

FAREWELL TO THE CHURCH

This study concludes the First Letter to the Church at Corinth and is Paul's farewell.

We did not complete the lesson last week and will deal with it in a few minutes but there were two questions posed that deserve more attention.

The first question was asked by Brother Asa before the lesson began and I promised to look into it more fully. Brother Asa asked for some help on 14:39.

1 Cor 14:39-40

³⁹ So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy,
and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

⁴⁰ But all things should be done decently and in order.

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1 Cor 14:39

Verse 39. - **Wherefore.** The final conclusion. **Covet... forbid not.** The power to preach is to be desired; all that can be said of glossolaly is that it is not to be absolutely forbidden so long as the conditions which St. Paul has laid down for its regulation are observed. But glossolaly is hardly possible under conditions of order, decorum, and self suppression, and we are not surprised that we hear no more of it in the Church, but only in the wild excitement of fanatical sects.

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1 Corinthians 14:39

[Covet to prophesy] See the note at [1 Cor 14:1](#). This is the "summing up" of all that he had said. It was "desirable" that a man should wish to be able to speak, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in such a manner as to edify the church.

[And forbid not ...] Do not suppose that the power of speaking foreign languages is useless, or is to be despised, or that it is to be prohibited. "In its own place" it is a valuable endowment; and on proper occasions the talent should be exercised; see in [1 Cor 14:22](#).

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The other question was raised by Brother Gables and it was to what OT Scripture was Jesus referring to when He told the Sadducees that they were wrong and then made reference to the angels.

Matt 22:23-33

²³ The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, ²⁴ saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.' ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ So too the second and third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ After them all, the woman died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

²⁹ But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God:

³² 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.'" ³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

William Hendricksen's commentary on Matthew points out that the Sadducees denied the existence of angels while the very book that they held to, viz. Genesis clearly refers to angels.

Gen 19:1

And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; KJV

Gen 19:15

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

Gen 28:10-12

¹⁰ And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

¹¹ And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

¹² And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

Gen 32:1

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

The consensus is that Jesus takes a broad view of the writings of Moses, the only Scriptures that the Sadducees accepted, to prove the resurrection. If the Sadducees do not accept angels then they will be wrong in their understanding of the resurrection.

Matthew 22:23-33

Verse 29. [**Ye do err, not knowing ...**] They had taken a wrong view of the doctrine of the resurrection. It was not taught that people would marry there. The "Scriptures," here, mean the books of the Old Testament. By appealing to them, Jesus showed that the doctrine of the future state was there, and that the Sadducees should have believed it as it was, and not have added the absurd doctrine to it that people must live there as they do here. The way in which the enemies of the truth often attempt to make a doctrine of the Bible ridiculous is by adding to it, and then calling it absurd. The reason why the Saviour produced a passage from the books of Moses (Matt 22:32) was that they had also appealed to his writings, Matt 22:24. Other places of the Old Testament, in fact, asserted the doctrine more clearly (Dan 12:2; Isa 26:19), but he wished to meet them on their own ground. None of those scriptures asserted that people would live there as they do here, and therefore their reasoning was false.

[**Nor the power of God**] They probably denied, as many have done since, that God could gather the scattered dust of the dead and remould it into a body. On this ground they affirmed that the doctrine could not be true-opposing reason to revelation, and supposing that infinite power could not reorganize a body that it had at first organized, and raise a body from its own dust which it had at first raised from nothing.

Verse 30. [**Neither marry ...**] This was a full answer to the objections of the Sadducees.

[**But are as the angels of God**] That is, in the manner of their conversation; in regard to marriage and the mode of their existence. Luke adds that they shall be "equal with the angels." That is, they shall be elevated above the circumstances of mortality, and live in a manner and in a kind of conversation similar to that of the angels. It does not imply that they shall be equal in intellect, but only "in the circumstances of their existence," as that is distinguished from the way in which mortals live. He also adds, "Neither do they die any more, but are the children of God; being the children of the resurrection," or being accounted worthy to be raised up to life, and therefore "sons of God raised up to him."

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The Sadducees denied the resurrection and also the existence of angels. So Jesus says they are ignorant of the Scriptures because they teach both a resurrection and about angels.

We did not complete Chapter 15:

8. The Coming Resurrection of the Church

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The reason we must have a new body is because, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

Our bodies must be transformed into an immortal body that is able to exist in the spiritual realm in the presence of God forever. Paul says this is a mystery that cannot be explained to our understanding now. Some will be changed without experiencing death, those who are alive at His coming [1 Thess 4:17].

What makes death so frightening is sin.

When our sin has been forgiven and imputed to Christ, death is no longer something to fear. Why would you be afraid to be with Christ?

We must not confuse the circumstances of death, e.g. illness, tragedy, with death itself.

Paul anticipates this glorious outcome by quoting Hosea.

Hosea 13:14

Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol?
Shall I redeem them from Death?
O Death, where are your plagues?
O Sheol, where is your sting?
Compassion is hidden from my eyes.

Paul exhorts his readers to hold steadfast in their commitment to Jesus Christ. Your work in the Lord will never be in vain [58].

FAREWELL TO THE CHURCH

Paul has covered the main issues that needed attention in the church at Corinth. There were two more questions asked by Chloe's people [1:11]. Also, there were a few things that Paul wanted to say before closing his letter, such as his travel plans, his hope of visiting them, and some remarks to individuals.

1. Concerning Taking Up a Collection

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ² On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. ³ And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Evidently Paul had discussed with the Corinthians the matter of taking up a collection to relieve the saints in Jerusalem. But apparently they needed more instruction as to how to go about it.

In 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul writes in greater detail about this matter. It is interesting that Paul can move from a spiritual issue, viz. the resurrection, to a very practical one, i.e. giving.

1. The collection included the other churches, e.g. Galatia.’
2. Everyone is to participate.
3. Giving is proportionate to your income.
4. The funds are to be set aside the first day of the week, viz. Sunday.

The Greek “set aside” means “by himself.” This probably means at home. The funds were to be collected prior to Paul’s arrival, so it would not be a last minute, rushed-up affair.

To insure the safety of the funds getting to Jerusalem, Paul will prepare letters of commendation for the men the Corinthian church will choose to carry them. Paul may himself go with them.

2. Paul’s Travel Plans

1 Corinthians 16:5-9

⁵ I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ⁶ and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

As a courtesy, Paul writes about his travel plans. Of course, he cannot be certain of all of the details. He is writing from Ephesus, and plans to go through Macedonia to visit the churches in Philippi and Thessalonica, before coming to Corinth. He plans a rather long visit. He probably knows that what he has written to them will require more explanation.

He plans to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost which is in late spring. There is much opposition to his preaching as we have seen in our studies in Acts. Yet Paul is encouraged that his work is effective.

3. How to Treat Various Brethren

1 Corinthians 16:10-18

¹⁰ When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹ So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.

¹² Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

¹³ Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all that you do be done in love.

¹⁵ Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints— ¹⁶ be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. ¹⁷ I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, ¹⁸ for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men.

Paul has some instruction on how to treat several individuals. First, there is Timothy {and Erastus}, whom Paul had sent ahead of him from Ephesus to Macedonia [Acts 19:22]. Paul mentioned Timothy in 4:17 and gave him an unqualified endorsement. Knowing the arrogance of the Corinthians and knowing that Timothy was not as bold as he was, Paul tells them to accept him as they would Paul himself [10-11].

Next is Apollos. “Now concerning our brother Apollos...” Apparently there was a question about whether Apollos would visit them. As we saw earlier come of them were especially fond of Apollos. Paul will urge Apollos to visit but Apollos did not think now was the time [12].

Before mentioning other individuals, Paul gives more encouragement. This is likely to remind the Corinthians that the church did not depend on individual personalities, but on their continued faithfulness and love [13-14].

Then Paul refers to the household of Stephanas. This family was baptized by Paul [1:16], and was known for their faithful service to the saints. It appears that the church at Corinth failed to appreciate what this family had done and did not recognize them as leaders [15-16].

Finally, Paul mentions Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus {only mention} who had come from Corinth to Ephesus, perhaps bringing the letter from the Corinthians which he is now answering [7:1].

Their coming has meant a lot to Paul because it showed that even though the church at Corinth had problems they were concerned about spiritual matters and sought his instruction. The church should recognize such men [17-18].

4. Greetings and Farewell

1 Corinthians 16:19-24

¹⁹ The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. ²⁰ All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

²¹ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. ²² If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

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

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At the close of this letter Paul sends greetings from the churches of Asia.

Note: Asia at this time was not the great land mass that is today called Asia, but a small Roman province in the western part of Asia Minor. Ephesus was its principle city and the plural indicates that there were other churches, perhaps the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 1:11.

Aquila and Pricilla [Prisca] were well known to the Corinthians. This is the couple with whom Paul had worked and lived with when he first came to Corinth [Acts 18:1-3]. This faithful couple hosted a church in their house [19].

“All the brothers...” send greetings. A “holy kiss” was a first-century form of greeting that has now become a handshake [20].

Paul signs his letter with his own hand which was his way of authenticating his letters [21]. Cf. 2 Thess 3:17.

There is a strong warning about the consequence of failing to love the Lord.

There is every believer’s great hope, “Our Lord, Come!” [22]

The benediction [24].