



*Gifted local church
Waiting for Jesus
God is faithful
They should not divide over persons
It does not matter who baptised you
It is the message that is central*

1 Corinthians 1.1-17

1 Corinthians 1.1-9 the Address and the Greeting

Flow of the argument

The flow of the section:

[1] Written from Ephesus, following the visit of Chloe's people to Paul, who reported the situation at Corinth. The letter is sent by Paul. He mentions also Sosthenes as a co-sender, who is a local Corinthian known and honoured by the people there.

[2] The Corinthian church is addressed as "saints by calling" - holy and consecrated people to the service of God and called through the Holy Spirit bringing them a sure conviction as to the truth of the apostolic witness which they had heard. This statement is not peculiar to the Corinthians, it is true of all Christians everywhere who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; they have a common Lord.

[3] Paul addresses the Corinthians as charismatically gifted people - particularly in matters of speech and knowledge - who, in their lives the testimony concerning Jesus was confirmed.

[4] They are eagerly awaiting the "revelation" of the Lord Jesus - by which he means the physical return of Christ - whom, says Paul, God will confirm them as blameless on that day.

[5] He states that God is faithful, who has called them into the fellowship of his Son.

Gifted local church

Waiting for Jesus

Faithful God

Sosthenes

When Paul was staying in Corinth for the first time, Luke records [Acts 18.1-17] that Paul was discussing in the synagogue there. Crispus, who was the leader of the synagogue, believed in Jesus and he and his household was baptised - by Paul [1 Cor 1.14].

Paul then moved to the house of Titius Justus, a God-fearer who lived next door to the synagogue.

Later, when there was a fracas in front of the judgment seat of Gallio, the proconsul we hear that Sosthenes, who is called the leader of the synagogue, was beaten in front of the judgment seat. Are we to understand that this is the same Sosthenes who is a brother of Paul and a co-sender of this letter to the Corinthians? It would seem so.

Sosthenes

1 Corinthians 1.10-17 Exhortation not to be divided

[1] The Corinthians are exhorted to not divide into factions or parties. They are to agree and to ask God to cause them to be of the same mind and judgement.

[2] Paul says that he writes this exhortation in response to information he has, from Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among them based on people lifting up Christian brothers as their favourites. Some are for Paul, some Apollos, some Peter and others, who perhaps did not want to take a side in the matters, simply said they are for Christ,

[3] Paul makes clear that the implication of this is that it lowers Christ to the status of one of the brothers mentioned. Being careful for Christ's honour he states rhetorically, that Christ cannot be divided, that He alone was crucified for us and that it is into His name that we are baptised, not into some brother's name.

[4] The issue seemed to arise from who had been baptised by whom. If they are going to divide over this matter then Paul is glad he baptised only two people and one household.

[5] And he makes it clear that his charge from Christ was to preach the gospel - and in such a way that did not rely on clever rhetoric. Otherwise the focus falls on to the preacher; whereas Paul wanted the cross of Christ to be the central thing. It was the message, not the messenger who mattered.

No elevating of brothers

It dishonours Christ

The cross of Christ is central - not the preacher

1 Corinthians

1.18-31

*Two groups identified as the gospel is preached
Wise and foolish - strong and weak
God's foolishness wiser; God's weakness stronger
In Christ Jesus
A separating gospel*



1 Corinthians 1.18-31 God: the wise fool and the strong weakling

The flow of the section:

Two responses manifest

[1] Paul had found that he was addressing two groups of people. These two groups are manifested by the act of preaching. The “perishing” group assess the message of the gospel as foolishness; those who receive it, and constitute the “being saved” group, welcome the gospel as the power of God.

Wise and foolish of this present age

[2] The prophet Isaiah was speaking at a time when Israel was living by rote - doing the things God had set for his people; they were keeping tradition but hiding their hearts from Him [Is 29.13]. Paul quotes Is 29.14, where the Lord makes clear, in a ‘long future’ setting, that God will deal with this people where the wisdom of their wise men will perish and the discerning of their discerning ones will be hidden.

Paul, seeing the gospel preaching in a ‘last days’ setting, broadens the Israelite context to the setting of a Corinthian background and speaks of the wisdom of the age. He makes clear that in the wisdom of God it pleased God to preach a gospel - a ‘foolish’ message in the estimate of the wisdom of the age, that is the wisdom of scribes, clever professional speakers and debaters.

The world sees a ‘foolish’ and ‘weak’ God behind his message

[3] However, as this message went out, a group of people who were “being powerfully saved” emerged - they were those who believed, they trusted the message.

[4] The broadened context of Is29.14 includes Jews of the age who were pre-occupied with signs, they were stumbled by the execution of Jesus. And it included Greeks who were looking for wisdom - they saw the message as foolish. But out of both groups, there were people who were drawn to trust the message and found it to be to them the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Wisdom of God is wiser; the weakness of God stronger

[5] It turned out that the ‘foolishness’ of God is wiser than men - because it released a deeper penetration onto the broken condition of men and women. And the ‘weakness’ of God stronger than men - because it approached men humbly - from the bottom up as it were - as a servant God. Only in that way could their pride be dealt with.

To be “in Christ Jesus” is the only boast

[6] The Corinthian church are a sample of people who are “being saved” - and there are not many among them who the world of the flesh would have esteemed as wise or strong. Rather, they come from the people the world would have thought as debased and weak.

[7] There is no ground for boasting - because God has saved those who are not much in the world in the face of those who are considered very high - He has nullified and reversed such judgments of men - showing them to be nothing.

[8] So, the Corinthians are to understand that, by God’s doing, they are “in Christ Jesus” - Christ, as the God-man, has come for them and done for them what they could not do for themselves. Insofar that it is God’s doing, Christ has become for the Corinthians the wisdom of God. He has lived a life which is pleasing to God “for them”, carried and born away their sins and He has become the ‘righteousness’ of God to them. He has brought them out of bondage to Satan, the world and their flesh - He is their redemption. His godly life has led them into the sonship of God where they share the godly life of Jesus Christ by his Spirit. He has become their sanctification.

[9] If there is to be any boasting then, anything to be pleased about before others in their situation, it will be ‘in the Lord’ that such an exaltation will be found. The prophet Jeremiah is quoted as he laments over Zion who has gone to the Baals and the false gods [Je 9.1-16]. He announces that God will scatter them, put them to shame and they will come to death [Je.9.17-22]. When that judgment has come then the wise, the mighty and the rich will have nothing to boast about. The Only person who can boast in that day will be the one who understands and knows God as One who is kind and just and righteous [Je.9.24].

[10] This last quotation sets us in the “last days” - and carries forward a

theme of judgment. As the gospel is preached there is a separation taking place. It is the message that brings down the wise and the mighty and leaves the people that are "being saved" as those who, through that gospel, come to understand the kindness, the justice [righteousness] of God that they have found in being "in Christ Jesus".

Implied here is that the divisions of the Corinthians is a return to worldly wisdom out of which they have been saved - it must not re-enter the Church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 2.1-5 Christ crucified: a proper ground of their faith

[1] Paul spoke, simply, the 'testimony of God' - what God would want his servant to 'bear witness' to. In a nutshell, Christ, and Him crucified.

[2] In keeping with his theme of not lifting up brothers - and so returning to a worldly wisdom - Paul demonstrates that his preaching among them made no show of rhetoric or human wisdom in the form of clever debate. Indeed, he is aware that his way and manner conveyed his human weakness and trembling. He did not try to persuade - but looked for a demonstration of the power of God. He wanted any faith that arise on them to have its foundations in the power of God and certainly not the wisdom of men.

There is a persuasion which is taking place when the gospel is preached. It is the conviction of the Holy Spirit - which is not so much a persuasion of the intellectual sense of wisdom that people have in a worldly way - but an address to their spirit. It is a full conviction [1 Thessalonians 1.10] that comes.

1 Corinthians 2.6-16 God's wisdom spoken in a mystery of Gospel

[1] Paul now wants us to understand what the wisdom of this age - a passing age in these last days - called foolishness is really the wisdom of God.

[2] It is a wisdom which can be spoken among the "mature" - by which he means those who know themselves to be in the last days and are 'being saved' and are 'in Christ Jesus' [Eph.4.13; Phil 3.15].

It is a wisdom that:

[a] because it is not of this age that is passing away, neither the rulers, nor the age understood it.

[b] is a mystery - a wisdom already existing but hidden - which had been predestined before the ages.

[c] was so for our glory. That is, because it was predestined, it can bring us glory which God has ordained for us, while being, at the same time, something which leaves us with nothing to boast of in ourselves.

[d] is proved to be not of this age - by the fact that, if the present rulers had understood it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. This means that because they did not see in Jesus of Nazareth the Jewish Messiah, nor a man of any worth, they rejected Him as a person who was accursed, of no account and someone who could be dispensed with. In the words of Paul to the Pisidian Antioch mixed audience of Jews and god-fearers, the rulers of this age "...recognising neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him...asked Pilate that He be executed" [Acts 13.27-28].

[3] Isaiah's context is that when God acts on behalf of Israel; those who wait for Him to deliver them will see things that no eye has seen before and no ear heard about [Is 64.4]. This is particularly so when God makes the 'new heaven and the new earth' which takes place after the Jerusalem is defended by the Lord from the advancing army of the last day [Is 65.16-17] and a new wonderful reign of Christ is set up from Jerusalem. Christ is called by Paul here in Corinthians the "Lord of Glory". The rulers of this age had this hidden from them.

[4] But to us [the 'mature' of verse 4], God has revealed these matters through the Spirit. This revelation is consistent with the Spirit's essential nature - He

A gospel that separates and judges.

The testimony of God - Paul as a witness

No human cleverness, no persuasion

Conviction of the Spirit

The wisdom of God

Wisdom which can be spoken in the hearing of the 'mature'

The Lord of Glory

The parallel operation of the Spirit; in both God and man

1 Corinthians

2.1-16;

3.1-23

The Lord of Glory

The 'mature' know the things of God by reception of the Spirit

The natural man and the spiritual man

We have the mind of Christ

#Fleshly Corinthians; because divided

The apostles are co-workers with differing tasks

Building with quality that survives God's inspection



The "mature" know the things of God by reception of the Spirit

searches [probes] all things, even the very depths of God. Paul draws a parallel between the spirit of a man who plumbs the depths of the man and the Spirit of God who sounds the deeps of God.

[5] There is more here. The Spirit we have received is not the spirit of the age but God's very own Spirit. That He is the Spirit of revelation is consistent with the fact that He is given to us so that we might know the things that God has freely given us. Indeed, Paul understands that when he preaches he is using words that are not taught by human wisdom but by the Spirit.

[6] Still keeping the contrast of the two groups in mind, Paul speaks of the natural man - the group who is perishing - doesn't accept the things of the Spirit. This is so because such things are spiritually appraised and recognised.

[7] This inability of the natural man to read the things of the Spirit of God also applies to the understanding of the spiritual man - those of the group who are 'being saved' - they don't get him either, and they certainly find him mysterious and hard to understand.

[8] This should not surprise us. For Isaiah can say of God Himself, that no one directs the Spirit of the Lord or mentors Him [Is 40.13]. So, no wonder the rulers of this age do not understand either God, the gospel which is His testimony, nor the spiritual men who are being saved.

[9] But we, that is, the "mature"; we appraise, recognise and apprehend all things, because we have the mind of Christ. This means that the reception of the Spirit brings us a participation in the mind of the Lord, who, as truly God and man, takes us into the awareness of the deep things of God and the wisdom of God which had been previously hidden.

The natural man and the spiritual man

The "mature" have the mind of Christ

1 Corinthians 3.1-23 Divisions are fleshly and destructive

The argument flow:

[1] Paul has given his exhortation in 1.10 that there ought not be divisions among them. Now he declares that he could not speak to them as spiritual men. He does not mean that they are not Christians, he means that the "mature" position that we occupy in these last days has its basis in the work of Christ for us, but it has not come to reality in their life right now. He says that this was so before when he did not feed them solid food then, so he cannot do so even now. He sees them as fleshly; living everyday as mere worldly men.

[2] The evidence for this perception is that they have jealousy and strife among them as they divide into their various parties according to their championing of one apostle over the other.

[3] The field: He points out that these Christian brothers are men, servants of God, working with Him like harvesters in the Corinthian's field. And their work varies; some are at work planting and some watering, but it is God who is fundamentally at work giving the increase and the harvest. Perhaps the Corinthians had compared and contrasted the men according to their results - as they saw them?

[4] The building: Changing his image from a field to a building, Paul saw himself as a wise master builder who had laid the foundation of the Corinthian church. That foundation is Christ. If others build upon that foundation, they need to build with quality work.

[5] The worth of their individual labour will only become evident at the great day, when the fire of God's judgment reveals the quality of the work done. If any builder's work does not come through the fire - it is his loss; but the man himself is safe.

[6] The temple [in the sense of 'sanctuary']: On the basis that the Spirit of God dwells [Rom 8.9] in the corporate body which is the Corinthian assembly Paul says they are the sanctuary [the holy place] of God. Then a man must be careful

Divisions evidence of fleshliness

Co workers in a field; different tasks

Need to build with quality that lasts and survives God's scrutiny

*Handling a holy thing of God - need for respectful care
 No boasting in men - all things are yours because you are
 Christ's
 How to think about those who serve them
 Arrogance of the Corinthians puts Paul and Apollos in a jam
 It also dishonours the apostles*

1 Corinthians

**3.1-23;
 4.1-21**

**Handling and working
 on a holy thing**

**Christ belongs to
 God, you belong to
 Christ - all things
 yours**

**How to think of an
 apostle and servants
 of God.**

Arrogance.

**Dishonouring of the
 apostles**

how he deals with the holy sanctuary of God which is what the Corinthians are.

[7] Returning to his theme of the foolishness of the world, Paul wants no one in Corinthian assembly to think of themselves as wise or clever in the worldly sense. If they do, they will have to become foolish - appropriate the Christian gospel properly - so as to become wise - in the Christian 'mature' sense. With quotations from Job 5.13 and Ps 94.11 he makes it clear that God catches the wise in their crafty ways and he thinks the reasonings of the wise to be useless.

[8] They should not boast in men. And the reason is that every Christian brother and all things belong to them. And they belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God. The argument appears to be that, "why would you boast in men whom you have as brothers in the household, when it is the Christ - to whom you belong - who has brought you these brothers?" The brothers are derivative of another relationship which is God as to Christ, Christ as to you and then brothers and sisters as to one another. The belonging proceeds from that order; not the reverse.

1 Corinthians 4.1-21 How to think of the apostolic workers

The argument flow:

[a] It is not the time yet to be judging matters.

[1] How are the Corinthians to regard Paul and the other apostles? They are servants of Christ and stewards of mysteries. In the case of stewardship faithfulness is the most important matters.

[2] It does not matter to Paul what others think of him, indeed, he does not even judge himself. In his conscience, he is not aware of anything against himself - but even then, it is the Lord who examines him.

[3] So the Corinthians should not indulge in this examining and passing judgment on men before the day of the Lord - it is too early for that! Everything will come to light when Jesus comes and every secret heart-motive will be laid bare - and then each man's praise will come from Jesus.

[b] What we have is that we have received; this leaves no place for arrogance.

[4] The figures of planting and watering [3.6] have been applied by Paul with the contrast of himself and Apollos in mind; and with the purpose that the Corinthians do not become arrogant on behalf of one against the other. [In other words it is a burden to Apollos and Paul - to have people saying things in respect of them which they themselves would not regard as things that should be advanced on their behalf. So they are acting arrogantly, towards Christ, who really is the Judge, and towards Apollos and Paul who do not need this.]

[5] To boast about something which the Corinthians had received is silly. It is the glory of the Giver that is decisive here.

[6] In a strongly worded, almost sarcastic way, Paul paints the Corinthians as already superior, reigning as kings without the apostles. Indeed, he wishes they did so that the apostles might reign with them. That is, he appeals to the oneness that the church has as a basis for thinking the best of each other.

[7] The apostles then are seen as the last of all - the lowliest regarded of the Christian flock. For their experience is that they are seen as condemned men, as a spectacle to the world and the angelic ones. Contrary to the Corinthian's superior view of themselves the apostles are seen to be :

[a] fools while the Corinthians are seen as prudent and wise.

[b] weak; the Corinthians strong

[c] without honour; the Corinthians distinguished

The situation of the apostles is one of hunger and thirst, poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless and toiling with their own hands. While even now they are treated as the scum of the earth, paradoxically, in this setting of poverty the life of God that they have a share of leads them to

[a] bless when reviled

1 Corinthians

4.1-21;5.1-13

Paul is a founding father, and should be mimicked in life
Incestuous man to experience salvation through judgment
The deed
Dealing with the man
Celebrating Christ as our Passover by godly living



- [b] endure when persecuted
- [c] conciliate when slandered

[c] Paul, through the gospel, is the father of the Corinthian assembly, he is their founding apostle.

[8] On the grounds that he sees the Corinthians as his children, Paul is admonishing the Corinthians, not shaming them. While they will have, over their Christian life, many tutors [Is this a veiled reference to Apollos?] they have only one founding father - himself. And if they know him as their father - through the gospel - then they should treat him as a father and copy his way of life. Timothy, as a true son of Paul's in this way, will acquaint them with his ways.

[9] Further, if they know him as a father, then they will treat him as one who can come to them and discipline them; and not simply as a matter of words, but with power. What would they, as his children like? Would they like to see him come with a rod and be stern, or to come with love and a spirit of gentleness? His implication is that both ways of coming are appropriate for a father who is revered and honoured.

Fathers should be copied in life and revered for who they are.

1 Corinthians 5.1-13 Discernment and discipline in Corinth

The argument flow:

[a] The discipline of the man living incestuously.

[1] Presumably from the report that Chloe's people brought him [1 Cor.1.11] or someone else, Paul is aware of a man among the church there who is living with his father's wife. Something which Paul is aware that even the heathen Gentiles would not do.

[2] The arrogance - that they are puffed up - of the Corinthians is seen here; they ought to be mourning about such behaviour and the deed should have been removed from among them. [He is dealing with the "deed" - that is, the removal from among the assembly of such behaviour.]

[3] Paul has already judged the person involved - he has delivered him to Satan so that his flesh may be destroyed and so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The discipline of the church is concerning the deed among them. The man himself - who it would seem is intractable about the matter - is not repentant, for that would have kept him from the evil one. So the apostle, even though he is not there in Corinth, exercising discipline on behalf of Christ's honour here, has handed him over to the evil one to do his worst, so that the correction of the results of such a life would lead him to despair and so to repentance by that route.

Salvation through judgment - the disciplining of the man living incestuously.

Dealing with the deed

[b] Discipline, and a disciplined life, for the sake of Christ's sacrifice.

[4] The Corinthians are to know that slackness over this immorality will have the effect of working its way, like yeast in a lump of warm dough, through the whole of the local church.

Paul invokes the feast of unleavened bread which accompanied the Passover at the time for the Exodus. He wants the church there to be cleanse out the former leaven of their ungodly life - by which he means malice and wickedness - that they may be a new lump of dough without any yeast at work among them.

He makes clear that the Corinthian church has been liberated by Christ as their own Passover Lamb - he means through Christ's sacrificial death. In this way, their Christian life is a celebration of keeping that Passover, by living in sincerity and truth.

Godly living celebrates the Passover who is Christ.

[c] The former letter explained.

[5] Paul had sent a letter before this one he is writing from Ephesus. In it he had advised them to have nothing to do with immoral people in the assembly's

life. This was presumably the way the discipline was to be administered. When they found a brother in the church who was immoral, covetous, an idolator, a swindler or drunkard; they were to withdraw from them and not eat with them - they were to deny them table fellowship.

[6] However, they had taken Paul to mean to withdraw from all, including those outside the fellowship. He points out that the judging of outsiders is the Lord's final matter and his business. But within the church there is a need to discern and correct clearly what was wrong. They were to attend to that and remove the wicked man from among themselves - not by excommunicating him, but by withdrawal from shared life with him. This is what he meant in 1 Cor 5.2 by "removing".

The principle of removal of the wicked from their common life is drawn from Deuteronomy 13.5,[dealing with idolaters], 17.7-12[stoning idolaters]; 21.21 [the rebellious son who is a waster and drunkard].

It is based on the understanding that the whole covenant community lives before the Lord and to tolerate such activity as He would find displeasing contravenes their own desire to please the Lord as a total community. Discipline arises out of honour for Christ. It has nothing to do with hounding someone or exercising control over them for our own desires.

Withdrawal from the man who is living in a way that dishonours Christ

1 Corinthians 6.1-11 Resolution of internal conflicts using courts

Paul now follows on from 1 Cor 5.9-13, where he corrected the impression that his former letter had made. In that matter he had made the point that the church is a judge of its own life. It has the mind of Christ [1 Cor 2.16] and can sort out its own affairs while it leaves the judgment of those of the world, outside the church, to God.

In this chapter the apostle speaks to the assembly at Corinth concerning the reverse matter where they are attempting to:

[1] Resolve their conflicts internally within the church's life and wisdom by going before the secular authorities [6.1-11]

[2] Use the lawfulness of activities as the criterion for engaging in them [6.12-20]

These two areas are connected. The resolving of their differences had led them to resort to the public law courts. This drew them into submitting to secular judgments; a denial of the relationship they have with the world. They needed to live based on the fact of their destiny in Christ, and that meant that they must know they are heading to judge angels and the world.

The whole area of legality proves not to be the basis for personal conduct either. They needed to consider what was the effect of a sin in relation to the body of Christ, both viewed as a congregation and also as an effect upon their own bodies.

What is common to both of these issues is the knowledge of who they are as the body of Christ and as Christian people. Their relation is changed to the world and also to sin.

They need to consider the effect of sin as a contradiction of their destiny and as a defiling influence upon the body of Christ.

[1] The issue turns on the difference in Paul's mind between the "saints" and the "unrighteous" [1 Cor 6.1]; between the "believers" and the "unbelievers" [1 Cor 6.6].

[2] In the eschatological setting of the last days in which we live since Jesus' incarnation [Heb 1.1-4], there is need for the Christians to take seriously that they are going to judge the world and angels. If this is the case, that they will be judging on such a wide scale, are they not competent to deal with a small case of local matters amongst themselves?

[3] And if the church had no confidence in the eldership that those appointed to judge matters of the assembly, then that was a shame among the Corinthians.

[4] When Christian brothers go to secular courts to resolve their matters

Two connected matters concerning the use of law.

The "saints" and the "unrighteous"

The "last days" setting of things as they stand now

1 Corinthians

6.1-11,12-20

The defeat of going to public courts
Poor standards of life among the Corinthians
'Lawfulness' not the final arbiter for free sons of God
Not everything is advantageous
Need to ask, "Will this master me?"



The defeat in life that is involved in going public

between themselves that is already a defeat - for is a reversal of the very situation that Christ had established by his coming to us. Why not rather be defrauded by a brother than have the defeat of going to a public court?

[5] But the fact is that the life of the Corinthians does have such a poor quality. That it is true is sad, for they do defraud each other over the matters between them.

[6] Then they must have forgotten that the life-style of the unbelieving world is characterised by those who are unrighteous - and that means fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate and homosexuals, thieves, coveters, drunkards, revilers and swindlers; these are those who do not inherit the kingdom of God.

[7] The sad thing is, the Corinthians formerly lived like this - and since then they had been washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God.

The poor standards among the saints

1 Corinthians 6.12-20

Free only for that which does not rob us of our freedom

In the previous section we saw that there were two related matters that turned on the understanding of law in the local assembly.

[1] What is lawful... [6.12]

Bodily existence requires us to not only consider what is lawful but, in carrying our freedoms that the law allows, we must be informed about the consequences of bodily actions. Some bodily functions will cease; the body is to be resurrected [6.12-14]

While some bodily functions will cease at the resurrection, the body itself is destined for a new life. The discussion of fornication as a sin that compromises the bodily union with Christ is begun in this section.

[2] Things are lawful but ...[6.12]

[1] We are introduced to two parallel sentences, the first clause of both is the expression "All things are lawful to me/forme...". Then each has a strong contrast, a strong adversative, represented by a "but".

It must be said that the law does prohibit some things, and that these are still incumbent upon Christians to keep and honour. We are not lawless in that way. But what is opened to us here is that whether or not a matter is lawful or not is not the place for any Christian to start his thinking about an action.

Our attention is being directed to another set of issues. What must be under consideration is not only whether a matter is lawful but also "what is the result of doing it". We need to be asking, "If I do this action, what in fact, will I have done; and what is the effect of doing it?"

[2] This leads us to the two comparisons made.

[a] ...but not all things are advantageous, Not all things bring a benefit, or are profitable or useful. This is true even if things are lawful. This addresses the outcome of an action with respect to the person doing it. What will it mean for him? Are there different bodily outcomes to different situations and actions? These are the questions we are being led towards.

[b] ...but I will not allow myself to be brought under authority by anything. I.e. By the doing of something even lawful, it may be an action through which I may lose the very freedom that I have to act. We are free only for that which does not rob us of our freedom.

And are there differing results according to the nature of the bodily act?

[3] There are bodily parts and functions that are done away [6.13a]

Foods are for the stomach, and stomach is for the foods but God will do away with both the stomach and the foods. At the resurrection of the body there takes place a change within its constitution. Such parts as a stomach and food are not necessary post resurrection.

The person could lose their freedom as a person by being overcome by

"Lawfulness" not the final matter for those who are free as sons of God

Not all things are advantageous

Do I lose my freedom in doing this? Will it master me?

gluttony; this would be to come under the authority of a bodily function that is not permanent. And so something of eternal nature, the person [and their body included], who is to be raised would be wedded [come under the authority] to the gluttony which had overcome them.

Treasure in heaven. This same idea is contained in the Lord's teaching concerning the treasure in heaven and the treasure on the earth [Matthew 6.19-21; Luke 12.33-34]. The Lord's principle is that where your treasure is so there is your heart also. So, if your heart [which is of eternal value and is your person] was allied to something as a treasure which was not lasting, [it could rust away], or could be taken from you by others [thieves who break through and steal], then your person of eternal life and value could go down with the treasure you have allied yourself to.

*This is wonderfully treated by George MacDonald,
 Unspoken Sermons, First Series [1867], page 118-124.*

[4] The body as a whole [6.13b]

But the body as a whole is to be raised, and is expressive of our whole person. It is this truth which now leads us into a consideration of the results of fornication as being absolutely unlike other sins which are done "outside the body" ie external to it's integrity and wholeness.

In another place, we notice Paul's idea of how "a man is a body", and it also can be said that "a man has a body" in reference to Romans 6-8 where what is under discussion is the understanding of sin as a power being still resident within our mortal bodies, as well as Paul's understanding of the "flesh" and "Spirit" tension within the bodily life of the Christian.

Here we learn that the body, as the whole person, is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. The first part of the sentence states that fornication is a matter of your whole person engaging in a bodily union in such a way as your person is compromised. While engaged in the act of fornication, no one could say, "my body is fornicating"; the nature of the sin would require his whole self to be involved; he would have to admit "...I am..."

The second part of the sentence makes clear that the Lord wants our body, He has an interest in it, He desires that it should be separated to his service [Romans 12.1-2].

[5] Fornication compromises Christ's Lordship [6.13b]

Paul is carrying on a discussion of the practical outcomes of fornication for a Christian. He is insisting that the lordship of Christ over our bodies is totally compromised in the act of fornication. So that he can say that the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. These two ideas are mutually exclusive; they are at odds. The reason has to do with the nature of fornication and what it entails. He develops this later.

[6] Body is destined for resurrection [6.14]

The body is to be raised by the power of God who raised Jesus. The destiny of the body of those who are caught up in the shared life of Jesus is resurrection. As we learn from 1 Corinthians 6.13 that there are bodily functions which will be left behind in the resurrection of the body. But the body itself is as honoured as the person.

[7] Your bodies are members of Christ [6.15]

The relationship of union of Christ with us is expressed as a union where our bodies [plural] are members of Christ. That is, they are his executive operators, our bodies carry out the requirements and commands of the Lord. This is a form of Lordship which was clear in the ancient world. The person of a slave would be bought at auction. And it was understood that you were buying the body of that person to carry out your own requirements and ideas – he is the executive arm of your own will.

However, the freedom of the Christians was that they are in union with their lord, sharing the same life. They are member of his body and are not free to enter another union by way of their body.

The destiny of the body is resurrection.

Fornication is such a sin as to lose your freedom.

Body destined for resurrection

Bodies are members of Christ

Fornication a bodily union

1 Corinthians

Personal mastery lost

6.12-20;7.1-16

The inner sanctuary of the spirit

Matters about which the Corinthians had written

Men and women



[8] Fornication is a bodily union; union with Christ is one spirit [6.16-17]

The act of fornication makes a bodily union, such that it violates the union already operating over our bodies as members of Christ. To take a member of Christ and join bodily join [which in this case is to join their person] to a harlot is to engage in a fleshly union of bodies; for, the one joining himself to a harlot is "one body with her" [6.16].

However, to make clear that the union with Christ is not that of a simple bodily coupling together, Paul shows that the union operating is that of being "one spirit" with the Lord. A fornicating coupling brings about a oneness of physical relationship which contradicts the Lord's claim over the body; creating a disparity between the body and the spirit which is united to the Lord.

Personal mastery lost

[9] Fornication is not simply an external sin, it has bodily and personal consequences [6.18]

Sin as an act or deed carried out by the decision of the individual and carried through by their body as their executive arm does not, of itself, harm the body. Further, the culpability of the sin is addressed to the person, not to their body. But the fornicating man cannot disassociate himself from his act; since it is an act that embroils his whole self into the joining. He cannot say to himself, "My body is fornicating but I am not!" Such a distinction here is not applicable.

Further, it is dishonouring to his body. It places his body in a place of tension between two lords, because of two unequal unions. He sins against his own body.

The inner sanctuary of the Spirit

[10] Your [plural] body is a temple of the Holy Spirit

Addressing the whole gathered body congregated at Corinth, Paul makes clear that their body is the inner sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit they have from God. This addresses their whole congregation since the body of Christ is a collected people.

He reminds them that they, as a group [household], are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, the place where He has taken up residence and is present. As a result, they can never think of themselves as just being their own, they are sanctified [and bodily holy] as the residence of the Holy Spirit. They must keep this body undefiled as befits the one who dwells there.

He reminds them that they are bought with a price. That is, they have a Lord who exercises Lordship over them – so they must glorify God in their body. There are to be no unsanctified bodily unions.

Matters about which they had written to Paul

1 Corinthians 7.1-16 Men and women; single and married

This material opens the replies of Paul to a list of matters about which the Corinthians had written to him, seeking his advice and answers. As we work through the list, we see that it included reference to:

Relations between men and women [Chapter 7.1-24]

Unmarried virgin women and widows [7.25]

About eating meat formerly sacrificed to idols [8]

Paul to the married

Paul addresses issues here of marriage - and as Calvin noted here, "the question is not as to the reasons for which marriage was instituted, but as to the persons for whom it is necessary."

[a] To the married:

[1] Under the impact of the "last days" it is good for a man not to touch a woman but because of immoralities each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Here the apostle recognises that there is an eschatological pressure upon us as we attend to the Lord and his immanent coming.

But he is also aware of the tensions and pressures that exist in the men and women of the fellowship and that there are those for whom it is necessary - even in these last days - that they should marry. Certainly it is preferable to them falling

into immorality as he has discussed in the previous chapter.

[2] There is, for married persons, the obligation to fulfill their conjugal rights of the covenant of one another. In the situation they each have an authority over the other's body.

They should not deprive each other of bodily union; they could for an agreed time so as to devote themselves to prayer, but they should come together after that so that they are not tempted to a lack of self-control.

[The implication in this matter of not having marital sex is that Paul sees it as an opportunity for the enemy - and the issue is that it could lead to lack of self-control. Such a lack of control he recognises could arise in the proximity of marriage and bodily life together. It is the lack of self-control that Paul is concerned about; that would be a serious matter for the Christian man or woman.]

Paul concedes this, he does not command it. He rather wishes they were like him - single - but not all have this gift; and it is a gift of the Lord!

[b] To the unmarried and widows:

[3] The married and the widows should remain as Paul. But if they do not have self control as single people, then they should marry. Again, the issue is a matter of holding to self-control, which is a matter of Christian freedom - as was the issue in the matter of fornication.

[c] To the married

[4] Paul recounts what he understands to be the Lord's instructions [Matthew 5.32, 19.3-9; Mk 10.2-12; Luke 16.18:

[a] the marriage bond cannot be dissolved at the will of the parties

[b] it can be annulled, not rightfully, but effectually by:

[i] adultery; because it is a breach of the covenant

[ii] wilful desertion; as 1 Cor 7.11

If the woman does desert, then she should either

[a] be reconciled to her husband or

[b] remain unmarried

[d] To the Christians who are in a mixed marriage with an unbelieving partner:

[5] [a] The marriage may continue because the unbelieving partner is sanctified in the believing party. ἀγιάζω - means [1] to cleave, [2] to render morally pure [3] to consecrate or regard as sacred. This is the use in Acts 10.15, 1 Tim 4.5; Rom 11.16; Matt 23.17,19].

[b] Should the unbelieving partner wish to go, then the Christian partner should allow that.

1 Corinthians 7.17-24 Where the call of God finds us

The argument flow:

[1] While discussing these various states of life, whether married, single, living in a mixed marriage or what ever it is, Paul has an understanding that the call of God requires that there should not necessarily demand a change of circumstance. And it is not just simply a person's marital status - it would apply to circumcision, slavery or other social states that are possible to the person in this life.

[2] His principle appears to be that as the call of God comes to us, it is of itself, the uppermost thing of the person's life. It is such a radical matter that it eclipses all ambitions of upward social mobility. In the case of slavery, Paul indicates that it is quite possible to stay a slave to another human being - for one is, after all the Lord's bond slave and His "freeman". However, if an opportunity came for freedom then it should be taken.

[3] What this section asserts is that Christians are not of a particular social class or set of circumstances. These matters control the civil and social life of everyone else but they don't for the Christian. The call of God can come into any human circumstance and the Christian life is perfectly able to accommodate that setting.

Unmarried and widows

Marriage and divorce

Mixed marriages

The gospel does not require a response of change of circumstance

Slavery is a possible place to stay

Call of God is not 'class' sensitive

1 Corinthians *The call of God eclipses all other social ambitions*

Call of God is not class sensitive

7.17-24,25-40 *Today: Philemon and Onesimus*

No command of the Lord but a trustworthy opinion.

Controlling idea of 1 Cor 7.17-24

Marriage has obligations and concentration on each other

Last days perspective: need for undivided interests

Father's deciding on their daughters freedom to marry



Call of God eclipses all other ambitions.

[4] As to "condition" - the place, social status and situation of life that pertained to you when you were found and called by God - it is better to stay there and live the life of God within you at that place. Otherwise the corollary of this would be that the Christian life can only be lived in certain places and states that allow it certain freedoms to practice such a life. This is not so; and the importance of preaching the gospel is that it goes to all persons, regardless of status, and if called, they can live it there, right where they are.

Today:

Quite a different set of circumstances has arisen in the major modern democracies which have, to some degree, been founded and governed under the influence of the Judeo-Christian basic values.

Here, the striving to render people to be in a place of egalitarian and equal status, seems to create a middle-class style of Christianity which now governs the Christian church and its life - so that it presumes that such 'freedoms' are paramount.

It therefore creates the phenomenon that to be called by God through the gospel preaching, results in the drive to be educated, socially upwardly mobile. Sadly, this is conveyed to the mission field as a cultural overlay and taints the radical eschatological stance of this apostolic situation that Paul inculcates in his Corinthian people. This is a confusing overlay which often is read across this passage of Paul's.

Philemon

In another place and much later, - in his letter to Philemon - Paul approaches the matter of slavery from the reverse side of the perspective of the master. He makes clear to a Christian brother, that his treatment of his runaway slave would now change because the master sees the slave as a 'brother' in the Lord. In this way, the very common life that they share within the body of Christ has a power to undermine - because it takes precedence - the social status and network of slavery within the community. This is a change which arises out of the new life that Philemon and Onesimus share in Christ.

A trustworthy opinion

1 Corinthians 7.25-40 Virgins, men and women; widows, last days **The argument flow**

[1] He stresses that he has no command of the Lord but by God's mercy his opinion can be found trustworthy.

[2] Using the control passage of 1 Cor. 7.17-24 that we have just discussed, Paul now turns to give his opinion of the situation for men to remain as they are. If married, not to seek release from their marriage, if single, not to seek a wife.

[3] There is nothing wrong with marrying. Paul is at pains to recognise that marriage is a matter of God's own invention for us. But he stresses that it is costly and brings "tribulation in the flesh"[7.5b?]; Paul's motivation for his opinion is to spare them the trouble; what he later typifies as being 'free from concern' [v.32a].

[4] Paul's main drive is taken from the 'last days' in which the church lives. Since the time has been shortened and the world is passing away, then there is a tension which enters every sphere of domestic, emotional reaction and transaction of life.

[5] The issues of concern have to do with the focus of the individual: the married person has obligations - quite rightly - to attend to their spouse, the single person can attend devotedly to the Lord without distraction.

[6] For fathers, it is no sin to give your daughter to marry; and for another father to not, then he will do well.

[7] For widows, once their husband dies, they are in a place to be married again, but only to a brother in the Lord, and if they remain single, then Paul reckons that is a place in which she will be happier.

Marriage is a God-given state of life with obligations

Last days perspective

Divided interests

Fathers giving their daughters in marriage or refraining to do so.

Widows - better to remain unmarried.

*Meat sacrificed to idols as it is prepared for sale.
 Knowledge held with freedom to act; need for love as well
 Idols are nothing - there is only one God
 A weak conscience; unable to act on knowledge
 A sullied conscience as acts are done contrary to its witness
 A wounded conscience, as encouraged to act when it is not free*

1 Corinthians

8.1-13

1 Corinthians 8.1-13 Caring for each other's conscience

In the ancient world, there were many fertility cults, local shrines and polytheism abounded. Often, in the market place of a local city, town, or village, the only meat that was available was that which the local butchering had dedicated to the local god. It may have had a mark put on it, or designated in some other way.

It is also true that the stalls where food was served was the temple of a local idol, such as we see today in many restaurants.

Christians, who had turned from this idolatry, often were confronted with the food available as reminding them of their old allegiances; they had to grow into a mature Christian freedom; what should they do while their conscience was finding this freedom? This was the background to the Corinthian question put to Paul.

The argument flow:

[a] The knowledge of what is true, and of our freedom to practice it, makes us arrogant whereas love builds up.

[1] Paul makes clear in verse 1-6 that there is to be no doubt that knowledge must always be held while, at the same time, knowing that we don't know everything. The emphasis of the Christian life does not fall on what we know but on Who knows us - we must walk in the assurance that God knows us, and each Christian, personally. The implication of this is that God knows each person's journey and growth in liberty of conscience.

[2] About idols: Paul says these things are known:

[a] there is no such thing as an idol in God's reality - they arise through the imaginations of men and women.

[b] there is only one God.

[c] in the polytheistic world of idolatrous practices there may be many so "called" gods

[d] for us - the Jews and Christians in the Church - there is only One God, the Father who is the Origin of our life and one Lord, Jesus Christ who is the agent of God's creation and we exist through Him.

[b] The conscientious freedom to practice this knowledge is not found in every Christian - people are on a journey of freely exercising what they know.

[3] The man of weak conscience does not "have this knowledge" in such a way that he can practice it in freedom of conscience. Being accustomed to eating meat as sacrificed to the idol, he finds that he still does so - out of habit of his old life. Paul says that when they do that their conscience is weak, and when they eat, the conscience is not clean, but dirtied, sullied, or defiled.

[4] The eating of food is not what commends us to God: so whether we abstain or not it does not effect our relation with God. This principle clarifies that the eating is not a decisive matter which in any way controls the relation with God. We have seen this laid down in 1 Corinthians 6.13a.

[5] But relationally speaking, brother to brother, could it be that the freedom to eat it in the one person, can stumble the other? Yes, because they will follow your example as you freely eat, and when they do, they are accused in their conscience.

[6] This 'weak' brother is ruined - in that he went against his conscience - his conscience is said to be 'wounded' when it is weak, through the power of the example of the strong Christian. This means that relationally, the strong one has sinned against Christ, because he has wounded his brother when his conscience was weak. [Romans 14-15]

[7] Paul reckons then, that if food is the issue that stumbles his brother, he

Meat sacrificed to idols in its preparation

Knowledge is one thing - needs to be expressed in love

Idols are not anything but imaginations of men and women.

Only one God - the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Food is not a decisive issue in regard to God.

A sullied conscience arises when a person acts contrary to his conscience.

A conscience may be wounded by encouraging a man, through our example, to act when he should, internally not do so.

1 Corinthians

9.1-26;

10.1-22

The challenge to Paul's apostleship

The rights of the apostolic office

Why Paul does not choose to exercise those rights

#Israelites experienced salvation through judgment

The cause of Idolatry



will not eat it out of concern for his brother's weak conscience in the matter.

1 Corinthians 9.1-26 Rights of the apostolic office: Paul's own way in the matter

Following on from the discussion of the need to care for each other's conscience, Paul now ranges into a matter of his own freedom as he exercises his apostolic office.

The argument flow:

[1] Paul's apostleship has been challenged by people who are outside the Corinthian assembly; this seems a fair inference as he appeals to them as the one group of people who are the seal - because the fruit - of his apostleship in that place.

[2] Paul's examiners seem to imply that he has not acted as an apostle should, insofar that he had not asserted the rights that an apostle might do. He certainly agrees that the teaching of the Old Testament, and the Lord, was that the apostle's of Christ might make their living from the gospel. He amasses the teaching:

[a] they have a right to eat and drink

[b] to be accompanied by a believing wife

[c] to have their expenses met, appealing to the Torah concerning the ox and applying that, by extension, to humans.

[d] to have material things given to him in exchange for the spiritual

[e] to recognise that others share this right over them.

[f] as the Lord taught.

[3] But he has done none of these things, not because he has not the right to do so, but so as to make the gospel free to them and because he has a stewardship entrusted to him and he has a reward, it is knowing he has brought the gospel to them without charge.

[4] Paul identifies with all sorts of men and women, and he does this for the sake of the gospel that he may be a partaker of it.

[5] He is conscious that he runs the race to receive the prize but not for a perishable wreath at the end. He won't do what he does for monetary gain. He disciplines his body and pursues his goal that after preaching to others, he might not be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 10.1-22 Keeping exclusively to the Lord's table

Following on from the possibility of being disqualified from the race, Paul now opens the door to the issue of idolatry which he thinks the Corinthians are in danger. Their leniency in this matter threatens to offend the Lord over the issue of idolatry.

The argument flow:

[1] He uses the Exodus parallels of the Hebrews experiencing a salvation through judgment by going through water to salvation, and eating of manna and drinking from the rock. This immersion in the sea and the eating and drinking finds its parallel for the Corinthians in the Gospel sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. He makes clear that what the Hebrews fed on, in those ancient days, was really Christ, just as the people of God - the church of God - do today [1 Corinthians 10.1-5]. The warning for the Corinthians was that these ancient ones, who were blessed in covenant experience, later fell in the wilderness.

[2] What caused them to do so was that they became idolatrous, indulged in immorality and were destroyed by serpents [Numbers 21.5-6]. They also grumbled at the Lord in the wilderness and were also destroyed following the rebellion that Korah provoked [Numbers 16.41,49]. Paul warns the Corinthians about the common matter of temptation and that God enables us to endure through it.

Paul's apostleship challenged by those others who visit the Corinthians

The rights of the apostolic office Paul does not deny

Why he does not take those rights and provisions.

Salvation through judgment

Cause of idolatry

Eating in table fellowship with demons - the jealousy of God
Eating with out asking about it
Refraining out of care for a brother
Copying Paul
Mixed worship:redeemed humans & obedient angels
"is the head of"

1 Corinthians

**10.1-22,
 23-11.1**

[3] Paul exhorts them that they must shun the worship of idols. Showing that the Lord's supper is a participation in the body and blood of the Lord. He says that the people of Israel, in eating the sacrifices were partners at the altar. He does not mean that the food offered is anything, nor that the idols to which it is offered are either; but he does make clear that behind the pagan sacrificial meals is an offering to demons [Deut 32.17].

It would be impossible for the Christians to consider they could fellowship in a meal with the demons while they also eat at the Lord's table. This would provoke the Lord to jealousy [1 Corinthians 10.14-22]. And if they did that, they must surely take into account that He is stronger than they are - He is dangerous to them, as He was to Israel in the wilderness!

Participation through eating the demonic feast, arouses the Lord to jealousy.

1 Corinthians 10:23-11.1 Eating thankfully, without giving offence

We saw in 1 Cor 8, that Paul had dealt with the issue of the weaker brother's conscience and the need to take care of him in the matter of eating. Here is the reciprocal side of that - where it is possible to be manipulated by the scrupulous person.

The argument flow

[1] Lest he was misunderstood in speaking out against flagrant eating at the table of the demons, Paul needs to make clear that they have a freedom to eat, in conscience, anything sold in the meat market, on the basis that God created all things. However, they need to heed what he said in 1 Cor 8 about caring for the conscience of the weaker brother.

[2] In eating with unbelievers, they should just eat with thankfulness to the Lord, without asking any questions about the food itself. But they should refrain if someone, with a weaker conscience on the matter, informs you of the meat offered to idols.

[3] Paul makes clear that this is to not let the other man's conscience judge your conscience - your freedom is not subject to his scruples. But the principle here is that Paul will not give offence to another human person whether they be Jews, Greeks or the household of God.

[4] He wants the Corinthians to mimic him in this matter.

Eating anything without asking about it

Refraining out of care - not out of fear of judgment by others

The Corinthians are to copy Paul in this matter

1 Corinthians 11.2-16 Obedient angels & humans worship together

The argument flow:

[1] Confident that the Corinthians will follow in the traditional way Paul arranges things in the churches he plants, he sets out his understanding of men and women who pray and prophesy before God and the angels.

[2] He establishes a principle of what he means by "is the head of" by using three relational settings in which this applies:

- [a] Christ is the head of every man
- [b] the man is the head of a woman
- [c] God is the head of Christ.

That is, there is something which is common to the relational way of interacting here that is expressed between Christ and men, men and women and God and Christ.

[3] Concentrating on the relation between man and a woman, Paul draws attention as to how this relational order between them is expressed in the act of praying or prophesying, that is, speaking to God or speaking to others for God.

He says for a man to have something on [ie covering] his own head when he prays or prophesies would disgrace his head. [Meaning his own head or Christ?]

[4] Concentrating on the woman, he says for a woman to have her head uncovered while praying or prophesying would disgrace her head. [Meaning her own head or the man?] Paul states that the disgrace would be parallel to having her head shaved, which was the public shaming of a woman caught in sexual sin

Praying and prophesying in the church as shared with angels

"is the head of"

Head covering is a public, physical way of declaring gender difference

1 Corinthians

11.1-16,17-34

*A head covering a public statement
Relational glory - sustained creation order
When angels and humans worship together
Their divisions and how they manifest
Lord's Supper not a matter of satisfying one's hunger and thirst
Shaming of those with a smaller contribution.
What the Lord did and said at the Supper*



“is the head of” = to be glorified by some one else

where she has already dishonoured her husband.

Paul now states a parallel in the setting of praying and prophesying - if she does not wear her covering as she prays and prophesies, then it is as shameful to be shaved and vice versa.

[5] Turning to the man he gives the reason for the head not being covered, it is because he is the glory of God as made in his image, but the woman is the glory of the man. He draws this from a creation order, on the basis that she had her origin from him and was made to serve the man.

The issue of creation order being maintained before angels

This now tells us that this whole matter has to do with registering in a public way, who is the glory of whom. So that we could now say that verse 3, which set the relations would mean that for Christ to *be the head* of every man is to say that every man is the glory of Christ; for the man to be the head of the woman means that she is his glory.

[6] This matter of creational order, as the man being the head of woman and she being his glory needs to be expressed by the covering of her head because of the angels.

The open access of both men and women to speak to and for God is a manifestation of intimacy which is accessible to both - regardless of gender. In the church of the redeemed there is no distinction here as to sonship. Neither male nor female is the rule. It is that which makes it a practical issue where both do and practice the same things without distinction or difference.

Human redeemed persons at worship before angels

In the order of creation, where the obedient angels also participate in the worship of God along with the men and women of the church, it is vital, because of their presence and engagement in this worship to distinguish the created orders of men and women. Because the angels themselves are subject to one another and are the glory of those angels under whose authority they live and obey.

[7] The appropriateness of the covering of the woman's head as she prays and prophesies recognises that this mixed human and angelic worship is creaturely and the redemption is for men and women who were lost and have been purchased for God [Rev.5] - but the good angels, who as creatures have known no change in that matter, attend with the standing instructions of creation intact.

Their divisions are evident

1 Corinthians 11.17-34 The Lord's discipline over his Supper

Paul continues with the theme of the Corinthian worship as they assemble together. Having made clear his reasons for the need for distinguishing gender in the assembly as it prays and prophesies, he now turns to the Lord's Supper.

Lord's Supper is not for the satisfying of food and drink

The argument flow:

[1] He returns to the factions [divisions] which exist among them, having dealt with them as a matter of first order in his letter [1 Cor.1-4]. He has heard that there are factions, and his reason for believing it is that there would never have been a preference for Paul, Apollos, Peter etc in the first place if that were not so.

Participation was unequal

[2] Factions have implications for their eating of the Lord's Supper. They manifest themselves in looking after 'number one' - ie the factions destroy the ability to care for each other so as to prefer each other and wait for one another at the supper. If they are ravenous and need to drink they should do that at home - the Lord's Supper is not for satisfying their needs but to express their worship in eating at the Lord's table.

The Lord's actions and words at the Last Supper

Further, there were those who had not enough to bring to the Supper, and those who had plenty; the differences, under the impact of the factions, was emphasised. This shamed some and elevated others.

[3] Paul now recites what he received of the Lord about that Last Supper. He will recite it to go on to show that the meaning of it is precious, and that they, by their divisive and self-serving behaviour, are violating that meaning.

[a] on the night He was betrayed the Lord Jesus **took** bread
 [b] when he had **given thanks**
 [c] He **broke** it
 [d] He **said**, referring to the bread, "This is my body, which is for you; do
 this in remembrance of me."
 [e] He **took** the cup after the supper
 [f] He **said**, referring to the cup, "This cup is the new covenant in my
 blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
 Paul adds, As often as you eat the bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's
 death until He comes. So the act of eating and drinking is a proclamation of the
 death of Christ which should go on until his return.

[4] To eat and drink in an unworthy manner, he has already said what this
 is [verse 20-21,33-34], is to be guilty of the body and blood = to handle it in a
 way that belies the meaning of what they are doing as instructed by the Lord.

They must judge [examine and pronounce a verdict on] themselves for, in
 their failure to judge the body [= the assembly's collected life together] they have
 opened themselves to the judgment of the Lord. He has caused sickness among
 them and a few deaths as a result.

[5] Paul insists that if they had judged themselves about his matter they
 would not have been judged. However, they are to see this as a discipline of the
 Lord so that they would not be condemned with the world.

[6] Paul wants them to eat at home, so that they will not come to the sup-
 per to get a meal for their stomach. This will incur judgment.

**Paul's understanding
 of it as a proclama-
 tion**

**God has disciplined
 them about this.**

1 Corinthians 12.1-11 "Spirituals"- gifts in the body from the Holy Spirit for the common good

Paul now picks up a new matter on the list of the Corinthians. He calls them "spirituals" by which he means the things given by/of the Holy Spirit as they show themselves in the congregation.

The argument flow:

[1] The Corinthians had come out of idolatry. They had the experienced
 the occult. So they would know, and Paul reminds them, that to speak by the Spirit
 of God would never mean that someone would curse Jesus. Indeed, no one could
 say Jesus is Lord except as the Holy Spirit enabled them.

[2] Their previous occult experience would have taught them that 'many
 manifestations = many spirits at work'. It is not so here. There are varieties of gifts
 given by the Spirit, they will see varieties of service shown by the same Lord, and
 they will see varieties of effects [workings] of the same God. All the spirituals are
 given to individuals, so that, through the operation of that 'spiritual' something is
 worked for the common good; they benefit the community there in Corinth.

[3] To individuals, just as He wishes, the holy Spirit has given and He
 works all these things for the common good;

[a] knowledge gifts and ministries: words that speak wisdom, words that
 bring forth knowledge, knowledge about the distinguishing of spirits. This last may
 mean the awareness of the presence of evil spirits, or it may mean the perception
 of the spirits of men and women. The first is most likely.

[b] word ministries and gifts: prophecy, tongues and their interpretation.

[c] effects/workings as gifts and services to the body: miracles, healing,
 faith.

**Speaking by the
 Spirit**

**Varieties of expres-
 sion - One Spirit**

**Gifts of knowledge,
 words, and works.**

1 Corinthians

12.12-31;

13.1-13

A unity of members

Mutually dependent upon one another

*# The place of the chapter in the wider flow of the argument
12-14*



1 Corinthians 12.12-31 Christ is one body with many members

Maintaining his theme of the body of Christ as it manifests locally, Paul now wants to indicate that these 'spirituals' are given into the assembly in a way that, for them to know how they shall operate them, they must know something about the body of Christ.

A unity of the body expressed as a unity of members.

The argument flow:

[1] The unity of the body is a unity of many members. So all the members should think of themselves as one body. This is how it is for Christ; He is many members but one Christ.

Mutually dependent

This unity is echoed by the fact that we have all been baptised into one body by the Spirit. Whether we were different as Jews are from Greeks, as slaves are from freemen, we were all made to 'drink' of the one Spirit - an image of reception of the Spirit by each.

[2] The body is not one member, but many. They need each other, and they do different functions that benefit the whole. They cannot think of themselves as being independent of one another - they are mutually dependent.

God's appointment in the church

Even weaker members, or unseemly members, turn out to be crucial to the life of the body. So, because there is no division in the body, they must all care for one another. They suffer together and are glorified together. They are Christ's body and individually members of it.

[3] In the church God has appointed:

[i] apostles

[ii] prophets

[iii] teachers

[iv] miracles

[v] gifts of healings, helps, administrations, kinds of tongues.

But they all do not have all the same gifts, they are variously dispersed among the body.

[4] The Corinthians should desire the greater gifts and yet there is still a more excellent way to understand.

Setting of the chapter.

1 Corinthians 13.1-13 Love for one another is permanent!

The setting or context:

As we have seen from the context of this section, the chapter 13 is sandwiched between the 12 and 14 as a control passage for the life of the charismatically gifted body.

Having spoken to the question of the divine order that has an expression within the body of Christ, and which is the underlying basis for the right ordering and performance of the spiritual gifts which he is discussing, Paul now wants to put these gifts in their proper setting.

He wants us to contrast them:

[a] with the life of Christ which is ours by the Spirit of God. In this way he throws the emphasis upon the fruit of the Spirit in our life and the permanency of that participation in the Lord's proper human life which has come to us through his resurrection and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is a permanent sharing with the Lord and with one another.

[b] as impermanent gifts, consistent with their usage in the Church of God for the upbuilding and edification of the body - for the common good.

[c] as ministries that are eschatologically conditioned. Just as we saw him speak to the issues of unmarried virgins in 1Cor7, - where the issues always need to be considered in the light of the current time, the present distress and the attention

to the Lord - so he speaks to the gifts of the spirit in this way here.

The argument flow of the chapter

[1] The speaking with tongues, having gifts and knowledge, and acts of mercy all are pointless if they are done in a way that lacks love [13.1-3].

This makes a sharp contrast between the being of the people of God and their doing. What they do ceases to have any reality if it is done in such a way as it denies, by the way it is done, the very being of the people who do it. We cannot live in this fractured way.

[2] The qualities of the life of God's people indicate their very being in Christ. Paul subsumes under the heading of "love" all the qualities which, if absent, make the use and goal of charismatic gifts null [13.4-7].

He mentions the relational power of not being jealous of one another, including what they can or cannot do; of not bragging or being arrogant.

He speaks of unbecoming behaviour, such as seeking one's own interests, being easily provoked. The importance of not counting others sins against you.

He says what we rejoice in bears witness to this life of God, we need to rejoice in the truth and not unrighteousness.

Love is a great bearer - it carries the load of life. It lives by trust - in God and in others; it lives in the presence of the future hope and it has amazing endurance or patience with people and life.

All these manifest the presence, or absence, of love and in that way they have a definitive effect upon the efficacy of all that we do.

[3] Under the fact that love never fails - it never has an end to its life, it never has to be put aside - Paul contrasts the tongues and the knowledge, both of which will have to be eventually "done away", put down as the tools that they are [13.8].

[4] The reason the gifts the Holy Spirit gives will not endure, is a matter of the eschatological timing. They are given now, in this age, and so for a time in which the imperfect and uncomplete accompanies all that we do, say, and offer in service to one another [13.9-12].

[a]The gifts are partial.

Knowledge and prophecy take place now as simply parts of the whole, when the complete arrives, the partial is "done away". This makes clear what "done away " means. Not done away because of any imperfection in the gift, or failure of it to operate and deliver in its time, but because it is overtaken by the arrival of the complete and finished work of God.

[b] They relate to a time of our immaturity.

The gifts are devices of the holy Spirit, given to build up one another in service offered and empowered for this time. But when we ourselves arrive to where God wants us to be - the measure of the stature of Christ - then they are simply not needed.

[c] Knowledge suffers from the same imperfection, it is unclear, partial and so operates all that it does in a dim, uncompleted environment.

Our knowing takes a quantum leap into 'completion' the day we see the Lord face to face. Our knowing of Him is a relational knowing; and we only know ourselves that way. So, when positioned face to face with no barriers, no confusions about each other, this will lead to "full" knowing on our side. In this way we are able to answer Him to whom we were always "fully known". [See the same theme in 1 Jn3.1-3].

[5] At this time in which we are living upon the earth, waiting for our Saviour to gather us to Himself, we can say that faith, hope and love remain with us - they "now abide"[13.13].

However, of these three we may say that faith has its manifestation in its current working through love [Ga5.6], At this time we have our trust in One Whom we do not yet see face to face. Hope is a future matter in our present. Both will be relativised in some way when we are face to face. Love will show itself to be, of these three, the greatest in the transition from partial to complete.

The flow of the argument

Without the accompanying love - deeds and services are annulled.

The nature of love in action

Love is a permanent matter among others that are transitory

Life here is not complete - everything is partial and dim

Face to face is a different matter

Love the greatest

1 Corinthians

14.1-25

Persue love

Desire the gifts especially prophecy

Tongues is an indistinct sound, compared with prophecy



1 Corinthians 14.1-25 Propheying is to be desired- it edifies all

The argument flow:

Love is to be persued

Following on from the permancy and greatness of love, Paul now moves to the exhortation:

[1] to pursue love [14.1a]

[2] to earnestly desire spriitual gifts, [14.1b]

[3] and of these gifts especially that they should prophesy [14.1c,39]

[4] The direction of the speech is vital to the assembled body [14.2-5]

Desire especially prophecy

Paul makes clear that if we are to consider the body and not ourselves and our own interests [13.5b], then we must be aware that the speech in tongues is directed to God, whereas prophecy is directed to men, and so while the one edifies the tongue speaker the other edifies the church. This is the vital difference, for the assembled body, between speaking in tongues and the propheying to the community.

Since greatness in the church is about most useful service, then the prophetic speaker is to be considered 'greater' - in the sense of more valued - than the tongue speaker; unless of course, the tongue speaker interprets, so that the church may be edified.

The three identifiable results of propheying, which are registered in the life of the assembly are οἰκοδομῆν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν. [strengthening, encouragement and comfort [NIV].

[5] Tongues, compared with prophecy, is an indistinct and unclear sound[14.6-13].

It is as if an unknown language is spoken and it cannot edify the church. The outcome of this is, that if the church is to be edified, the tongue speaker should pray for the ability to interpret. This is the way that the tongue speaker can have the same effect that the prophecy gift would have for the body.

[6] Paul's own example achieves this aim. Although he uses tongues more than anyone he knows, he chooses, in the assembly, to pray with his mind, articulating what he says in the normal way [14.14-19]

His argument is laid out in this way:

Difference between tongues and prophecy

[a] spirit and mind

[a] First, Paul assumes that there is a distinction known to a Christian person to distinguish an activity of their spirit from that of their mind. Because to pray, or to sing, in tongues is to pray, or sing, with the spirit [of the man] and this implies that the mind does not have any fruit when that is done. These actions, to pray with the spirit and to have a mental product, appear to be mutually exclusive.

Difference between tongues and prophecy

[b] unclear and clear

[b] To pray, or to sing, with the mind is also possible and both are available as choices, and in this case preferable, for the "ungifted" person in the assembly is then able to mentally assess, and so meaningfully agree, with your prayer and so say 'Amen' with integrity and is therefore edified. Edified because your action as a prayer took your brother into the event and so was an action for the sake of the body.

Difference between tongues and prophecy

[c] unedifying [because no revelation given] and upbuilding [because clear]

[7] Christians, while they are to be babes in knowing and practising evil, they are to be mature thinkers; not childish in their ways. [14.20-25]

Paul uses a quotation from Isaiah 26.11ff, when the people of God, under the discipline of God were not believers in God's word and did not receive the voices of their prophets. They were "unbelievers".

At that time God sent them away into exile and to an experience of listening to an unknown language - they were forced to endure struggling with the tongue they were hearing and hardly got anything clear. This tongue was a sign to them that they were in this situation as a judgment of God. The tongue was an appropriate sign for them - for they were "unbelievers".

Conversely, to hear the prophetic voice of God was the normal, everyday fare of the trusting covenant people of God. Prophecy is a sign for believers.

To assemble, and then for all to speak in tongues, would mean that the 'ungifted' or the unbelievers among them would never understand and so would

*Things should also be orderly, listening to Paul's direction.
 #Christ's resurrection central and pivotal
 Doubt about the Christian dead being raised.
 Their early reception of the Gospel
 Paul's apostolic witness*

1 Corinthians

14.1-25; 15.1-11

think them mad.

But if they prophesied, revelation would be clear and made even to the unbelievers and turn them towards God as his conviction comes upon them as the Spirit uses the clarity of the message. So the prophecy, as it brought revelation to them - would then be a sign to them of His grace, as it had the effect of making believers out of them.

[8] The goal to aim at is edification and done with good order [14.26-33].

[9] The Corinthians need to correct the constant interruption by women asking questions [14.34-36].

[10] They need to recognise Paul's authority to direct them in this way [14.37-39].

1 Corinthians 15.1-11 Crucial to believe in the bodily resurrection

Read also Romans 4.20-25

Boan, Discipleship School No 4 2009

1 Corinthians 15 is a basis to understand the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus and the future bodily resurrection for those who believe in Him as Messiah. As our study progresses, we see the resurrection of Jesus as the place where Paul understands the whole world changed and the new creation has begun.

The setting and context

Paul, as the planter of the church in Corinth. Among the Corinthians there was a time when the trust they first had that the dead in Christ will be bodily raised had come to be doubted [1 Corinthians 15.1-11].

The flow of the argument:

[1] Paul makes clear to the Corinthians that they have had the gospel preached to them, they received it and they now stand in it. Further, he reminds them that it is by the gospel that they are saved. This salvation that they know and experience must be maintained in their life, for to doubt the resurrection of the Christian dead challenges the very saving power of the gospel [1 Corinthians 15.1-2]. So it is a serious question.

[2] He states that what was preached to them of first importance was the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is what he, Paul himself, had received and believed; it was consistent to the [Old Testament] Scriptures, and he had passed it on to them [1 Corinthians 15.3-4].

[3] He then lists the apostolic men, and others, who personally witnessed the bodily resurrection of Christ as a matter of historical veracity [1 Corinthians 15.5-8].

[4] Finally, he indicates that he, himself, received an appearance of the risen Lord. He thinks of himself as a witness who was "untimely born" - he means that he is not a witness like the others who walked with Jesus from the baptism of John to his Ascension [Acts 1.21-22], but he is the last in the apostolic line-up.

Although not in the same time-frame of witness as the other apostles, he can witness to the Lord Jesus as being alive. However, if Paul as a person does not stand with them as to time of birth, he does stand with us as those who have known Christ after the Ascension. The other apostles span both the earthly ministry and the resurrection and ascension. Paul is one who will teach us, as a true apostle with authority. He is untimely born for an apostle, but, uniquely in the apostolic group, he stands with us in time.

[5] Paul also sees himself as the "least" of the apostles. The church of God he now has a share in caring for, he had once been persecuting [Acts 9.1-9]. Now, it is the grace of God which has brought him to be a major carer and foundation apostle of the church - and this is particularly so for the Corinthians, because he is, in that sense, their founding father [2 Corinthians 3.1-3].

Difference between tongues and prophecy [d] dishonoring to the church if handled immaturely; A converting power if prophetically done

Larger theme of the resurrection of Christ and the Christian dead

Entry of some doubt about the Christian dead being raised

They have received the gospel and so stand in it.

Death Burial and resurrection of Christ is where the work was done for them

Paul's apostolic witness

Paul least of the apostles

1 Corinthians

15.12-19;

20-35

*Resurrection of the Christian dead and resurrection of Christ linked
The union between them
Empty gospel if resurrection is denied.
Corinthians are unforgiven if that were the case
The Christ is the first fruits*



1 Corinthians 15.12-19 - Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of the Christian dead; two episodes of the one event

Argument flow:

Paul now begins to lay down an important argument, which we need to follow carefully.

[1] He begins by linking the preached Christ, the resurrected Christ, with the fact that some are now asserting that there is no resurrection of the Christian dead. And his implication is: "if you have received the preaching, then what was preached was Christ as resurrected; how then can you now deny the resurrection of the Christian dead?" Now for our purposes, it is vital to see that he cannot discuss the resurrection of the Christian dead without the resurrection of Christ [verses 12,16]. He shows that any questioning the resurrection of believers is to question Christ's resurrection.

[2] He now makes an important move. He reasons from the whole class of those who will be resurrected, back to Christ; the implication being that, if they are not to be resurrected, then neither is Christ.

This implies that the two groups, Christ, and the to-be-resurrected dead, are joined [united] in such a way that we cannot speak of resurrection for the one, without at the same time saying it of the other [verse 13]. Paul has a picture that expresses the union of the to-be-resurrected ones and Christ. We shall have to read on, to examine later this picture of the "firstfruits".

[3] If the objection, that the dead are not raised, is sustained, then a further implication would be true. The preaching would be empty and the apostolic witness found false for the apostles would have been speaking against God if the dead are not raised.

[4] Further, if the preaching is empty, then the Corinthians faith is an empty thing and they are still in their sins [verse 17]. This makes clear that the death of Christ accomplishes our release from the guilt of our sin and that we can know this in our experience because he rose.

[5] Further, if the dead are not raised then the dead in Christ have perished. We would then be left as people who only have a hope in Christ for this life, the period of our earthly existence in the body. Paul thinks we are to be pitied if that is the case [verses 16-19].

1 Corinthians 15.20-35 - Christ the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep

In 1 Corinthians 15.20-23 Paul sees the to-be-resurrected ones and the resurrected Christ as united. He understands that the to-be-resurrected ones are, as it were, asleep and that Christ is related to them as the first fruits of a harvest crop are related to the whole crop.

Let us look at this as it is shown to us in the Old Testament.

"You shall bring the firstfruits of your soil into the house of the Lord." [Exodus 23.19]

"When you enter the land which I am going to give you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits to the priest..." [Leviticus 23.10].

"Of the first of your dough [coarse meal] you shall lift up a cake as an offering to the Lord." [Numbers 15.20]

Numbers 18.8-18 indicates that the Lord gave to Aaron the first fruits that the people brought so that he and the priests would eat them.

Concerning the priest it was said

"you shall give him the firstfruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep." [Deuteronomy 18.4]

Resurrection of the Christian dead and resurrection of Christ linked

Two groups are vitally united

Preaching would be empty if resurrection is denied

If resurrection is denied - the Corinthians are still unforgiven

Christ as the First-fruits

First fruits in the Old Testament

The Christ is the first fruits
Christ's resurrection is representative of all men and women
Adam and Christ - death and life

1 Corinthians

15.20-35

Deuteronomy 26.1-11 makes clear that the first of the produce was a thanksgiving that the whole was given by God.

We can say three things about all this:

[1] The firstfruits are an offering made to God as a statement of thanksgiving to Him for what He has already shown by the first fruit itself, that there is a harvest to follow.

[2] In that sense the firstfruits are considered, not as an offering for their own sake, but as an offering that is representative of the whole harvest. It looks at the initial portion of the harvest only as a portion of the whole.

[3] The firstfruits are also a recognition by the offerer that all the crop is given by God.

We can see then, behind this use of the word "firstfruits" is a picture which contains the following elements within it.

[a] There is an organic connection between the firstfruits and the rest of the crop. They have both grown together, they come forth from the same life source. The use of the Greek word "firstfruit" is used elsewhere by Paul to state this idea of organic connection.

In Romans 11.16 the word is used to speak of Israel as the firstfruits of the dough, and then he reasons to the whole lump. Also in Romans 16.5 he speaks of Epaphroditus as the beginning of a great harvest for Christ in Asia by using the word firstfruit. Similarly of the household of Stephanus [1 Corinthians 16.15] as the firstfruits of Achaia. In Romans 8.23 Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit, as the firstfruits, as being given to believers as a token of the initial, secret, enjoyment of the adoption [Romans 8.15] which he says is fully and openly received as the resurrection of the body.

[b] There is therefore a unity established between them, for the firstfruits cannot be thought of as organically separate from the rest of the crop. Even though they have appeared in time as separated from one another, organically there is an inseparability of the initial portion from the whole.

[c] The firstfruits are a representative of the whole although it is appearing earlier than the whole. Offering of firstfruits is to represent the whole God given harvest.

This image then, stresses that Christ's resurrection is the representative beginning of the resurrection of all and it makes clear the connection between the two resurrections. The opponents of Paul, who were denying the resurrection of the Christian dead must have denied the bodily nature of the resurrection. It is to this issue that Paul is addressing:

[1] the resurrection of Christ has as its consequence the resurrection of the believers.

[2] Christ's resurrection is not simply a guarantee of the others resurrecting, it is the beginning of the general event of the harvest come. This means that the two resurrections are not thought of as two separate events but as two episodes of the same event.

[3] Yet, Paul does indicate that there is a time difference between them, the "after that" of verse 23 makes this clear.

1 Corinthians 15.20-22

Christ's resurrection is effective for Christians and for all mankind. Paul gives the reason as to why he thinks this way, and why he uses such an image as firstfruits, by what he states in verse 21.

Christ is a firstfruit because:

[1] Christ and Adam are representative of all men and women; the resurrection of the dead comes through a man [verse 21b] and this man is a "head man" with whom all men and women have a solidarity.

[2] firstfruits are understood as organically linked with the rest - hence the "making alive" of all through Christ [verse 22b].

**Organic connection
 = a matter of shared
 life of the same tree**

**Christ's resurrection
 is representative of
 all**

**Adam and Christ -
 death and life**

1 Corinthians

15.20-35;
35-49

An order of events at the last times
#The kind of spiritual body when resurrected
Principle of agriculture



In contrast with the death which came through Adam - another representative man - is the resurrection of Christ, which is the beginning of the sequence of the "making alive" of others [the rest of the crop]. Christ is the firstfruits because he is raised as the second Adam, and verse 22b makes clear that it is only as they are united in the second Adam that "all shall be raised".

There is a solidarity with Christ which is expressed by contrasting Christ with Adam, another man with whom we have solidarity, but who draws us in to a different consequence - death.

Paul's timetable for this last time in which we live.

1 Corinthians 15.23-28

In Paul's thinking there is not always a hard and fast distinction between the Messianic kingdom as present now, and the ultimate expression of the kingdom of God which flesh and blood cannot inherit [1 Corinthians 15.50]. This is because if we consider the Person Who is the kingdom, there is no distinction: while if we consider the time difference of the completed kingdom, there is.

Throughout 1 Corinthians 15 what is emphasised is the conquest of Christ over His enemies and the establishment of His rule. This has implications for the bringing of the kingdom now, as well as for the finality of its future form then.

Elsewhere, Paul speaks of such things as the "man of sin", and what takes place at the judgment. But while we are looking at 1 Corinthians 15 there are some things to notice here.

We can see from the section 1 Corinthians 15.23-28 that Paul has an order of events in his mind. We could list these points:

[1] the resurrection of Christ, who is understood as the first fruits in relation to others [verse 23]. Christ is understood as "reigning" [verse 25] now, and that He has received this reign from the Father, Who is not subject to Christ [verse 27].

[2] then, after Christ's resurrection, those who are Christ's; they resurrect at his bodily coming - the presencing of Himself - [verse 23] among us

[3] then comes "the end" which is described as:

[a] the abolition of all rule, authority and power. This has to do with His enemies, those who are currently opposing Him. [verse 24]

[b] the enemies are brought to be under His feet [verse 24], the last enemy to be abolished is death. [This must be wider than just the Christian dead in its application].

[4] The Son hands back the kingdom and shows Himself as subjected to the Father [verse 28].

This outline of Paul's, whilst it does not contain everything he mentions in other places, will be part of the puzzle when we collect these matters from other parts of the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 15.35-49- What kind of a body is a resurrected body?

In discussing the contrast between the introduction of death into the world and the coming of resurrection Paul has used Adam and Christ as two representative men.

Because of their place and action both Adam and Christ stand at the head of a group of people; but it is also true that, the way Paul uses them, they stand at the beginning of a time-age as well. This is especially clear when Paul comes to discuss the way the dead are raised.

Principle of agriculture

In 1 Corinthians 15.35-49 he makes the following movements in his argument:

[1] In discussing "what kind of body?" the raised dead receive, Paul establishes that there is an instructive principle at work in the world of agriculture, and the universe at large. [36-41]

An order of events

[a] First, the seed that is sown in the ground does not come to life unless it dies.

[Strictly speaking, it is the “corpse” of the believer which Paul is discussing in this section of 1 Corinthians. Elsewhere, Paul will speak of the body of the believer and will mean the body which is still alive.

See for example Romans 6.12, 8.10, 2 Corinthians 4.10 and the “body of death” in Romans 7.24.

So, in relation to order, the death of the thing sown precedes the coming to life of the new product. [verse 36]

[b]Second, the kind of body that the resurrected thing receives is a matter of God’s own choice [38]

[c] Third, each body has its own glory [nature] and each species of God’s creation differs in its glory from another [39-41]. This is an example of how God chooses the differences.

[2] Now, in verses 42-44 Paul develops the answer to the “what kind of body?” question. He sets out a series of contrasts, which will illustrate the idea of “sowing” which he introduced in verse 36-37.

Illustrating that the body you sow is not the body you get he states the contrasts:

[a] the body sown the body raised is perishable [in corruption] is imperishable in dishonour in glory in weakness in power

[b] these above three contrasts are summarised by the words: natural and spiritual

[Soul and life - The noun psyche in Greek means soul, and in some cases can stand for the life of the man as a whole. The adjective here for the body would be soulish [or following the Greek construction of the word “psychical”]. It is rendered “natural” by the American Standard Version.

[3] Now, in **verses 44b-49** his argument takes a surprising, but wonderfully instructive, turn.

[a] We see that 44a summarises the contrasts between the body sown and the body raised as “natural” and “spiritual”.

[b] Verse 44b “If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body” is an argument in itself. For it is stating that the grounds, or the condition, laid down by the presence of the natural body means that there will be a spiritual body. The argument is of the form, “If the one: then the other”.

[c] Verse 45, supports this argument of 44b, by a quotation from Genesis 2.7. “The first man, Adam, became a living soul”. This quotation is used here in reference to the “becoming” of the last Adam as “a life giving Spirit”. Notice that, for the second clause of this verse, the word became is in italics in some English versions. This signals that it is not in the original Greek text, but the sense demands that it be read. For the first clause, which is the quotation from Genesis 2.7, has “became” and the second clause requires it to complete the reason for the quotation. Christ becomes a “life giving Spirit”

So, to carry our contrasts through we now have something like this:

First Adam	Second Adam
= living soul	= life giving Spirit
psychical [soulish]	spiritual

[d]Notice that the argument has now broadened to include the environments of Adam and Christ in their respective bodily existences. The contrast that began as a difference between bodies, has now included the living persons, who represent others. The point of departure was the corpse of the believer, now it has broadened to include Adam by virtue of creation. Adam’s body, when created anticipates a “spiritual” body

[e] This last point is important, for “natural” in 44a describes the fallen, sinful body [corrupted, dishonoured, and weak]. Whereas in 44b “natural” is broader than that, it includes Adam’s body before the fall. Why does Paul expand this view to Adam’s prefall body? It is to show that from the beginning, prior to

The risen body is not natural but spiritual

The first and second Adam

1 Corinthians

15.35-49

Two orders of existence: contrasted in time
Summary



Two orders of existence; contrasted in time.

the fall, a higher or different kind of body to Adam's was in view. That is, by virtue of his creation [not because of his sin]? Adam's body then anticipates and points forward to a higher form of bodily existence.

See Romans 5.14-19 where Adam is used as a representative man who is a type [pattern] of Christ, who was to come.

[f] Verse 46 now extends the horizon to set forth two comprehensive scenarios, two orders of existence contrasted in time. First there is the soulish [natural] and then there is the spiritual. In this way Paul has given us a comprehensive overview of history.

We could set it out as two ages: which are revealed by resurrection
the era of the first Adam the era of the second Adam

[g] the perspective with which Paul views the resurrection of believers is cosmic. This cosmic language is reflected in the verses 47-49 where he places side by side the parallels of:

earth	heaven
Adam	Christ
earthly	heavenly
out from the earth	out of heaven:

[4] Two ages are now seen to control the interpretation of the world history and the Christian life.

We now have two ages compared and contrasted like this:

psychical	spiritual
pre-eschatological	last age
incomplete	complete
transitory	definitive
provisional	final

Notice that Adam and Christ are not being compared here simply as individuals: they are representative men, and so Paul goes on to speak of all those associated with each of them.

with Adam the earthy one	with Christ the heavenly man
are the earthy ones	are the heavenly ones
because they bear his image	because they bear his image

To summarise:

It is the image bearing which fixes each of these groups [verse 49].

These things can be said **in summary**:

[1] The contrast between Adam and Christ is comprehensive, ranging over many areas. Yet it shows that they are, in all these areas, exclusive of each other.

[2] They are both viewed as heads, who being representative of others, also fix their existence.

[3] This is so because each of them represents two contrastive orders of life, two world ages [periods], two creations. These are the psychical [natural] and earthy as opposed to the spiritual and heavenly.

[4] One follows the other spanning the whole of time.

[5] The order of Adam is first - so there is none before him.

[6] The order of Christ is second - so there is no one between Adam and Christ.

[7] The order of Christ is last - so there is none after him, He is the eschatological Man. Paul's understanding of the two ages is central and controlling for the way he sets forth how we are to see world history, as well as how we shall think about where it is that we are called to live. It is this large idea which is behind what it means to be:

[a] in the flesh [1 Cor. 10.3] or in the Spirit [Romans 8.9]

[b] the "new creation" [2 Cor. 5.17, Galatians 6.15],

[c] in the glorious liberty of the children of God [Romans 8. 18-21, 2 Cor 3.17]

[d] regenerated [1 Peter 1.3] to a living hope

*We shall all be changed - whether we die or not
Death is overcome
This has its connection with the overcoming of sin
The whole person is redeemed.
The collection for the churches in Judea
Paul's travel plans and his timing.*

1 Corinthians

**15.50-58;
16.1-9**

1 Corinthians 15.50-58 - The final victory is assured - whether we sleep or not

The argument flow

[1] Paul now returns to the initial setting of the chapter's beginning. It was the question of the Christian dead and their final resurrection. The perspective had been that of those who had died in this age.

[2] Paul now wants to tell them a mystery - something present but hidden - in the Gospel. It is that it is not the case that everyone will "sleep" in Christ - for there will be people who are alive upon the earth at the return of the Lord.

[3] What is certain is that everyone will be changed - that is, all that he has been speaking about in reference to the final reception of a spiritual body will happen to all. It is just that for those who are not asleep in Christ, they will be changed in a flash.

[4] This is so because the certainty of the victory over death is already ours because it is already Christ's. Nothing is more certain that we shall "put on" - and that bodily, not a matter of the soul - immortality. Death will be swallowed up in victory [Isaiah 25.8; Hosea 13.14].

[5] Using the analogy of the sting of an insect as the pain which we register, Paul shows death is the painful matter of which we are aware and feel bodily through our senses. But this pain has arisen through sin; it is its consequence or result.

Whereas the power of sin is the law; a power deriving from a knowledge of God's requirements for us - which is registered as guilt in the conscience.

[6] But thanks be to God - for the victory over both our conscience and our bodily trauma of death and decay are given us in Christ Jesus. Our whole man is the subject of redemption, because His whole man was.

[7] The Corinthians should encourage themselves in light of this.

1 Corinthians 16.1-9 The collection for the saints: Paul's plans

[1] On his journey to Macedonia, Paul is reminding the Corinthians of the collection for the saints in Judea. He suggests that they put aside weekly what they have over from their needs.

[2] They are to appoint some persons, who may go with Paul or not, to carry this money to Jerusalem with accompanying letters from the Corinthians assembly.

[3] He indicates that he is going to Macedonia first and that he intends to winter with them in Corinth. He will see them then for a protracted period of time, so he is not coming to them directly.

[4] He is going to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost where he has much work and also many adversaries. [This means that this letter was sent before Pentecost].

The mystery - we shall all be changed

Death is overcome

Connected with the overcoming of sin

The whole human is redeemed

The collection for the churches in Judea

Travel plans and timing

1 Corinthians

16.10-24

Timothy and Apollos
Stephanus and Fortunatus
Greetings and Salutation



1 Corinthians 16.10-24 The collection for the saints: Paul's plans

Timothy and Apollos

[1] They should make Timothy welcome and not despise him.

[2] Paul encouraged Apollos to come to them, but he cannot make it right away.

[3] They should be alert and live in love as true men.

Visit of Stephanus and Fortunatus

[4] Stephanus and Fortunatus have blessed Paul by their coming. In this way they have reoriented the Corinthians lifting his spirit. They are men who are to be honoured.

Greetings

[5] Greetings: from

[a] the Asian churches

[b] Aquila and Priscilla with the church in their house

[c] Brethren with a kiss

[d] Paul's own greeting in his own handwriting.

[6] A curse is open those who do not love the Lord. May He come.

[7] The grace of God and Paul's love in Christ Jesus be with them.

Final salutation