

The Context Bible

Life Group Lesson 35

August 25-31, 2014

Acts 18:1 – 19:20
1 Corinthians 2:16-6:11

Introduction to the Context Bible

Have you ever wished the Bible was easier to read through like an ordinary book – cover to cover? Because the Bible is a collection of 66 books, reading it like an ordinary book is quite difficult. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that the later writers of the New Testament were often quoting or referencing passages in the Old Testament. In fact, much of the New Testament makes better sense only if one also considers the Old Testament passages that place the text into its scriptural context.

You are reading a running commentary to The Context Bible. This arrangement of Scripture seeks to overcome some of these difficulties. Using a core reading of John's gospel, the book of Acts, and the Revelation of John, the Context Bible arranges all the rest of Scripture into a contextual framework that supports the core reading. It is broken out into daily readings so that this program allows one to read the entire Bible in a year, but in a contextual format.

Here is the running commentary for week thirty-five, along with the readings for week thirty-six appended. Join in. It's never too late to read the Bible in context!

Week Thirty-Five Readings

<p>8/25 Paul to Corinthians - The Spirit's Wisdom 1 Cor 2:6-2:16</p> <p>Dan 5-6 Prov 19:8 Prov 20:24, 27</p> <p>8/26 Paul to Corinthians - Divisions at Church 1 Cor 3</p> <p>1 Kgs 12:1-12:15 Prov 21:24 1 Kgs 12:16-13:33 Prov 30:21-30:23</p>	<p>8/27 Paul to Corinthians - Divisions at Church 1 Cor 3</p> <p>1 Kgs 14-15</p> <p>8/28 Paul to Corinthians - Divisions at Church 1 Cor 3</p> <p>2 Chron 10-13 Prov 17:19</p> <p>8/29 Paul to Corinthians - The Apostles' Ministry 1 Cor 4</p> <p>Mrk 10:13-10:16 Phil 2:12-2:18 2 Jn 3 Jn</p>	<p>8/30 Paul to Corinthians Sexual Morality 1 Cor 5</p> <p>Prov 5:15-5:23 Prov 6:20-6:35 Prov 10:17 Prov 11:22 Prov 30:20 Prov 10:13 Prov 23:26-23:28</p> <p>Paul to Corinthians - Lawsuits Among Believers 1 Cor 6:1-6:11</p> <p>Luk 12:57-12:59 Ex 18 Prov 25:8-25:10</p> <p>8/31 Off</p>
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The Acts Narrative

We left Luke's narrative in Acts to consider one of Paul's letters back to the Corinthian church, the letter we call First Corinthians. Last week's readings led up to chapter 2, where the readings for this week continue.

The Spirit's Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6-2:16; Daniel 5-6; Proverbs 19:8; 20:24,27)

Paul's preaching proceeded from a wisdom beyond that which the world considered wise. Paul delivered God's wisdom, one spiritually discerned. We have inserted into these readings two chapters from the narrative portion of Daniel. These chapters both demonstrate the difference in the way the world sees reality and the truth of God's reality. Daniel, inspired by the Spirit of God, saw reality, even as the wise of the world did not.

In that sense, we tie in these two chapters of Daniel, both of which pronounce the same core theme: God judges the proud. Chapter five sets the events in Babylon, where King Belshazzar had a feast for a thousand of his lords, with consumption of a great deal of wine. Not satisfied with the party, Belshazzar ordered that the holy vessels from Solomon's temple were brought out so that the concubines and others would use them for their drinking party. They toasted their idols with the holy vessels, downing drink after drink.

While this sacrilege was taking place, a hand appeared and wrote on the wall, scaring the king quite a bit. The king began summoning his wise men to try to understand the appearance of the mysterious hand and the words written. It was the queen who knew of Daniel, by now an old man, and urged the king to summon him forth:

There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar (Dan 5:11-5:12).

With this, Belshazzar called Daniel offering him great rewards for any help. Daniel refused the rewards and prefaced his help with a short sermon. Daniel explained how Nebuchadnezzar had stumbled out of his arrogance and pride, until he turned and acknowledged God Most High. Then Daniel began to read the writing on the wall:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN (Dan 5:25)

The words themselves were not unknown to the king; it was the interpretation that was missing. Each word was an Aramaic weight, in descending order, the *mina*, the *shekel*, and the *half-shekel*. Daniel then interpreted the words:

This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” (Dan 5:26-5:28).

As interpreted, Daniel used words that sounded very similar to the weights. *Mene* from the word meant “to number” and this was the indication that God had numbered the days. *Tekel* from the word meant “to weigh” and this word was the indication that Belshazzar was “weighed” and did not measure up. *Peres* from the word meaning “to break in two,” and this was Daniel’s explanation that the kingdom was divided and given up.

Belshazzar, in a move some might reckon alcohol-induced, celebrates the interpretation by giving Daniel royal clothes and a gold chain, proclaiming Daniel “the third ruler in the kingdom.” This is one of several places in the story that subtly refer to Belshazzar as acting king/co-regent rather than the singular king of Babylon. Historical records outside Scripture explain that Belshazzar’s birth father Nabonidus had abdicated effective reign on the throne to Belshazzar for at least ten years. Hence Belshazzar could be king in substance, even though not the singular king in title. The best Belshazzar could give Daniel was place number three (See also 5:7, 16). Of course these gifts meant nothing, as Daniel’s interpretation proved true almost immediately:

That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old (Dan 5:30-5:31).

The story in Daniel 5 is very consistent with that given in other historical documents. In the fifth century BC, Herodotus wrote of Babylon’s fall in the night amidst revelry and intoxication.¹

¹ The “father of history,” the Greek historian Herodotus (c.484BC-430), wrote of the conquest that the Babylonians were:

dancing and making merry at a festival...till they learnt the truth but too well. Thus was Babylon then for the first time taken¹

The Greek Xenophon (c.430 BC-c.354) detailed that Cyrus timed his attack for when,

A certain festival had come round in Babylon, during which all Babylon was accustomed to drink and revel all night long.

Before we leave this chapter, we should note several “issues” that occupy pages of scholarly comment. First, some scholars protest the reference in Daniel five to Nebuchadnezzar as “father” to Belshazzar as historical error. This protest is not fair because the idea of “father” in a regal sense is not always biological. On the throne, even if Nabonidus and Belshazzar had no familial relation, the father of the kingship of Babylon was easily identifiable as Nebuchadnezzar. We see a similar situation on the Mesha stele at the Louvre. Israel’s king Jehu is called the son of Omri, even though he was a usurper responsible for killing the regal offspring of Omri’s lineage (2 Kings 9). We must not read Daniel as something it is not. It is not a Babylonian court record making official notations of “king” with accession years, or of lineage trees. It is a private retelling of events.

A second “weed” is the reference to “Darius the Mede” receiving the kingdom from Belshazzar that night. This has kept many scholars up late at night trying to determine if Porphyry of Tyre (AD234-c.305) and other skeptics are right in saying that Daniel must have been written very late by a sloppy or ignorant historian. We can state with a measure of certainty, that there were historical Darius figures, but they were kings of Persia at a much later date. Darius I was 522-486BC, Darius II was 423-404BC, and Darius III was 336/5-331BC. Of course none of these could be Darius the Mede. Furthermore, historical records show that Cyrus was the Mede/Persian conqueror of Babylon, not a man named Darius. (As a practical matter, it was not Darius himself who conquered the city, but an army and general on his behalf). As a name, Darius in Old Persian meant “he possesses.” It is not fair to assume it was a name only of kings, never found in any other context, and could easily be a name of one given possession or taking possession of a city. This point is fully aside from the points other scholars make about possible identities of this “Darius the Mede” that are consistent with the historical context of the 6th century BC.²

Daniel chapter six sets up the sixth and final narrative story of God’s great care for his people and over the world. In this story, we have Darius the king (who Wiseman argues is the same as Cyrus based on his reading of Daniel 8:28, *see* citation at footnote 2) setting up a kingdom here and Daniel has a key position. This incites jealousy among other officials who plan a trap to take Daniel down. At the instigation of the jealous men, the king unwittingly passes a law that will conflict with Daniel’s ability to be an obedient member of the state. The king’s law states that no one was allowed to pray to a god for a thirty-day period without going through the king. Failure to abide by this law would result in being pitched into the den of lions.

Xenophon then detailed how in that night, once the people discovered the king slain, they surrendered and Cyrus took possession. (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VII, v.15 (Transl’d by Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard 1914).

² See, e.g., Wiseman, D. J., *et al.*, *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, (London 1965), at 9ff.

Even though Daniel knew the law was in place, he kept to his prayerful habit and three times daily prayed in his house on his knees facing Jerusalem. The jealous men caught Daniel in his practice and ratted Daniel out to the king. The king was obligated to follow his legal decree and begrudgingly sent Daniel into the den, hoping that God might miraculously rescue Daniel:

May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you! (Dan 6:16).

The king spent a sleepless night in fasting, while Daniel spent the night in the home of lions, but also in the hands of God. At daybreak, the king raced to check on Daniel and found him alive and well. Daniel explained that God had sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions, and Daniel was removed from the pit. The men that had set Daniel up were then tossed into the pit and the lions had their fill! Darius was moved to decree that “the God of Daniel” was worthy of worship as “the living God” who “delivers and rescues” and “who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions” (Dan 6:26-27).

Paired with these chapters are proverbs that speak of the importance of getting wisdom and living by it.

Divisions at Church (1 Corinthians 3; 1 Kings 12-15; 2 Chronicles 10-13; Proverbs 17:19; 21:24; 30:21-30:23)

In 1 Corinthians 3, we read of Paul chiding the Corinthians for their immaturity in spiritual matters. Their petty bickering shows they are not ready for this spiritual meat. Their respective jealousies over relationships with Paul and Apollos are a good case in point. Paul and Apollos are nothing more than God’s instruments to bring the Corinthians along. To use agricultural terms, God used Paul to plant the church, Apollos watered the church, but God is the one who grew the church.

To use construction terms, Paul laid the foundation for the church, while others are building the walls. The foundation Paul laid, of course, is Christ. God is ultimately in charge of not only the foundation, but the building as well. Anyone who builds on the foundation out of their own merit or work, rather than God’s, is simply building out of wood, hay, and kindling that will burn up on judgment day. It is much better to build as God directs which is the same as using gold and silver that will show their metal in the fires of judgment. This is Paul’s reward! He will get to see the fruit of his labor for God endure through eternity. Think of those whose labor will burn rather than endure! What a loss they will suffer.

By the way, the Corinthians as a building are no ordinary building. They are the very temple of God! God’s Spirit indwells them. That is yet another reason to build up and honor the church, not destroy it!

To recap, no one should put himself over someone else as “wise” or “followers of the wise teacher.” Paul and Apollos both serve the Corinthians because they both serve God. The Corinthians in turn serve Christ, who in turn is God’s way to salvation.

Paul knew the history of his own heritage. A civil war and division laid asunder the nation of Israel into two parts, a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. This division occurred immediately after the kingship of Solomon, at one point the wisest of kings. Between Solomon and his son Rehoboam, Israel went from Godly wisdom at its helm, to spiritual immaturity and sin – manifested at its core in a division among God’s people. We have inserted that lesson from 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles here.

After Solomon died (which ends 1 Kings chapter 11), his son Rehoboam took over the kingship. Rehoboam began his reign by going to Shechem for his coronation by “all Israel” (which at that time still meant all tribes). Jeroboam heard the news and returned from Egypt for the service. Before Israel would recognize Rehoboam as king, they had a demand:

Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you (1 Kings 12:4).

The people saw this as a chance to stop the hard “forced labor” of Solomon. Rehoboam responded that he would consider the demand and let them know his answer in three days.

During the intervening time, Rehoboam sought “counsel.”³ First he sought counsel from the “old men,” those who had counseled Solomon before his death. These men recommended that Rehoboam honor the peoples’ request, at least initially:

If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever (1 Kings 12:7).

Rehoboam did not heed the advice of the “old men.” Instead, he took the counsel of the young men with whom he had grown up. Their counsel was the exact opposite:

Thus you shall speak to these people who said to you, “Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,” thus shall you say to them, “My little finger is thicker than my father’s thighs. And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined

³ The root verb used here is *רָעַ* (*y’ts*) meaning consult, advise, or counsel. It is used twice in verse six, twice in verse eight, as well as in verse nine, and in verse thirteen. It is clearly a focus of the story. No other story or context in the Old Testament comes close to this repeated usage except the story of Absalom’s rebellion against David.

you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions” (1 Kings 12:10-12:11).

Needless to say, this harsh answer did not go over well with the people. Led by Jeroboam, the people said, “What portion do we have in David?” They left the presence of Rehoboam and rebelled against his kingship. Rehoboam sent the boss over the forced labor (a taskmaster named Adoram) to the Israelite workers, still not quite getting the dire situation. The Israelites picked up stones and killed the man who had historically held the whip over them.

At this point, Rehoboam finally understood the danger; he got in his chariot, and hurried back to the protection of Jerusalem. The Israelites, except for the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, all pledged loyalty to Jeroboam and made him their king. From that time forward, the twelve tribes never reunited under a single monarch.

Rehoboam did gather an army to go fight the rebellious tribes. Before they marched, however, a man of God named Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and the troops and told them,

Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your relatives the people of Israel. Every man return to his home, for this thing is from me (1 Kings 12:24).

This time, Rehoboam heeded the counsel and the troops returned to their homes. Israel is now split into the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom of ten tribes is henceforth known as “Israel.” The Southern Kingdom which is concentrated around Judah is simply known as Judah.

Meanwhile to the north, Jeroboam found himself king of ten tribes of Israelites, but without possession of the royal palace in the capital of Jerusalem. Jeroboam at first fortified and ruled from Shechem. This was smart strategically. Shechem was situated in a narrow neck of a west-east pass for Israel and was critical for guarding the roads through the hill country of Manasseh and Bethshan.⁴ Subsequently, he fortified a town called Penuel, which guarded the kingdom from hostile attacks from the east and northeast.⁵ These moves were politically and geographically smart. They were moves to protect his fledgling new kingdom. Jeroboam was concerned not only about foreign invasions, but also about the internal security of his people’s devotion. Because the people would continue to go worship the LORD at the festivals in Jerusalem, Jeroboam feared that over time, returning to the temple would turn the peoples’ hearts back to Rehoboam.

⁴ Gray, John, *1 and 2 Kings: A Commentary*, (Westminster 1970), at 314.

⁵ Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F., *Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Hendrickson Reprint 2006), Vol. 3 at 138.

Jeroboam then “took counsel” (*y’ats*⁶) and made two golden calves (1 Kings 12:28). He then proclaimed these calves as representing the “gods” who brought the people up out of Egypt.⁷ One calf he set in Bethel, which, ironically, means “house of God,” the other in Dan. He also made temples on the high places and set up priests who were not from the priestly tribe of Levi. A final touch was his changing the dates for worship festivals and setting a feast at a time “he had devised from his own heart” (1 Kings 12:33).

One day when Jeroboam was standing by one of his idolatrous altars to offer sacrifices, a nameless “man of God”⁸ from Judah came up to the altar, and began to prophesy,

O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: “Behold a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you” (1 Kings 13:2).

The “man of God” then guaranteed the prophecy with a sign, that the altar was going to be torn down and the ashes on it would be poured out. Jeroboam took a hand off the altar and pointed at the prophet and yelled, “Seize him!” That hand immediately withered before the eyes of the king and any looking to see whom the king was pointing out. The altar then fell down and the ashes fell out, fulfilling the prophet’s declared sign.

⁶ This word for counsel or advice reappears here after the last story where it was used repeatedly. It is not a coincidence.

⁷ Scholars debate whether these calves were actually intended to represent God or whether they were meant as pedestals for an unseen God (much like the cherubim on the ark). It is clear that the bull was associated in the pagan culture surrounding (and infiltrating) Israel with the god Baal. (See, Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, (Westminster John Knox 2000), 4th Ed. at 238). Without regard to the full motive of Jeroboam, we are left with his idolatry that was contrary to the teachings and commandments of God. The irony (or stupidity) of this is magnified as we realize that when Jeroboam was first given his regal prophecy, he was told God was tearing the kingdom from Solomon because,

they have forsaken me and worshipped [idols]...and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my rules (1 Kings 11:33).

Scholars also note the many parallels in these stories to those of the Israelites in captivity and in the exodus. Solomon persecutes the people with whips in his building programs much as Pharaoh did in the days of Moses. God delivers the people from bondage, but Jeroboam, like Aaron, then constructs idolatrous calves for worship. Jeroboam even names his sons Nadab and Abijah, reminiscent of Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu (See, Ex 6:23 and 1 Kings 14:1, 20).

⁸ Earlier Scripture identified the prophet who kept Rehoboam from invading Israel as “Shemaiah the man of God” (1 Kings 12:22). There is no indication that this was the same man of God.

The king then sang a different tune. He begged the “man of God” to ask God to restore his hand, which the prophet did. With his hand restored, the king then asked the man to return to his palace for some refreshments. The “man of God” declined the invitation explaining that God had instructed him on his mission to finish and then return home by a different route than used for getting to Bethel, and without stopping to eat or drink.

Word of the events quickly spread throughout Bethel. An old prophet who lived in Bethel found out about the events from his sons. They also told him of the conversation between the “man of God” and the king about God’s instructions that the man return home without eating or drinking.

The old prophet found out the direction the “man of God” went and rode on his donkey to find him. The old prophet found the “man of God” sitting under an oak tree. He confirmed his identity asking,

Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” (1 Kings 13:14).

The man identified himself as “one from God” saying, “I am!” The old prophet then invited the man back to Bethel to eat some bread. The “man of God” repeated his clear instructions from the LORD that he was not to do so. The old prophet then lied to the man of God saying,

I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, “Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water” (1 Kings 13:18).

Foolishly, the “man of God” returned with the old prophet to Bethel and dined in his home. It was then that the old prophet truly prophesied:

Thus says the LORD, “Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD and have not kept the command that the LORD your God commanded you, but have come back and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, ‘Eat no bread and drink no water,’ your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers” (1 Kings 13:21-13:22).

Interestingly, after delivering the prophetic deathblow, the old prophet saddled the donkey for the prophet (no longer called “ the man of God” in the story) who had returned. And the prophet from Judah set out to return home. On the way, he was met by a lion who killed him, but did not eat the body.

The old prophet went and retrieved the body of the prophet from Judah and buried him in the grave planned for the old prophet himself. He then declared to his sons that upon his own death, his sons were to bury him right next to the ex-man of God.

Unfortunately, none of these events changed the idolatrous and disobedient practices of Jeroboam.

The Apostles' Ministry (1 Corinthians 4; Mark 10:13-10:16; Philippians 2:12-2:18; 2 John; 3 John)

In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul describes his efforts to live in a way where God would regard him as a trustworthy servant of Christ. (Paul really does not care how others judge him. His focus is on what God thinks!) Actually, Paul was writing in the first person about how he and Apollos were to be regarded because a lesson needed to be learned here by the Corinthians. They had a tendency to gloat over being “rich” spiritually, if not also economically. It was as if they have totally forgotten the way that Paul had worked in their midst for almost two years. Paul was never out for riches. He gladly suffered hunger, thirst, homelessness, slander, and money problems. Paul was treated like the “scum of the world,” yet rejoiced because he was God’s apostle.

Did the Corinthians not see the irony? They termed themselves “strong” while Paul admitted he was “weak.” They considered themselves worthy of “honor” while Paul was fine being held in disrepute for the sake of the gospel. Paul did not mean to shame the Corinthians, but he did want them to grow up! He found he must treat them a bit like children.

Paul had already sent Timothy to the Corinthians to help iron out some of these issues. Unfortunately, some of the Corinthians gave Timothy quite an arrogant reception. Paul wrote a stern warning to those folks. Paul bluntly informed them he was coming to see them. His visit could be a gentle one or one that was stunning in its power. Paul would then have a chance to see if they just talked arrogantly or if they had some way to back it up!

We have inserted the Mark reading of Jesus encouraging children to come to him (Mark 10:13-10:16). This was never Jesus’ plea for people to behave immaturely. It sets the contrast between the immaturity Paul recoiled over and the gentle trust of a child. Paul’s view is perhaps best illustrated by the Philippians 2:12-2:18 reading.

In Philippians 2, Paul encouraged the Philippians to live in “a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.” Paul pleaded with them to focus on their unity in Jesus, their fellowship in the Holy Spirit, their tenderness and compassion, and being “one in spirit.” They were to do “nothing” – NOTHING – out of “selfish ambition or vain conceit” but do “everything” – EVERYTHING – with humility, considering others better than themselves.

To drive home his point, Paul spoke of Christ in a most profound way. Many scholars reference the poetic nature of Paul’s illustration and consider it an early Christian hymn or poem. Paul wrote that the Philippians should have the same attitude of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:6-2:11).⁹

This passage rises to very special heights of glory as it speaks of Jesus. Jesus truly models humility and service on a supreme level. After such an incredible discourse, how could any reader dare not follow Paul’s exhortation to live in humility?

In 2 and 3 John, we read another writing of the importance of the loving treatment believers are to have for each other. It is not simply a tolerance. It is a genuine caring that flows from obedience to God.

Sexual Morality (1 Corinthians 5; Proverbs 5:15-5:23; 6:20-6:35; 10:13; 10:17; 11:22; 30:20)

There was another issue that needed correction in the Corinthian church. There was one in the church who was living in horrible sexual sin. Paul wanted that person removed from the assembly and delivered over to Satan. Paul knew that if Satan could have his way with the man’s body, perhaps the man’s spirit would come around to God. This sexual sin reinforces the point about the Corinthians wrongly boasting in their spirituality. Just as a little bit of yeast works through an entire batch of bread, so a little sin works into a group of people. The boasting, the acceptance of offensive and flaunted sexual sin, would likewise grow into massive proportions if not handled properly.

Paul echoed an aspect of the practice of the Jewish Passover. It is celebrated with the removal of all leaven from the house. Paul used this metaphor to teach that Jesus was a permanent Passover sacrifice for the Christian. Therefore, believers should clean out our houses from all sin/leaven. The church should not be a place for the display of evil or immorality. It is the kingdom of God and should function that way.

⁹ Scholars have studied and written on this song/poem for decades trying to understand the full depth of Paul’s meaning as well as the nuances of some significant vocabulary he used. We are not going into great depth at this point in the study on this passage. Instead, we anticipate going into a more exhaustive study of the passage at the point in this class where we consider Paul’s teaching on Christ. For now we are recognizing that “Paul is dealing with a question of practical ethics, the marvelous condescension and unselfishness of Christ, and he brings into view the several stages in this process as facts of history.” Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* (Eerdmans 1956) vol. 3 at 435.

There are many proverbs that speak to the importance of sexual morality and purity. We have inserted a number, but a relative few in light of the many that are found there.

Lawsuits Among Believers (1 Corinthians 6:1-6:11; Luke 12:57-12:59; Exodus 18; Proverbs 25:8-25:10)

Because it should function as the kingdom of God, disputes among its members should be resolved internally, not by outsiders. The church should never take its disputes into the public arena or courts. Better to suffer loss than to say that the world's courts must judge the kingdom of God!

When we became Christians, we left the ways of this world. We are no longer immoral, greedy, drunkards, swindlers, etc. These are not the people in the kingdom. We have been cleaned up, declared righteous, and made holy! That is the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

In an earlier letter, the Corinthians had written to Paul that "all things are lawful." But, that does not mean that everything is helpful. It is not a reason to be out of control. We must remember that our bodies serve a purpose in God's kingdom. He will, after all, raise us up bodily. Really our bodies belong to him. This, by the way, is the reason a Christian should never visit a prostitute. It is taking God's temple and joining it to horrendous sin.

Jesus warned of the problems with taking cases to magistrates (Luk 12:57-12:59). The magistrates would take control of the cases and dictate the consequences. In matters of the church, such control is not to be given to pagans.

In Exodus 18, we read of how Moses was trying to resolve all such problems himself in Israel. His father-in-law gave him wise counsel about setting up others to do so, showing the importance of having a peaceful and authoritative way of resolving genuine disputes. Paul just insisted those disputes not be resolved by pagans.

Questions for Discussion

Consider building questions around these passages:

1. Where have you seen God's wisdom seem contrary to the ways the world suggests people live?
2. Are you able to see divisions among others who are believers? If so, what can you do about it?
3. What protections can people build up to help minimize opportunities for sexual immorality?

Week Thirty-Six Readings

<p>9/1 Paul to Corinthians - Instructions for Home 1 Cor 6:12-7:24</p> <p>Mrk 10:1-10:12 Ex 22:19 Heb 13:4 Eph 6:1-6:4 Prov 10:1; 27-28 Prov 12:4 Prov 13:1, 24 Prov 15:5, 20 Prov 17:6, 21, 25 Prov 19:13, 18, 26-27 Prov 20:20 Prov 22:6, 15 Prov 27:11, 13 Prov 29:15, 17 Prov 30:17 Prov 18:22</p>	<p>9/2 Paul to Corinthians - Unmarried and Widows 1 Cor 7:25-7:40</p> <p>- Body as a temple 1 Cor 6:12-6:20</p> <p>1 Kgs 8:1-8:30</p> <p>- Food Offered to Idols 1 Cor 8</p> <p>Col 2:20-2:23</p> <p>- Paul and his Rights 1 Cor 9</p> <p>Rom 14:1-14:12 Isa 45:22-45:23 Rom 14:13-14:23</p> <p>9/3 Paul to Corinthians - Living for God 1 Cor 10:1-11:16</p> <p>Num 11 Prov 4:14-4:17 Prov 11:19-11:21</p>	<p>9/4 Paul to Corinthians - The Lord's Supper 1 Cor 11:17-11:34</p> <p>Luk 22:1-22:23 Prov 24:8-24:10 Gen 14 Prov 22:2</p> <p>- Spiritual Gifts 1 Cor 12</p> <p>Mrk 12:38-12:44 Prov 17:5 Rom 12:3-12:8</p> <p>- Love 1 Cor 13</p> <p>Heb 13:1 Col 3:5-3:25 Prov 23:12-23:14</p>	<p>9/5 Paul to Corinthians - Love 1 Cor 13</p> <p>Eph 4:17-4:32 Prov 25:11-25:13 Prov 22:24-22:25 Pslm 4 Prov 10:12 Prov 15:17-15:18 Prov 17:9, 17</p> <p>- Worship and Maturity 1 Cor 14</p> <p>Heb 5:11-6:12 Prov 19:2</p> <p>- Christ's Resurrection 1 Cor 15:1-15:11</p> <p>Luk 24</p> <p>- Resurrection of the Dead 1 Cor 15:12-15:58</p> <p>Mrk 12:18-12:27 Luk 20:27-20:47</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9/6 Off</p>
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