

Course Outline

- I. Origen (185-253 A.D.)
 - a. Early life: courageous, intelligent, ascetic
 - b. A teacher in Alexandria
 - c. A theologian and exegete of the Scriptures; 232-253 in Caesarea
 - i. A prodigious writer: 800 known titles
 - ii. His hexapla
 - iii. His commentaries on all books of the Bible
 - iv. Apologetical works, e.g., *Against Celsus*
 - v. His theological work, 220-230; e.g., *First Principles*, the main defect, his platonic philosophy predominant
- II. The Alexandrian Interpretation of Scripture: Two Different Schools of Interpretation
 - a. Clement and Origen: the divine origin of philosophy
 - i. Clement
 - 1. Only elemental Christianity found in literal interpretation
 - 2. More depth of meaning in allegorical interpretation
 - ii. Origen:
 - 1. A strong doctrine of inspiration
 - 2. The literal sense associated with Judaizing
 - 3. The same position on allegorizing as Clement
 - 4. The more sense of Scripture: the application of Scripture: the application of Scripture to the soul
 - b. What is the meaning of the “allegorizing sense”?
 - i. “...concerns the secret mysteries of God’s activities toward human beings.”

Creeds in General: The Apostles’ Creed

- I. Creeds in General

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- a. Defined: A declaratory statement stereotyped in form and officially sanctioned by local church authorities.
- b. Creeds not used extensively in the second and third centuries
- c. Baptismal interrogations and answers from early days
- d. Creeds developed to combat heresies and to function as public expressions of the church's belief

II. The Apostles' Creed

The Aftermath of the Letter

- a. I Corinthians 11:2–16:24
- b. Concerning Worship (11:2–14:40)
 - i. Head coverings: Men and women (11:2-16)—see lectures 12-13
 - 1. The next four chapters deal with three problems afflicting the Corinthians at worship. *The issue of head coverings on men and women* (11:2-16) is treated in the section on Paul and gender roles below.
 - ii. Lord's Supper: Use and abuse (11:17-34)
 - 1. A discussion of *the use and abuse of the Lord's Supper* occupies 11:17-34. Here Paul demonstrates the seriousness of the problem by departing from his "Yes, but . . ." approach and offering no praise at all (v. 17).
 - A. The problem (vv. 17-22)
 - I. Verses 17-22 describe the problem—the more well-to-do Christians are bringing more food and drink and overeating and getting drunk at the expense of the poorer Christians in the communal meals that the early church shared (what Jude 12 calls "love feasts").
 - B. The tradition (vv. 23-26)
 - I. Paul reminds them, therefore, of the tradition of Jesus' teaching about this meal (w. 23-26; cf. Luke 22:17-

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- 20)—it is supposed to memorialize Christ's sacrifice and instill a deep concern to share with one another.
- C. The warning (vv. 27-34)
 - I. In vv. 27-34 he thus warns them not to eat or drink in a selfish fashion, lest God judge them, even with sickness or death. "In an unworthy manner" in v. 27 translates the one Greek adverb "unworthily." It does not imply that those who are or feel "unworthy" (an adjective) must refrain—the Lord's table is for sinners. It does mean those who are unwilling to share of their wealth with needy Christians in their midst should not partake. "Without recognizing the body of the Lord" (v. 29) in this context most probably means "not being adequately concerned for the rest of the church."
 - D. Spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)
 - I. Chapters 12:1–14:40 addresses the problem of *right and wrong use of spiritual gifts* in the public assembly.³³ We may subdivide these chapters into at least six major sections:
 - E. Recognition (12:1-3)
 - I. Counterfeits existed then and now in other religious circles, so all must be tested. The foundational test is whether or not those practicing them truly acknowledge Jesus as Lord (v. 3).
 - F. Distribution (12:4-11)
 - I. In short, God wants to create diversity within unity. To do this He gives different people different gifts, even though they all come from the same Triune God (vv. 4-6). Every Christian has at least one (v. 7a). They are to be used for mutual edification (v. 7b). Paul gives samples of some of these gifts (vv. 8-10). Other lists appear in Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:11. There is no evidence that any of the lists or all of them put together were intended to be comprehensive.³⁴

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- G. Importance (12:12-26)
 - I. Like the physical body, the church is made up of mutually interdependent parts. Every one of which is necessary, even if all are not equally prominent. If anything, the more hidden may be the more valuable (vv. 22-24).
- H. Ranking (12:27-31a)
 - I. At first glance, these verses seem to contradict vv. 12-26 by establishing a hierarchy with the more prominent gifts of public speaking and ministry at the top. More likely, Paul is establishing a *chronological* priority of importance: in order to even have a church there must be a missionary or church-planter (the root meaning of “apostle”), one who proclaims God’s word (the function of a “prophet”), and one who teaches the body of Christian doctrine to new disciples. Then, and only then, can all the rest of the gifts come into play.
- I. Love (12:31b–13:13)
 - I. We often forget that chapter 13 is no independent poem or rhapsody in praise of love but falls squarely in the middle of Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts. Verses 1-3 use several of the gifts as examples to make the point that without love they are worthless. Verses 4-7 list positive and negative qualities of love that the Corinthians especially needed to practice or avoid. An excellent summary of the portrait of love painted here is “the unsolicited giving of the very best I have on behalf of another regardless of response.”³⁵ In vv. 8-13, Paul again selects sample gifts to stress their transience over against the permanence of love (and faith and hope—v. 13). In light of 1:7 and 13:12, “the perfect” in v. 10 almost certainly refers to Christ’s return.
- J. Comparing tongues and prophecy (14:1-40)
 - I. Paul now singles out the two that are the most

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controversial in Corinth. The “big idea” of this chapter is to *prefer prophecy to tongues*. Verses 1-25 explain why prophecy (intelligible proclamation of God’s Word, whether prepared or spontaneous³⁶) is superior—it is immediately understandable (vv. 1-19) and it is not as likely as tongues to make the uninitiated think Christians are mad (vv. 20-25) and so function as a sign of judgment against them (v. 22; cf. the context of the Isaiah 28:11-12 quote in v. 21). That does not mean tongues are to be forbidden, however (vv. 18, 39), but that they are to play a minimal public role (v. 19) and that all of the gifts are to be regulated and evaluated (vv. 26-40).³⁷ Paul’s silencing of the women (vv. 33b-38) seems out of place in this context, but we will suggest reasons for it in the discussion of Paul and gender roles below.

- II. Verses 39-40 close Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts with two complementary principles that go a long way toward squelching squabbling on this topic in any age: (1) Rule none of the gifts out as inappropriate for any church (v. 39); (2) but do everything with decorum and order (v. 40), including following the regulations for the use of the gifts which Paul has outlined so that no gift is ever made a criterion of salvation or spiritual maturity or allowed to overshadow all the rest.
- c. Concerning the resurrection (15:1-58)
 - 1. Hellenistic dualism led many to believe merely in the immortality of the soul and not also in the resurrection of the body. In response Paul affirms *the certainty of the resurrection* (vv. 1-34) and then replies to a potential objector by discussing *the nature of the resurrection* (vv. 35-58).
 - i. The fact of Christ’s bodily resurrection (vv. 1-11)
 - 1. He reminds the church in Corinth that the fact of Christ’s bodily resurrection (vv. 1-11) is attested both by extensive Christian

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- witness and tradition, including Scripture (vv. 1-7, perhaps alluding to Psalm 16:10) and by Paul's own personal revelation of the Risen Lord on the Damascus road (vv. 8-11), inasmuch as he was "untimely born" as an apostle—not present with the Twelve earlier to see Jesus before his ascension.
- ii. The implications of this for the general resurrection (vv. 12-34)
 - 1. Christ's resurrection in turn guarantees the resurrection one day of all believers (vv. 12-34). Our very Christian hope relies on this—if Christ was not raised, our faith is futile (vv. 12-19). But in fact, He is the "firstfruits" of the resurrection, even if we have to wait longer for our new bodies than Jesus did (vv. 20-28). Verses 29-34 are the most puzzling part of Paul's argument, especially v. 19 with its reference to baptism for the dead. Second-century evidence points to the persistence of sects in the Greek Christian world that practiced a kind of proxy-baptism (see especially Chrysostom, *Homily on I Corinthians 40:1*), not wholly unlike contemporary Mormons do. But Paul nowhere approves of this practice, much less does he command it. Instead, he seems to be arguing *ad hominem*, just as he does in vv. 30-32. Why do the Corinthians practice this baptism, rightly or wrongly, unless they have hope of a resurrection life? So too why does Paul endure persecution (and he is certainly not commanding *this* practice) if he has no hope for a better life ahead (vv. 30-32)?
 - iii. The nature of Christian resurrection (vv. 35-58)
 - 1. But for those who would ridicule Paul's hope by asking how it is possible to have resurrection bodies in the first place, Paul points to a variety of analogies in creation that illustrate both continuity and discontinuity (vv. 35-49). We now have physical (or natural) bodies; when Christ returns, we will receive spiritual (or supernatural) bodies. What these are like we cannot tell, except via whatever legitimate inferences we might derive from the nature of Christ's resurrection body. But such recreation is necessary, because "flesh and blood" (a Jewish idiom for frail, mortal, fallen humanity) cannot coexist with an infinite, all holy

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God without substantial transformation (vv. 50-58).

- d. Concerning the Collection/Offering for Jerusalem (16:1-4)
 - i. The last item about which the Corinthians wrote that Paul addresses in the body of his letter is a collection he had been organizing for believers in Jerusalem. Paul will have much more to say about this in II Corinthians 8-9 and Romans 15:26-27. From these latter verses we learn of two primary motivations for the offering: to alleviate the needs of the poor Christians there and to offer a kind of tribute for the “mother church” from which all early Christian communities were ultimately derived. These correspond very roughly to the two major purposes of Christian giving throughout church history: helping the physical and spiritual needs of people and remunerating ecclesiastical authorities. Here Paul establishes two principles—setting aside a sum of money weekly and giving in proportion to one’s means (v. 2).

III. Conclusion: Travel Plans and Final Greetings (16:5-24)

- a. Paul ends this letter by explaining his eagerness to see the Corinthians, but only when the timing is right (vv. 5-8). He commends three of their members for having recently visited them (vv. 15-18) and gives additional closing instructions and greetings (vv. 9-14, 19-24).

IV. Aftermath

- a. Paul’s Follow-Up Visit
- b. Paul’s Follow-Up Letter

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