

1 Corinthians

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

1:6. “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. 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*). In this case, the fact that the testimony about Jesus was confirmed in the Corinthians is proof that they were enriched in speech and knowledge (v. 6).

“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.

1:28. “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 *mysterion* (#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, “I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers” (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.

3:18. “deceived.” The word is *exapatao* (#1818 ἐξαπατάω), “thoroughly deceive” (See entry on 1 Tim. 2:14). We have translated the word simply “deceived” 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” = (#3623 οἰκονόμος *oikonomos*). *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. Ac 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 word “ruin” is from *olethros* (#3639 ὄλεθρος), occurring 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 in 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). As Lenski points out, this list is not exhaustive but representative. It is complete enough that Christians are to clear understand that one 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 the owners a man 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 *eidolotrēs* (#1496 εἰδωλολῶτρης) 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 idolator. 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 ἀρσενικοίτης), 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 sexual intercourse. 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 men are stimulated by sight, 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 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.

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 Isaiah In that case, the more specific term “widows” would be put in 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. The other, less likely possibility, is that “unmarried” refers to widowers, which is possible because there is no specific Greek word for widowers as there is for widows, so one way to say widower that would be to say “unmarried.”

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.

7:21. “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” (#1584 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 *perisseuo* (#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. “without aim.” The Greek is *adelos* (#84 ἀδύλωος) *not aimlessly*, i.e. not as one who has no fixed goal (BDAG). “pertaining to being without a special goal or purpose - 'without purpose, unintentionally, aimlessly.' “...I, then, do not run like a man running aimlessly'. In a number of languages 'aimlessly' may be rendered 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 the object, “*for the prize.*”

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

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

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.

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 full 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 “...the spiritual...” It seems apparent from the context and the use of the definite article that the Corinthians had written Paul about spiritual matters even as they had about sexual matters (1Cor. 7:1). Thus Paul writes about “the” spiritual matters, using the figure ellipsis to emphasize “spiritual.” “Matters.” The word “spiritual” is an adjective, so most translations supply “gifts” as the noun that “spiritual” modifies. However, the context is much broader than gifts. “Things” usually refers more to concrete entities or objects, whereas “matters” refers more to ideas and concepts.

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” (*apago*) is one of intensity. *Apago* has the sense of forcefully carried off, and the context makes “carried astray” an acceptable translation.

12:3 “Make known to you” (as per Fee, 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 by *the* spirit of God.” Speaking by spirit can refer to speaking by revelation (Matt. 22:43) or speaking in tongues. In this context, speaking by spirit (“the” is not in the Greek) refers to speaking in tongues. There are a number of reasons to come to this conclusion.

First, it is obvious if someone is speaking in a known language that they are not cursing God—there is simply no reason to make that point because anyone listening could hear that they were not cursing God. With tongues, however, because the language was not known, it could be assumed that perhaps the speaker was cursing God.

Second, in the context of the manifestations, covered in 1 Cor. 12-14, the same phrase in Greek, “by *the* spirit” is used in 1 Cor. 14:16, where it definitely refers to speaking in tongues.

Third, 1 Cor. 12:3 not only says that no one speaking by spirit calls Jesus cursed, it also makes the point that no one can say (can “really” say) that Jesus is Lord but “by spirit holy,” the same “...by spirit...” that is used in the first part of the verse. This is making the point that it is by obeying God and speaking in tongues a person makes Christ Lord. This is the case because by speaking in tongues a person follows the Lord’s desire (1 Cor. 14:5), thus making him Lord in a practical sense, and because the only “sign” a person is really saved given in Scripture is speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14:22). Many people think they are saved, but do they really know, and can they really convince others? When someone speaks in tongues it is a sign that they have really made Jesus Lord and are saved. The phrase that no one can really say Jesus is Lord except “by spirit” cannot mean “by speaking by revelation” because there is no sure and certain way for every Christian to know whether or not they are speaking by revelation. Many people go their whole lives without knowing whether or not they have spoken by revelation, but if they walk out on the direction of the Lord and speak in tongues, they will absolutely know they have made Jesus Lord.

Fourth, 1 Corinthians 12:3 says that no one speaking by spirit can say Jesus is accursed, but that does not say what he is saying. That question is answered in the context of the manifestations when 1 Corinthians 14:2 says that no one understands the person who is speaking in tongue, but “by spirit” (a dative) he is speaking sacred secrets. We left “anathema” in the verse. It has a unique meaning; in this context something set apart for or by God as an object of wrath or destruction. “Cursed” is not necessarily a good translation because no one may have spoken a curse of any kind.

12:4 “Distributions,” is a good translation in this context (See Lenski, C. K. Barrett, and Rotherham). That the gifts differ is too obvious to mention. The point is that the gifts are being distributed to different people. The word *pneuma*, spirit, is problematic in that it can refer to the gift of holy spirit, Jesus, or God. Both Jesus and God are called the “Spirit.” Arguing for “spirit” (holy spirit) is a number of things: the use of “spirit” for holy spirit in verse 3, immediately above; the fact that verses 4, 5, and 6 would have spirit, Lord (Jesus), and God; and the fact that although there are many “gifts,” there is only one gift of holy spirit. Arguing for “Spirit” is also a number of things. Verse 4 and 11 are almost parallel, with the Spirit distributing to people; if Spirit in verse 4 refers to God, Lord in verse 5 refers to Christ, and God in verse 6 refers to God, then we have a chiasmic structure that is common in other parts of Scripture. Not to be left out is the possibility of amphibologia, where both meanings hold true.

12:10 We have left out the word “and” according to the brackets in NA 27. It seems much more likely the words were added in some texts than subtracted in others. “interpretation,” because the Greek word can mean the “product of interpretive procedure, *interpretation, exposition*” (BDAG), we feel that “interpretation” is a good translation.

12:11 The word “wills” 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 “will” 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).

13:1 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.

14:3. “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.” As per RSV, ESV, etc.

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

14:7. Lifeless = without *psuche*, soul-less (a hapax).

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 *phoniai* 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 this verse, “spirits” is put by the figure of speech metonymy for the manifestations produced by the spirit. The people in Corinth were very zealous for spiritual power. When they came together, every one had a tongue, an interpretation, a revelation (14:26). Lenski is correct when he says, “This term ‘spirits’ designates the different manifestations of the one Holy Spirit [holy spirit] in the individual Christians.”

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.

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

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.

14:27. “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,” *diermenvo* (#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.

14:32. "And spirits of 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 it is likely they were not part of the original text, but were an early textual note that was copied into the text. There are several reasons to come to this conclusion, of which we will only touch on two here (for more, see *The New International Commentary on the New Testament on First Corinthians* by Gordon Fee, and *Misquoting Jesus* by Bart Ehrman). These two verses do not appear in the same place in all the manuscripts, which is good evidence that they were inserted. It often happens when verses are inserted that scribes do not agree where to insert them, and put them in different places. Another very strong piece of evidence that the verses were inserted is that they contradict what Paul had written throughout the NT, and even in this same book and chapter. Women led in the early church (Cp. Phoebe in Romans

16:1 who was a “deaconess,” and Junia who was an apostle), and they prayed and prophesied (Cp. 1 Cor. 11:13; Acts 21:9).

Since women obviously did speak in, and participate in, church meetings, and since not all women were married and thus could not ask their husbands (Cp. Lydia in Acts), most commentators spend their time trying to explain why these verses do not mean what they seem to say. If they are original, then what they say must be understood in a limited sense that would make sense in the church at Corinth, the meaning of the verse being anchored in the culture of the day. In general in the first century, in both the Roman and Judean cultures, women were uneducated, and thus were not prepared to always understand the theological issues being discussed in the Church. The husbands usually had been educated, which was why the women could ask their husbands at home (v. 35). This verse is certainly not a commentary that women are less intelligent, or less spiritually able, or less spiritually qualified to minister, than men are. If it is the case that these verses applied in a limited sense in the church at Corinth due to cultural constraints, then it should be obvious that today, when women are as educated and equipped as men are to minister in the church, they should be allowed to do so.

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. “make 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 misses the point. 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.

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.

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.”

15:20. “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:

²⁰But in fact, Christ has been raised out from among *the* dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also *the* resurrection of *the* dead. ²²For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will

be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's, at his coming. ²⁴Then *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. ²⁵For it is necessary for him (Jesus) to reign until he (Jesus) has put all these enemies under his (Jesus') feet. ²⁶*The last enemy to be abolished—death!* ²⁷For 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. ²⁸And 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 *katargeo* (#2673 καταργέω). BDAG gives the following definitions for *katargeo*, all of which can adequately describe what Christ does to the angelic rulers, authorities, and powers:

- 1) **to cause someth. to lose its power or effectiveness, *invalidate, make powerless***
- 2) **to cause someth. to come to an end or to be no longer in existence, *abolish, wipe out, set aside***
- 3) **to cause the release of someone from an obligation (one has nothing more to do with it), *be discharged, be released.***

All this authority has been transferred to Christ (Matt. 28:18) and he thus 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 eschaton (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 destroyed.” 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.”

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” is awkward, but 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), and, like his, have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). Christ’s body is called a “spiritual” body because its origin is God, who gave it new life, and it is empowered by a different spiritual force (*pneuma*) than our flesh bodies, which are powered by *psuche*. 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 as the soul body that all mankind had from 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 not a “spirit,” see v. 44 above.

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 “strive” = *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 “is temperate” = *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” = *aira 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 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.

16:22. “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 too 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.