” and so those terms are widely used, and “word” is used for “message” in Christian jargon. Nevertheless, it could be misleading to a new Bible student who might think of revelation as “words,” especially because in our experience the majority of the revelation any person receives is not a “word” and not even by “words,” but much more often by an impression or picture.

In this verse, the Greek word *logos* is used of individual revelation to people. This is important because both *logos* and *rhema* (#4487 ρήμα) are used of individual messages of revelation given to Christians. This verse, 1 Cor. 12:8 is a good example of *logos* being used that way, and examples of *rhema* include: Matt. 4:4; Luke 2:29; 3:2. Examples of *rhema* being used of the whole word of God include 1 Pet. 1:25 (cp. Heb. 6:5).

**“a message of wisdom.”** Definition: A message of wisdom is God or the Lord Jesus Christ, by revelation, providing a person with wisdom. It is God or the Lord giving a person direction, or guiding them in how to apply the knowledge he has about something.

For an explanation of how a message of wisdom works, see the commentary on “a message of knowledge.” Both “a message of knowledge” and “a message of wisdom” are revelation (for more on what “revelation is and how it works, see commentary on Galatians 1:12).

For years scholars have discussed the manifestations of holy spirit, and there are many differing opinions. For example, reading different commentaries shows that some scholars think “a message of wisdom” is being able to understand the wisdom of God, or perhaps being able to express the wisdom of God. The Living Bible, for example, calls “a message of wisdom,” “the ability to give wise advice.” Many people, saved and unsaved, give wise advice. That is not a manifestation of holy spirit. The manifestation of a message of wisdom occurs when God gives a Christian a message about what to do in a given situation via the gift of holy spirit.

The reason for the discussion and the uncertainty is that the manifestations are not defined in 1 Corinthians. There is a good reason for this. It is common in all writing that authors leave out details and descriptions that everyone knows. Writers today commonly mention cars, planes, the Internet, and thousands of other things that they do not explain because the readers know what they are. There are many examples of this in the Bible also.

A good example occurs in the Gospel of Luke. Luke did, for the time in which he lived, a good job of dating the birth of Christ by telling us it was about the time of the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria (Luke 2:2). No doubt everyone in Luke’s day who read that said, “Ah, now I know when the birth of Christ

occurred.” Today, however, not much information about Quirinius has survived the centuries, and so there is controversy about the date of the birth of Christ. Another example involves biblical animals. No doubt when Job was written, everyone knew what the “behemoth” was (Job 40:15). Today we do not know enough information for scholars to agree on what the animal is. Another example involves nations. Genesis and other books of the Bible mention the “Hittites” (Gen. 10:15), but that nation was lost in history so completely that until the nineteenth century, when archaeologists uncovered entire Hittite cities, some scholars even doubted their existence.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the Bible never describes them because the biblical readers knew exactly who they were and where they lived.

The people of Corinth and other Christians in the first century were familiar with the manifestations of holy spirit, so there was no need for Paul to explain what they were or how they worked. God’s people had been manifesting holy spirit for generations (except for speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues, with which the Corinthian Church was very familiar). God had put holy spirit upon people in the Old Testament such as Moses, Joshua, Deborah, David, Elijah, and many others, and those people could then hear knowledge or wisdom from God (thus, the message of knowledge and wisdom). They had the faith to do what God asked of them even when it seemed impossible, they did miracles, and when Jesus came on the scene, he taught his disciples to heal and cast out demons. The believers of Corinth were familiar with all these manifestations, and of course Paul, who founded the Church in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-18), had also instructed them.

Some scholars have tried to look in Greek culture to find the meaning of the manifestations based on the definitions of the Greek words themselves (for example, “wisdom” was very important in the Greek culture). That misses the point, and for the most part has been unhelpful in discovering the nature of the manifestations, and is one reason why there is so much debate about the manifestations by scholars. The manifestations were not Greek experiences or concepts, but the timeless manifestations, outward evidences, of the inward presence of holy spirit. These manifestations were not to be found in Greek culture, vocabulary, or history, but in the experiences of the men and women of God throughout the centuries.

English culture today is somewhat similar to the Greek culture in that there has been very little accurate exposure to the power of holy spirit and very little accurate teaching on it. Therefore, we need a clear explanation of the manifestations so we can understand them. As the Greeks of old, we need to get our understanding from the Bible itself and then add to our understanding by utilizing and experiencing the manifestations.

**“a message of knowledge.”** A message of knowledge is God or the Lord Jesus Christ, by revelation, providing knowledge to a person; i.e., giving that person information, insight, and understanding about something.

The message of wisdom and the message of knowledge are “revelation” manifestations, and we will cover them in this one entry because they often work seamlessly together, with a single revelation from God consisting of both a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom. We call these the “revelation” manifestations

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<sup>35</sup> Joseph Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1982), p. 108.

because they deal with God or the Lord Jesus “revealing” something (for more on what “revelation is and how it works, see commentary on Galatians 1:12).

We can understand the difference between “a message of knowledge” and “a message of wisdom” by understanding the difference between “knowledge” and “wisdom.” Knowledge is information about a situation, while wisdom is what to do about the situation. The first definition of “wisdom” in *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* captures its essence: “the right use or exercise of knowledge.” Since the time of Adam and Eve, it has been important for mankind to hear from God. When God speaks to individuals, if what He says is knowledge, i.e., information and insight, the revelation is “a message of knowledge.” If what He says is wisdom, i.e., direction or what to do about a given situation, the revelation is “a message of wisdom.”

A good example of a message of knowledge would be Joseph interpreting Pharaoh’s dream (Gen. 41:25-27). God gave Joseph knowledge about the meaning of the dream, which was that there would be seven years of plenty, then seven years of famine. That revelation is a message of knowledge because it only gives information, the facts of the case.

When God gives someone a message of knowledge, He may or may not need to give a message of wisdom so the person will know what to do. For example, if a person has lost his car keys, all God has to do is let the person know where they are, He does not have to give a message of wisdom and say, “Go get them.” The person will do that without having to have a message of wisdom. Often, however, God will give a message of wisdom when He gives a message of knowledge. What if God had told Joseph about the years of plenty and the years of famine, but then never said what to do about it? The best Joseph could have done in that case would have been to pick a reasonable solution. However, God did give Joseph a message of wisdom when He told Joseph to store up twenty per cent of the harvest during the plenteous years for the upcoming famine years (Gen. 41:33-36). When God gives a person direction, and tells him what to do, then it is “a message of wisdom.”

The Bible is full of examples of “a message of knowledge” and “a message of wisdom,” and God gives us numerous examples so we will understand how He communicates and directs us. The Bible usually does not make it clear whether these examples are via the gift of holy spirit or simply the audible voice of God, but they are all revelation nevertheless. In Numbers 11:16-20 Moses gets both knowledge and wisdom from God. In Joshua 1:2-9 God gives Joshua both knowledge and wisdom. In Judges 7:4 God gave Gideon both knowledge and wisdom. In 1 Sam. 8:7-9 God gave Samuel wisdom, telling him what to do, and knowledge, telling him why to do it. In 1 Kings 14:5, God gave Ahijah knowledge of what was going to happen, and wisdom, telling him what to say. In 1 Kings 17:2-4, God gave Elijah wisdom by telling him what to do, and knowledge, telling him what would happen. These are only a few examples of “a message of knowledge” and “a message of wisdom,” but we can learn a lot from them. For one thing, we see that these manifestations could work independently, but they often work seamlessly together in one “message” from God. Another thing we can see is why God did not need to define the manifestations to the people of Corinth. God’s revelation of knowledge and wisdom are clearly laid out in the Bible and are essential to living a powerful and successful spiritual life.

A message of knowledge and a message of wisdom are God “speaking” to us to guide and help us. It is inconceivable that He would not do that for each and every Christian. Surely He would not give guidance to one Christian and not to another. Every Christian can, and needs to, manifest holy spirit in messages of knowledge and wisdom in order to live a rich and successful Christian life. No doubt most Christians have heard from God via the manifestations without even realizing it. Although there are times when God gives a message of knowledge or wisdom in such a clear and powerful way that it cannot be missed, usually God speaks in a “gentle whisper” or “a still small voice.” (1 Kings 19:12; NIV, KJV).

We need to be aware that there is a difference between “a message of knowledge” and “the manifestation of a message of knowledge” and also between “a message of wisdom” and “the manifestation of a message of wisdom.” A message of knowledge or wisdom can come from God in many ways: God’s audible voice (Deut. 4:12); an angel (Judges 13:3-5); a miracle such as a donkey speaking (Num. 22:28, 30) or handwriting on a wall (Dan. 5:5). That type of revelation is word of knowledge or word of wisdom, but it is not the “manifestation” of word of knowledge or wisdom because it did not come via the gift of holy spirit.

The “manifestation of word of knowledge (or wisdom)” is a manifestation of the gift of holy spirit, which means the information comes from God or the Lord to the person via the gift of holy spirit inside the person. It is important to realize and keep in mind that a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom are manifestations of holy spirit, but they come via the human mind. The revelation comes from the spirit within us, through the mind, and that is why we often have a hard time discerning whether a thought was from God or from ourselves. Similarly, many people think they are hearing from God when they are not, while others think they are making things up when really they are from the Lord.

**12:9. “to a different one.”** God has placed the nine manifestations of holy spirit into three groups, or categories. Most English versions are not sensitive to this, and read “to one” or “to another” eight times. However, there are actually two different Greek words, *allos* (#243 □λλος) and *heteros* (#2087 □τερος), that need to be properly understood and translated, rather than both of them simply being translated “to another.” In Greek, *allos* was generally used to express a numerical difference and denotes “another of the same sort,” while *heteros* usually means a qualitative difference and denotes “another of a different sort.” When a list is put together, and the items are said to be *allos*, they are of the same kind or nature. When they are said to be *heteros*, they are different in nature. Thus what we see in this section is God separating the manifestations into three groups, dividing the groups by the word *heteros*, which we showed in brackets when we quoted the verses. In our translation, we used “another” when the Greek word was *allos*, and “different one” when it was *heteros*.

Studying the groups reveals that two manifestations are revelation (hearing from God), five of them relate to the power of God, and two are oriented toward worship.

- **Revelation:** A message of knowledge; a message of wisdom
- **Power:** Faith, gifts of healing; miracles; prophecy; discerning of spirits
- **Worship:** Speaking in tongues; interpretation of tongues

Although it is helpful to study these manifestations separately so we can best understand them, we need to be aware that we are doing that only for the sake of clarity.

God never intended them to be completely separate and distinct in the lives of the believers who experience them. He is our Father and He wants a relationship with us, and He wants us to be effective fellow-workers with Him (1 Cor. 3:9). In order to do that, must be able to worship God (the worship group), hear from Him (the revelation group) and work for Him (the power group). In the day-to-day life of a believer who is striving to love God, live a holy life, and do God's will, the manifestations will often work seamlessly and result in great blessing for the believer and the people affected. For example, a Christian woman, let's call her "Susan," may be by herself enjoying worshipping God by singing in tongues to some Christian music she is playing. Then the phone rings and it is her friend who needs prayer because many things are going wrong in her life and today she is sick. Susan immediately feels the leading of the Lord to pray for specifics about her friend's life (the revelation manifestations at work) and then commands healing to take place in the name of Jesus Christ (faith and healing). By the time she gets off the phone, her friend is feeling better emotionally and physically. In this scenario, Susan did not think to herself, "Now I need a message of knowledge. Now I need a message of wisdom. Now I need faith. Now I need the manifestation of gifts of healings." No, she had a relationship with God and love for her friend, and the manifestations worked together seamlessly to produce the "common good" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7.

**"faith."** The manifestation of faith is a person having the confidence or trust that what God or the Lord Jesus Christ has revealed to him by revelation (a message of knowledge or a message of wisdom), will come to pass or come to pass at his command.

The manifestation of faith is the first manifestation that God places in the second group of manifestations, which we call the "power" manifestations. We believe that faith is the foundation of the power manifestations. "Faith" is the translation of the Greek word *pistis*, (#4102 πιστις) which means "trust," "confidence" or "assurance." (cp. Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *Don't Blame God!* Chapter 10, "Keep the Faith"). We like to use the word "trust." It is important to distinguish the biblical definition of faith from today's definition that has permeated the Christian Church and society. When most people think of "faith," they think of it in terms of the modern definition: "firm belief in something for which there is no proof" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*; 11<sup>th</sup> edition). When religious people have no proof for what they believe, we often hear them say, "You just have to take it by faith." It is vital to understand that "belief in something for which there is no proof" is not the biblical definition of "faith."

The biblical definition of faith is "trust," and we trust things only after they have been proven to us. Jesus never asked anyone to believe he was the Messiah without proof. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and did miracles, and he asked people to believe the miracles that he did (John 10:38). Similarly, God does not ask us to believe Him without proof. He has left many evidences that He exists and that His Word is true. Thus when God asks us to have faith, He is not asking us to believe something without proof. God proves Himself to us, and because of that we trust Him, that is, we have faith.

We must distinguish between faith as it is commonly used in the Bible and the "manifestation of faith." All of us have "faith" (trust) in a large number of things. In fact, ordinary life would be impossible without trust. A person would not sit down if he did not trust the chair would hold him. God asks us to trust that Jesus has been raised from the dead because the Bible, history, and life give plenty of evidence for it.

In contrast to ordinary faith, the **manifestation of faith** is necessary to accomplish the special tasks that God, by revelation, asks us to do. For example, Jesus said that a person with faith could tell a mountain to be cast into the ocean and it would be done (Mark 11:23). Well, all of us have seen mountains, and we know that we do not have the human power to move them, so doing that requires the power of God. We need God to make that kind of miracle available to us by first giving us the revelation to do it. When He does, then the faith (trust) we must have in what He revealed to us in order to get the job done is “the manifestation of faith.”

Moses brought water out of a rock by the manifestation of faith (Ex. 17:5 and 6), Gideon defeated the Midianites by the manifestation of faith (Judg. 6:16), Elijah multiplied the oil and bread by the manifestation of faith (1 Kings 17:14-16), and the other great miracles of the Bible were done by the manifestation of faith. When it comes to miracles and gifts of healings, we need the manifestation of faith because we cannot heal the sick or do miracles by our human power. God must give us a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom, letting us know that it is His will for us to heal someone or do a miracle, and then we must trust God that if we received the revelation to do the work, we can in fact do it.

Every Christian needs to utilize the manifestation of faith. Christ said that when people received holy spirit they would receive power (Acts 1:8), but no one can operate the power of God without the faith to do so. Since every Christian needs to use the manifestation of faith to bring to pass the revelation that God gives him, every Christian has the ability to manifest faith. Thus, we see that the manifestation of faith, like a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom, is for every Christian, not just certain ones.

“**gifts of healings**” is a person exercising his God-given spiritual ability to heal by the power of God, according to what God or the Lord Jesus has revealed to him by revelation (a message of knowledge or a message of wisdom).

We cover the manifestations of gifts of healings and working of miracles together because they are similar in many ways. The “gifts [plural] of healings [plural]” is so called because God does multiple healings, and each of them is a gift, done out of His grace or mercy. Gifts of healings and working of miracles are manifestations of holy spirit because it takes a believer to do them by the power of God that he has been given. It is very important to realize that it is people, empowered by holy spirit within, who do healings and miracles. On rare occasions God heals or does a miracle without human agency, but that is not “the manifestation” of gifts of healings or miracles because the gift of holy spirit inside a Christian was not employed.

To do a healing or miracle, several manifestations come into action. First, the person needs a message of knowledge and/or a message of wisdom to know what the situation is and what to do about it. Second, he needs the manifestation of faith to bring to pass the healing or miracle. Third, he must represent Christ on earth and, via the power of God, bring to pass the miracle as God supplies the energy for it. Notice how Peter raised Tabitha: he said, “Tabitha, get up” (Acts 9:40). Then she got up from the dead. Peter spoke the miracle into being. First, Peter prayed. Then, when he had revelation from the Lord to go ahead, he raised her from the dead by the power of God. Once Peter received the revelation to raise Tabitha, he performed the miracle. We believe that there would be more miracles and healings in Christendom today if Christians would step out on faith

and do what the Lord tells them to do. Too often we are waiting for God to do what He has given us the spiritual power to do.

It is not our intention to demean the power of prayer in any way. Christians are commanded to pray, and should do so as much as possible. However, when God or the Lord Jesus gives us the revelation to do a healing or miracle, that is not the time to pray, it is the time to step out in faith and boldly do the miracle. If the miracle or healing takes time, the one receiving the revelation must stay in faith and prayer to see it accomplished.

Jesus' apostles and disciples had holy spirit upon them (John 14:17), which is why he could send them out to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons (Matt. 10:8; Luke 10:9). Furthermore, Jesus said that when people have holy spirit, they have power (Acts 1:8). It is clear that since every Christian has the gift of holy spirit, then every Christian has the power to do healings and miracles (Mark 16:17 and 18, John 14:12), just as the disciples of Christ and the prophets of old did. We need to increase our faith and step forth boldly to do what the Lord directs us to do. We realize that although the presence of holy spirit gives each Christian the spiritual power to do healings and miracles, not everyone is called to walk in that kind of ministry. There is a difference between inherent spiritual ability and how that ability will actually be evidenced in the life of an individual Christian. Nevertheless, we assert that many more Christians would be doing healings and miracles if they knew they had the ability, and were confident to act on the spiritual power they have.

The manifestations of gifts of healings and working of miracles are often interwoven. There are certainly miracles that are not healings, such as when Moses parted the sea so the Israelites could escape Egypt. Also, there are healings that are not miracles, when, although the natural power of the body to heal itself is augmented by the healing power of God, the healing is not instantaneous. However, there are many miracles of healing in the Bible, such as the instantaneous healing of Bartimaeus, who was blind (Mark 10:46-52). Also, casting out a demon can be a miracle (Mark 9:39).

**12:10. "Working of Miracles."** The manifestation of working of miracles is a person exercising his God-given spiritual ability to do miracles by the power of God, according to what God or the Lord Jesus has revealed to him by revelation (a message of knowledge or a message of wisdom). For an explanation of the manifestation, see "gifts of healings" in verse 9 above. The word "working" is perhaps more properly, "energizings" (it is plural). However, we felt that saying "energizings of miracles" was unclear. The phrase "working of miracles" is working more than one miracle and thus adequately covers the plural in the Greek.

**"Prophecy."** Prophecy is speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating a message from God to a person or persons. The manifestation of prophecy is speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating a message from God to another person or persons. God or the Lord Jesus gives the Christian a message of knowledge or a message of wisdom via the holy spirit born inside him, and when he gives that message to someone else it is prophecy. The revelation that is spoken as prophecy can come in the moment, coming almost word by word as the speaker says them, something we refer to as "inspirational prophecy." However, it can also come as a complete revelation given to the speaker before it is spoken as prophecy, or prophecy can come as a combination, with some revelation coming beforehand and some coming as the prophecy is spoken. In the Old Testament, when a person had holy spirit, he or she almost always prophesied. That

is why Joel said that when holy spirit was poured out on all believers, they would prophesy (Joel 2:28), and why Peter, in his teaching on the Day of Pentecost, referenced Joel (cp. Acts 2:17, 18).

God says His servants will prophesy, so there should be little argument about it. The manifestation of prophecy is to strengthen, encourage and comfort people (1 Cor. 14:3). It can reveal the secrets of people's hearts so that they can be closer to God (1 Cor. 14:24 and 25). A study of prophecy in Scripture shows that prophecy is part of the power of God, which is why God places prophecy in the "power" group of the manifestations. Some Bible teachers have placed prophecy in the "worship" group of manifestations, but prophecy is not primarily worship, it is speaking a message from God to people. It is used in a worship service, yes, but that does not make it worship. At any given Christian service all the manifestations may come into play, depending on the needs of the people.

Many Christians do not prophesy, but not because they do not have the spiritual ability. Scripture makes it clear that every Christian has the power to prophesy because of the presence of holy spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:17; 1 Cor. 14:1, 5, and 24). If a Christian does not prophesy, either he has not been sufficiently instructed, or he does not have the faith to step out on what he has been given, or he does not want to prophesy.

There is a reason why each Christian should covet to prophesy. Bringing God's messages to His people is not only a tremendous privilege, it is essential for the wellbeing of the Church. A study of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, reveals how valuable the prophets were in the spiritual wholeness of the people of Israel. Prophecy is not only about speaking about the future. Not only can every Christian prophesy, as the Scripture says, but we should want to. That every believer can prophesy gives us more conclusive evidence that each believer can manifest all nine manifestations. (For more on prophecy, including what it is, how it comes to the Christian via holy spirit, that each Christian should want to prophesy, and the difference between the manifestation of prophecy and the ministry of a prophet, see John Schoenheit, *Prophecy*).

**Discerning of spirits** is God or the Lord Jesus Christ revealing to a person information about the presence or absence of spirits (including both the holy spirit and demons), sometimes including the identity of demons present and whether or not he may cast them out, and providing the power to do it.

The Greek word translated "discerning" is *diakrisis* (#1253 διακρίσις), and it has several meanings. It can mean a "distinguishing" or "differentiation." Also, it can mean to quarrel (William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*). One of the definitions in Liddell and Scott's Greek lexicon is "decision by battle, quarrel, dispute." Thus *diakrisis* can be much more than just "discerning," it has the overtones of quarreling or fighting. Since "discerning of spirits" is a total package of recognizing "spirits" and dealing with them, God places it in the "power" group of manifestations. In this verse, discerning is plural. Nevertheless, we used "discerning" because it has the overtones of plurality. If a person is "discerning," it is because he has exhibited discernment in a multitude of situations.

The manifestation of discerning of spirits is necessary if men and women of God are going to deal effectively with the spiritual realities of this fallen world. There are many "spirits" in this world, including angels and the gift of holy spirit. Nevertheless, because of the spiritual battle that rages around all of us, the most important aspect of discerning of spirits is dealing with the demonic forces of this world. Ephesians 6:12

makes it clear that Christians do not primarily wrestle against fleshly forces, but spiritual forces.

Our Adversary, the Devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking people to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). God has not left us helpless in that situation, but has empowered us to deal with him. The manifestation of discerning of spirits is more than just recognizing them, it also involves entering into battle against them and casting them out. Recognizing demons, protecting the believers, and casting them out is all part of “discerning of spirits.” (For more insights into the spiritual battle, see the commentary on Mark 1:25 and Jesus “subduing” evil spirits).

The manifestation of discerning of spirits is interwoven with the other manifestations. For example, a believer manifesting discerning of spirits may be simultaneously aware of the presence of the demon, know what to do about the situation, and begin to command it to come out of the person. Receiving the information about the demon and knowing what to do is similar to and interwoven with a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom, while the casting out the demon can be in the category of a miracle (Mark 9:38 and 39), even as a healing can be a miracle (Acts 4:16).

Every Christian will encounter demons, whether he recognizes them or not. What a great blessing and comfort to know that God has equipped each of us to deal with any demon that comes against us. Ephesians 6:12, which says we wrestle with demonic powers, is written to every Christian. Therefore, every Christian can manifest discerning of spirits.

The word “spirits” in the phrase “discerning of spirits” does not refer to “attitudes.” Although that is one of the meanings of *pneuma*, it is not the meaning in this context. There are many very gifted people that are very sensitive and can “read” people and situations very well, but many of them are unsaved. That discernment is a natural ability, just as is native intelligence and other natural abilities.

In some Greek texts there is the word “and” before both “to another prophecy” and “to another discerning.” We have left out the word “and” because textual research shows that it seems much more likely the words were added in some texts than subtracted in others.

**“various kinds of tongues.”** The manifestation of the spirit that involves speaking languages the speaker does not understand is commonly known as “speaking in tongues.” Speaking in tongues is a Christian speaking a language of men or angels that he does not understand, a language that is given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:33). It is one of the great blessings that God has given to the Christian Church, and He desires that every Christian speak in tongues: “Now I want all of you to speak in tongues” (1 Cor. 14:5). For a much fuller explanation of speaking in tongues, see commentray on 1 Cor. 14:5.

**“the interpretation of tongues.”** The interpretation of tongues is interpreting, or giving the sum and substance, in one’s own language, that which he has just spoken in tongues. The word “interpretation” is *hermēneia* (#2058 ἑρμηνεία), which means interpretation or exposition. It does not necessarily mean a word for word translation, but rather an interpretation, giving the gist or sum and substance. Thus the interpretation of tongues is giving the gist of what was just spoken in tongues. The Bible makes it clear that speaking in tongues is always “to” God (1 Cor. 14:2), so the interpretation will be to God also, and be praise and prayer to Him. That is the big difference between prophecy

and the interpretation of tongues. Prophecy is a message to the people (1 Cor. 14:3), while interpretation of tongues is to God (or the Lord Jesus Christ), but is heard by the congregation, who are then edified by it.

The interpretation of tongues, like speaking in tongues itself, is given by the Lord. No one understands what he is saying in a tongue, so no one could give an interpretation of what he is saying. The interpretation comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, just as the tongue does. The manifestation of interpretation of tongues works just like speaking in tongues and prophecy do—the words come from the Lord Jesus Christ to the individual via the gift of holy spirit inside him. When a person speaks in tongues in a believer’s meeting, he should interpret so that the people in the meeting may be edified (1 Cor. 14:5).

The interpretation of tongues is to be done by the one who spoke in tongues, just as 1 Corinthians 14:5 says (see commentary on 1 Cor. 14:27).

**12:11.** The word “purposes” at the end of the verse is the contextual key that “Spirit” does not refer to the gift, for the gift of holy spirit does not “purpose” anything, but only speaks what it hears (John 16:13).

**12:13** The question is whether or not the “*en*” is an instrumental dative, “by one Spirit (Jesus)” or a more standard use of “in” as “in one spirit.” The verse, that we were all made to drink of one spirit argues for the standard use of “in.” We were all immersed in spirit, and made to drink of it (John 7:37-39).

**12:28. “tongues.”** For a much fuller explanation of speaking in tongues, see commentary on 1 Cor. 14:5.

**12:30.** “Do all speak in tongues?” Speaking in tongues is a manifestation of the gift of holy spirit, and therefore every Christian has the God-given ability to speak in tongues. Nevertheless, many do not, for different reasons. The key to understanding this verse is realizing that the things listed (tongues, interpretation, and healing) are manifestations of holy spirit that some people are especially gifted at or are energized to do in the Church. It is a matter of fact that everyone does not speak in tongues or interpret, or heal, even though technically they have the spiritual power and ability to do so. For more on speaking in tongues, see commentary on 1 Cor. 12:10 and 14:5.

**13:1** “speak with the tongues.” For information on speaking in tongues, see commentary on 1 Cor. 12:10 and 14:5.

**“sounding brass.”** Trumpets and horns were made of brass in the Roman world, so the “sounding brass” [horn] which was loud and penetrating is contrasted with the clanging cymbal. The word clanging is onomatopoeic. “*Alalazon*” was used of a wail or a battle cry.

**13:8.** “Where there is knowledge.” The reference in the context, which mentions the manifestations of prophecy and speaking in tongues, is to “a message of knowledge.” Paul would assume that since the OT prophecies said that “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9), and he will go on to say that we will know even as we are known, that “knowledge” will not pass away, but the manifestation of “a message of knowledge” (1 Cor. 12:8) will pass away. We felt this so compelling, and have seen such confusion regarding it, that we added the italics to clear up the point.

**14:1.** “Diligently pursue.” The Greek word is *diokō* (#1377 δι□κω), “to follow with haste, and presumably with intensity of effort” (Louw & Nida Greek Lexicon); to move rapidly and decisively toward an objective (BDAG). In light of the definition and context, we felt “diligently pursue” was better than just “pursue.”

“**spiritual things.**” The word “spiritual” is *pneumatikos* (#4152 πνευματικ□ς), which is an adjective, so most translations supply “gifts” as the noun that “spiritual” modifies. However, the spiritual things that Christians are to pursue are clearly including the manifestations of the spirit, such as tongues, interpretation, and prophecy, which are “manifestations,” not gifts (although they are regularly miscalled “gifts”).

Most Christians commonly use the word “gifts” to describe what the Bible calls “manifestations” of the spirit, and this causes problems in Christianity. What is the difference between a gift and a manifestation? A gift is individually given, and no one has a gift unless it was given to him. A manifestation is an evidence, a showing forth, of something that a person already has. There are spiritual gifts, which include holy spirit, God-given ministries such as that of an apostle or a prophet, and the gift of everlasting life (Rom. 6:23). But the nine manifestations are not gifts, and calling them “gifts” can have a negative effect on the quality of believers’ lives.

If a person believes that he will be given at most only one of the manifestations (which is the most common teaching about the “gifts of the spirit”), then to him there is no difference between a gift and a manifestation. The major problem that occurs when the manifestations of holy spirit are thought to be “gifts” is that it causes many Christians to be spiritually passive. Instead of realizing that they can use each of the nine manifestations, some believers wait on God, hoping that one day He will give them the “gift” of tongues, or the “gift” of something else. Such people are waiting for something they already have! They may even plead with and beg God, and end up disappointed with Him for not answering their prayers. Christians need to know that they have received the power of holy spirit, and that God is waiting for them to act.

The theology of Bible translators is in large part responsible for people thinking that the manifestations of the spirit are gifts. Notice how often the word “gift,” “gifts,” or “gifted” appears in most translations of 1 Corinthians 12-14. Yet not one of these uses of “gift” is in the Greek text.

- 1 Corinthians 12:1a—Now about spiritual **gifts**, brothers....”
- 1 Corinthians 13:2a—If I have the **gift** of prophecy....”
- 1 Corinthians 14:1—Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual **gifts**, especially the **gift** of prophecy.
- 1 Corinthians 14:12—So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual **gifts**, try to excel in **gifts** that build up the church.
- 1 Corinthians 14:37a—If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually **gifted**....”

It is easy to see why the average Christian thinks of prophecy and the other manifestations as “gifts.” It is difficult to read most versions of the Bible and come away with an accurate understanding of it when the translators have followed their theology instead of the reading of the Greek and thus distorted the clear reading of the text. One good thing about the King James Version, American Standard Version, and New American Standard Version is that the translators italicized many words that are not in the Hebrew or Greek text, but which they added in an attempt to clarify what a verse

says. In today's English writing words are sometimes italicized for emphasis. A Christian reading those versions needs to remember that the italicized words are not being emphasized, they were **added** to the original text.

**“prophecy.”** The Greek word is *propheteuō* (#4395 προφητεῖω), the verb “prophecy.” Although it is in a *hina* clause, in this case and context the *hina* is not “in order that” but rather just a statement; “that you prophesy” (Lenski), or even just “to prophesy” (*The Source New Testament*; A. Nyland).

**14:2. “for no one understands.”** The phrase, “for no one understands,” is an accurate translation of the Greek text. The point the verse is making is that when someone speaks in tongues, he does not understand what he is saying. Many versions add the word “him” at the end of the phrase, saying “for no one understands **him**.” Adding the word “him” when it is not in the Greek text changes God's intended meaning, and causes the verse to be in error. There are times, such as in Acts 2 and as has been reported in Christian history, when someone in the audience will understand what another person says in tongues. Thus, if 1 Corinthians 14:2 is made to say that no one listening to someone speaking in tongues will ever understand what the speaker is saying, it creates a contradiction in Scripture, and confuses people who want to be able to read and understand the Bible. 1 Corinthians 14:2 is very clear: when it comes to an individual speaking in tongues, “no one understands,” that is, no one will understand what he himself is saying. This is also what 1 Cor. 14:14 says: “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”

**“by the spirit.”** The Greek text simply has “*pneuma*” (spirit) in the dative case, *pneumati* (πνεύματι), which in this case would mean, “by spirit” or more fully, “by way of the spirit.” God, or the Lord Jesus Christ, gives the divine language (speaking in tongues) to the person syllable by syllable, word by word. The person speaks out what the Lord gives him as it comes to him from the Lord, speaking word by word. The individual speaking does not know the language, it is “tongues” to him.”

**14:3. “speaks unto men.”** Some have used 1 Cor. 14:3 to teach that there must be at least 3 people present to manifest interpretation of tongues or prophecy. They claim this verse limits us to speak unto “men” (plural), and God does not intend prophecy or interpretation to be done with only one other individual present. But this teaching is misguided. The word “men” can be used in a generic sense, referring to mankind; or it can be used numerically, referring to men (plural) instead of just “a man” (singular). In 1 Cor. 14:1-3, it can be easily seen that the word “men” is generic (mankind) and does not refer to the number of people present. “Men” is being contrasted with “God.” Prophecy is “to people” and interpretation is “to God.”

We can prophesy or interpret if there is anyone to listen, even just one person. We can demonstrate this is accurate by examining Scripture. Although there was no interpretation before the day of Pentecost, there was prophecy. According to the idea that “men” in 1 Corinthians 14:2 meant more than one man, it would then follow that no one who gave a genuine prophecy ever gave it to just one man. But when we examine prophecy, we discover that prophecy was often spoken to just one man, such as when Samuel gave Saul a prophecy with no one else around (1 Sam. 9:26-10:8), or when Nathan gave David a prophecy--in that case, others were there, but the prophecy was only to David. So prophecy can definitely be to just one “man.”

The point of 1 Corinthians 14:1-3 is not to limit our manifesting to when we have

a group, but rather to point out that when we speak in tongues it is “to God” and not “to mankind,” and when we prophesy it is “to mankind,” not “to God.”

**“Edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”** Each of these is equally important, a point that God makes clear through the Figure of Speech *polysyndeton*, or “Many Ands.” Proper grammar would have only one “and,” after exhortation.

**14:4.** We have translated the *de* as “while” (Cp. Lenski). The *de* is a soft contrast, and the fact is that both tongues and prophecy edify. So *while* the tongues speaker edifies himself, the prophet edifies the church.

**14:5. “want.”** The Greek word is *thelō* (#2309  $\theta\lambda\omega$ ), and in this context it means “want or desire.” It does not mean “wish” in the sense of “a desire for something generally unattainable,” as “I wish I had a billion dollars.” It can mean “wish” if “wish” is understood to mean “want” or “desire,” but since we generally use “wish” to mean a desire for something we generally cannot have or that is unlikely, “wish” is not a good translation here. Speaking in tongues is a manifestation of the spirit, and anyone who has the spirit, which means anyone who is saved, has the spiritual ability to speak in tongues. God never forces people to speak in tongues; we must operate the manifestation ourselves and speak. Thus it takes personal desire, and proper instruction, to speak in tongues, which explains why God wants Christians to do it but most do not. “Want” is a very good translation here, as seen in the RSV, ESV, etc., and “would like” is good too, as seen in the NIV and NRSV.

**“speak in tongues.”** Speaking in tongues is a manifestation of holy spirit that contributes greatly to the quality of our lives as Christians. Before we see what speaking in tongues is, it is helpful to examine five things it is not.

• **Speaking in tongues is not: 1)** It is not a “gift.” No properly translated verse of Scripture calls speaking in tongues a gift. It is one of the “manifestations” of the gift holy spirit. **2)** It is not gibberish, babble, or a made-up language. Some languages sound strange to our ears, but the Word of God assures us that genuine speaking in tongues is indeed a language of men or angels. **3)** It is not speaking a language you already know. When a person speaks in tongues, he does not know the language he is speaking. The Bible says, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful” (1 Cor. 14:14, cp. 14:2).

**4)** It is not designed for missionary work. The language people speak when they speak in tongues is not chosen by the person speaking, it is given by the Lord via the gift of holy spirit. The Bible gives many reasons Christians should speak in tongues, and missionary work is not one of them. Furthermore, there is no record in Scripture where anyone used speaking in tongues to do missionary work. That idea came from the early Pentecostal movement when God, apparently to show people that speaking in tongues was not gibberish, gave known languages to people as they spoke in tongues, just as he did on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). For example, when Agnes Ozman manifested speaking in tongues, she spoke in Chinese (Roberts Liardon, *God's Generals*, p. 119). Upon hearing known foreign languages, people listening assumed speaking in tongues was for mission work.

**5)** Speaking in tongues is not “dead,” “gone,” or “passed away.” Some Christians believe that it was only for the early Church and is now gone, but that cannot be the case. Tongues is prayer in the spirit, is giving thanks well to God, is proof of one’s salvation, and more. Surely these things are as necessary in the Church today as they were in the

first century. 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 says that speaking in tongues will pass away when “that which is perfect is come,” and when we know even as we are known. “That which is perfect” is the Lord Jesus Christ, as verse 12 makes clear when it says we will be “face to face” with him. Furthermore, we will know as we are known only when the Lord comes, and until then we will continue to know “in part” (1 Cor. 13:12).

• **Speaking in tongues is:** Let us now look at 15 different and important things about speaking in tongues. **1)** Speaking in tongues is a Christian speaking a language that he does not understand, a language that has been given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ via the gift of holy spirit. **2)** It is something God wants us to do. “Now I want all of you to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 14:5, see commentary there). The late J. E. Styles, a Charismatic teacher who led many people into speaking in tongues during his ministry, wrote, “From our own experiences, and from the testimony of many others, both ministers and laymen, we are convinced that every Spirit-filled child of God should speak with tongues every day in his own private prayer life” (J. E. Styles, *The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Fleming H. Revell Company), pp. 37, 38).

**3)** It is the absolute proof to a Christian that he is saved, born again, and guaranteed everlasting life in Paradise. Speaking in tongues is supernatural, i.e., it is beyond man’s natural ability. It is a God-given ability made possible by the presence of holy spirit that is born inside each Christian. No non-Christian can speak in tongues. Because speaking in tongues is a manifestation of holy spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-10), the only people who can speak in tongues are those who have holy spirit, and every Christian was sealed with holy spirit when he believed (Eph. 1:13). **4)** Speaking in tongues makes a person operate the most basic principle of the Christian walk, which is trusting and obeying the Word of our heavenly Father. God says to speak in tongues, but to do so a Christian must have faith that what God says is true, and then he must walk out on that faith and obey what God says. **5)** It is a witness of the resurrection of Christ to the believer, and also a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22).

**6)** It is speaking a language of men or of angels (1 Cor. 13:1) which explains why there are so many tongues that are not known human languages. **7)** It is speaking to God, not to men (1 Cor. 14:2). **8)** It is speaking sacred secrets (the Greek word *mysterion* means “sacred secret,” not “mystery,” and it is translated “sacred secret” in *Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible*). It is a blessing and a privilege for Christians to be able to speak sacred secrets to God by speaking in tongues. **9)** It is speaking the wonders of God (Acts 2:11). On the Day of Pentecost, the tongues the Lord gave the apostles to speak could be understood by the audience, and even the skeptics had to admit that the apostles were speaking the wonders of God. **10)** It is praise to God (Acts 10:46; 1 Cor. 14:16 and 17). **11.)** It is giving thanks to our Heavenly Father (1 Cor. 14:17).

**12.)** It is prayer in the spirit (1 Cor. 14:14 and 15). It is very important to realize that speaking in tongues is prayer in the spirit. Sometimes Christians call fervent or emotional prayer “prayer in the spirit,” but in the Bible that phrase refers only to speaking in tongues. **13)** It builds up the one speaking (1 Cor. 14:4; Jude 20). It does not build up the speaker by him understanding what he said, because he does not understand his own tongue. It build him up in his faith and in his spiritual sensitivity, because the words have to come from the spirit to his mind.

**14.)** It is under the speaker’s control. If the person does not “speak,” i.e., move his mouth, his tongue, and make the sounds, he will not speak in tongues. A Christian

speaking in tongues can start and stop when he wants to. He can speak loudly or softly, he can sing or shout in tongues. Since it is under the speakers control, it can be misused and operated incorrectly. This is why the Word has directions in 1 Corinthians 14 to how to speak in tongues correctly. For example, there is no profit in someone standing up in front of a group and speaking in tongues, because those listening will not understand the tongue and the speaker will be speaking “into the air” (1 Cor. 14:6-9). Similarly, if the whole church has gathered and everyone is speaking in tongues at the same time, if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in, he will probably say you are all out of your mind (1 Cor. 14:23). One thing we need to be aware of is that on rare occasions a person who is demonized (“possessed”) will be taken over by the demon and forced to speak in a language they do not understand (demons know angel languages). This is not speaking in tongues, the counterfeit can be recognized because it is never under the control of the speaker.

**15)** Speaking in tongues is primarily designed for one’s personal edification and use, but it is also to be utilized in a gathering of Christians by following it with its companion manifestation, the interpretation of tongues, so that the Church is edified by one’s praise to God. Speaking in tongues followed by the interpretation of tongues enables each believer to obey God’s exhortation to “...strive to excel in building up the church” (1 Cor. 14:12, ESV).

• **How does a person speak in tongues? 1)** Remember that God would not ask you to do something you cannot do. He clearly says, “I would like every one of you to speak in tongues” (1 Cor. 14:5). **2)** Act. Open your mouth and utilize the mechanics of speech, but do *not* speak English or any other language you know. What you will be speaking is whatever language the Lord chooses to give you. The only way to fail is to not speak. Do not wait for the Lord to give you a sentence. The syllables form as you speak them. The water did not become firm for Peter before he stepped on it, but as he stepped. It is the same with speaking in tongues. **3)** Keep speaking even if it seems strange. You are not used to speaking words without understanding them, but that is what you have to do to speak in tongues. Practice makes it easier. **4)** You may tend to repeat the same syllables or words over and over. Although that is speaking in tongues, it is not the developed language that you should desire. Remember that **you** are doing the speaking, so relax and let the Lord help you expand your vocabulary with different sounds.

**5)** Overcome any fears you have about it. Some people do not speak in tongues due to a fear about it, so overcome your fears. One common fear people have is that they will not really speak in tongues, but instead will have some kind of counterfeit. God never warns us about counterfeit tongues, so we should not worry about that. When a Christian is speaking words he does not understand, and is in control of his mouth, then he is speaking in tongues (cp. Luke 11:13). Another common fear people have is that they are making up the language they are speaking. Speaking in tongues is part supernatural and part natural; part spirit and part flesh because the language comes via the spirit but we have to use our flesh to speak. In fact, some Christians do not speak in tongues even when they know it is God’s will because they expect God to speak through them, i.e., take over their mouths and make them speak. He will not do it. The Bible says the Christian does the speaking. Thus, it may feel like you are making up the language, but as you speak more and more, and the language starts to really flow out of you, you

will realize there is no way you could be making it up. Keep speaking and let the language develop. Some people are afraid of “sounding stupid.” Nothing that comes from the Lord is ever “stupid.” We should be very thankful for whatever language the Lord gives us. Some people are afraid to try to speak in tongues because they are afraid they are not good enough. Since speaking in tongues is a manifestation of holy spirit, if you are saved then you already have holy spirit and can therefore speak in tongues. Remember also that speaking in tongues is prayer and praise in the spirit. No one is not good enough to pray and praise God, so get speaking in tongues!

**14:6.** “How” = *ti*, “for what reason.” (RSV).

“speaking in tongues.” Speaking in tongues is a language of men or angels, and it is not understood by the speaker or anyone speaking the same language or languages he speaks. The manifestation of interpretation of tongues is for the edification of the congregation. For more on speaking in tongues, see commentary on 1 Cor. 12:10 and 14:5.

**“revelation.”** For what “revelation” is, see commentary on Galatians 1:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:8.

**14:7.** Lifeless = without *psuche*, soul-less (occurs only here in the NT).

**14:9.** “a message.” *Logos* can be what is said, a message (see Interlinear by Brown and Comfort). “Easy to understand” or clear. *Zodhiates*.

**14:10.** “Voices, voiceless” Not just “languages.” That is not the word here, although some commentators think that *phonai* means “languages.” However, then the verse makes no sense: there are many kinds of languages, and none languageless (see Lenski). The “voice” can refer to individual human voices (explains better “it may be,” not trying to set any number), and no voice is “voiceless,” i.e., without sound.

**14:12.** “zealous for spirits, *spiritual utterances*.” In both Greek and Hebrew, the word translated “spirit” (Hebrew: *ruach*; Greek: *pneuma*) has many meanings. In this verse and a number of others in both the Old and New Testaments, the word “spirits” is put by the figure of speech metonymy for the manifestations produced by the spirit. In other words, “spirits” means “manifestations of the spirit,” which would include speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, etc. Lenski correctly understands that “spirits” refers to the manifestations of the spirit, “This term ‘spirits’ designates the different manifestations of the one Holy Spirit [holy spirit] in the individual Christians.” Understanding that “spirits” can mean the manifestations of holy spirit is essential to understanding a number of verses in the Bible. For example, this same use of “spirits,” is used in 14:32; 1 John 4:1, 2, 3; 2 Thess. 2:2, 8; Isa. 11:4 (translated “breath” in most versions)

The people in Corinth were very zealous for spiritual power. When they came together, everyone had a tongue (i.e., everyone spoke in tongues in the congregation), an interpretation, or a revelation (14:26). Although their zeal needed to be tempered, they were in the spot that most Christians should be: zealous to use the spiritual power God has given us. Too many Christians are content not to utilize the spiritual power they have.

1 John 4:1 says, “do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits” and since the context is false prophets, the word “spirits” in that verse (and verses 2 and 3) also primarily refer to prophecies. The exhortation in 1 John is that Christians should not just believe every prophecy and spiritual utterance, but test them to see if they are from God. This is necessary because many false prophets are gone into the world, and thus the

information that every prophecy that acknowledges that Jesus has come in the flesh is from God, while those prophecies that do not are not from God. We do need to acknowledge that the use of “spirit” for “utterances of the spirit” also leaves the door open for the word “spirit” to be a literal reference to the “spirit” (the gift of holy spirit or the demon) that is producing the prophecy.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 is another place where “spirit” primarily refers to a prophecy, and Paul warns the church at Thessalonica not to be unsettled or alarmed by a prophecy that the Day of the Lord has already come (see note there).

2 Thessalonians 2:8 says the Lord will kill the lawless one by the “spirit” (*pneuma*) from his mouth.” There again we see the use of “spirit” is a reference to the prophetic word. Although we do not fully understand it, it is clear that Christ is prophesying and destroys the lawless one by the “spirit,” the powerful spiritual utterance, that he speaks. In the beginning God created the universe by speaking it into being (Genesis 1) and after his resurrection Jesus received all power and authority from God (Matt. 28:18). Thus it makes perfect sense that Jesus could destroy the wicked by a prophetic word, an utterance with true spiritual power. This is also foretold in Isaiah 11:4, which says, “He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath [ruach; “spirit”] of his lips he will slay the wicked.” The phrase, “rod of his mouth” is the genitive and can be translated, “rod from his mouth,” and similarly “spirit of his lips” can be translated “spirit from his lips,” i.e., the spiritual utterance from his lips.

The prophetic word coming from the mouth of Jesus Christ is portrayed as a sword coming out of Christ’s mouth in Revelation 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21. We are told in Ephesians 6:17 that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

**14:13.** “so that.” The person prays (speaks in tongues) so that he can interpret.

**14:15.** The opening phrase is difficult in English. The NIV has the sense, “What shall I do then?” The same phrase is in Acts 21:22. See NASB there.

**14:16.** “Otherwise.” The Greek word is *epei* (#1893  $\square\pi\epsilon\square$ , pronounced, “ep-ā), which is a marker of time, cause, or reason. Here it is a marker of reason, and a very important one, because it links verses 15 and 16 together and shows that it is not proper for someone to “bless” (bless and praise God) with the spirit (i.e., by speaking in tongues) in the congregation unless that person interprets. If there is no interpretation, the people do “not know what you are saying.” Thus although it is possible to “pray with the understanding” and “sing with the understanding” without it being an interpretation, in this context that is the most important emphasis.

**14:18.** “speak in tongues.” For more on speaking in tongues, see commentary on 1 Cor. 12:10 and 14:5.

**14:21.** Quoted from Isaiah 28:11, 12.

**14:23.** “speaks in tongues.” For more on speaking in tongues, see commentary on 1 Cor. 12:10 and 14:5.

“**raving mad.**” The translation “raving mad” (some versions read, “mad,” or “out of your mind”) is an attempt to represent the Greek text in this context of public worship, which, unfortunately, cannot be easily translated into English. In the Greek pagan worship, it occasionally happened that the devotees were taken over by demons and acted in a frenzied, frantic, raving manner. The New Testament scholar, C. K. Barrett, writes: “*You are mad...* does not mean, You are suffering from mental disease, but, You are possessed...” (C. K. Barrett, *Black’s New Testament Commentary: The First Epistle to*

*the Corinthians*). God wants to prevent confusion in Christian fellowships. He never wants people who attend church to think that the congregation has been taken over by demons and gone into a religious frenzy. He makes it clear that what is done in the service "...must be done for the strengthening of the church" (1 Cor. 14:26b).

**14:24.** "Convinced" by all. The Greek word *elegcho* is hard to translate here. We went with "convinced" because it is being contrasted to the ones who, upon seeing tongues, were not convinced but said the people were "raving mad" (actually, demonized). However, it also carries the meaning of being openly exposed, brought to light. In prophecy, the life of the person is often brought to light in a way that convinces them that God is among you.

**14:26. "revelation."** For what "revelation" is, see commentary on Galatians 1:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:8.

**14:27.** "the same one must interpret." The Greek for this phrase may be read two different ways—"one, as in anyone, must interpret," or "*the* one, he alone must interpret." Those who claim that a different person may interpret someone's tongue in an assembly favor the first reading. However, we will see that this creates problems with the context of chapter fourteen and is therefore most likely not the sense of the Greek. The underlying Greek text is composed of the word *heis*, (#1520 εἷς) which is the cardinal number one (however, we will see it is not always used in that simple manner) and the verb for "interpret," *diermenvuo* (#1329 διερμηνεύω), in the third person, singular, imperative mood. When the verb is put in this form it means, "he/she/someone must interpret."

We use the word *must* to indicate that this is a command. The imperative mood is better served by the English word 'must' rather than 'let,' as it is in some translations, because 'let' in English usually indicates passivity rather than activity of command. When we use the word 'let' we typically mean something like, "I am going to *let* you go rather than keep you here." This does not get the sense of the directive command that the imperative mood dictates. The English word 'must' communicates more clearly the idea that Paul is giving a command here.

Putting these two Greek words together we get "one must interpret." If this is taken to mean that one, as in anyone, can interpret the tongue, then this verse seems to go against what Paul has written up to this point on how tongues ought to be interpreted. There are three places prior to this verse where the practice of interpreting tongues is discussed. These are 1 Corinthians 14:5, 13, and 15-16:

1. Verse 5 tells us that a person who speaks in tongues is not edifying the church unless he interprets. This would seem to indicate that the person who speaks in tongues would be edifying the church if that same person (he) followed the tongues with an interpretation. According to normal Greek syntax, the logical antecedent for the verb "interpret" would be *ho lalon* ("The one speaking" in tongues).
2. Verse 13 instructs us that a person who speaks in a tongue should "pray" that he may interpret. This instruction seems clear that the same person who spoke in the tongue should be the one who interprets. In Greek, "the one speaking in tongues" is the subject of the verb "interpret."

3. Verses 15-16 begin with Paul rhetorically asking the question “What then should a person do?” regarding the proper place and practice of tongues and interpretation in the church assembly. He then answers the question by stating that it is proper to “pray/praise” with the spirit and then “pray/praise” with the understanding; otherwise people will not be edified because they will not understand the tongues (praying/praising with the spirit) by itself. The first word of verse 16 is a key to understanding Paul’s intent in these two verses. It is the word “otherwise.” Paul is saying that unless he follows his speaking in tongues with an interpretation others will not be edified. Verses 15-16 clearly indicate that Paul is teaching that the person who speaks in tongues should follow it with an interpretation. He says *I will pray with my spirit then I will pray with my understanding also*. Paul sets the example of the same person giving the interpretation.

It seems then that every verse to this point indicates that the person who gives the tongue ought to be the one to give the interpretation. This is strong evidence that we should not read Paul as going against this in verse 27. Instead, there is a legitimate alternative reading that clears up the apparent inconsistency. A closer look at the Greek word *heis* reveals that this word is not always used in the sense of the number one. Lenski states that, “There is no reason to stress εἷς to mean one person only for the two or the three speakers...” Gingrich’s Lexicon lists three different definitions for *heis* while Thayer lists five different definitions with numerous subcategories under each category. One of the definitions that Thayer provides in his second definition category is the usage of the word *heis* in the sense of ‘alone’ or ‘only.’ He cites Mark 2:7 as an example of this usage: “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (ESV). The word translated “alone” is the Greek word *heis*. It makes no sense to translate their statement, “Who can forgive sins but God one.” It is made clear by this verse that a legitimate Biblical usage of the Greek word *heis* meaning “alone” does exist. The sense is to indicate the “one and same” nature of the subject, *this one God only* can forgive sins.

If we bring this meaning back into 1 Corinthians 14:27 we get the following phrase, “he alone must interpret” or “this same one must interpret.” This sense put along with the rest of the verse would read as follows: “If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* two or three at the most, and in turn, and the same one must interpret.” This reading lines up with Paul’s earlier instruction in the chapter and actually prohibits the very activity which the contradictory reading promoted (i.e. someone else interpreting). We should note that if Paul had meant to teach that someone else should interpret the messages, he could have said it in many different and clearer ways. He could have used the following words instead of *heis*:

*tis* - this would have indicated that anyone could have given the interpretation.

*heteros* - this would have indicated that any other one could have given the interpretation.

*to autos* - this would have indicated that the same one should give all interpretations.

*hekastos* - this would have indicated that each one in turn should give his own interpretation after someone speaks in tongues.

However, verse 27 uses none of these words. It does use the word *heis*, which in contrast to these other words, shows that “the one and the same” one who spoke should interpret the message.

**14:28.** “But if there is no one to interpret.” This translation fits the context and follows versions such as the ESV, RSV, and NRSV. This verse is saying that if no one in the room has been instructed in interpretation or if no one desires to speak in tongues then interpret at that time, then instead of speaking in tongues out loud without interpretation, each person should just keep quiet.

This verse is not saying that the “interpreter” is a different person than the one who speaks in tongues. The phrase, “if there is no one to interpret” is a simple statement of fact--not a reference to another person. There are many people who speak in tongues and who do not interpret, as is clearly evidenced in congregations of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. So, it can happen that “there is no one to interpret” for several reasons. For one, people may not have been instructed in interpretation or may have even been taught that since they speak in tongues they cannot interpret. Or, people may not want to interpret because they are comfortable with just knowing how to speak in tongues. Or even that people may not feel like interpreting in that particular meeting. In each of these cases, there is “no one to interpret” in the room.

Far from showing that the person who interprets is different than the person who speaks in tongues, this verse is more evidence that the person speaking in tongues is the same person who must interpret. In a large congregation, especially with new people and visitors coming and going, how would anyone who might desire to speak in tongues know if someone else in the room was “an interpreter?” And since the Bible says not to speak in tongues in public worship without there being an interpretation, that would place a terrible burden on the person who becomes inspired to speak in tongues to be sure that someone in the room would interpret. The only real and practical way to be sure that if someone speaks in tongues there will be an interpretation is if the one who speaks in tongues is the same one who interprets. Both speaking in tongues and interpretation are manifestations of the gift of holy spirit (1 Cor. 12:10), and are both operated from the freewill and faith of the individual Christian. So when a Christian has been instructed in the use of the manifestations, and in faith wants to use them in a meeting as a blessing to the people there, he or she will speak in tongue and then interpret the message so the congregation can understand it.

**14:29. “do not forbid.”** In spite of this command, many congregations forbid people from speaking in tongues.

**“speaking in tongues.”** For more on speaking in tongues, see commentary on 1 Cor. 12:10 and 14:5.

**14:30. “revelation.”** For what “revelation” is, see commentary on Galatians 1:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:8.

**14:32.** “And spirits, *spiritual utterances*, from prophets are subject to prophets.” This verse has a primary interpretation, and some sub-themes. First, it is accurate as translated above. The text does not read, “the spirits” or “the prophets.” There are no definite articles. Second, “spirits” is the figure of speech metonymy for “spiritual utterances,” or prophecies, due to the fact that they originate from the spirit. Thus if this verse were to be expanded according to meaning, it would be: “The prophecies of prophets are subject to prophets.” That “spirits” refers to spiritual manifestations, prophecies, can be seen both

from this chapter and from a similar use in 1 John. For example, in verse 12, people are said to be “zealous for spirits.” In that verse, as in this one, “spirits” is put by metonymy for that which is produced by the spirit, which is the manifestation, or evidences of the spirit (see note on 14:12). Here in 14:32, the “spirits of,” is a genitive of origin, and should be understood as “spirit from,” or expanded as, “And spiritual manifestations, prophecies, from prophets are subject to prophets.”

Another example of this use of “spirits” is in 1 John 4:1: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” The context of 1 John 4:1 makes it clear that we are to test the “spirits,” the manifestations (specifically prophecies), **because** many false prophets are in the world, and thus there are many false prophecies (“spirits”) in the world. Then the context of 1 John 4 goes on about what the false prophets say (see note there). Another use of the word “spirits” in the sense of a prophetic word is 2 Thessalonians 2:2 (see note there).

**14:34, 35.** These verses are in brackets because the evidence is that they were not part of the original text, but were an early textual note that was copied into the text. It is more accurate to the original text to omit these verses when reading. As much as we dislike omitting a verse or verses that have been accepted as part of the text, it is honest to recognize that occasionally the biblical text was changed, and in this case there is good evidence that these two verses are an early addition to the text.

When scholars encounter a word (or words) that is in some ancient manuscripts but not in others, they have certain tests they apply to see whether the word was added to the original, or omitted from it. One test is the placement of the verses in the text. If a phrase is in the original text, then obviously, when it is omitted, it is always omitted from the same place. However, if a phrase is not in the original text, when a scribe adds it, another scribe may add it in a different place, or, thinking it does not fit, move it somewhere else. 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 do not appear in the same place in every manuscript of 1 Corinthians, which is one reason some scholars conclude they were added to the text by a copyist. Alan Johnson (*The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians*, p. 271), and Richard Hays (*A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: 1 Corinthians*, p. 247), are two such scholars.

Additions to the text often break the context and even cause contradictions, and that is the case here. Scholars have long noticed that 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 break the flow of the passage, which makes perfect sense without them. Verse 36 makes perfect sense after verse 33, because the prophets who spoke had a revelation (v. 30), but they still must listen to other prophets. The word of the Lord had not come “to you only,” i.e., only to those prophets. However, if we add verses 34 and 35, we create contradictions in the text.

One of the contradictions created by the addition of these verses is that there is no evidence any women thought the Word of God came to them only, as verse 36 asserts. There is nothing in Greco-Roman or Jewish culture, or in the context of these verses, that leads us to think that the women in Corinth asserted that the Word of God came only to them, or only out from them. The fact that the women of Corinth wore head coverings as a sign of the authority over them (1 Cor. 11:5) is evidence that they were not being rebellious or acting as if God was speaking only to them. Paul’s comment in verse 36 seems especially inappropriate if addressed to the women because it is harsher than a

simple statement, it is, as Robertson and Plummer point out, actually sarcasm (Robertson and Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 326).

Being sarcastic to the women is inappropriate and out of place. On the other hand, writing the phrase about the Word of God coming to “you only” would make perfect sense if it were written to one of the prophets. A prophet who got a revelation from God, as is indicated in verse 30, might have felt so strongly about his revelation that he might try to persuade the entire congregation of his point of view no matter how other prophets saw the situation. Since it can take a real jolt to convince a prophet to let go of his idea, if the sarcastic sentences in verse 36, and the phrase, “has it come to you only” is applied to the prophets in verses 29 and 30, they fit perfectly. That verse 36 applies best to the prophets of verse 30 and not to the women of verses 34 and 35, is powerful evidence that the verses about the women being silent were added.

The phrase about the women “asking their husbands” at home is more good evidence these verses were added to the text. Earlier in Corinthians the Word of God said, “But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I [Paul]” (1 Cor. 7:8 NASB). How “good” would it be to remain as a widow if it meant that you could not express yourself in the church and also had no husband at home to ask questions and represent you in the Church? It seems quite insensitive and disingenuous for God to say in chapter seven that it would be good for a woman to remain single and then in chapter 14 to say she cannot express her opinions in church, and to ask her “husband.”

Another problem with limiting women to asking their husbands is that not every husband could answer the questions of their wives. The wording of the text would leave the women who had no husbands, or whose husbands could not answer their questions, with no clear instruction about what God wanted them to do. Still another problem with “asking the husbands at home” is it unrealistically limits the reasons that women speak in meetings. Women speak in the church for a lot more reasons than just to ask questions so they will “learn.”

Another clear contradiction caused by 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 is that the women were in fact speaking in the first century Church. The immediate context mentions prophecy, and even scholars who believe that women should not lead or teach admit that God allows women to prophesy in the congregation. At the very start of the Church when the gift of holy spirit was poured out, Peter made it clear that both men and women would receive holy spirit, and both would prophesy (Acts 2:17-18). Since it is quite clear even from Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians that women could prophesy and pray openly in the church (1 Cor. 11:5), it makes no sense that Paul would immediately follow a verse about them prophesying with a verse saying they had to be “silent” and not speak.

But the women were regularly speaking up besides just giving prophecy. One verse that gives evidence for that is 1 Corinthians 14:26 (the word “brothers” is often used to refer to both men and women; cp. Matt. 25:40, Rom. 8:29, Eph. 6:23, Rev. 12:10). Both the context of 1 Corinthians 14:26 and its contents make it clear that everyone, not just the men, were speaking. As for women teaching in the Church, the fact that some of the Church Fathers spent time condemning teaching by women seems to be a good ancillary argument that they did teach, something confirmed in 1 Tim. 2:12, a

verse that has been historically mistranslated and misunderstood (see commentary on that verse). Furthermore, in the book of Revelation, the prophetess Jezebel is castigated because “she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit *acts of immorality* and eat things sacrificed to idols” (Rev. 2:20 NASB). It is important to note that she is not reprovved for teaching, but for teaching error.

Another very good piece of evidence that 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 was added to the text is the phrase, “as the Law also says.” Scholars have long had a problem with this phrase, because the Law does not say women should be silent. Commentators have tried very hard to justify Paul’s supposed statement by coming up with verses from the Law which would support the idea that women should be silent, and cited verses such as Genesis 2:20-24; 3:16, and Job 29:21, but these verses do not say women should be silent. In fact, there is nothing in the Law about women being “silent.” Would the actual Word of God contain a contradiction as blatant as this one seems to be. We say, “No.”

Another problem with 1 Corinthian 14:34 and 35 is that they contradict 1 Timothy 2:12 (This is true no matter how the verses in Timothy are translated or understood. When properly translated and understood, 1 Tim. 2:12 confirms that women can teach in the Church, see Catherine Clark Kroeger and Richard Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992), pp. 79-113, and also the commentary on that verse). As traditionally understood, however, 1 Timothy 2:12 says that women cannot teach. But 1 Timothy was written a decade or so after 1 Corinthians, and if Corinthians said that women could not even speak, then there is no logical reason that Timothy would be more lenient than the verses in Corinthians, perhaps even causing confusion in the Church. Timothy is a leadership epistle, and it is a general tenet of the leadership epistles that the directions within them are more specific and more stringent than the directions within the epistles written to the Church in general. Therefore, if 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35, which say women should not speak, are actually in the original text, it makes no sense that Paul would seem to water that down in Timothy and say the women could not teach. In reality, there was no confusion in the early Church because the verses we know as 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 were not in the original text.

Yet another piece of evidence that Paul did not write 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 is that those verses contain some vocabulary that is not characteristic of Paul. This is something that has been pointed out by a number of Greek scholars, and in and of itself would be a weak argument that the verses were not written by Paul. However, given the other weighty evidence that the verses were a scribal addition, the unPauline vocabulary is more evidence that leads us to the conclusion that the verses were not part of what Paul originally wrote (cp. Gordon Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1987), p. 702).

One thing that Christians can be thankful for is that when something is wrong with Christian doctrine, the spirit of God usually moves powerfully in people to overcome the problem. That certainly is the case when it comes to 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35. Perhaps no supposed command of God is as regularly ignored as this one. In churches and fellowship halls around the world, women speak up. Even in many denominations that do not allow women to teach the congregation, they are allowed to contribute before or after the sermon.

Their speaking up is even more apparent in the many house churches and cell groups that are being run all over the globe. In those small settings, women often openly share the Word of God, their testimonies, ideas, and opinions. This is important, because when Corinthians was penned by the Apostle Paul around the middle of the first century, house churches were the only “churches” that existed. Were first-century house church meetings so different from ours today? Could it be that a spirit of rebellion is running rampant in today’s Christian women who speak up in spite of the command not to, and Christian men either cannot seem to hear the spirit of God or are too spineless to force the women to be silent? That is not likely. It is much more likely that God did not tell the women to be silent in church, but rather that was the opinion of a copyist or scribe that years later became copied into the Bible, and the spirit of God is moving in people today to ignore that spurious command.

In spite of the evidence the verses were added, many scholars feel that 1 Cor. 14:34 and 35 are original, even though they are “difficult.” This has led to a large number of ways, some of them quite imaginative, that these verses have been explained. The explanations generally fall into two general categories. The first category is that the verses are literal and women should not speak at all in the Church, and the second is that women can speak, but with limitations as to who and when.

Commentators who fall into the first category, saying that women are to be silent in public worship, must explain the verses that say they can speak, and frankly they have been unsuccessful in doing that.

The second category of dealing with the verses is to say that it cannot be God’s true intention to have all women be silent and never speak, so therefore the verses must mean something other than what they literally say. Some commentators say that Paul only meant for these verses to apply in Corinth, but the actual language of the verses themselves does not support that conclusion. Some scholars say that these verses apply only to married women, but again, the verses do not say that, and besides, married women such as Prisca (or Priscilla in some versions) did lead in some ways and are commended by Paul. Other commentators say that these two verses were not Paul’s position at all, but that of people opposing him and that Paul was actually refuting that position. However, again, a straightforward reading of the verses does not show that. Some commentators say that the Greek word translated “speak,” *laleō*, refers to “chatter,” speaking that is not pertinent to the meeting. However, a study of *laleō* even in just the 34 times it is used in the epistle of 1 Corinthians, shows that it has a wide range of meaning, so saying it means “chatter” in this particular verse is just an arbitrary explanation without actual support. The truth of the matter is that there is no explanation of this verse that actually explains what the verse says in plain Greek (or English), which is strong evidence that the verse is not part of the original text in the first place.

In spite of much evidence that 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 were added to the text, we must still admit to the possibility that they were original. If they are original, then they need to be understood and acted upon like the other verses that are in the original text but are specifically applicable to the culture of the time when Paul wrote. What they say must be understood in a limited sense that would apply to the church at Corinth due to the customs and culture of the time. In that sense, they would be similar to other verses such as those that say women should wear a head covering when they pray or prophesy, or those that direct women not to cut their hair but leave it long. These are understood to

have applied to the church at Corinth but are not generally applicable today. If God authored these verses due to the specific circumstances of the first century, then it should be obvious that today, when women are as educated and equipped as men to minister in the church, they should be allowed to do so, especially since it is clear that there is neither male nor female in Christ. Thankfully, women are leading and teaching in the Church today, and the evidence from congregations around the globe is that they are as spiritually able to minister as the men.

Our Adversary, the Devil, has worked overtime to keep Christians from fulfilling their God-given calling. Let's not allow the Devil, or people who have been tricked by him, to limit the effectiveness of half of the Body of Christ by some mistranslations and misunderstood verses. Women have an important place in the Body of Christ and a calling on their lives, and the Church needs them fulfilling their ministries.

**14:38.** "If anyone does not acknowledge this, he is not acknowledged." (Cp. Lenski; NAB) If anyone in the congregation is hardhearted and does not acknowledge that what Paul was writing was the word and direction of the Lord, then that person should not be acknowledged in the Church as a leader, teacher, or spiritual person.

**14:39.** "do not forbid speaking in tongues." The Corinthian church needed instruction on the subject of the manifestations of holy spirit, which Paul provides in chapters 12-14. He clarifies the manifestations themselves in chapter 12, encourages people to manifest. He tells people to eagerly desire spiritual things (14:1), to speak in tongues (14:5; which means that not everyone was), and to seek to edify the church (14:12). Paul set the example for the Corinthians by saying that he spoke in tongues more than all of them combined (14:18), and he explained that tongues were a sign to unbelievers (14:22). In light of the clear command to not forbid speaking in tongues, it is astounding how many Christian denominations do exactly that, clearly contradicting the clear teaching of Scripture. Christians should take to heart the desire of God that is clearly expressed in 14:5: God wants every Christian to speak in tongues.

Due to the construction of the words in the verse, it sometimes gets suggested that this verse is the figure of speech Tapeinosis, or Understatement, and that what Paul is really saying is "Greatly encourage people to speak in tongues." Although God would like us to greatly encourage speaking in tongues, the evidence is that this is not the figure Tapeinosis. In considering whether or not a verse is a figure, we must keep in mind that the literal reading is always to be preferred if it makes sense in the context. In this case, the fact on his third missionary journey Paul had to write to the people of Corinth about the manifestations shows that the people had become unclear about them. After all, only a couple years earlier Paul would have instructed them about the manifestations when he was there for a year and a half (Acts 18:11). Nevertheless, division started in the Church (1 Cor. 1:10ff), and along with that came confusion about the manifestations. It got to the point that there were people who were not speaking in tongues, and apparently not eager to do so (hence the encouragement to speak in tongues and be eager about the manifestations). It is easy to see in that context that there even would have been some people trying to stop the speaking in tongues, just as there are today in the Church. In that context, a clear warning not to forbid speaking in tongues was necessary. This would put an end to any debate about whether or not the manifestations had a place in the Church. Also, in verse 38, Paul wrote that if a person did not acknowledge this instruction, he was not to be acknowledged as a spiritual person. Thus the people in Corinth were instructed

not to endlessly debate the issue with those who were defiant towards the power of God, but simply not acknowledge as leaders of people of authority anyone who stood in opposition to what Paul was teaching.

**15:1.** “making known to you.” This is the correct sense of the Greek, although the death and resurrection of Christ was fundamental, and something they should have known and boldly stood on. Some versions, such as the NIV, have translated this “I want to remind you,” but that seems to be missing the point of why Paul is wording this as he is. Yes, he wanted to remind them, but that is not what the text says. By saying, “I make known to you” something they already knew, he was mildly reproving them for not standing on what they knew. Grosheide writes: “The solemn beginning of this chapter must be understood against this background. I make known is not, “I remind you,” but “I make known emphatically” (cp. Gal. 1:11) (F. W. Grosheide, *The New International Commentary*).

**15:2.** “are being saved.” There are verses that say we have been saved (Eph. 2:8), verses that say we are being saved (1 Cor. 15:2), and verses that say we will be saved (Rom. 13:11). Our salvation is more than just our guarantee of everlasting life. We get that guarantee when we believe and are sealed with holy spirit (Eph. 1:13, 14), and because we believed we will be with Christ forever. However, a guarantee is not the actual thing, and the guarantee of salvation is not salvation in full. The verses that say we “have been saved” are using the idiom of the prophetic perfect (see note on “seated,” in Ephesians 2:6). “Salvation” is being rescued from this present evil world, and that is still future, and will occur when Christ comes and we get our new, everlasting bodies. Also, we “are being saved,” in the sense that our being rescued from this world is being worked out every day, and we are building both wholeness now and rewards in the future. It is in this light that if we “believed in vain (to no purpose)” we will have everlasting life (cp. 1 Cor. 3:11-15), but we will be in Paradise without the fruits and rewards of salvation-rewards which every believer would have earned if he had been serious about his salvation and obeying his God. Life is not to be wasted. God created us to do good works (Eph. 2:10), and people who hide their talent in the ground and do not use it for God’s purposes are “wicked, lazy” servants (Matt. 25:26).

**15:3.** “as of first importance.” The phrase *en prōtos* is literally “in the first place (or position), and in this context refers to what Paul thought was the most important. Paul is not remembering the very first thing he taught the Corinthians, but rather what he thought was most important.

**15:12.** “if Christ is preached.” A good example of the idiomatic Greek use of “if” meaning “since” (cp. Eph. 3:2). However, it is so well understood in English that Christ had been being preached that leaving the “if” does not cause confusion, and the sentence reads smoother with it left in.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “from among the dead.”

**15:15.** “in contradiction to God.” The Greek here for “contradiction” is from the preposition *kata* (#2596 κατά). BDAG defines *kata* as contradiction in this verse: “give testimony in contradiction to God” (def. b, β). Paul’s reasoning starts by assuming that God always knows the true position of things and speaks the truth. Supposing for argument’s sake that God did not in fact raise Christ, then God’s position would be that He did not raise him. And thus Paul would be testifying *against* God by saying He did

something He did not in fact do. Testifying against God in this sense would be to speak in contradiction to God.

**15:20.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among the dead.”

**15:20-28.** We believe the pronouns in verses 20-28 should be understood as follows:

<sup>20</sup>But in fact, Christ has been raised out from among *the* dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup>For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also *the* resurrection of *the* dead. <sup>22</sup>For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup>But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then those who are Christ’s, at his coming. <sup>24</sup>Then *comes* the end, when he (Jesus) delivers the kingdom to God, even the Father, after he (Jesus) abolishes all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup>For it is necessary for him (Jesus) to reign until he (Jesus) has put all these enemies under his (Jesus’) feet. <sup>26</sup>*The last enemy to be abolished—death!* <sup>27</sup>For he (God) has put all things in subjection under his (Jesus’) feet. But when it says, **All things have been put in subjection**, it is clear that the one (God) who subjected all things to him (Jesus) is not included. <sup>28</sup>And when all things have been subjected to him (Jesus), then the Son will subject himself to him (God) who subjected all things to him (Jesus), that God may be all in all.

**15:24.** “when... after.” This verse contains the Greek word *hotan* (#3752 ὅταν) twice, which we have rendered “when” and “after.” The proper translation of this word unlocks the temporal sequence of the end that Paul is revealing. *Hotan* is a temporal term that can signify either *simultaneous* action with the main clause or *prior* action to the main clause. The difference depends on the tense and mood of the verb that it modifies: “with the present subjunctive, when the action of the subordinate clause is contemporaneous with that of the main clause... with the aorist subjunctive, when the action of the subordinate clause precedes that of the main clause” (BDAG). Here in verse 24 the main clause is “then comes the end,” the action that is contemporaneous with the end is “when he delivers (present subjunctive) the kingdom to God,” and the action that is prior to the end (making the end “after” this) is “he abolishes (aorist subjunctive) all rule and all authority and power.” Paul is being very precise in revealing the order of events. First Christ abolishes all the powers, and then he delivers the kingdom to God, and this delivery is simultaneous with the end. The end is the *telos*, or end goal, the desired conclusion of the creation project. Compare BDAG’s definition of *telos*: the goal toward which a movement is being directed, *end, goal, outcome*.

**“abolishes all rule and all authority and power.”** Jesus is the one who abolishes all rule and all authority and power. He has the power and authority to do that, because God gave it to him (Matt. 28:18; John 5:21-29; Acts 2:34-36; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 2:9, 10; Heb. 1:3, 4; Jude 1:15; Rev. 1:18; 22:12). The rule, authority, and power refers to the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12); see also commentary entry on 15:25. Scripture teaches that there are angelic rulers and cosmic powers who hold certain authority in the universe, and that some of these powers are hostile to God (E.g., Dan. 10; Psalm 82; Matt. 24:29; Luke 4:6; Rom. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 6:12; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:3-10). Here, Paul is saying that Christ “abolishes” these positions of authority. This comes from the Greek word *katargeō* (#2673 καταργέω). BDAG gives the

following definitions for *katargeō*, all of which can adequately describe what Christ does to the angelic rulers, authorities, and powers: 1) to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness; hence invalidate or make powerless; 2) to cause something to come to an end or to be no longer in existence; hence abolish, wipe out, set aside. 3) to cause the release of someone from an obligation (one has nothing more to do with it); hence be discharged, be released.

All this authority has been transferred to Christ (Matt. 28:18) and he will discharge the demons of their rule, wipe out their authority, and render their power ineffective. But as Hebrews 2:8 makes clear, even though everything has been put under Christ's subjection, we do not yet see everything subjected to him. The powers are still in the heavenly places now (Eph. 6:12). It is not until the end that Christ takes his mighty power and begins to reign, starting with the war in heaven and the conquering of Satan and his minions (Rev. 11:15-18; 12:10).

**15:25.** "these enemies." The Greek has the definite article, literally, "the enemies." This refers to a particular set of enemies, namely the spiritual forces behind "all rule and all authority and power" just mentioned in verse 24. This echoes Ephesians 6:12 (ESV):

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers**, against the **authorities**, against the cosmic **powers** over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (emphasis added).

It is necessary for Christ to reign until all *these* enemies are put under his feet. (See also Hebrews 2:5-9, 1 Peter 3:22, and Revelation 11:15-18; 12:10).

**15:26.** "to be abolished." In the Greek this verb, *katargeo* (#2673 καταργέω), occurs in the present tense. It is an instance of the Prophetic Present, presenting a future reality as certain by speaking of it in the present tense. "This tense startles and arrests. It affirms and does not merely predict. It conveys a sense of certainty" (Lenski). This idiom uses a present tense verb, instead of a future tense verb, to express an action in the future, and by doing so emphasizes that the action is certain to come to pass, and usually quite soon (See note on Luke 3:9 for more on the prophetic present). In this case, the word "abolished" is in the present tense, and Young's Literal Translation has a very literal translation of the verse: "the last enemy is done away—death." Although Young's is very literal to the Greek text, and preserves the figure of speech in the verse, it can confuse the English reader who does not understand the idiom, because death has not yet been abolished. Nevertheless, the idiom gives great comfort to the knowledgeable reader who understands that God is communicating clearly that death will indeed be destroyed, and soon. However, most English versions use the English future tense, translating the verb in a way that does not confuse the reader. Thus, the NASB reads, "The last enemy that will be abolished is death."

**"death."** This is death, the absence of life, not just the death of the body. In the Garden of Eden, God said to Adam that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would "die" (Gen 2:17). God said "die," not "live forever in a bad place" (i.e., "hell"). When people die, they are "dead," and by definition, death is the absence of life. There are some people who assert that "death" means "separation," but that is not biblically correct. When a person "dies," he is not alive in any form or in any place, because God said he is dead. When it comes to things that we cannot know such as what happens when a person dies, we must trust that God has given us the answers in His

Word. Regarding “death,” The Bible uses the same Hebrew and Greek words for the “death” of humans, as for the death of animals and plants. There is no special word for the “death” of people that means “separation.” This shows us that “death” is the same for all of them--it is the total absence of life.

In the Garden of Eden, the Devil contradicted God and said that a person does not really die (Gen. 3:4). That same teaching, that when a person “dies,” only his body dies but his soul or spirit lives on, has continued down through the ages and is a very common belief. If we take the time to study the idea that people live on after they die we can see why the Devil and demons promulgate it and contradict God’s Word. For one thing, the teaching that a person does not really “die” (lose all life) when he dies waters down the value of living this life. If we actually are alive, but just in another form after we “die,” then dying is not that bad after all. In contrast, the Bible says death is an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26). It is hard to see how death could be an enemy if it sent us to a better place and put us with God, Jesus, and those who have gone before us. Another reason the Devil promotes that people are actually alive as a soul or spirit after they die is that if they are alive they can speak to us. The Devil and his demons do a very good job of impersonating dead people in séances, and use that and similar strategies to feed untrue and even harmful information to people who knowingly or unknowingly disobey God’s command in Deuteronomy 18:11, which is that trying to contact the dead is an abomination to God. Since dead people are dead, it is only demons impersonating the dead that ever answer those who seek advice from the dead.

One way the Devil has been successful fooling people into believing the dead are actually alive is by promoting the belief in an “immortal soul,” which lives on after the person dies. The soul is not immortal, and the phrase “immortal soul” does not appear in the Bible--only in Christian literature. The Bible is very clear that the soul can die and be destroyed (Matt. 10:28).

The Bible has many verses that show that when a person dies he is dead in every sense of the word. Living people can think, but dead people “know nothing” (Ecc. 9:5; Ps. 146:4). In fact “Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished” (Ecc. 9:6). Thus, death is referred to as “the land of oblivion” (Ps. 88:12). Living people have hope, while dead people, knowing nothing, have no hope, so the Bible says “a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Ecc. 9:4). In fact, in death, “there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom” (Ecc. 9:10; cp Ps. 6:5). There is no profit in the death of a believer, because when he dies, he will no longer be able to praise God or testify about Him (Psalm 30:9; 88:10; 115:17; Isa. 38:18). The dead person has no consciousness and the body decays and disappears, so Job said that when he died, “I shall lie in the earth; you [God] will seek me, but I shall not be” (Job 7:21). People die just as animals do (Ps. 49:12-14), but God promises that people will be raised from the dead. The reason they must be raised from the dead is because they are dead, not alive.

The Bible compares death to sleep many times, because just like in sleep, the dead person is not aware of the passage of time or what is happening on earth, but like in sleep, the dead person will be awakened at the resurrection (cp. Job. 14:12; Ps. 13:3; John 11:11-14; Acts 13:36).

If people are really dead, as the Bible says, then the way to get them up from the dead is a resurrection. That is why 1 Corinthians 15:18 says that if there is no resurrection, the people have “perished,”--they will stay dead forever. Many verses in the

Bible speak of the resurrections, when all the dead people will be given life again and raised from the ground. Isaiah 26:19 speaks of the earth giving birth to her dead. Daniel 12:1 and 2 speak of the dead people who are now sleeping in the dust of the earth awakening to the judgment. Revelation 20:5 and 6 speak of the first resurrection, and those who did not get to be in it. All through the Bible dead people are said to be dead, not alive, and in the resurrection, the actual people, not merely their bodies, come to life. Psalm 49:15 says that God will redeem people from the grave. Jesus taught that the people in the grave would hear his voice and get up (John 5:28, 29). It is important that we pay attention to the fact that none of the verses that speak of resurrection say that only the body will get up because the soul is already alive. It is “people,” not just “bodies,” who are given life and raised up out of the graves (Ezek. 37:9-14).

One of the reasons people do not believe that the dead are actually dead is that sometimes the dead “appear” to people. We call these encounters apparitions, and while it might be possible for God to make a dead person appear, this seems very unlikely since God was the One who forbid us to speak to the dead. Demons can and do impersonate the dead to further the Devil’s agenda that dead people are actually alive. Demons can affect the environment and cause noise or movement, cold or hot spots, or “hauntings,” and in basically the same way they can cause “ghosts” of different clarity to appear, including impersonating dead people. Examples of this in the Bible include Job 4:15 and 1 Samuel 28:13-19 (What appeared to the medium at Endor was not Samuel, but a demon. It cannot be that a medium can make a godly man come from the dead and speak to the living in disobedience to God. The demon is called “Samuel” because it impersonated him so well).

Another reason people believe that the soul or spirit goes on living after a person dies is because of what is referred to as “near death” experiences. In these experiences, people who have clinically “died,” or been close to death, have seen what they report as the afterlife. There are a number of explanations why this could happen. First, God can and does raise the dead, and although there is no record of a “near death” experience in the Bible, it is possible that a person would die and God both raise him from the dead and give him a vision of part of our glorious future life. God has given people visions of the life to come. Abraham, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, and John are some of the people who were given extraordinary information or visions about the future life. Thus it is quite possible that some of the people who have had “near death experiences” have had God-given visions of the next life to help them and others overcome their fear of dying and encourage them concerning the Hope. The mistake these people make is that they assume they would go to this future place, to “heaven,” right away. But the vision of God never promises that. The vision John had of the future that he wrote in the book of Revelation seemed very real to him, and we can imagine that someone seeing that might think that if he died he would be part of it right at that time, but it has been 2000 years and it has not happened yet.

Another reason people could have “near death” experiences is due to demonic visions. Demons can give people hallucinations and visions, and it makes perfect sense that they would do that as part of their overall agenda to promote that people are not actually dead when they die. Also, part of the Devil’s agenda is to make God seem cruel and thus cause people to misunderstand God, or be afraid of Him, or even ignore the things of God altogether. Some of the more terrifying visions of “hell” that some people

claim to have had clearly contradict the loving nature of God, and the Bible only describes Gehenna as a lake of fire into which the unsaved are thrown and then burn up, not as a multi-level torture chamber.

Still another reason some people have “near death” experiences is simply due to how the mind works. We are all familiar with the “dream-like” state that can occur to a person just before he falls asleep or just when he is waking up, at which time the mind can blend thoughts and dreams, and thought-images can seem very real and yet not be. Most people have ideas about the next life that have been implanted in their minds from their culture or religion, and it is reasonable that many times these would surface if the body was close to death or the mind thought death was imminent. We have instruments that can measure the activity of life in a person, the electricity the body produces, brain wave activity, etc., but no scientist would say that our instruments are sensitive enough to pick up the exact moment of death--they are not that sensitive. So a third cause of “near death” experiences is simply the mind imagining those things at a time when it is not fully capable of separating fact from fiction, imagination from reality.

It is also important to note that not one person in the Bible who was raised from the dead said anything about the afterlife. This includes people who had been dead for hours or days such as the Shunammite woman’s son (2 Kings 4:35), the man from Nain (Luke 7:15), the synagogue leader’s daughter (Mark 5:42), and Lazarus, who had been dead four days (John 11:39, 44). If they experienced anything good or bad after they died, surely they would have talked about it. The fact that they did not, and no one even asked them, is good biblical evidence that nothing happens in death--no thoughts or experiences--there is just the absence of life.

The Bible is full of examples of people, like Eve, who trusted what they thought and felt more than God’s Word, with disastrous results. God has made it clear in His Word that when a human dies, he is dead. We dare not abandon the clear teaching of Scripture, especially when the Devil has such a clear agenda to undermine it, because of what we see in the physical world. There are godly explanations for what we see, including near death experiences.

For more information on the dead being dead and not alive in any form, see, Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *Is There Death After Life*. For information on people being annihilated in hell and not burning forever, see note on Revelation 20:10.

**15:27.** Quoted from Psalm 8:6.

**“it says.”** Some versions translate this “he says” (KJV; ASV; NASB), which would make God the first person speaker being quoted. Although it is true that God inspired the Scripture and is its author, in this instance Paul is dealing with the biblical text of Psalm 8:6 where the Psalmist, as the narrator, is speaking of God; it is not God who is speaking in the first person. This is a quote of the narration of Scripture and should be handled as it often is by preachers and teachers who say, “the Bible says...it says,” not “the Bible says...He says.”

**15:28.** “subject himself.” The form of this verb, *hupotasso* (#5293 ὑποτάσσω), can either be passive (“be subjected” [NIV; ESV; NASB]) or be a middle future, “the son will subject himself” (Lenski; Robertson, *Grammar*). The latter translation makes sense, that the son subjects himself. In every other use in this context, the active or passive of “subject” refers to the use of force, but that certainly does not apply to the Son, who out

of love for His Father and of his own free will subjects himself after all enemies are subjected by force.

**15:32.** Quoted from Isaiah 22:13.

**15:40** Some versions use the adjectives, “celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial” (which contrasts the earth with the planets) while some use the adjectives “heavenly bodies and earthly bodies,” which places contrast more on heaven and earth. The immediate context does have “sun, moon, and stars,” which favors “celestial” and “terrestrial,” but the chapter is all about the resurrection of the dead, which is about the difference between our earthly body and the heavenly body we will have. Also, there is no reason that angels and other spirit beings are not included in the “heavenly bodies” description, and planets and stars are in fact “heavenly bodies,” so that is the way we have gone in our translation.

**15:44.** “Soul body.” The phrase “soul body” seems awkward, but is important. The importance is in the contrast between *psuche*, (soul) and *pneuma* (spirit). This contrast is complicated by the fact that *psuche* has so many possible meanings. However, the bodies we will have at the Rapture will be like Christ’s glorious body (Phil. 3:21). Scripture makes it clear that Jesus’ resurrected body was not a “spirit body,” i.e., without flesh and bones, but did in fact have both flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). The reason that Christ’s body is called a “spiritual” body is that it comes from God, who gave it new life, and also because Christ’s new body is empowered by a different spiritual force (*pneuma*) than our flesh bodies, which are powered by *psuche* (“soul”).

If we are going to translate *psuche* as “natural,” then we should translate *pneuma* as “supernatural,” but even though that is true, it misses the point. Just as we are sown in “dishonor” and raised in “honor” so we are sown in death as the soul body that all mankind has had since Adam, but are raised with a new type of body, not one without flesh and bones, but one that is a *pneuma* body, a spirit-powered and spirit-enabled body. Because Jesus, upon being raised from the dead, has a spiritually powered body, he is called “the Spirit,” in Romans 8:26 and 27, 2 Corinthians 3:17 and 18; Revelation 2:7, 11 (cp. 8), 17, 29 (cp. 18); 3:6, 13, 22 (cp. 14).

**“If there is.”** The condition assumed to be true. We could have translated this as “Since there is,” but because it is clear that there is a soul body, we left the “if” in place.

**15:45.** Quoted from Gen. 2:7.

“life-giving.” There is so much in the phrase that Jesus is a “life-giving” spirit. The primary meaning is that God has given Christ the power to raise the dead (John 5:21; 6:39-54; 11:25). However, he also gives us power in this life (Cp. 2 Tim. 1:7).

**“spirit.”** Jesus is referred to as a “spirit,” but has a flesh and bone body. See commentary on v. 44 above.

**15:51. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”). This is the only time *idou* appears in 1 Corinthians, so it brings a very important emphasis (cp. more than 60 times in Matthew). God wants us to pay serious attention to the sacred secret that involves our resurrection (or Rapture) and receiving new bodies that will be spiritual bodies like Jesus’ body.

**15:52.** “last trumpet.” There are many athletic analogies in Corinthians. This makes perfect sense when you understand the history and culture of Corinth. Every two years at Corinth the Isthmian Games were held. The Isthmian Games were the second most important athletic games of the Greco-Roman world, held twice as often as the Olympic

Games. They honored the god Poseidon, and the winner received a pine wreath (and lots of money) instead of the olive wreath of the Olympic Games. Furthermore, besides the Isthmian Games, there were many lesser "Games" held at Corinth, much like schools today have "local meets," "regional meets," and "national meets."

Because of the importance of athletics to the Corinthians, there are a number of athletic references in 1 and 2 Corinthians. For example, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 has many athletic terms. 1 Corinthians 9:24 has "run" = *trecho*, to run in a race; "race" - *stadios*, race-course; "prize" = *brabeion*, the prize for the contest. 1 Corinthians 9:25 has "is completing" = *agonizomai*, to strive in a contest. The word *agonizomai* is from *agonu*, the place where the games took place. 1 Corinthians 9:25 also has "exercises self-control" = *egkrateuomai*, to exercise self-control in training; and "crown" = *stephanos*, the crown or wreath received for winning the contest. 1 Corinthians 9:26 has *trecho* like verse 24, and also "fight" = *pukteuo*, to box; "beat the air" = *aera deron*, to beat the air or shadow box. In 2 Corinthians 10:13, 15 and 16, the word "rule" = *kanon*, meaning rule or standard, and was used of the measure of a leap in athletics. 1 Corinthians 7:18 mentions becoming "uncircumcised." It was embarrassing for a Jew to participate in the Grecian games because the contestants were nude, so an operation was devised whereby the skin of the penis was cut and pulled forward so that when it healed it looked like the contestant was uncircumcised.

Closely aligned to the athletics of Greece were the Roman games, which often involved gladiators and people fighting animals. 1 Corinthians 4:9 mentions the spectacle of the arena, and the procession that it sometimes involved. 1 Corinthians 15 has a couple allusions to the Roman games. In 1 Corinthians 15:32 Paul wrote, "If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'" Paul was not actually in the arena, but the analogy to the Roman games was well understood at Corinth. It was standard for the Roman Games to begin and end with trumpets. The Corinthians would easily understand that "the last trumpet" was the one that ended the Games. For the Church, the ending, the "last trumpet," is the trumpet that accompanies the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16), which ends the Church Age. It is important for the analogy to realize that no Corinthian would think that the "last trumpet" meant there were no more trumpets and no more Games. It just meant that those particular Games were over. The next Games would begin some weeks or months later. The last trumpet of Corinthians ends the "Church Game," then "the Game of life" continues on with the Tribulation, which has 7 Trumpets we know of (Rev. 8:7-11:15). Then, after the Battle of Armageddon, Christ will gather the elect with a loud trumpet (Matt. 24:31).

**15:54, 55.** Quoted from Isaiah 25:8 and Hos. 13:14.

**15:55.** "Death" is in the vocative case, the case of direct address. This is the figure of speech Personification (Prosopopoeia) where death is set forth as a person and spoken to.

**16:2.** "prosper." See note on "go well with you" on 3 John 1:2.

**16:5.** "for I am *only* passing through Macedonia." Paul was not passing through Macedonia at the time, but was writing 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8). This is a case where the present tense is used to indicate an intention. We do this all the time. We say, "I am going to the mall" when we are sitting at home discussing what we will do during the day. Many versions translate the intention into the text and say, "I intend to go

through Macedonia.” While this is clear, it is perhaps better to learn the idiom of the original.

**16:11.** “treat...with contempt.” From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

**16:12.** “brother Apollos.” Cp. CJB. The Greek literally reads “Apollos the brother,” with the word “brother” in the genitive case. It is a descriptive genitive, describing an attribute of Apollos, that he is a brother in the Lord. To translate this “Apollos our brother,” as many versions do, would shift the emphasis of the phrase from Apollos’ membership in the whole family of God (brother Apollos), to his relationship to Paul and company (our brother).

**16:18.** “deeply appreciate.” For this translation, compare Williams’ *The New Testament: a Private Translation in the Language of the People*; CJB; and NJB. This is the from the Greek word “to know” *epiginosko* (#1921 ἐπιγινώσκω). Paul’s command to “know” such men is rightly understood by all versions to mean “acknowledge” such men, or “give recognition” to such men. The *Complete Jewish Bible* and *New Jerusalem Bible* translate the word “appreciate” here, which captures the sense very well. However, the Greek adds the preposition *epi* as an intensifier, which we have brought out in the translation as *deeply* appreciate.

**16:22.** “is not a friend with the Lord.” The Greek word we translate “is...a friend with,” is *phileo* (#5368 φιλέω). It is hard to translate the Greek verb *phileo* in this context and keep the English as a verb. If we say, “love,” as most versions do, we lose the meaning of *phileo* here, and confuse it with *agape* love. We could say if someone is not “friendly to” or “fond of,” but these seem to weak. Likewise, “attached to” seemed too unclear, because when a person is saved they are attached to the Lord by virtue of being a part of the Body of Christ. It seemed that using the noun, “a friend” and having “with the Lord” as an indirect object of the verb instead of the direct object that it is in the Greek was still the best way to keep the meaning in English. For a more complete understanding of *phileo*, see the note on John 21:15.