

Chapter Eleven Notes

Verses one to sixteen

- Undoubtedly, vs. 1 should be connected to the discussion in chapter 10. Paul wanted them to be imitators of him. From a passage such as this, we learn that the approved action of the early Christians communicates to us the will of God. Paul imitated the Lord in this matter. The implication is that we should imitate the apostle only so long as he imitated Christ.
- Before criticizing the brethren concerning the congregational abuses, Paul commended the church for what it was doing right. First of all, the Corinthians remembered Paul in all things. The church had not forgotten the apostle nor his labors among them. Secondly, the apostle praised the Corinthians because they kept the ordinances which he had given to them. They had habitually retained them faithfully. The traditions which were handed down were the teachings of Jesus. It includes both doctrine and manner of conduct.
- In vs. 3, Paul lays out the order of God's ranking. Christ is the head of the human race; he is the master over it. Every man, whether he acknowledges it or not, is subject to Jesus Christ. Man is also head of the woman. The woman is to be subject to the man. The woman cannot exercise authority over a man since she is subject to him (1 Timothy 2:12-15).
- "Every man praying or prophesying" and "every woman praying or prophesying" means inspired actions. They were inspired, Spirit-led people. This was not ordinary, common, uninspired preaching and praying. The prophetesses at Corinth and in early congregations did have to show their subjection by being veiled. They were public and private teachers. Lest they be exalted, lest they try to assume authority over men, lest they feel they were not in subjection, they were to be veiled when they prayed or prophesied, whether they did this publicly or privately.
- Vs. 6, and those that follow, begins a series of illustrations of verses 4 and 5, statements of divine truths, which show the propriety of the women under discussion (the prophetesses) being veiled. The Greek "Xurao" means "a razor, to shear, shave, to get one's self shaved." The Greek "Keiro" means "to have one's hair cut off, be shorn; to get or let be shorn; of shearing or cutting short the hair of the head." Thus the woman (in this case, the prophetess) who would not be veiled, refused to recognize her subjection to man and obey the instructions of the apostle, might as

well be shaved and shorn. Her natural hair is a covering ("peribalaion," vs. 15), denotes her sex and femininity, and therefore her subjection as a woman to man. If she would not wear the veil, then she should be consistent and cut off her natural covering.

- Man is God's crowning creation, made in His image, and gives glory to God. The woman was made of man and for man, a suitable companion for him. Man, therefore, should "pray or prophesy" unveiled, and the woman should do so veiled in honoring the man.
- Man was first created and then the woman, and she was taken from man (Genesis 2:23). She bears his name and was created for his happiness. She is a complement and counterpart to and of him. Truly she is of man. For this reason she should be veiled when "praying or prophesying."
- Man was created for God's glory, not for the woman. Woman was created for man's need and companionship. His priority and headship is affirmed and it was proper she should be veiled.
- The "sign of authority" (the words "a sign of" are supplied by the translators) she was to have on her head was a veil, a kalumma, a sign of man's authority over her. She was to do this "because of the angels." This phrase is an ellipsis; words must be supplied to complete the sense . . . because of the angel's subjection and recognition of authority. Paul reasons from the greater to the lesser, the superior to the inferior. Angels are superior beings to men and women, yet submit to and recognize authority. Therefore, it was proper that the inferior, the woman, submit to and recognize the authority of man by wearing the veil upon her head.
- God has made the man and woman mutually dependent upon each other, and especially is this true as they learn and do God's will (Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7). They truly become "one flesh" and "heirs together of the grace of life."
- Man is born of woman and could not have life without her. She came from him, and he comes from her. Their existence depends upon each other. Yet all is of God, i.e., by His arrangement that each lives by, in and through the other, and that He has given man a place of headship and the woman a place of subjection.
- Paul gives two bases in these verses as to the propriety of the prophetess being veiled and the prophet unveiled: 1) "Judge ye in yourselves . . ." It was apparent to all. People, themselves, could judge and understand this matter and pronounce upon it. It just was not "comely, seemly," proper or becoming that the woman should pray unveiled, for the reason was that; and, 2) "even nature itself" teaches mankind a lesson regarding this matter. *Nature* is

from the Greek "phusis" which Thayer says: "nature, i.e. natural sense, native conviction or knowledge, as opposed to what is learned by instruction and accomplished by training or prescribed by law; i.e., the native sense of propriety." Man should not be veiled when praying, just as his hair is not to be long. Nature teaches that a man's long hair is shameful, and a man praying veiled was shameful. A woman's long hair is a glory to her, is given her for a covering, veil (peribolaion), and nature teaches by this long hair, this natural covering, the propriety of the prophetess praying with a veil, a kalumma (Paul's special purpose in these verses is not to discuss the length of hair, as he does not define long (how long) or short (how short), nor enforce lengths nor standards as to the cutting or not cutting of it. These verses are an illustration of verses 4-5. A man's short hair stands in contrast to the woman's long hair. The prophet, unveiled, stands in contrast to the prophetess, veiled, illustrated by the short hair of the man standing in contrast to the long hair of the woman. Thus "nature" teaches the truth he had enforced in verses 4-5).

- The apostolic authority is stated in this verse. The matter of inspired men and women and their being unveiled and veiled was not to be a matter of contention among brethren and in churches. Paul had stated what must be done -- and they were to do it. This was to be done by all prophets and all prophetesses in all the churches. There was to be no such custom or practice as a prophet "praying or prophesying" veiled, or a prophetess "praying or prophesying" unveiled. A uniform practice was thus established in the early congregations by the apostolic orders in 1 Corinthians 11:4-6.

Verses seventeen to thirty-four

- Paul now addresses abuses surrounding the Lord's supper. There were apparently two problems in Corinth: (1) Perversions of this religious memorial into a common meal and (2) Divisions in the local assembly. Paul could not praise the Corinthians because when they came together, the act of assembling was harmful rather than helpful. The congregational assembly is designed to edify the members.
- The term "church" in vs. 18 refers to the assembly and not to the physical building. The reports of divisions were continually reaching Paul, but he would not believe that things were actually as bad as they were reported to be. However, where there is smoke there is fire. The reports were probably exaggerated.
- The idea in vs. 19 is not that factions are inseparable from the

Christian religion, or that they are physically impossible, but they should be expected given the corrupt nature of man. The context of the passage indicates that the divisions were non-doctrinal in nature. They were class divisions between the rich and the poor. God, in his providential government of the world, can use the sins of man to accomplish His purposes. He can use the sins of man that tend to divide the church to separate the wicked and the righteous even while they are on this earth. It is assumed by Paul that those who make divisions could not be regarded as friendly to order and truth; or that their course could not be approved by God.

- The problem which had developed was that the Lord's supper had become associated with a common meal. The Greek worship which commonly had a feast together was brought over into the Lord's church. Paul makes it very plain that the Lord's supper was a congregational observance and not a private act of worship. One of the main purposes of the early church assembly was to observe the Lord's supper. Because of the internal divisions in the church at Corinth and because the Lord's supper had become so closely associated with a common meal that it, too, was viewed as a means of satisfying one's appetite, the Corinthians could not possibly observe the Lord's supper in a proper way under these circumstances.
- The Corinthians were apparently dividing into social classes in the eating of a common meal. Instead of the meal being a pitch-in dinner where every person shared all of the food brought by the group, each family ate his own food. In this case, the rich had an abundance to eat and the poor did not have enough to satisfy their hunger. The Corinthians were actually becoming drunk at the observance of the supper. This made the proper observance impossible.
- The public assembly was not designed as an occasion to satisfy one's hunger; it was an occasion to offer worship to God. The Corinthians had distorted the divine nature of the church. Paul, by use of this rhetorical question, commanded the Corinthians to eat at home. One can show disrespect for the church by perverting its assembly for worship into an assembly for recreation or by desecrating the Lord's supper into a common meal. The rich also shamed the poor in their conduct at this common meal. There was nothing praiseworthy in their actions. He was greatly disappointed with them.
- Paul now turns to present the proper method for observing the Lord's supper. He was delivering to them precisely what he had received from the Lord. Jesus lovingly instituted this memorial of

Himself in the very night that wicked men were plotting His death. This solemn occasion is contrasted with the frivolity with which the Corinthians partook of the meal that they mistakenly called the Lord's supper. What they called the Lord's supper did not remotely resemble what Jesus instituted.

- Christians are to follow the pattern laid down by the Lord. They are to bless the bread, break it, and all share in eating it. The phrase "which is for you" emphasizes the atoning sacrifice of Jesus' death. Jesus gave His body on Calvary's cross so that we might live (Isaiah 53:5-6). The Lord's supper is a divinely ordained memorial of the work of Jesus Christ in the same sense as the Passover feast was a divinely ordained memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.
- After their supper, Jesus gave the disciples the fruit of the vine. The cup is a memorial of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The word "testament" is a covenant or a contract between two parties who are not on equal terms. Christ's blood was shed to establish the new covenant. The Lord's supper was regularly observed. The congregation assembled on the first day of every week to break bread (Acts 20:7). It is apparent from 16:1-2 that Corinth had the same type of assembly.
- The Lord's supper is a proclamation of the church's belief in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The supper is to last for a specified period of time -- from the time when Jesus instituted it until His second coming. Hence, the Lord's supper testifies to the church's belief in Jesus' present reign in heaven and His future second coming, as well as in His atoning death.
- An "unworthy" manner means a careless manner. Today, one can be guilty of partaking of the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner when he fails to give it the respect which it deserves -- when he fails to partake of the Supper in the way in which its nature and design demand that it be partaken. The one who partakes the Lord's supper unworthily has sinned against, not mere unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, but against the body and blood of Jesus Christ.
- We are to examine ourselves to see if we are in the right frame of mind to partake of the Lord's supper, and if we are not, we should make whatever alterations are necessary to get in the proper frame of mind. Every person is to conduct their own self-examination; no one is to examine his brother and exclude him from the supper.
- Whoever eats without conducting this self-examination is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of Christ. Discerning means to "distinguish" or "judge correctly." When someone partakes of the

supper and does not view it as the proper memorial to the Lord, that person has brought the condemnation of God upon himself.

- In vs. 30, the weakness and sickness which are experienced is spiritual weakness and sickness. Whenever people partake of the Lord's supper unworthily, they are always spiritually ill or dead. Because of the sinful way the Corinthians were partaking of the Lord's supper, many were spiritually sick if not spiritually dead.
- If the Corinthians would habitually examine themselves, then they would not be receiving God's condemnation. It is simply not true that we will escape physical illness and death by properly examining ourselves. However, it is true that we will escape God's condemnation with reference to the Lord's supper if we ourselves properly discern the Lord's body and partake with the respect due to a feast with its nature and design.
- The very purpose of God's chastisement was to prevent being condemned with the world. The believer ought to constantly judge himself. If he fails in this task, God reminds him by giving him some chastisement. If he does not profit by this, there is nothing left but to suffer with the world in the final judgment.
- Paul tells the congregation to wait on one another in partaking of the Lord's supper so that the entire church may eat of it as a body.
- Vs. 34 confirms that the church was not intended to become a social, recreational organization to conduct fellowship dinners. If the early church came together for a common meal, it was under the condemnation of God. No one knows what other disorders might have existed in connection with the Lord's supper. However, Paul chose not to deal with them in a letter but to wait until he came to them to correct those disorders.