



Epistles I

International Alpha Bible Course
by Ralph Vincent Reynolds

Alpha Bible Course

EPISTLES

PART I

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INTERNATIONAL ALPHA BIBLE COURSE

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Lesson One

THE PAULINE EPISTLES

A. THE EPISTLES

In the New Testament there are twenty-one epistles, fourteen of which were written by the apostle Paul.

There is a definite harmony in the New Testament, and the Epistles should be studied after the student has a thorough knowledge of the Book of Acts. The writers of the Epistles, with the exception of Jude, were all leading characters in Acts. The message found in the historical Book of Acts is mainly addressed to the unbelievers; the Epistles were written to believers. The purpose of the Book of Acts is to evangelize; the purpose of the Epistles is to instruct and to edify. The Book of Acts answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?" The Epistles answer the question, "What must I do to live for Christ after I am saved?"

Just as there is harmony between Acts and the Epistles, there is also harmony among the Epistles themselves. The writers never contradicted one another although each author had his own distinctive theme:

- Paul's theme in his epistles—FAITH
- Peter's theme in his epistles—HOPE
- John's theme in his epistles—LOVE
- James' theme in his epistle—ACTION
- Jude's theme in his epistle—VIGILANCE

The word *epistle* comes from the Greek *epistole* and the Latin *epistola*. In modern English they are simply called "letters." This word is used in the same way we would use letter in ordinary correspondence.

Although a few of the Epistles were addressed to individuals, most of the Epistles were written to be read publicly to the churches. Some of the Epistles were written to meet specific needs of particular

churches and individuals. Nevertheless, they were so inspired and of such spiritual importance that they were of great interest and profit to everyone. They were soon quoted as being part of the Scriptures and found their place in the New Testament canon as inspired writings.

B. APOSTLE PAUL

We may readily understand the importance of the ministry of apostle Paul when we remember that he was the central character in the last sixteen chapters of the Book of Acts, and that he was the author of fourteen epistles which make up part of the New Testament. We may learn a great deal about this great man of God by not only studying the historical sketch given in the Acts, but also by studying his own writings. Each of his epistles tells us something about the author.

He was born Saul, the son of an important Jewish family with Roman citizenship. His birth place was Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia and the seat of a well-known school of learning. He was of the tribe of Benjamin.

As a youth he was sent to Jerusalem to continue his education. There he was taught by Gamaliel, one of the most distinguished rabbis of that day. Paul soon became a member of the Pharisee party and an arch persecutor of the church. Considering the prominent place he took at the death of Stephen and in the persecution of the Christians, it would seem that he was a member of the Council of the Sanhedrin.

About AD 35, while traveling in order to arrest the Christians, Saul was converted when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus. After spending some three years in the Arabian desert, he eventually made his way back to Tarsus. There Saul remained until Barnabas brought him to Antioch to be a teacher to the young church. In Antioch he received his missionary call and was set forth by the assembly.

It was during his second missionary journey, in late AD 50 or early 51, that he wrote his first letters. These were his epistles to the church at Thessalonica.

C. PAUL'S LETTERS

Paul was a great evangelist. The entire Mediterranean world was stirred by this great soulwinner who traveled from town to town, declaring the apostolic truth without fear or favor.

In the beginning of his ministry, he made return trips to the newly established churches. In this manner he confirmed them in the truth and corrected such errors that might have arisen. This became more and more difficult, however, as the number of churches grew, and his ministry was extended farther and farther afield. It was then that he began to write letters of advice, encouragement, instruction, and correction to the elders and saints of the churches he had established.

Apparently, Paul had some difficulty with his eyesight and therefore dictated most of his letters to a copyist. Then he would add the salutation in his own "large hand." When he wrote the Galatians, however, Paul departed from his usual custom and wrote the entire letter with his own hand (Galatians 6:11).

Paul wrote three of his letters to pastors of churches, one to a Christian friend, and the others to churches. The letter to the Galatians was to be circulated to the churches in Galatia.

D. THE CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL'S LETTERS

We shall study Paul's letters as they were recorded in the Bible. Nevertheless, it will help us a great deal if we would remember the chronological order of these letters. They were written as follows:

1. About AD 50-53; written during Paul's second missionary journey:

I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians

2. About AD 54-58; written during the third missionary journey:

Galatians
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Romans

3. About AD 61-63; written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome:

Colossians
Ephesians
Philemon
Philippians
Hebrews

4. About AD 64-67; written after the release from the first and during Paul's second imprisonment at Rome:

I Timothy
Titus
II Timothy

Lesson Two

**PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS
PART I**

A. AUTHOR

The epistle to the Romans was written by the apostle Paul. In the very first verse he identified and introduced himself to the Romans. He described himself as being a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle and separated unto the gospel of God.

The term *servant* means “bond-servant.” The apostle Paul looked upon himself as being a bond slave of Jesus Christ. In this lesson Paul actually stated the motto that directed his life: “As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel” (verse 15). In this statement we find the characteristic that directed Paul throughout his entire ministry and the one thing that made Paul the great apostle that he was.

B. DATE, PLACE, AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

1. Date

The epistle to the Romans was written in AD 58. Apostle Paul had been a Christian for about twenty years. This epistle was written some twenty-eight years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. Place

Paul spent three months with the church at Corinth, from the late autumn of AD 57 to the early spring of AD 58. It was during these three months that he wrote the letter to the Romans and sent it to Rome by Phoebe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchræa, a suburb and port of Corinth. Phoebe was an active Christian helper and woman of quality and means. Paul entrusted to her this epistle, which was his most important letter.

3. Circumstances of Writing

Apostle Paul had long desired to visit Rome and to preach the gospel there. This epistle was written to pave the way for his arrival and, in the meantime, to supply much needed teaching material. The epistle is the only letter written by Paul to a church which he had not founded. His other letters were written to individuals or to churches and were written to warn of danger or to correct some mistake and to encourage them in the Lord. These epistles were written to converts or to churches which had been founded by him; the epistle to the Romans was written in preparation for his coming ministry.

C. THE CHURCH AT ROME

Paul greeted the church at Rome as being beloved of God, called to be saints (verse 7). Undoubtedly, the assembly at Rome consisted mainly of Gentiles. However, there were some Jewish believers. In 63 BC the Roman General Pompey established a Jewish colony at Rome. In his epistle, Paul addressed both Gentiles and Jews.

The names recorded in Romans 16 give an indication of the membership of this assembly. Among these there were Jewish, Roman, and Greek names. It would seem that Paul was personally acquainted with many of these. When persecution came to Jerusalem and the Christians were scattered, they traveled throughout the Roman Empire. Undoubtedly, some found themselves at Rome. It is even possible that a few were converts of Paul. Others were converts of Barnabas, Peter, or other evangelists.

D. PAUL'S MASTERPIECE

This epistle is Paul's most important work. It has been called Paul's masterpiece. If one wants to understand Paul's theology, he must carefully study the Epistle to the Romans.

This epistle is the philosophy of the gospel, showing how it meets every human need and is the only answer to the problem of guilt and power of sin. There is no book in the Bible that looks so fearlessly into the depth of the degradation resulting from human sin and gives God's answer for it. The Epistle to the Romans is a doctrinal treatise, a body of systematic theology. It is a fundamental,

profound, and systematic discussion of the whole plan of salvation. It is universal in its application. It considers man as man, and not as Jew or Gentile. Whether Jew or Gentile, salvation is provided in Jesus for all who will believe on Him and obey His gospel.

E. THE THEME OF THE EPISTLE

The theme and text of the epistle is found in the introduction. The theme of Romans is *justification by faith*, the great doctrine stated in Habakkuk 2:4. This doctrine is developed in this epistle and may be summed up in six words: *condemnation, justification, sanctification, adoption, restoration, and consecration*.

The theme of Romans is stated in the text of Romans:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16, 17).

F. OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE

The outline of the epistle which we shall follow in this study is as follows:

1. Introduction—1:1-17
2. Righteousness Needed by Sinful Men—1:18-3:20
3. Righteousness Provided by God—3:21-26
4. Righteousness Received by Faith—3:27-4:25
5. Righteousness Experienced in the Soul—5:1-8:17
6. Righteousness Guaranteed a Permanent Blessing—8:18-39
7. Righteousness Rejected by Jews—9-11
8. Righteousness Manifested in Daily Life—12-16

G. INTRODUCTION

1. Salutation: 1: 1-7

Apostle Paul greeted the Romans, stating his official position and his reason for the writing the epistle.

2. Personal feeling: 1:8-15

He expressed his deep interest in the Romans, his thanksgiving for them and his desire to see them that he might impart some spiritual gift. He also stated his obligation to preach the gospel to all men.

3. Theme: 1:16, 17

After his salutation and expression of his personal feelings, Paul introduced the theme of the epistle. He stated that he was not ashamed of the gospel and was ready to preach the gospel even in Rome. It is God's power for the salvation of everyone, through faith, because it reveals God's righteousness.

H. THE POWER OF GOD

Paul stated that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). In his epistle to the Corinthians he wrote that our faith will stand in the power of God (I Corinthians 2:5). The Greek *dunamis*, translated "power," gives us our word *dynamite* (*explosive* power). The gospel is the dynamite of God. Moral reform and social schemes are impotent to penetrate human wickedness. The gospel overcomes the greatest resistance, penetrates the hardest conscience, and softens the most obstinate heart.

Lesson Three

**EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
PART II**

Romans 1:18-4:25

A. RIGHTEOUSNESS NEEDED BY SINFUL MEN

Scripture Reference: Romans 1:18-3:20

1. Exposition

Righteousness is the key to man's relationship to God. Man is unrighteousness and as such cannot fellowship a God of infinite holiness, whose throne is established on righteousness. Man is guilty and can do nothing to retrieve his condition. If God has no righteousness for him, man is finished.

Man always pleads innocent. Before man can be brought to the knowledge of salvation, he must see himself completely guilty in the presence of God. In this passage of Scripture, the apostle Paul clearly showed that man is guilty before God. Apart from the Lord there is no one who is righteous. Paul dealt with this by showing four classes of guilty people.

a. The Heathen (Romans 1:18-32)

The heathen are without excuse. God is able to reveal Himself to man in any way He pleases. God can be known. In the past, God revealed Himself to man through creation. It is clear that the things which God created testify to His invisible nature. The reason for the darkness of this world is the rejection of light. The reason for the idolatrous systems of this world is the rejection of the knowledge of God. To reject God, to turn away from light, naturally brings darkness. Because men gave up God, He gave up them. Twice it is stated that God gave up them up—first to uncleanness and then to

vile affections (verses 24, 26). Once it is said God gave them over to a reprobate mind.

As the heathen turned from light to darkness and from the knowledge of God to idolatry, their downward steps should be noted. Images were made of man, birds, beasts, and reptiles and creeping things. When people change the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the creator, the whole order of nature is violated and man slips downward into utter vileness and filthiness.

The heathen described here had the opportunity to know the requirements of God. They knew that death was the penalty of evil action. Yet they not only sinned with pleasure, but applauded others who were sinning.

b. The Moralizer (Romans 2:1-16)

Paul dealt with the respectable sinner, the self-righteous man, the man who excuses his own sins but condemns others. It was the world of culture and refinement that Paul dealt with here. This type of sinner feels that other men's sins are worse than his own. Actually, he is a hypocrite. The sin of this man is that of being indignant at other people's sins while being indulgent of his own. The mistake that he makes is a common one. He is measuring himself by others. Instead of measuring themselves by someone else, they should measure themselves by Christ. When they do this, all grounds for hypocrisy and self-excuse are swept away.

Culture does not cleanse the heart. Education does not change the nature of man. Recognition of evil is not necessarily power to overcome evil.

c. The Jew (Romans 2:17-3:18)

Paul showed that the Jews are also guilty before God. Jews, like all men, refused to plead guilty. They plead religion as the basis of their action. Paul let them know that God refuted their claim to innocence. Although they boasted of their religious privileges, their unchanged lives rendered all of their claims void. Such action brought a greater condemnation upon them. Privilege increased responsibility; it did not set it to one side. Knowledge of the divine oracles gave the Jew a standard of judgment that no others had; therefore, he was inexcusable.

d. The World (Romans 3:9-20)

After Paul had proven the case against both Gentile and Jew, he showed that the whole world was guilty before God. He uncovered the universality of sin. All were unrighteous, and none were attempting to know God's way to enable them to erase their guilt.

Paul also showed the totality of sin. Speech, action and vision were all contaminated because tongue, lips, mouth and eyes were being yielded as instruments of unrighteousness. The whole world was guilty; hence, the whole world needed a Savior. To deny their guilt, to refute their need, would result in their rejecting their Savior, in whose name alone they could hope to find salvation. No flesh could hope to be justified in the sight of a righteous God, for the whole world was guilty before Him.

2. Commentary—1:26, 27

Here is stated the moral degradation that follows apostasy from God. Both homosexuality and lesbianism are mentioned. The increase of these sins and the terrible moral perversion of man today are evidence of mankind's apostasy from the truth of God (Romans 2:5). This verse speaks of God's anger which is stored up in heaven against the man whose heart is hard and impenitent. What a tragic stockpile a man can lay aside for himself (Romans 2:14)! "By nature" means "instinctively" (Romans 3:20).

The law made man aware of sin in his nature and character. Man, by breaking the Law, understands that he is in need of salvation. Only through the broken law can there come the consciousness of sin.

3. Summary

All men are proven to be guilty before God. This is done by the revelation of the righteousness of God in the Law and by man breaking this law and revealing his own unrighteousness. It should be noted that this has always been the first step toward God: man seeing his own unrighteousness and need for God.

B. RIGHTEOUSNESS PROVIDED BY GOD—3:21-26

After Paul showed that sin was universal and God's judgment is impartial, he declared God's gift of righteousness to be available to all. Man is wholly unable within himself to become righteous.

The righteousness of which Paul wrote is not the righteousness of man or the righteousness of the Law but the righteousness of God (verse 22). This righteousness of God is not a righteousness achieved by the keeping of the Law; yet the Law and the prophets witnessed to it.

In this passage of Scripture we examine some of the great truths of salvation: faith, grace, justification, redemption, and propitiation. *Redemption* means to buy a slave out of bondage in order to set him free. Man, apart from God, is in a slavery from which he cannot free himself. He is helplessly under the judgment of God, but God Himself has intervened, paid the price and set him free. *Propitiation* is the putting away of God's wrath. The wrath of God found adequate judicial satisfaction in the death of Jesus. Sin deserves punishment and death. There can be no reconciliation without judicial satisfaction. Jesus suffered the just penalty for our sins upon Calvary's cross that God might remain just and the One who can fully pardon the guilty sinner. Thus, the righteousness of God was provided by God for the guilty sinner.

C. RIGHTEOUSNESS RECEIVED BY FAITH—3:27-31, 4:1-25

1. Exposition

Paul proved that righteousness must be by faith and faith alone, that it might be by grace. If righteousness could be received by the works of the Law, it no longer would be by grace. If it came through works, then man could boast of his goodness and of his accomplishments.

In the distant past, the sin of Satan brought about the need of salvation being provided. What was this original sin? It was the sin of pride. If pride and boasting could re-enter Heaven, then all that God had planned and accomplished in providing salvation would be in vain. Boasting and pride must be excluded. Apostle Paul made it plain that it is only if salvation is received by faith that boasting could be excluded. If righteousness came through law or works, then there would be boasting. If it is by faith alone, then all boasting is excluded.

Righteousness received by faith alone does not nullify the Law, but rather the Law is confirmed, or made valid. It is confirmed in its role of making men conscious of sin and confronting men with God's only plan for salvation.

The fourth chapter of Romans proves that salvation is by faith alone. There may be many who believe that salvation is by faith. But it must not only be by faith, it must be by faith alone.

Two Old Testament characters were used to prove this great truth. Abraham was one of the greatest saints of the Old Testament. If Abraham could not be saved by works, then nobody could. David was one of the greatest sinners of the Old Testament. If David could be saved by faith, then everyone could. David had broken three of the Ten Commandments. He had coveted, committed adultery, and murdered. What could David do to restore to Bathsheba her chastity and to Uriah his life? Nothing. His case was hopeless. David had to look to the promise of God and, by simple faith, have righteousness imputed to him.

We also have proven here that salvation is not trusting in the rites of religion. Abraham was a justified man fourteen years before the rite of circumcision was given. The rite had nothing to do with his redemption. It did not confer righteousness; it merely confirmed the righteousness Abraham already had. Since the faith and bestowal of righteousness occurred before circumcision, Abraham was the father of the Gentiles who believe. The fact that circumcision was a sign of the righteousness imparted to Abraham because of faith makes Abraham the father of Jews also. He is the father of those who walk in the faith that he had before he had any external sign.

Finally, justification by faith alone is based upon the creative power of God and the fact of the resurrection. Abraham knew that he was physically incapable of fathering a child and that his wife, Sarah, was physically incapable of child-bearing. However, he weighed the human impossibility of becoming a father against the divine impossibility of God breaking His Word and decided that nothing is impossible with God.

2. Commentary

- a. Romans 4:6-7

Impute simply means “to reckon, to credit.” When God imputes righteousness to a man, God simply declares the man righteous, and righteousness is credited to him.

b. Romans 4:20

Stagger means “to be at odds with himself, to waver, to doubt.” With Abraham there was no uncertainty because of unbelief.

c. Romans 4:25

The fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ validates the atonement. Because Jesus arose, the blood of Jesus Christ has power to cleanse from sin. We are justified because of the resurrection of Jesus.

3. Summary

By faith, Abraham looked forward to the finished work of Christ. Jesus said to the Jews of His day, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). We look back, by faith, to the finished work of Christ and enjoy salvation. Two ways are compared and contrasted: salvation by trying, and salvation by trusting. What Abraham found, what David found, we must find. Salvation is by faith and by faith *alone*.

Lesson Four

**PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS
PART III
Romans 5:1-8:39**

A. RIGHTEOUSNESS EXPERIENCED IN THE SOUL—5:1-8:17

1. Romans, Chapter Five

a. Results of Justification by Faith

There are definite benefits resulting from God's act of justifying us through faith. Paul stated that peace, joy, love and hope are included in these benefits.

The first of these is peace. Having been declared righteous by faith, the believer has peace with God. Peace simply means that the war is over, the arms of rebellion have been laid down, and God's terms have been accepted. This peace with God means cessation of hostility between the soul and God. The hostility and animosity between God and believers are gone. In their place is blessed peace.

We should note that there is a difference between peace with God and the peace of God (Philippians 4:7). The peace of God refers to a sensation and tranquility of mind and heart. In Romans, peace with God is a complete surrender to the will of God. All hostility in the soul is gone. This brings about a fellowship with God.

Through Jesus Christ we have access into the grace of God in which we have taken our stand. This grace is the unmerited favor of God. The believer stands justified.

Having been justified and having access into the grace of God, the believer now rejoices in hope of the glory of God—not only in the future hope but also in present trials. Trials, rather than destroying our faith, develop a proven character. These trials turn us away from self-trust to complete trust in God. The believer glories in

tribulations because tribulation brings about endurance, and endurance builds proven character. This brings about hope. The order is significant: tribulation, endurance, character, and then hope. The character that is developed by tribulation and endurance gives the believer proof, or real evidence, that he is standing in the grace of God. The result is hope.

b. The Love of God

We shall not be disappointed in this hope, because we already have a foretaste of its consummation, which is the love of God poured forth within our hearts. This love which has been poured out and grips us is not our love for God but rather God's love for us. The nature of God's love is best described by what it does. God loves men, sinful as they are. God's love is totally unmotivated by any qualities in the person loved. Apostle Paul described man as being helpless, ungodly sinners and even enemies. Men might evidence their love by giving their lives for a just man, but God showed His love by Christ dying for His enemies.

c. The "Much More's" of Romans

In this chapter apostle Paul made certain comparisons and used the expression "much more": Verse 9, much more saved from wrath; verse 10, much more saved by His life; verse 15, much more God's grace hath abounded unto many; verse 17, much more the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by Jesus Christ; verse 20, much more grace abounds over sin. The student should take time to meditate upon these *much more's*, for they describe what Jesus Christ accomplished for the soul that is justified.

d. The Two Headships

The whole matter of righteousness experienced by the human soul is dealt with by a comparison of two representative headships: Adam and Christ. Our forefather, Adam, as the first representative man, plunged the whole human family into sin and death, from which man could not of himself escape. Through the last representative Man and His obedience to God, there came eternal life. This may be summed up as follows: Because of the sin and disobedience of Adam, there came death and condemnation upon all mankind; because of righteousness and obedience upon the part of Jesus,

there came the free gift of justification, righteousness, abundant grace, and eternal life to all who receive grace.

The chapter ends with a statement dealing with the absolute sovereignty of God's grace. God's grace is absolutely sovereign. Eternal life through Jesus Christ is assured.

2. Romans, Chapter Six

a. Our Death with Christ

If grace is more manifested as sin increases, why not go on sinning that the supply of grace might be increased? Paul's answer: "God forbid!" Such a conclusion would be a direct contradiction. Death, once our enemy, is now actually made to minister to the believer through the benefits of Christ's victory over the tomb.

Paul would have everyone to know that our baptism into Christ's body is a baptism into His death and His resurrection. To obey the gospel one goes with Christ through the steps of regeneration. This means that one dies to self and sin through thorough repentance, is buried with Christ in baptism into His death, and is resurrected to walk in newness of life. The life of our Lord is imparted through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Should a person who has experienced such a change continue to sin? Not if the believer is dead with Christ. A corpse is completely unresponsive to the promptings of sin.

The grace of God in Christ Jesus is indeed freedom—freedom from sin, not freedom to sin.

b. Two Reckonings

In verse 11 we have the secret of a victorious life in Christ. We are to reckon or count on certain things as true. Christ has suffered for my sins. I am therefore bought with a price; I am no longer my own. I am His; therefore, I do not recognize the old man which is crucified with him. I count myself as being dead unto sin. However, this is only part of the story. The believer not only reckons himself to be dead, but he also must see himself as alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

c. Two Yieldings

Having reckoned ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God, we now come to two yieldings. These are stated in verse 13: first, the inner life, and then the members. There is little use giving God some of our members when the heart is not yielded. The order should be to (1) yield yourselves unto God and (2) then your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

d. Man's Choice

There are two options available to man. He chooses either sin or God as his master. Sin leads ultimately to eternal death; obedience to God leads to eternal life. The real seat of sin is in the will. Sin reigns when the will says "yes" to temptation. The Holy Spirit reigns when the will says "no."

The old sin-master pays the ultimate wages of death. Sin is a deceiver. It offers life and ends up paying death. On the other hand, the free gift of God offers eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Romans, Chapter Seven

In the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul illustrated the death struggle of self. The carnal nature was condemned, for the Law made sin sinful. There was real defeat in the self-life. Some people try to live in the seventh chapter instead of accepting the fact that the self-life must die in order that eternal life may be imparted unto them. Why live in the seventh chapter, trying to justify sinfulness, when the Spirit will take over the conflict and conquer the flesh. Through the life of Christ, one becomes strong. There is a clear contrast between the lives lived in the flesh and the life lived in the Spirit.

The pronoun / appears twenty-six times in verses 15 to 25. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit until chapter 8, where He is mentioned nineteen times. In chapter 7 the Law is frequently mentioned, but only a few times in chapter 8. Paul was showing his wretched servitude under the Law. In spite of his consent to it, and his desire to keep it, the sinful nature within was continually overcoming the desire of his mind. How could the mind get free from the dictation of the flesh so that it could have power to do what it really desired to do? The only way out of this conflict and bondage was through Jesus Christ our Lord (verse 25).

4. Romans, Chapter Eight

a. Victory in Jesus

This chapter is the victory chapter. It begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation. Romans 7 is dominated by the words *me* and *my*. In contrast, Romans 8 is dominated by the Holy Spirit, Who is mentioned some nineteen times. The secret of victory is being in Christ.

There is a great difference between being in the flesh and being in the Spirit. To be in the flesh is to be motivated by the desires of the flesh; to be in the Spirit is to be motivated by the Spirit of God. The flesh produces a certain way of thinking and ends with death. The flesh is hostile to God and unwilling to subject itself to His law. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit produces a way of thinking which ends in life and peace.

b. Immortality

In verse 11, Paul stated clearly the role of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection. A mortal body is a body capable of dying. A body made alive by the Holy Spirit becomes immortal. This verse proves conclusively the necessity of having the Holy Spirit in order to be ready for the coming of Jesus.

c. Abba, Father

In Romans 8:15, the expression “Abba, Father” is half Aramaic and half Greek. This showed that both Jew and Gentile may be adopted into the family of God.

B. RIGHTEOUSNESS A PERMANENT BLESSING—8:18-39

1. Prayer with Groaning

Following adoption into the family of God, there comes adaptation to the family of God. A Christian must know how to yield himself to the Spirit and to express the longings which arise from within. While the whole world is groaning in suffering, the Christian groans with deep longings for the return of Jesus. He cannot express this without the help of the Holy Spirit. The child of God only prays

effectively when God's Spirit moves upon him. The Holy Spirit helps him and enables him to live victoriously in Christ.

2. No Separation from God's Love

Notwithstanding the tribulations of the present, everything is working together for good. And God, who commenced the work of grace, will not allow it to be interrupted and will see that it concludes in final glory. If He is with us, no one can be against us or lay anything to our charge. There is no condemnation and no separation from the love of God in Christ. This does not mean, however, that the Christian is still not a person of free choice, and of his own will he may turn his back upon God.

3. Predestination

From verses 29 and 30 we learn that predestination is based directly upon the foreknowledge of God. Foreknowledge no more determines facts than after-knowledge. The omniscient God is able to know in advance what course will be chosen by every individual. He therefore knows every one of His children; these are the elect. There is not a word of Scripture to suggest that any person is foreordained to be lost. Those who think that men are excluded from salvation because of the foreknowledge of God are mistaken. Whosoever will may come, man's free choice determines whether or not he shall enter into glorification.

Lesson Five

**PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS
PART IV
Romans, Chapters 9-16**

A. RIGHTEOUSNESS REJECTED BY JEWS—ROMANS 9-11

1. Why Israel Was Set Aside

Scripture Reference: Romans 9

Paul expressed his deep sorrow over the condition found in Israel because of Israel's rejection of Christ. He then enumerated the special privileges Israel had enjoyed. In Romans 9:4-5, there are eight mentioned: adoption, glory, covenant, law, service, promises, fathers, and Christ.

Israel had a spiritual election. Paul showed they were not justified in saying God was unrighteous because He had also granted salvation to the Gentiles. They blamed God, saying that He had set them aside, supplanting them with the Gentiles. Paul taught them that God is a God of justice. He has always had an interest in all men, whereas the Jews had thought of Him as a national God, interested in them alone. That had not been the case. No nation or individual can be justified in His sight if he does not believe His Word.

Abraham was the natural ancestor of a fleshly or earthly line; he was the father in faith to all them that believe, whether they belonged to his physical image or not. Since the Seed in whom God had chosen to realize His Abrahamic Covenant is Christ (Galatians 3:16), national Israel cannot have these promises fulfilled until they accept them in Christ.

God, being the creator of all, has the right to do as He pleases with that which He has created. Although He is sovereign, however, the divine will is never irrational or unrighteous. Moses and Pharaoh

were given as examples of the righteousness of God's divine method with Israel. God's messages and judgments were not the cause but the occasion of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. The same messages and judgments which hardened Pharaoh's heart caused others to yield to God.

The prophets had foretold the blinding of Israel and mercy to the Gentiles. Except for God's mercy, Israel would have been utterly destroyed. The Gentiles obtained righteousness because they sought it God's way, through faith. The Israelites had not obtained it because they sought it in their own way, by the works of the Law.

2. Israel at the Present

Scripture Reference: Romans 10

Israel needed to be saved. By seeking their own righteousness, they missed God's. They were zealous but ignorant. Therefore they failed to understand that the Law was fulfilled in Christ and that righteousness is by faith. Israel's condition was marked by three elements: ignorance, effort and failure. The present condition of Israel was due to their sin of unbelief and their unwillingness to submit to God's righteousness. It was solely by divine grace that the Gentiles were accepted while Israel's rejection was caused by refusal of grace and reliance on their own works.

Salvation, being intended for all mankind, is universal in its scope. Paul described the character of God. The same Lord is Lord of all and is rich unto all that call upon Him. He is ready to pour out the wealth of His grace to anyone and everyone who seeks Him. A universal proclamation of the gospel was absolutely necessary. God has placed faith's password in everyone's mouth. That password is *confess* (verses 9-11).

Call upon the Lord (verses 12, 13). Salvation is available to both Jews and Gentiles. The Jew does not enjoy salvation today because he refuses to comply with the rule to get it.

3. Israel's Future

Scripture Reference: Romans 11

Israel's partial blindness occurred to them because of unbelief. The nation had been warned, but they turned deaf ears to all of God's prophets. They were referred to as the "tame olive branch." Paul explained that God had grafted the "wild olive branch," the Gentiles, into the root of the true olive tree. Hence, the Gentiles could not boast against the Jews because, as he said to the Gentiles, "Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." It is surely evident that if God spared not the tame olive branches, but cast them off, He would not always bear with the wild branch if it became guilty of the same offence (verses 17-24). Israel is yet to be saved. God's covenant will be kept (verses 27-29). His mercy will be manifested (verses 30-32). His glory will be magnified (verses 33-36).

Note the warnings given by Paul. Paul warned the Gentiles against boastfulness, pride, and presumption. The Jews were the channel of blessing to the Gentiles and not the Gentiles to the Jews. On this account, the Gentiles should have a feeling of profound regard for Israel.

B. RIGHTEOUSNESS MANIFESTED IN DAILY LIFE—ROMANS 12-16

Beginning with chapter 12, Paul gave many exhortations regarding practical Christian living. These exhortations touch almost every aspect of life. Christian living is simply being a Christian and acting as a Christian should in every part of life. The word *therefore* links this entire appeal for practical Christian living to the argument of the previous chapters—salvation by grace.

1. Outline of the Five Chapters

- a. Life in Relation to the Christian Body: Romans 12.
- b. Christian Life in Relation to the State: Romans 13.
- c. Christian Life in Relation to Special Duties: Romans 14:1-15:13.
- d. Conclusion: Romans 15:14-16-27.
 - *Expression of Personal Feeling: Romans 15:14-33.
 - *Salutations: Romans 16:1-23.
 - *Final Words and Benediction: Romans 16:24-27.

2. Romans 12

- a. Conformity to God's Will (verses 1, 2)

The mercies of God, in the provision of righteousness in Christ, were intended to lead to consecration of life and service. Paul referred to both body and mind. The body is to be offered. Hence, one will not be conformed to the world. The mind is to be renewed. Hence, one will be transformed. The use of certain words in these two verses is very significant.

- (1) *Present* is the same word as *yield* in chapter 6. It means “utter abandonment to Christ.”
- (2) *Conformed* means “be not fashioned.” We are so inclined to be shaped by the world.
- (3) *Transformed* means “transfigured.”
- (4) *Renewing* occurs only one other place, Titus 3:5. It means “renovating.”

The expression “living sacrifice” contrasts the dedication of the Christian to the dying sacrifices of the Old Testament. Here is a life completely dedicated to Christ.

The expression “reasonable service” brings out the fact that it’s the only rational thing to do because Jesus made us and He bought us by right of creation and redemption. The only possible way to know the perfect will of God and to enter into a life of service is through complete dedication to that will. Complete consecration will prove that God’s will is good, well pleasing, and perfect.

b. Communion with Saints (verses 3-13)

Christian service in relation to the church calls for humility. The church is the body of Christ. We are many members; each has different functions. Consequently, services will be rendered as an expression of appreciation to Christ.

c. Conduct Towards Fellow Man (verses 14-21)

Christian service, in relation to our fellow man and society, calls for love. We are exhorted to loving faithfulness toward all men. There is a special exhortation to loving forbearance. God will repay in vengeance. Man should serve in love.

Dissimulation (in verse 9) means “hypocrisy.” In verse 11, the expression “fervent in spirit” means “boiling hot.”

The student of this chapter will find it profitable to list all the be's and not to be's. There are some thirty-six things that the Christian is to be: holy, godly, humble, considerate, natural, faithful, liberal, diligent, cheerful, sincere, pure, etc.

3. Romans 13

Christian service calls for submission in relation to the government. The Christian is a citizen as well as a member of a church. This demands obedience to the temporal powers, the payment of everything that is due, and the fulfillment of the law of love in the light of the great and imminent event of the Lord's coming.

Human government represents divine authority. When one resists it, he resists God. The appeal here is for good citizenship. God's law of love is the guarantee of a law-abiding life. Love fulfills the Law, and a Christian will love his neighbor and will live in peace with all men.

Paul gave an exhortation to alertness, being awake and living soberly. In consideration of the near return of our Lord, one should put on Christ and make no provisions for the flesh.

4. Special Duties

Scripture Reference: Romans 14:1-15:13

There are particular duties under special circumstances which must be remembered. We are to respect the conscience of our fellow Christian since some may have convictions regarding the observance of days and the eating of special meats. Those who are strong are to be tender; those who are weak are to be careful. We are not to please ourselves but follow the example of Christ to please our neighbor, living in such harmony that we may glorify God and rejoice with thankfulness that all, both Jews and Gentiles, have been brought to Christ.

The following subjects are dealt with in this part of the epistle: Is the person who only eats herbs more pleasing to God than the person who eats meat? Is the person who esteems a certain day

more righteous than the one who esteems every day alike? Does death separate one from God?

The answer to all of these questions is a definite NO. Nevertheless, in the first two problems, there should be no condemnation placed against the weaker brother who eats only herbs or the brother who esteems one day above another. Love should govern the action of saints.

5. Conclusion

Scripture Reference: Romans 16

Chapter 16 consists largely of salutations to saints who dwelt in Rome. It is very interesting to study this list and to note the comments that Paul made concerning each. Priscilla and Aquila were to him as members of his own family, so intimate had been their association. Andronicus and Junia were relatives of his who had been saved before him. It is possible that their prayers may have had much to do with his conversion. Another kinsman, Herodion, is mentioned in verse 11. In verse 13 Paul referred to the mother of Rufus. Somewhere on his journeys this Christian woman had mothered the devoted apostle, and he remembered with gratitude her tender care.

Paul warned the Roman saints of the danger of listening to men who were false teachers. However, eventually this is exactly what was done at Rome. By the seventh century, the papacy itself was enthroned in Rome.

The benediction which concludes the epistle marks it as being genuinely Pauline.

Lesson Six

**PAUL'S FIRST CORINTHIANS LETTER
Part I**

A. AUTHORSHIP

First Corinthians was written by apostle Paul. I Corinthians 1:1 states, "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." I Corinthians 16:21 reads, "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand." Paul wrote this epistle, possibly in the spring in AD 57, from Ephesus. We know he was at Ephesus from I Corinthians 16:8, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost."

B. CORINTH

The city of Corinth was a Roman colony located on the isthmus of Corinth. This was on the principal east-west trade route of the Roman Empire. The commerce of the world flowed through the natural harbors of Corinth. The city had been destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC, but had been rebuilt of pure white marble by Julius Caesar 100 years later.

When Paul reached Corinth for the first time in AD 51, he found a thriving commercial city. It was the metropolis of Greece and the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire, being surpassed only by Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. The population was largely Greek, with mixed minorities of Romans, Jews, and other nationalities. The people of Corinth gave themselves over to pleasure, entertainment, and vices of many sorts. Corinth was called the "Vanity Fair" of the Roman Empire.

High above the city was the magnificent temple of white marble, dedicated to the patroness of the city, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, identified by the Romans with Venus. Their worship of Aphrodite encouraged all kinds of immoral practices at Corinth.

C. THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

The historical account of the origin of the Corinthian church is given in the first eighteen verses of Acts 18. Paul founded the church during his second missionary journey. Paul and his companions had gone into Macedonia and Greece and planted churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. Paul had labored for eighteen months at Corinth, and it was one of his greatest churches.

Some Jews had been converted, but the majority of the church was Gentiles. The membership of the church included rich and poor, educated and ignorant, freemen and slaves. The church was troubled with cliques, and there was an element of emotional people whose extremes degenerated into immorality. The loose habits of heathenism clung to many. Yet, Paul addressed the church as the church of God, called to be saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus (I Corinthians 1:2).

D. THE PURPOSE OF THE CORINTHIAN LETTER

The epistle known as I Corinthians was not the first letter which Paul had written to the saints at Corinth. We know this from his statement in I Corinthians 5:9, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators."

In AD 54, Paul left Antioch on his third journey, visiting again the churches of Galatia and finally reaching the city of Ephesus in Asia Minor. Here he stayed for the next three years. Corinth was only 200 miles west of Ephesus, across the Aegean Sea. Communication was easy and frequent.

While he was at Ephesus, persons of the household of Chloe (I Corinthians 1:11) came from Corinth to report the disorders in the church. Apparently Paul wrote a letter, now lost, in which he scolded the Corinthians for their misconduct. He sent it to Corinth by the hand of Chloe's people.

Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth by way of Macedonia but had not heard from him when a delegation came from Corinth led by Stephanas. It would seem that a letter came at the same time from Corinth asking certain questions (I Corinthians 7:1).

From this we discover that carnal people can cover up their carnality by asking theological questions. Paul did not hurry to answer their questions. Not until chapter 7 did he say, “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me.” In the first six chapters he dealt with a situation that existed in the church at Corinth. He went right to the root of the trouble first. Then he answered their questions.

The first eleven chapters of this epistle deal with carnality. Paul exposed the tragedy of their living in sin and worldliness and applied the positive remedy of the cross of Jesus Christ. In the twelfth chapter, Paul began to teach of spiritual things. I Corinthians 12:2 states, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” The last five chapters deal with spirituality and expound the gospel of resurrection and life.

E. DIVISIONS CORRECTED BY THE CROSS

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 1

1. Key Verses

“That no flesh should glory in his presence” (I Corinthians 1:29).

“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:31).

In these two verses, we have the key thought for the epistle expressed. It is a message condemning the exaltation of the flesh and pointing the Corinthian church to the Lord that they may glory in Jesus, and in Jesus alone.

2. Salutation

In the salutation Paul vindicated his apostleship: called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God. Paul was not boasting or glorying in the fact that he was an apostle, but it was necessary for him to state his authority. If they were to accept what he was writing in this letter, it would be necessary for the Corinthian saints to recognize the authority by which Paul wrote.

In addressing the Corinthians he called them the church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. Although this church was torn by schisms and man-worship, and in the church there was sin, apostle Paul drew their attention to the fact that they were to be

sanctified, set apart unto God and that their calling, above everything else, was to be saints.

We should note that he mentioned grace and peace. Grace is mentioned first, for one cannot receive peace from God unless he has first received the grace of God. This peace is not a state of inactivity but refers to perfect harmony and unity resulting from being in perfect accord with the will of God. Not only were they to receive grace and peace from God but their lives were to be enriched with a spiritual wealth in all utterance and knowledge. They had a message to proclaim, a gospel to preach, and they had received the Holy Spirit by whom they would have the wisdom and strength to fully understand that which they were to proclaim.

3. The Faithfulness of God

In verse 9 Paul mentioned the faithfulness of God. This seems to be a theme which he carried throughout the epistle, for he came back to it again in I Corinthians 15:58. Because of God's faithfulness, the exhortation is for the saints to be steadfast, unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord. Because of the faithfulness of God, they would be presented blameless when the Lord returns. Note that there is a difference between being blameless and faultless. Perfection means that we are to be blameless. Thus, each child of God has the power and the privilege to achieve.

4. Division Caused by Exalting Leaders

In the Corinthian church there were many party divisions and man-worship. The divisions in the church were caused largely by the Christians getting their eyes upon the preacher and exalting the preacher under whose ministry they had been converted. Paul cut through all these divisions by reminding them that it was Christ that was crucified and it was in His name that they all were baptized. Paul's methods of curing division directed everyone to Jesus. Christ cannot be divided and He is the center of the source of all spiritual unity.

5. Division Caused By Exalting Human Wisdom

Paul dealt with this with the preaching of the cross. To the worldly wise, the preaching of Christ crucified and salvation through His sacrifice was foolishness, but to the believer it was the highest wisdom that one may receive.

To the born-again child of God, the preaching of the cross becomes the power of God. When ego, with all its pride, self-righteousness, and self-importance is crucified, then that person is brought into contact with His throne and begins to touch omnipotence and receive power.

6. Paul's Statement on Baptism

Paul had baptized only a few at Corinth. This was not because he did not place importance on baptism, but he took a humble position, not taking pride in being able to name large numbers that he had personally immersed. He was willing to preach and let others do the baptizing.

F. TRUE WISDOM IMPARTED BY THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 2

Paul went to Corinth in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. His reception on the European continent had not been very pleasant. He had been imprisoned at Philippi, smuggled out of Thessalonica, driven out of Berea, and accomplished very little by arguing when he reached Athens. He had been pressed in spirit when he came to Corinth, and God Himself had encouraged him.

Knowing the strength of Corinthian wisdom, the character of the city, the depths of its sin, and the boast of its intellect, he determined that he would not argue or debate with anyone. He would present the crucified, risen Lord in the conviction that if he lifted Jesus up, Jesus would draw all men unto him. Apostle Paul had to get out of the picture so that people would forget the personality of the preacher and get their eyes upon Jesus.

The principle is as true today as it was then. There must be a life willing to be crucified, to retreat from its own cleverness, wisdom, and efforts, and rest entirely upon the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Faith shall stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. The preacher must preach not what the people want, but what they need. No man has any business to be in a pulpit to entertain. He is there to present Calvary in all its fullness of hope and glory.

Paul wrote of a mystery to be revealed: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Corinthians 2:9). The Christian is not a fool. He has an enlightened mind and speaks the wisdom of God.

The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God simply because he has never received of the Spirit of God. To him the gospel is foolishness. In verses 10, 11, and 12, Paul made it very plain that it is only through the Holy Spirit that the Word of God can be understood and received.

Lesson Seven

**PAUL'S FIRST CORINTHIAN LETTER
PART II**

A. SERVICE AND SERVANTS

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 3-4

1. The Carnality of Divisions

The Corinthians believed that Paul was teaching beneath their high intellectual level, but Paul was ministering to them according to their immediate need. He could not give them spiritual meat, because they were still babes in Christ. The carnality of divisions among them indicated their infancy in Christ. We should remember that schisms in the church always are an indication of infancy and carnality.

2. Laborers Together With God

“For we are laborers together with God” (I Corinthians 3:9). This is a tremendous truth: ministers do not work for God, but with God. The church belongs to the Lord. The church is God’s husbandry, God’s building. This truth removes a tremendous pressure from the individual minister. He is working with God, and it is God who gives the increase.

Ministers should never be compared with ministers or preachers with preachers. All are workers together with God. All are working for one common goal, looking forward to the harvest, but the harvest comes from God. Only God can get the glory, and no man should glory in men (verse 21).

3. The Temple of God

Paul stated that the church is God’s building, the temple of God. Here we see the importance of unity and the terrible sin of division.

There is only one foundation, Jesus Christ, and every material that goes into the construction of the church, must be that which is to the glory of God. Everything that is to the glory of man and for the promotion of man's cause is impure and temporal and will be destroyed.

There are two types of building materials: indestructible—gold, silver, precious stones; and temporary—wood, hay, stubble. Man's works do not purchase salvation, and here we see a clear distinction between salvation and rewards. It is possible for a man's soul to be saved, but his works, being of no value, to be burned. If his motives are not permanent, but temporal or earthly, he may be saved as one snatched from a burning fire, but his works, destroyed. Carnal, selfish motives lead to works that will be burned. We must have one motive: to build for eternity to the glory of God.

4. Stewards of the Mysteries of God

Ministers are called stewards, servants to whom has been committed the property of the Master. The mysteries of God have been committed to the ministers of Christ. The mysteries of God are the tremendous truths and revelations of God's Word. What a tremendous responsibility it is to preach God's Word, just as it is, without changing or adding to it. Ministers are required to be found faithful. Apostle Paul did not say they must be successful, but they must be faithful. Also, ministers are not to be judged of man. But since they are entrusted with the mysteries of God, it is to God that they must be accountable. He will do the judging.

5. Paul Plans to Return to Corinth

Paul reminded the Corinthians that he was their spiritual father. They had been saved under his ministry. Although they might have 10,000 teachers, they only had one father. Their spiritual father would have more true concern for their welfare than anyone else.

Some at Corinth were puffed up and boasting in Paul's absence. However, Paul planned to visit Corinth, and he would see if they had the power of which they boasted. He asked them whether they desired him to come as a father of correction or as a father of love and meekness. Note the parallel between Paul's coming to Corinth and Christ returning to earth again. We must be ready, if we do not want Christ to come in judgment.

B. DISCIPLINE, LAWSUITS, AND IMPURITY

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 5-6

1. The Sin of Incest

There was a case of incest in the church, a situation more shocking than that among the heathen. Both Jewish law and Roman law forbade incest. Paul had previously written to them not to have any fellowship with a fornicator, yet the Corinthians here were puffed up in their tolerance of this sin. Apparently this man was one of influence and popularity in the midst. Paul did not hesitate in naming the sin and the punishment.

2. Handing Over To Satan

I Corinthians 5:5 gives the most severe act of discipline that the church can administer. It is handing one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the soul might be saved. This would be an act of excommunication so the individual would be removed from the protection of the church and the blessings of God. In this place he would be open to the attack of Satan, where he would be brought low and be made to suffer for his wrong. The purpose of this would be that the man eventually would be brought to the place of repentance and restoration with God. This does not refer to living in sin here and then being saved in eternity. The person delivered over to Satan would have to be brought to a place of repentance in this life if his spirit was to be saved.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that there is no way of avoiding the pagans around them and the sins with which they were not to have fellowship, but these sins must not be found within the church. He also mentioned, apart from the fornicator, the covetous, idolater, railer (slanderer), drunkard, and extortioner. There must be no fellowship with these within the church. They are not to judge those in the world, but they must judge the saints within the church.

3. Exhortation Against Going to Law in the Heathen Courts

Paul rebuked the Corinthian saints for going to law against their brethren in the heathen courts. The saints were to work out their

own problems among themselves. There were three reasons given why Christians should not take their problems to law:

- a. They are to judge the world in the future.
- b. They are to judge angels.
- c. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom.

Paul exhorted them to suffer wrong from another rather than take their grievance before the heathen courts and bring about any disharmony in the church.

4. Impurity

In the latter part of chapter 6, the apostle emphasized the necessity of holiness and the principles which should govern the life of a Christian. The Christian is not his own; he has been bought with a price. Therefore, he belongs to the Lord. His body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. He must keep it holy and pure.

Certain things might be lawful but still not profitable. His life must not be governed by the principle of whether the matter is lawful or not, but he must be governed by the principle: Is it profitable and necessary? He must remember that his entire life must glorify the Lord. There is a difference between expedience and lawfulness. The Christian liberty is governed by this difference.

C. MARRIAGE

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 7

1. The Marriage of Christians

Some seem to think that Paul exalted celibacy above wedlock. However, this is not true. We should consider all his instruction on the matter. In chapter 7 he began to answer some of the questions they had asked and the first question was about marriage. He strictly did not believe that saints of God should over-indulge in sexual relationships. He exalted personal chastity. He would never have endorsed premarital promiscuity or extra-marital sexual relations. He believed in the ideal family in which the father and mother were obeyed and honored by well-trained, unprovoked children.

2. Marriage with an Unbeliever

The Christian should never marry an unbeliever. However, it is possible for someone to be saved who was already married to an unbeliever. In this case they should remain together. It is the responsibility of the believer to maintain peace. Nevertheless, if the unbeliever leaves, the believer is not under bondage.

3. Marriage of a Virgin Daughter

The latter part of chapter 7 deals with the proper attitude of the father towards his virgin daughter. In those days a father had authority to cause his daughter to marry or to remain single. Paul advised that either case, married or single, is right before the Lord. Paul gave permission for widows to remarry, but he advised that they will be happier if they remain as widows.

D. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 8-10

1. Exercise of Christian Liberty

Apostle Paul continued to answer the questions that this church had asked. Another question concerned the eating of meats offered to idols. This may not seem too important to us, but Paul devoted three chapters to his answer, applying it to different aspects of Christian living. His answer brought into view the matter of the influence of this young church on the city of Corinth.

In Corinth it was common to find meat which had been offered to idols in the heathen temples, offered for sale, at a bargain price. The question which concerned the Christians was this: Does the purchase and use of this meat involve us with idol worship? The fact that they asked the question showed that they were uncertain and divided about it.

Paul's answer might be summed up as follows: Because they were Christians, they knew that an idol was not real. There could not be contamination with something that does not exist. Therefore, there would be no harm in purchasing and eating this meat. If they were to go to the marketplace to purchase meat, they should not inquire whether or not it had been offered to idols. However, as they

sat down to eat, if someone said that this meat had been offered to idols, then they should not eat. In eating they would not be doing that which was wrong except that they would become a stumbling-block to others and would offend a weak conscience. Their sin: hindering somebody else. Therefore, they should not touch this meat if it offended others.

2. Paul's Liberties

Paul spent some time dwelling upon his liberties and privileges. However, he did not make use of any of these privileges, for the all important thing to him was the preaching of the gospel. He did not preach in order to earn a living, but because God had called him to preach. He did not abuse his power in the gospel. He was free, yet he became a servant to all.

3. All Things to All Men

I Corinthians 9:22 is the key to Paul's tremendous success in the gospel ministry. He maintained his ministry by going anywhere and everywhere, no matter what the situation and surroundings were, to reach people with the gospel. He crossed over boundaries of prejudice in race and religion to win men and women for Jesus Christ.

4. The Way to Escape

Verse 27 sheds more light upon Paul's greatness. Like the athlete who keeps himself in training behind the scenes to win an earthly crown, Paul kept his body in subjection. From this statement, the apostle continued with a review of the defeats of the children of Israel and warned the Corinthians concerning these things. He stated there were four things that overthrew the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness: lust, idolatry, fornication, and unbelief. He warned the Corinthians against these. He also told them that no one need fall, for God had given them a way to escape and with every temptation there was deliverance. Finally, he exhorted them to flee from idolatry, to run for their life.

Lesson Eight

**PAUL'S FIRST CORINTHIAN LETTER
PART III
I Corinthians 11, 12, 14**

A. WOMEN'S PLACE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 11:6-16; 14:34, 35

In chapter 12 Paul dealt with proper behavior in public worship. The conduct of women involved the principle of subjection to the man. Paul's chief argument had to do with headship. The woman covered her head to acknowledge the headship of the man, and the man left his head uncovered to acknowledge the headship of Christ.

Before correcting the women, Paul complimented them on the ordinances which they had kept. It was his desire that they followed Christ as closely as he had. Christ was dishonored when a man prayed with his head covered. It was a disgrace for a woman to have her head shorn or shaven, for it showed that she was not in subjection to man. Man is the glory and image of Christ, and woman is the glory of man.

Corinth was full of temple prostitutes. These lewd women were known to go about the street unveiled, which was a sign of their character. Some of the Christian women, taking advantage of their new found liberty in Christ, were laying aside their veil in church meetings, and it was this that Paul endeavored to correct.

In this Scripture, Paul established the necessity of long hair. He stated that the woman's hair was her glory and her covering (verse 15). There was no custom in the church of a woman cutting her hair, and thus there was no reason for contention (verse 10).

Not only did Paul emphasize the importance of a woman having long hair and not cutting her hair, but he also emphasized the importance of a man having his hair cut. God definitely wanted a

distinction between male and female. When it comes to the matter of worship, the man and woman must conform to God's plan.

In verse 10, the word *power* means "covering; authority." This was a reminder that even the angels covered their faces as they worshiped Jehovah. A Christian woman must also worship God in reverence. In verse 11, we are reminded that we are nothing without Him, and yet, as the woman is from the man by creation, even so is the man also from the woman by human birth. But all things are of God, and in Jesus Christ the man and woman are together in a love that is submissive for the glory of the Lord Jesus.

B. THE LORD'S SUPPER

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 11:17-34

Another problem of the Corinthian church concerned their method of keeping the Lord's Supper. Paul defined how the observance of that ceremony could be a blessing or a curse. Paul did not disapprove of literal communion, but he set forth the orderly procedure and gave the spiritual interpretation which would result in fellowship between them and the Lord.

It was the practice of the early church to meet together for what they called "love feasts." This was simply a time of social fellowship which they followed with the breaking of bread. The trouble was that in Corinth the Lord's table had become abused because of surfeiting. Many who brought food ate it in their own clique and those who had abundance were not sharing with those who had little.

The cup containing the fruit of the vine represented the shed blood of Christ; the broken bread, his broken body. These were emblems. There was no virtue in the wine and bread itself. Nothing is said as to how often the observance should be made, but it is not to become commonplace. In observing the Lord's Supper, we look back to Calvary and forward to His coming.

Paul warned the Corinthian church against the sin of eating the bread and drinking the cup unworthily. He did not write, "If ye are unworthy," for we could never be worthy. Our worthiness is in Christ. He warned against the way in which the communion service would be kept or the attitude in which we would approach the table. When we meet around the Lord's table, we are to remember the Lord's

body. This means not only His body that hung on the cross, but the body of Jesus Christ in the world today. If we discern that we, a part of His body, are in any way sinning against the body, we are grieving the Lord and would be eating unworthily. Also, if we were to not examine ourselves, we would be eating and drinking unworthily. Paul stated because of this many were sick and some had even died.

C. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 12

1. Unity of the Body

The problem with the Corinthian church was three-fold:

- a. Division and carnality
- b. Immorality and sin
- c. Problems of church administration and of life in general.

The unity of the body answers the question and gives the remedy for divisions and carnality. Verse 13 is one of the more important verses of the entire Bible. Every Christian must understand it fully. There is only one body and one Spirit. Christians may come from many different cultures and nationalities, but one Spirit places them into one body. The members of the church may be different in temperament and personality, but they are members one of another. Together they make one body.

The same Spirit works in all. The Spirit divides to every man as He will. The saints must all work together. All are needed in the church. Some may seem to be more important or prominent and have greater responsibility, but no member should feel superior to another member because each is dependent upon the other. Actually, within the body there is no such thing as an unimportant member or a member who is not essential. We should seek the welfare of the body, desire the will of God, and covet to be used by God in a way that will glorify the Lord and benefit the entire body.

2. Gifts of the Spirit

There are nine gifts of the Spirit placed in the church for the profit of each member (verse 7). These gifts are diverse and given to every man severally as the Lord wills (verse 11). The gifts of the

Spirit are distributed within the body according to the Lord's will. They are there, not for display purposes, nor to be played with, nor to be shown off, nor to reveal the spirituality of a saint. They are there to meet a definite need that may arise in the church and to minister to the church. These nine gifts are as follows:

a. Word of Wisdom

This is not wisdom but the *word of wisdom*. Jesus showed the gift of the word of wisdom in His ministry (Mark 12:14-17). He promised His disciples similar aid (Matthew 10:19, 20).

b. Word of Knowledge

This is not knowledge but the *word of knowledge*. It is manifested in the ministry of apostle Paul (Acts 27:22-26).

c. Faith

The gift of faith is not given to make up for a lack of faith or weak faith. This gift is a supernatural endowment by which some special work is wrought through answered prayer. It is to meet a special need that may arise in a church.

d. Gifts of Healing

This gift is in the plural—gifts of healing. In verse 28 it is gifts of healings. The reason for the plural is because of the many causes of sickness. Some ailments are caused by demon activity; others are organic and still others may call for a correction of living habits. The human body is extremely complex, and there are hundreds of reasons for sickness, spiritual and physical. For this reason, it is gifts of healing.

e. Working of Miracles

A miracle is an act of God that to the natural man would seem impossible and would have no natural explanation. This gift is not for display purposes but to meet needs that arise in the protection and preservation of God's people.

f. Prophecy

New Testament prophecy is a fore-telling of scriptural truths within the framework of the Bible. Prophecy is speaking by inspiration in one's own mother tongue. Prophecy speaks unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3).

g. Discerning of Spirits

The Holy Spirit places into the body the gift of the discerning of spirits, making us aware of a wrong spirit. It is the opinion of the writer that every successful pastor must have, at least in a measure, this gift. This is one of the most important of all nine gifts.

h. Divers Kinds of Tongues

This gift, connected with the gift of prophecy, is speaking to the church a message that God wants the church to hear. It should be operated in strict connection with interpretation. It is a message addressed to the church strictly in harmony with Bible truths.

i. Interpretation of Tongues

In the original, *interpret* does not mean "to translate" but "to explain." The one who receives this gift explains the meaning of the message in tongues, yielding to the Spirit in the giving forth of the message. Sometimes the message in tongues is longer than the interpretation and vice versa.

It may help us somewhat in understanding the ministry of the nine gifts by grouping them into three groups as follows:

- * Gifts of Knowledge (to know); word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits
- * Gifts of Power (to act): faith, working of miracles, gifts of healing
- * Gifts of Utterance (to speak): prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues

3. Other Gifts

In verse 28, Paul listed other ministries and gifts which God has placed in the church:

Apostles	Prophets	Teachers
Miracles	Gifts of healings	Helps
Governments	Diversities of tongues	

The word *governments* refers to “organizations.” This is scriptural proof that organization is of God.

The question, “Do all speak with tongues?” is a definite reference to the gift of tongues, one of the nine gifts. It does not refer to the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

D. ORDERLY WORSHIP

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 14

In chapter 14, Paul gave clear instruction relative to tongues and interpretations. This gift may either be misused or neglected. Do not misinterpret verse 19. Nowhere did Paul condemn speaking in tongues, but he did advise against ministering to the church congregation in tongues unless accompanied by orderly interpretations. The edifying of the church was Paul’s concern, and he recommended prophecy above tongues for that purpose, unless there was an interpreter.

There are several important truths brought out in this chapter concerning orderly worship in the church. Listed are a few of them:

1. Love should govern the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.
2. The guiding principle of the operation of the gifts of the Spirit is to edify the church.
3. There are four ways of speaking to the church: by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by doctrine (verse 6).
4. Prophecy is speaking unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort (verse 3).
5. One may speak in tongues in prayer and worship and by so doing edify himself (verse 4).
6. The vernacular should be used in the church so that the unsaved can understand what is going on (verse 19, 20).
7. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. This means that a prophet does have power to control the gift.
8. There should be no confusion in the church, but everything should be done decently and in order. Then, it will glorify the Lord.

Lesson Nine

**PAUL'S FIRST CORINTHIAN LETTER
PART IV****A. THE CHRISTIAN AND LOVE**

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 13

This chapter is a gem of literature. It has been called “the encyclopedia of love.” The English word *charity* does not express the original word *agape*. *Agape* means “to love, expecting nothing in return,” and has its source in God alone (I John 4:8). It is never found in the Greek classics.

There are two Greek words translated *love* in the New Testament. One is *agape*, the highest type of love. This is the kind of love which God has for the world. It is a sacrificial love. The other word is *phileo*. This lesser type of love is given in a mutual relationship where one loves the lovable.

Nowhere in the literature can there be found more highly exalted ethics than Paul sets forth in the love chapter. He shows the emptiness and worthlessness of profession without love. Then he outlines its activities until no one is left in question as to whether or not he possesses it. This love is not a natural acquisition, but is shed abroad in one's heart by the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:5).

1. The Value of Love (verses 1-3)

Love is vital. Without love, all other attributes are worthless.

2. Characteristics of Love (verses 4-8a)

There is a long list of the virtues and characteristics of love:

- a. longsuffering and kind
- b. does not envy

- c. does not become rash
- d. is not conceited
- e. is polite and courteous
- f. is unselfish
- g. is not provoked
- h. does not keep a ledger of wrongs suffered
- i. does not rejoice in unrighteousness
- j. does not rejoice in gossip
- k. overlooks all faults
- l. does not contain suspicion
- m. optimistic
- n. remains strong through all circumstances

3. Endurance of Love (verses 8b-13)

The other gifts will fail, for they will end when the church is perfected. These have been given for the edification of the church and when the church is raptured they will have finished the purpose for which they have been given. The gifts of the Spirit will no longer be needed when we are caught up from this world. Love is that which will endure into eternity and is, therefore, the greatest.

B. THE RESURRECTIONS

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 15

1. The Certainty of the Resurrection (verses 1-34)

The question of the resurrection had been raised at Corinth. Apparently, some had believed the teaching of the Sadducees. Materialistic conceptions of the resurrection of the body had led to wrong views of the resurrection. Paul dealt with these errors by insisting on the bodily resurrection of Jesus as the fundamental fact on which the whole gospel rests. Paul argued strongly that except for the hope of the resurrection there is no reason for the existence of Christianity.

In this chapter three reasons are given for the fact of the resurrection:

- a. We are saved by the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1, 2). The experiences of the Corinthians were proof to them of the resurrection. Verse 2 is a strong proof that the teaching of unconditional eternal security is an error.

b. The Scripture bore witness to the reality of the resurrection.

c. There were eye witnesses of the resurrected body of Jesus. He had been seen at different times by the apostles. Jesus had appeared to a crowd of 500 people at one time. This was twenty-seven years before Paul's writing, but half of these 500 were still living. A crowd of this size would not just imagine the same thing. The resurrection had to be a reality. Paul himself was a witness of the resurrection of Jesus. Paul had seen Jesus on the road to Damascus. There could be no other explanation to the phenomenon of Paul's life.

If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Jesus did not rise. If Jesus did not rise, then the faith of the Corinthians was in vain and they were still in their sins.

Christ is the firstfruits. Even when the graves were opened at His death, there was no resurrection of Old Testament saints until after His resurrection (Matthew 27:52, 53).

The statement is given in verse 24 that the time will come when Christ's mediatorial reign will have to come to its end, having fulfilled its purpose, and at that time the office of the Sonship will cease.

There is a problem in verse 29 concerning baptizing by proxy. Whether or not the Corinthians were following some heathen custom here, we are not certain. Certainly Paul did not approve of it if they were doing this. He asked that if there was no resurrection, why were they doing it?

A better interpretation for this verse is that apostle Paul was referring to the act of baptism and asking the question: Why baptize if Jesus was never raised, for if there was no resurrection then the ordinance loses its meaning. A translation given by Sir Robert Anderson reads like this: "Else what shall become of them which are being baptized? It is for corpses if the dead rise not." This brings out the thought that if there is no resurrection, baptism is for the sake of the absolutely dead, and there is no purpose in it.

2. The Manner and Nature of the Resurrection (verses 35- 50)

Paul anticipated some questions concerning the nature of the resurrection and answered those questions. He likened the body to

the seed that is planted. Just as each seed has its own body, so our mortal bodies, through death, will resurrect with a new body, given by God. It will be a spiritual body, changed from mortal to immortal. All shall not die, but all shall be changed.

Our hope is not merely immortality of the spirit, but actual resurrection of the body (Romans 8:23, I Thessalonians 5:23, II Corinthians 5:4). It will not be the same corrupt, earthly body but a spiritual body, partaking of the nature of God's own heavenly glory.

3. The Final Triumph (verses 51-58)

Paul revealed a mystery of those who have died in the Lord. He described them as being asleep in Jesus. This is a lovely way to describe the condition of those who have departed from this life: they are asleep in Jesus. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. They are waiting to be clothed upon with a new body. The dead are asleep in Jesus: a redeemed spirit without a body, waiting for that moment, that day of resurrection.

Suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound. The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. There will be a generation which will not die, a generation that will not go into the valley of the shadow of death, but they all shall be changed.

There will come a day when the incorruptible spirit shall be reunited again with a body that will put on incorruption. The fate of your soul will also be the fate of your body; the two cannot be separated eternally. They are separated for a little while, as the body waits for its resurrection, but when Jesus comes, the spirit will be reunited with the body. Death cannot touch the soul or the spirit of a Christian. It touches the body for a short time until the resurrection takes place.

The sting is taken out of death because sin is cancelled. Death is no longer an enemy to the Christian. We may put our foot on the neck of the enemy death and laugh at him: O death, where is thy victory? Instead of swallowing us up, death itself will be swallowed up. Instead of casting us into eternal Hell, death itself will go there. Because of Calvary, the tables have been turned.

Finally, this victory leaves a challenge with us—a challenge to be steadfast, unmovable, and abounding in the work of the Lord.

C. POSTSCRIPT

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 16

1. The Matter of Collection

Paul gave the church instruction concerning receiving offerings to help the assembly at Jerusalem. Apparently the congregation at Jerusalem was suffering financial hardships. He was receiving offerings from the Gentile churches for the assistance of the mother church. Paul advised the Corinthians to collect the money on the first day of the week and to choose one to deliver it to Jerusalem. He himself would not do it.

2. Final Exhortations

Paul gave the Corinthians many final exhortations. He exhorted them: watch, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong, and let all things be done with love.

Paul told them of his plans to visit Corinth. He said that he would pass through Macedonia and possibly spend the winter with them.

It is quite possible that this letter had been written by Sosthenes (I Corinthians 1:1), at Paul's dictation, and then Paul signed it with his own hand (I Corinthians 16:21). He may have added the next verse: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." This verse contains a very serious message and tells us what the option is if we love not Jesus. It is to be cursed with a very serious judgment, for the Lord cometh.

Lesson Ten

**PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO
THE CORINTHIANS
PART I
II Corinthians 1-4**

A. AUTHORSHIP

This epistle was written by apostle Paul from Philippi in Macedonia, not many months after I Corinthians.

Paul had spent the greater part of three years at Ephesus. He stated that he would remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, which would be in June, AD 57. From there he planned to go to Corinth by way of Macedonia. He had sent Timothy on a mission to Macedonia and Corinth. Timothy had returned to Ephesus and was now ready to accompany Paul. Titus, who also had been sent to Corinth, was to join them in Troas. However, Paul and Timothy went on from Troas to Philippi in order to meet Titus. Apparently they were eager to learn from Titus the state of affairs among the Corinthian saints.

Paul was pleased with the good news that Titus brought from Corinth. He wrote a letter immediately and sent Titus back with it, accompanied with two other brethren (II Corinthians 8:16-24). They delivered the letter and had charge of completing the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

B. THE EFFECT OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

Much could be written concerning what had happened in the Corinthian church between the time of the writing of First and Second Corinthians. Paul referred to this in II Corinthians 7:11, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge."

Although much repentance had followed the reception of his first letter, there were certain points of correction still needed. However, Paul had found areas of intimate fellowship which he wanted to discuss with them before proceeding to more discipline.

C. THE CONTENTS OF THIS EPISTLE

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians was the most personal of Paul's letters and the most autobiographical. Much of the epistle was spent upon Paul's own ministry, his motives, and his sacrifices. He vindicated his authority as an apostle and endeavored to prepare the church of Corinth for his arrival.

The first nine chapters were written in the past tense, while the last four chapters were written in the present or future tense. It has been suggested that these last four chapters were written earlier and then attached to the letter.

D. FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING

Paul longed to draw the Corinthians closer to himself. In the beginning of this letter, he tried to accomplish his purpose. He told them that as they were partakers of the suffering, so would they be partakers of the consolation. Paul had suffered, but he recognized that they had also suffered. They had gone through affliction and tribulations also.

Paul gave thanks for the comfort that he had received from the Lord. This word *comfort* comes from the same Greek word as "comforter" in the Gospel of St. John. It is stronger than mere consolation. God not only encourages, but also supplies a foundation for encouragement. The benefit of suffering is that it produces a Christian capable of assisting others.

He reminded them of the certainty of the promises of God; these promises could not fail. Suffering causes one to know in a greater measure the certainty of the promises of God. Also, suffering establishes one in Christ and makes them to realize the reality of the gift of the Holy Spirit which seals them.

E. PROGRESSIVE SALVATION

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 1:10

Paul preached a deliverance of three tenses: past, present, and future. He knew what he had been delivered from in the days gone by. He realized what he was being delivered from at that particular time. He knew God would still yet deliver him.

There is a great lesson here. Some testify of what God has done in the past, and they may look forward to the future. Not only must this be true, but they must have an up-to-date testimony of what the Lord is doing for them now.

Paul gave all the glory to God. He praised God and thanked the saints who had prayed for him.

F. THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINE

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 2

Paul delayed going to Corinth in order that he might spare them. It was not his desire to chastise them further. He did not want to go to them in heaviness in order to help them. He did not want to cause sorrow, but love. He wanted them to know his love for them (verse 4).

It would seem that Paul's first letter had changed the Corinthian church to such an extent that even those who had been upholding the man in sin had now turned against him in discipline. Apparently Paul did not know this until he met Titus. Paul, on learning this fact, advised a change of attitude toward the man who had repented. He did not want them to exclude him forever from their fellowship in Christ. This showed that the apostle could be very hard on sin, but soft and merciful when there was true repentance. He did not want the man lost, but he wanted him to be saved.

In the latter part of chapter 2, it would seem the apostle Paul was comparing his ministry to the incense-scented triumphal processions of conquering emperors returning to Rome with long lines of captives. Some of these captives would be put to death; others would be permitted to live. Paul's ministry bore the fragrance of God, which meant death or life, according to one's reaction to hearing his ministry. He looked upon his ministry as a march of triumph.

G. LIVING EPISTLES

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 3

Apparently there came some Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem, carrying letters of introduction. Paul's enemies at Corinth were still questioning Paul's authority, saying that he had no letters of commendation from Jerusalem. The Corinthian church had been founded by Paul himself. Therefore, the church was Paul's letter. He needed no other letter of commendation than the church at Corinth.

Paul proceeded to contrast his ministry with the ministry of these Judaizing teachers. Their gospel was the gospel of the Law, written on stone; his was written on hearts. The two gospels were contrasted by Paul: one of the letter, the other of the Spirit; one unto death, the other unto life; one veiled, the other unveiled; one unto condemnation, the other unto righteousness; one passes, the other remains.

H. PAUL'S LIVING MARTYRDOM

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 4

In chapter 4 Paul set forth the vision of the true minister. He never found preaching an easy task. Its purpose was to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty. Ministers must not work in craftiness, nor should they handle God's Word deceitfully. They should commend themselves to the consciences of men by the declaration of truth. The purpose of the true ministry is to preach Christ, that men might be saved. The treachery of Satan must be exposed, for he blinds men's minds by philosophy and vain deceit so the light of God's gospel cannot help them.

Paul showed the Corinthians that they must see beyond their troubles and their persecutions. God would not let them be destroyed when they were cast down. Although delivered unto death every day, they had the assurance of eternal life. Although they felt their outward strength being used for God, they felt the buoyancy of the inner life. And by the eye of faith they saw the glories of things eternal, though all around them the earth crumbled and fell away. With joy Paul spoke of his glorified body, with which he knew he would be clothed when he awoke in the likeness of God.

Paul's life was a living martyrdom. At his conversion the Lord had said: "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). The sufferings began immediately and continued for over thirty years. There was a continuous succession of beatings, imprisonments, shipwrecks, and privations of every kind. Finally, he was taken to Rome to be executed. In all of this, Paul rejoiced for he saw the future glory which would be his. He showed the Corinthians they were only earthen vessels and the glory was God's, not theirs. As long as we are kept by His power, Satan's power cannot conquer us. Here is the source of victory: the spirit of Christ shall keep us in this life and give us eternal life. The outward afflictions that we face here are nothing, because our inward man is strengthened from the power of God.

Lesson Eleven

**PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO
THE CORINTHIANS
PART II
II Corinthians 5-7**

**A. THE MOTIVATIONS FOR PAUL'S DEDICATION TO THE
MINISTRY**

Paul stated a number of things that had motivated him in his dedication to the ministry. We shall list them here for further consideration and study:

1. The knowledge and certainty of immortality (5:1-9)
2. Judgment (5:10)
3. Fear (5:11)
4. Unselfishness (5:12, 13)
5. Love (5:14, 15)
6. Regeneration (5:16, 17)
7. Reconciliation (5:18-21)
8. Time (6:1, 2)
9. Suffering (6:3-10)

B. THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 5:1-9

The knowledge and hope of immortality gave Paul strength to endure that he might please Christ (verse 9). The verb *know* is the same verb used in I John 2:21 and I John 3:1, 2. There is no uncertainty regarding the hope of immortality. The only uncertain fact about it is the matter of time.

The apostle made a comparison between what we are now and what we will be. Our bodies are likened to frail tents which will be exchanged so will our present bodies for a glorious body made in the likeness of Christ. With triumphant joy Paul spoke of his glorified

body with which he knew he would be clothed when he folded life's transient tent and awoke in the likeness of God. He did not fear to appear in the presence of his God, for he knew his reward was sure.

There are some very important truths taught in this passage of Scripture:

1. The Hope of the Resurrection

Death is spoken of here as being unclothed. The coming of Jesus is being spoken of as being clothed. No one longs for death. Death is an enemy. Our hope and longings is not for death, but rather for the coming of our Lord. This explains how a saint of God may testify at his longing to go home to be with Jesus. However, should he take sick, he does his utmost to still remain in this life. This is not inconsistent. No one longs for death, but it is for the coming of Jesus when we shall be clothed with our new house and mortality will be swallowed up of life. God has put a desire to live in the heart of every one of His creatures.

2. No Grounds for the Doctrine of Soul Sleep

When the child of God dies, he is immediately present with the Lord. When he is absent from this body, he will be present with the Lord. This means that the child of God will be in a state of conscious rest until Jesus comes, and at that time he will be clothed with his new resurrected body. But, until then, he is still present with the Lord in a conscious rest in Paradise.

C. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Scriptural Reference: II Corinthians 5:10

The judgment seat of Christ takes place immediately following the coming of the Lord for His church. The child of God is judged for his works and faithfulness. This will be pay day for him. "And, behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12). This reward, according to works, will be handed out at the judgment seat of Christ. This judgment has nothing to do with salvation. It has to do with a man's faithfulness, his motives, and his ministries.

D. A NEW CREATION

Scriptural Reference: II Corinthians 5:17

Paul frequently used the phrase “in Christ.” Certainly the Christian is either in Christ, or not. If he is in Christ, he has become a new creation, with old things passed away, and all things become new. We may conclude that if a man is not a new creature, then he is not in Christ, and, of course, not saved. Actually, this brings out the conclusive proof of salvation.

E. GOD IN CHRIST

Scriptural Reference: II Corinthians 5:19

This verse is a positive statement of the Oneness truth. Every student of the Bible should have this verse underlined and memorized. Please note that God was *in* Christ. *Christ* means “the anointed one,” and the anointing one is God. God is reconciling the world unto Himself. Note the singular pronoun, *Himself*. It does not say: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto themselves, but, rather unto Himself. We need no stronger statement than this to believe the oneness of God.

F. THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING FROM GRACE

Scriptural Reference: II Corinthians 6:1

This verse reveals that it is possible to fall away from grace. This statement explodes the doctrine of unconditional eternal security. This statement alone should be sufficient to convince any honest seeker of truth that unconditional eternal security is error.

G. THE DAY OF SALVATION

Scriptural Reference: II Corinthians 6:2

The passing of time is a strong motivation for the preacher to preach the gospel and for the individual to receive and to accept Jesus Christ and to be saved. This is a strong warning against procrastination. The word *now* refers to the gospel age.

H. PAUL'S SUFFERINGS AND PATIENCE

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 6:3-13

In chapter 6 apostle Paul again defended his ministry and referred to his sufferings and patience as proof of his ministry. He was always zealous to defend the ministry and it would seem that he suffered disappointment that the ministry was often misunderstood.

Paul gave proofs of the commendation of the ministry by referring to his afflictions, stripes, and toils. He also mentioned the virtues of the ministry, which were coordinated with patience recurring through the outward hardships, purity of life, teaching of the word of truth and love unfeigned. In all of these Paul showed the Corinthians that he was a true minister.

I. A SEPARATED LIFE

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Here is one of the strongest exhortations to a life of separation and holiness. There is no place of real fellowship between light and darkness. This is sufficient why a Christian should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. This is generally used in referring to marriage and, rightly so, but it also may be used in business partnerships and in being members of associations where a Christian has close connection with unbelievers.

The promise of being received by the Lord Almighty is conditional and dependent upon the Christian's separation from the world. God will receive us if we will separate ourselves from the world and dedicate ourselves to Him. There must be a complete abstaining from all filthiness of the *flesh and spirit*. It is possible to be moral and upright, outwardly, but yet have a wrong spirit. Holiness is a quality that may be perfected. There are definitely degrees of perfection and holiness for which the Christian should strive. He does this by separating himself from the world and cleansing himself from everything that is unclean.

J. THE GOOD NEWS BROUGHT BY TITUS

Scriptural Reference: II Corinthians 7:2-16

Paul had sent Titus to Corinth with a letter and apparently his mission had been successful. Under the influence of Paul's second letter and the presence of Titus, the church as a whole had been brought back into line. Paul had had misgivings, but now he was not sorry that he wrote to them in such a severe tone, for it brought them to repentance. Theirs was a godly sorrow, not the sorrow of the world. The result of their sorrow was real repentance.

In verses 10 and 11, we have a wonderful definition and explanation of true repentance.

Paul was comforted and rejoiced over the good news that Titus had brought back from Corinth. This is how the gospel minister will rejoice when he sees real fruit from his ministry and the people of God responding to an appeal for holiness and righteousness.

Lesson Twelve

**PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO
THE CORINTHIANS
PART III
II Corinthians 8-13**

A. THE GRACE OF GIVING

Scriptural Reference: II Corinthians 8-9

1. The Collection for the Poor Saints in Jerusalem

Chapters 8 and 9 contain instructions about the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. The subject of this relief fund is referred to in four places in the New Testament (I Corinthians 16:1-3; 11 Corinthians 8, 9; Romans 15:26, 27; Acts 24:17). This collection had been started the previous year (II Corinthians 8:10). Apparently, the Corinthian church had not been very enthusiastic in the raising of this fund, and Paul dealt with this in these two chapters. Not only did Paul want to help the saints back at Jerusalem, but he wanted to develop the grace of giving among the churches and to establish fellowship between the churches. He knew the best way to do that would be to interest the saints of Macedonia and the other provinces in helping the saints of Palestine.

2. The Example of the Saints in Macedonia

Paul spoke of the liberality of the saints in Macedonia. He said the grace of God was bestowed on them. The things which abounded unto the riches of their liberality were:

- a. their great trial of affliction
- b. their abundant joy
- c. their deep poverty

How can people of deep poverty give great offerings? Paul stated that they were willing to give beyond their power (verse 3).

They begged apostle Paul to accept their offering. They longed to have fellowship with the saints by sharing their material possessions with them. They gave themselves first; then they gave all they had.

3. Paul's Challenge

Paul exhorted and challenged the Corinthian church to give liberally for the benefit of themselves and the church. He exhorted them to have all in readiness when he came. To encourage them he reminded them of the example of our Lord. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).

Paul desired them to know the grace of living. He attempted to teach the Corinthians how to obtain this much needed grace. Paul taught certain principles regarding the giving of offerings. The offerings were to be given according to these principles:

- a. voluntary
- b. proportionate
- c. systematic
- d. above reproach in his business and ministration

4. The Spirit of Giving

The first requisite of the grace of giving was a willing heart. God desired everyone to share any burden for His work equally, according to ability. God wants no gift which the giver begrudges. God does not care for the gift which one gives because he feels he must. God loves the cheerful giver, the person who gladly remembers the needs of the work of God and purposes to have fellowship with Him, even beyond his power.

5. The Result of Liberal Giving

The results and blessings of liberal giving are stated here. Paul expressed the truth that he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Not only will there be a bountiful return for the bountiful sowing, but God will make grace abound toward the giver, and all of their needs will be supplied (verse 8). We may prove God in tithing and giving liberally to the need of God's cause (II Corinthians 9:13).

B. PAUL'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 10

In this chapter Paul vindicated his apostolic authority to the church. It is suggested that some of his enemies had charged that Paul was weak in personal appearance.

There is no hint in the New Testament as to Paul's appearance. Some traditions state that he was small in stature, bald-headed, and had a slightly prominent nose. Other traditions state that he was of moderate stature with curly hair. Actually there is no record of what the apostle looked like, but the charge that he was of a weak personality certainly was false. Through the preaching of the gospel, Paul was able to turn city after city upside down. He must have been a powerful and dominating person. In reply to the charge that he was weak, Paul wrote that at least he founded his own churches and did not trouble churches founded by others (II Corinthians 10:16).

Verses 3, 4, and 5 mention spiritual weapons, and these weapons are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Through these spiritual weapons the child of God is able to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Many church problems and troubles arise from imaginations which have to be cast down.

C. ESPOUSED TO CHRIST

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 11:2

In the time of Paul, it was customary to have a middle man arrange for the marriages of young couples. It was very serious if the engagements he made were broken or if either of the persons proved untrue. Engagement among the Jews was a very serious affair and could not be dissolved without a writing of divorcement. Society has gone far from that standard, but it is this standard that pleased God and still is pleasing to the Lord. Paul had this in mind when he wrote the Corinthians: "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

The church is the bride elect of Christ, espoused unto Christ as a chaste virgin.

D. PAUL'S BOASTING

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 11

Paul apologized for his boasting. He seemed to realize that his boasting was wrong, but he made it clear that his glorying was a folly which was forced upon him. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to bear with him because of his great concern for their souls. He was jealous for them, and he desired that they stay in the simple truth of the gospel.

Paul warned the Corinthians against Satan's messengers. These were false apostles who came, pretending to be real superior apostles. This was natural as their father, Satan, comes as an angel of light.

Paul excelled in suffering. If false prophets had reason to boast, he certainly did. If the Corinthians suffered fools, perhaps they would tolerate him, at least as a fool, if nothing else. As a servant of Christ, Paul declared that he excelled all of them. He bore not only the physical sufferings, but also the mental burden of the care of the church.

He challenged his critics to compare themselves with him by every standard: as a loyal Hebrew, as an effective worker for Christ and as a sufferer for Christ. His whole career had been an unbroken story of living martyrdom.

E. PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 12

The man that Paul was referring to in this chapter was his own person. The fourteen years went back to when Paul was stoned at Lystra and dragged out for dead. Paul stated that he did not know whether or not he was dead, but he had an experience that gave him a vision of Paradise.

Paradise is the place where disembodied spirits are in conscious rest with the Lord between death and the resurrection. Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, Paradise was located adjacent to Hades. When Jesus arose, however, He emptied this compartment and transported Paradise to the third Heaven. It was here that Paul

was caught up to. His experience was so glorious that the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble.

There are various opinions just what Paul's thorn in the flesh really was. It would seem that it was some physical infirmity, for he sought the Lord three times for deliverance. Nevertheless, the Lord made it real to him that this was given to him to keep him humble. The promise was given with this revelation that the Lord's grace was sufficient and that his strength was made perfect in weakness.

Some have thought that his thorn in the flesh was poor eyesight. This we cannot prove. However, Paul wrote with a large handwriting (Galatians 6:11), which may have been due to poor vision. This also may have been the reason Paul dictated some of his epistles to some of his helpers. The Galatians would have given him their own eyes (Galatians 4:15).

F. CONCLUSION

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 13

In conclusion, Paul spoke of this letter as being a third visit. He had written two previous letters and he was counting these letters as visits.

In his final admonition, he exhorted the Corinthians to self-examination, to be certain that they were guiltless before God.

This epistle was written in the year AD 57. Paul reached Corinth in the fall of that year, spent the winter there, and in the following spring departed for Jerusalem.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Epistles I

Lesson One

1. What were Paul's first two epistles?
 - a.
 - b.
2. Which was Paul's final epistle?
3. Which epistle did Paul write with his own handwriting?
4. Which epistles were written to pastors?
5. Write a brief history of Paul's life up to the time of his missionary call.

6. State the theme of the following writers:
 - a. Peter
 - b. James
 - c. Jude
 - d. Paul

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Epistles I

Lesson Three

1. What is man's first step towards God?

2. Why must pride and boasting be excluded from salvation?

3. Why is the heathen without excuse?

4. Why did God give the Gentiles up?

5. Explain the meaning of:
 - a. Impute
 - b. Propitiation

6. Why did Paul use Abraham and David as examples in his argument for justification by faith?

7. Explain how the resurrection of Jesus validates the atonement.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Epistles I

Lesson Four

1. Explain the following:
 - a. Two headships in Romans 5.

 - b. Two reckonings in Romans 6.

 - c. Two yieldings in Romans 6

2. Explain the fact that predestination is based directly upon the foreknowledge of God.

3. What is the secret of victory brought out in Romans 8.

4. What truth is taught by the expression, "Abba Father," in Romans 8:15?

