

## Chapter 5: The Temple of God

### *1 Corinthians 3:1–17*

Paul has just finished a long argument against reliance upon human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:17–2:16). Through this argument, Paul has demonstrated that human wisdom cannot reason up to God’s wisdom, nor can eloquent speech capture the depths of God’s wisdom. Instead, we human beings must depend entirely upon God to reveal his wisdom in his way. Through Christ and him crucified, God has finally accomplished the plan of his wisdom hidden in a mystery from before the ages (1 Cor. 2:7). God reveals this wisdom not through wisdom of word (1 Cor. 1:17), but through plain, simple, weak preaching (1 Cor. 2:3–4). This message falls on spiritually deaf ears, however, unless the Holy Spirit reveals the truthfulness, goodness, and beauty of Christ and him crucified by a demonstration of power through the effectual call (1 Cor. 1:24, 26; 2:4–5, 10–12). The Holy Spirit accomplishes his work by renewing a spiritual sense of discernment that transforms “natural people” (*psychikoi*) into “spiritual people” (*pneumatikoi*) who can discern the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14–15).<sup>1</sup> This extended argument stands on its own as a profound explanation of how people with blind eyes, deaf ears, and dull hearts come to believe in Christ and him crucified.

If this is true, what impact does this principle teach us about the Church? How does God give growth to his Church? How have the Corinthians’ obsession with human wisdom compromised this growth? How do ministers influence this work within the Church? What is the larger purpose that God is seeking to accomplish in and through his Church? Why is this work so important? In 1 Corinthians 3:1–17, Paul enters into one of his most complex—and most important—discussions on the nature and purpose of the Church. Here, we see that, in the Church, *God is finishing Christ’s finished work through his people.*

### **Fleshy and Fleshly Infants in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1–4)**

At this point in Paul’s letter, we must remember why Paul began writing against purely human wisdom in the first place. Specifically, Paul wrote this extended argument to address the underlying issue behind the significant divisions within the Church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:10–16).<sup>2</sup> Now, at 1 Corinthians 3:1, Paul returns to apply all that he has written about God’s power and wisdom to this divided church. Paul has a harsh critique for the Corinthians; however, he softens his critique by addressing them as “brothers” as he did when he first began to confront this issue (1 Cor. 1:10; 3:1).<sup>3</sup> Then, Paul delivers his blow by saying that he could not speak to them as “spiritual people” (*pneumatikoi*), but only as “fleshy” people (*sarkinoi*), as “infants” in Christ. Importantly, Paul does not say that they were “natural people” (*psychikoi*), since natural people do not have saving faith in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit at all.<sup>4</sup> These Corinthians are indeed spiritual people in the sense that they are believers; however, Paul cannot address them *as* spiritual people as he should be able to do. In other words, Paul is both distinguishing them from all natural people in the

world, and yet he is also distinguishing them from mature Christians.<sup>5</sup> They could not be considered *infants* unless they were begotten by the Holy Spirit of God, and they could not be *in Christ* unless the Holy Spirit had revealed Christ to them by faith.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the Corinthians are not acting *as* spiritual people or *as* mature Christians (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6). They are merely infants in the faith, and, like other infants in the faith, they are *fleshy*—that is, they still have too much of the flesh, and not enough of the Spirit in them.<sup>7</sup> Before infants can crawl or walk, they can become very *fleshy* with what we call baby fat. Once those infants become toddlers, they run, crawl, climb, and explore with seemingly limitless energy that burns off that baby fat quickly. Thus, new parents don't worry about fleshy babies. They know that as the child continues to grow and develop, that child will quickly shed the excess baby fat. The same principle is true spiritually: spiritual parents who help infants in the faith come to faith in Christ don't worry that those new believers still engage in many carnal, fleshy, worldly actions. It takes time for a new Christian to grow and develop. Once that growth and development begins, however, the flesh burns off quickly by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, here, Paul describes himself as a nursing, spiritual mother of these Corinthian Christians who fed them milk when they first came to faith in Christ (1 Cor. 3:2; cf. 1 Thess. 1:7).<sup>8</sup> All of this was normal, natural, and expected, just as no parent expects to feed their infants solid food right from the beginning. What Paul did not expect, however, is that even now the Corinthians are not ready for solid food, for they are still *fleshy* (*sarkikoi*; 1 Cor. 3:2b–3). In v. 3, Paul uses a slightly different word. Earlier, he said that he had to address the Corinthians as *fleshy* (*sarkinoi*; 1 Cor. 3:1) infants, but now he says that they remain *fleshy* (*sarkikoi*; 1 Cor. 3:3). Grammatically, there is a sudden change from completed actions (aorist and perfect aspect verbs) to a sudden present aspect: “even now you are not yet ready” (1 Cor. 3:2b).<sup>9</sup> Leon Morris carefully explains the difference between these two words that share all but one letter in common:

Paul gets to the root of the matter with his accusation that they are *still worldly*. He has changed his word for worldly from *sarkinos* (v. 1) to *sarkikos*. The *-inos* termination means ‘made of ...’; thus tablets ‘made of stone’, *lithinos*, are contrasted with those ‘made of flesh’, *sarkinos* (2 Cor. 3:3). The *-ikos* ending rather means ‘characterized by ...’; we see it in *psychikos* of the ‘natural’ man and *pneumatikos* of the ‘spiritual’ man (2:14–15). The difference between *sarkinos* and *sarkikos* is like that between ‘fleshy’ and ‘fleshly’....<sup>10</sup>

Lenski puts it this way: “The difference between the two terms is: ‘fleshy,’ and you cannot help it; ‘fleshly,’ and you can but do not help it. ‘Fleshy,’ you carry a bad load but will soon be rid of most of it; ‘fleshly,’ you follow a bad norm and refuse to get rid of it.”<sup>11</sup> These are not chubby infants who have not yet learned to walk in order to begin burning off their baby fat; these are Christians who remain in willful, ongoing, rebellious, fleshy immaturity. Although they have come to some kind of genuine faith, their ongoing divisions demonstrate that they have not grown in their faith by the power of the Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

### Milk vs. Solid Food

What, though, does Paul mean by the difference between milk and solid food? Certainly, Paul does not mean that he preaches two different kinds of doctrines, one to infants, and another to the

mature. Paul can say both that the Corinthians are “mature” in the sense that they are spiritual (1 Cor. 2:6, 13–14), but that he could not address them as spiritual people, since they are acting like infants (1 Cor. 3:1). Nevertheless, whether to mature believers or infants, Paul only had one message: Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). As John Calvin points out, “For Christ is at once *milk to babes*, and *strong meat to those that are of full age*, (Hebrews 5:13, 14,) the same truth of the gospel is administered to both, but so as to suit their capacity.”<sup>13</sup> Paul never held back the more difficult doctrines as though they were only fit for more mature believers.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, preachers have no authority to do so, being only heralds commissioned to proclaim the whole counsel of God. Whatever theologians may learn must also be catechized to our children.<sup>15</sup> The difference between milk and solid food is not a difference of substance, but a difference of depth. The children’s catechism and the adults’ catechism must clearly teach the same doctrines of Christ, but to different degrees of fullness.

### Walking in Fleshly, Human Ways

Paul names the issues that have stunted the spiritual growth of these Corinthians: jealousy and strife (1 Cor. 3:3). The word for *jealousy* (*zēlos*) is where we get our word for “zeal,” and it appears once to describe Christ’s righteous zeal when he cleansed the temple (John 2:17). That scene, where Christ made a whip of cords to drive out money-changers and venders selling livestock, perhaps gives us some idea of the intensity of this emotion (John 2:17). Thus, when the word appears positively, expresses great possessiveness for good things (2 Cor. 7:7, 11; 9:2; 11:2). Most of the time, however, people experience this jealousy/zeal for sinful, fleshly things (2 Cor. 12:20). In a similar passage, James says that this kind of jealousy does not arise from God’s wisdom, but from earthly, unspiritual, and demonic wisdom (Jas. 3:14–16). The word for *strife* appeared earlier in this letter (ESV: “quarreling”; 1 Cor. 1:11), and it appears alongside the word for jealousy/zeal in lists of fleshly works of darkness in two other passages (Gal. 5:20; Rom. 13:12–14).<sup>16</sup> Together, these ideas convey the sense that the Corinthians are possessive about their various factions in the church, and that they are quarreling against the other factions.

Pointing to those two issues, he asks, “Are you not fleshly (*sarkikoi*) and walking according to human [ways]?” (1 Cor. 3:3; my translation). The idea of “walking” has to do with behavior and conduct. Rather than conducting their behavior by the Holy Spirit’s influence, they are conducting themselves as natural humans, devoid of the Spirit, do.” Then, Paul reminds them that they have factionalized into followers of various teachers, including Paul and Apollos (1 Cor. 3:4a; cf. 1 Cor. 1:12). Pointing out these jealous, quarreling factions, Paul asks, “Are you not humans?” (1 Cor. 4:4b; my translation). The implication is that they are acting like humans—that is, like humans and “nothing more.”<sup>18</sup> The ESV captures this well by the word “merely.” Thomas Schreiner writes, “The Corinthians believed their partisanship reflected their spiritual perception, but Paul says that it points to their spiritual poverty; they are actually living on a human level instead of relying on the Holy Spirit.”<sup>19</sup>

### God’s Ministers and God’s Ministry (1 Cor. 3:5–9a)

Paul cuts through this partisanship by reframing the importance of individual leaders. If the Corinthians were dividing according to their preferred teachers, they apparently believed that

following the correct teacher was the most critical element of their discipleship. Paul, however, has already asked, “Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor. 1:13). The teacher is not of ultimate importance in comparison with Christ crucified. Paul uses an extended metaphor from the agricultural world to convey his point.

### Instruments, Not Agents

Paul attacks an overly high view of the Christian ministry by asking *what*—not *who*—Apollos and Paul are (1 Cor. 3:5).<sup>20</sup> These individuals are not the agents who bring about salvation by the skill of their teaching or the profundity of their own wisdom. Furthermore, they also do not acquire disciples for themselves.<sup>21</sup> Rather, they are merely *servants*. The word translated as *servants* is the word *diakanoi*, the word from which we get our word “deacon.” Paul is not talking about the office of deacon here, but is using a broader sense of the term to refer to himself and Apollos as ministers who are nothing more than table-waiters, attendants, or servants to the church on God’s behalf.<sup>22</sup> Thus, they are not the agents who actually accomplish salvation, but merely the instruments whom God uses to accomplish his salvation.<sup>23</sup> The work happens entirely according to the Lord’s assignment, with the servants merely carrying out the assigned work. The *assignment*, then, includes both the tasks of the workers as well as the results of the work, the faith of the Corinthians.<sup>24</sup>

### Instruments Through Whom God Gave the Growth

Still, if the Corinthians fell into the temptation of valuing their ministers too much, we should avoid the opposite temptation of devaluing ministers altogether. In 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul explains that God assigned unique work to him and to Apollos: Paul planted and Apollos watered. That is, these two ministered engaged in different kinds of service: Paul first scattered the seed of the word of God among the Corinthians, while Apollos came afterward to nourish the word of God by ongoing teaching.<sup>25</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that the verb for *watered* is the same verb Paul used earlier when he described feeding the Corinthians with milk (1 Cor. 3:2), since in both cases the verb means “give to drink.” This does not mean that Paul is continuing to compare milk to solid food, since Paul’s metaphor has changed. He uses the same verb in both contexts the word the fundamental characteristic of true Christian ministry is to dispense God’s word through teaching and preaching.

Once again in 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul acknowledges God as the agent who makes the work of ministry effective by giving the growth. Nevertheless, Paul’s metaphor demonstrates that God chooses to work *through* ministers, making their work indispensable in the process of giving growth.<sup>26</sup> John Calvin’s comments on this point are worth quoting at length:

Observe, however, in this passage, how necessary the preaching of the word is, and how necessary the continuance of it. It were, undoubtedly, as easy a thing for God to bless the earth without diligence on the part of men, so as to make it bring forth fruit of its own accord, as to draw out, or rather press out its increase, at the expense of much assiduity on the part of men, and much sweat and sorrow; but as the Lord *hath so ordained* (1 Corinthians 9:14) that man should labor, and that the earth, on its part, yield a return to his culture, let us take care to act accordingly. In like manner, it were perfectly in the power of God, without the aid of men, if it so pleased him, to produce faith in persons while asleep; but he has appointed it otherwise, so that faith is produced *by hearing*. (Romans 10:17.) That man, then,

who, in the neglect of this means, expects to attain faith, acts just as if the husbandman, throwing aside the plough, taking no care to sow; and leaving off all the labor of husbandry, were to open his mouth, expecting food to drop into it from heaven.<sup>27</sup>

Christian ministers must never take credit for growth in the church, but must boast only in what the Lord is doing in their midst (1 Cor. 1:31). They cannot boast before the Lord (1 Cor. 1:29), since it is impossible that a “mere instrument could forgive sin or impart grace.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, the ministers are nothing, while the God who gives the growth is everything (1 Cor. 3:7).<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, however, Christian ministers must also resist the temptation to passivity, waiting for God to give the growth without diligently planting and watering. Indeed, the way Paul has written this expresses the confidence that ministers may have as they approach their work. Paul describes the work of the planter and the waterer as completed actions (aorist aspect), while the verb for God’s giving the growth conveys an ongoing sense of growth-giving (imperfect aspect). This is hard to convey in English, but in Greek the tenses of these verbs suggest the finite, limited work of the laborers compared to the ongoing, all-encompassing work of the growth-giving God throughout the work of the planters and waterers.<sup>30</sup> Although our labor cannot bring about growth on its own, we labor with three implicit promises.

### God’s Promises to His Laborers

First, we labor in faith that our work does not need to stand on its own, but that God is working through a variety of servants who act as “one” (1 Cor. 3:8). That is, all God’s servants are “fellow workers” laboring together (1 Cor. 3:9).<sup>31</sup> Paul frequently uses the term “fellow workers” to describe those who labor alongside him in ministering the gospel (1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Cor. 1:24; 8:23; Phil. 2:25; 4:3; Col. 4:11; Phlm. 1:1, 24), and Paul and Apollos are “*God’s* fellow workers” because they labor with *each other* (not *with God*) according to God’s purposes.<sup>32</sup> It is foolish for the Corinthians to divide the ministers from each other, since the ministers are working together on *God’s* single, grand project.<sup>33</sup>

Second, we labor under the implicit promise that God will indeed give the growth—albeit in his time, in his way, according to his purposes.<sup>34</sup> Paul makes this implicit promise explicit at the end of his letter: “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.*” (1 Cor. 15:58). Our *labor* (cf. 1 Cor. 3:8) is not wasted, or done to no purpose. From another perspective, however, this is promise that our work will not be for nothing, but that God is using our labor to accomplish the great plan that he predestined before the ages for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7). Paul does not insist that God alone gives the growth to *discourage* us from hard, steady labor. Rather, Paul takes this theological principle as a promise: Although you are incapable of bringing any growth in yourself, take heart! In the Lord, your labor is not in vain. Where you cannot give the growth, God does—and he will!

Third, we labor in the hope of receiving a reward for our labor (1 Cor. 3:8). God does not promise to reward us on the basis of the *fruitfulness* of our work, for the growth belongs in the hands of God alone. Instead, God promises to reward us on the basis of the *faithfulness* of our work. Charles Hodge explains what Paul says about rewards this way:

The rule of reward is not the talents or gifts, nor the success of the ministers, but their

labours. This brings the humblest on a level with the most exalted; the least successful with the most highly favoured. The faithful, laborious minister or missionary who labours in obscurity and without apparent fruit, will meet a reward far beyond that of those who, with less self-denial and effort, are made the instruments of great results. Corinth was the field of labour of a multitude of teachers, some faithful, and some unfaithful; some laborious, and others indolent and self-indulgent. Each would have to answer for himself, and would receive a reward proportioned to his fidelity and self-denial.<sup>35</sup>

A similar principle appears in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30). There, the Master entrusts his servants with different amounts of talents. Thus, even though the servant entrusted with two talents worked just as faithfully as the servant entrusted with five talents, the two-talent servant could only bring two more talents in comparison with the five more talents brought by the five-talent servant. The Master knew how much he had entrusted to each of his servants, and he knew how faithful each had been with what he had entrusted to them. Therefore, the Master rewarded both servants equally on the basis of their *faithfulness*, rather than the unequal reward he might have given them if he had judged them on their *fruitfulness* (Matt. 25:20–23). Even so, this parable also demonstrates that the master rewarded his servants far more lavishly than even their faithfulness deserved.<sup>36</sup> Your labor is not in vain!

## The Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:9b–17)

Just as Paul and Apollos belong to God as co-workers, so the Corinthian Church also belongs to God.<sup>37</sup> For the Church, though, Paul uses two metaphors: God's field and God's building (1 Cor. 3:9b). The first image of the Church as God's field makes much sense in the context, since it carries forward Paul's metaphor of growth in the church as an agricultural work. More than in the immediate context, the Old Testament Scriptures often refer to God's people as his vineyard or as his vine (e.g., Ps. 80:8–16; Isa. 5:1–7; 27:2–6; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15:2–6; 17:5–10; 19:10–14).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Jesus declared himself to be the true vine, designating his people as the branches who have life and bear fruit through their union with him (John 15:1–11). The point of the metaphor is clear: the Church is the field in which God gives spiritual growth to his people through their union with Christ.

Suddenly, though, Paul shifts his imagery from the church as God's field to God's building. In the following verses, Paul will clarify the specific building he has in mind: the temple. Once again, the imagery of the Church as God's temple is common elsewhere in the Bible (Eph. 2:20–22; 1 Pet. 2:5).<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the Gospels describe Jesus as God who *tabernacles* among us (John 1:1, 14) and as the true temple (John 2:21). Again, the larger point of the metaphor is clear: the Church is the dwelling place of God, in whom God dwells by his Holy Spirit. We grow as a vine in a field, and we are built up as a dwelling place for God. Both of these images depend on our union with Christ, the true vine and the true temple, and both tell us something significant about the work of the Holy Spirit who gives growth to our faith and who dwells among us.

Why, though, does Paul mix his metaphors? Why the abrupt shift from a field to a temple? In a general way, God uses the imagery of planting and building to describe how he raises up *nations* (Jer. 1:10; 18:9; 24:6).<sup>40</sup> Still, this passage does not seem to have nation-building in view. Instead, G. K.

Beale offers the best answer in his book, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*. Early in the book, Beale observes that the garden of Eden is a temple where God dwells with his people, and then he observes the extensive garden imagery built into the tabernacle and the temple (e.g., Ex. 25:31–40).<sup>41</sup> In this light, Beale draws the connection between the Church as God's garden *and* as God's temple:

What does a 'cultivated field' have to do with a 'building'? Upon closer analysis, as we will see, Paul is not speaking of a generic 'building' but of the temple as a 'building'. If so, the shift from the agricultural metaphor of a 'cultivated field' or 'vineyard' to a temple may be viewed to be more natural in the light of our prior study in the Old Testament and Gospels. There we discovered that the Garden of Eden, Israel's garden-like promised land, and Israel's future restoration in a garden-like land were either equated or associated with a temple.<sup>42</sup>

The shift is subtle, and yet completely understandable within the larger context of the imagery of the Scriptures. The Church is where God dwells in the midst of his people, the renewed garden of Eden and the restored temple.

### Wise Master Builder

From this point onward, Paul drops the agricultural metaphor to focus exclusively on the metaphor of the church as God's building—that is, as God's temple. Paul begins by acknowledging the grace of God given to him for his own role in this spiritual construction project. While Paul could be speaking about *grace* in a general way (cf. 1 Cor. 1:4), he is more likely referring “to his apostolic task of founding churches. This is what makes him an apostle as far as the Corinthian church in particular is concerned, a point to which he feels compelled to return regularly (see 4:15–17; 9:1–2; 2 Cor. 3:1–3; 10:12–16; cf. Rom. 15:20).”<sup>43</sup> In part this refers to God's grace in calling Paul at all, but even more to God's grace as the enabling power that energizes Paul's work (cf. 1 Cor. 15:10).<sup>44</sup>

As the apostle who *planted* the church, Paul is also the one who *laid the church's foundation*. That is, Paul is the one who began the work, and then others carry that work forward—this would include Apollos (who *watered*), but also any other ministers who labor on top of the foundation Paul has laid.<sup>45</sup> Paul describes himself as a *wise* (ESV: “skilled”) master builder (Greek: *architektōn*). By using the word *wise*, Paul is referring back to his previous contrasts between worldly wisdom and the wisdom of God revealed through Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 1:17–2:16). Paul is not boasting (1 Cor. 1:29), but acknowledging that he has been the instrument whom the Holy Spirit has used to reveal the mystery of Christ to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:10).<sup>46</sup>

### Building on the Foundation

The reason that Paul emphasizes his completed work of laying the foundation is twofold. First, Paul wants to remind the Corinthians that they must not depart from the doctrine of Christ he preached. Christ and him crucified is the foundation of the Church, and they can no more depart from that doctrine than a construction worker can build apart from the foundation.<sup>47</sup> Second, Paul significantly describes his own work as completed, but the work of “someone else” (not a specific person, but a general reference to all other workers) as ongoing.<sup>48</sup> It is as though he is describing different construction specialists who are each contributing their own work. Paul has laid the

foundation, and now other ministers come in to do various parts of the work.<sup>49</sup> Just as Paul and Apollos did different work and yet were “one” (1 Cor. 1:8), so also the various builders are all working on the same construction project—an ongoing project that continues to build on the one foundation Paul has built.

Thus, Paul insists that *each one* who builds must be careful in his work. In a strict sense, Paul is speaking primarily to the ministers involved in the labor of building the church.<sup>50</sup> David Garland points out, though, that, while Paul’s use of “building up” has a primary reference to ministers, the language extends beyond ministers to the whole body of Christ:

“To build upon” refers to preaching and instruction (2 Cor. 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; cf. Eph. 2:19–22), but that task need not be limited to “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers,” since they are given “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11–12; cf. 4:16, 29). Each member has an assignment in this building project..., which is confirmed by Paul’s concluding exhortation in 15:58 that they “always excel in the work of the Lord.”<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, *each one* must be careful for his or her own individual role in building up the body of Christ.<sup>52</sup> The primary role of leaders is to equip each member of the body to build carefully on the foundation Paul has laid.

### Christ, the Firm Foundation

In v. 11, Paul focuses more specifically on the foundation than our English translations suggest. As R. C. H. Lenski points out, Paul brings the word “foundation” to the front of the sentence, so that the meaning is not, “Other foundation—no one can lay,” but “As regards *foundation*, another no one can lay.”<sup>53</sup> In other words, the foundation is in a class by itself, so that there are no other options for foundations from which we might choose. The foundation Paul is referring to, of course, is Jesus Christ—not that Paul laid Christ as the foundation by his own authority, but according to the grace given to him as an apostle called by the will of God.<sup>54</sup> John Calvin writes this about what it means to depend on Christ alone as our foundation:

Let us observe, then, in what way the Church is rightly built upon Christ. It is when he alone is set forth for righteousness, redemption, sanctification, wisdom, satisfaction and cleansing; in short, for life and glory; or if you would have it stated more briefly, when he is proclaimed in such a manner that his office and influence are understood in accordance with what we found stated in the close of the first chapter. (1 Corinthians 1:30.) If, on the other hand, Christ is only in some degree acknowledged, and is called a Redeemer only in name, while in the meantime recourse is had to some other quarter for righteousness, sanctification and salvation, he is driven off from the *foundation*, and spurious stones are substituted in his room....For as Christ is the *foundation* of the Church, because he is the only source of salvation and eternal life — because in him we come to know God the Father — because in him we have the source of every blessing; if he is not acknowledged as such he is no longer regarded as the *foundation*.<sup>55</sup>



The entirety of the Church must be built upon Christ alone as our foundation. The entirety of Christian ministry in the church must further this work of teaching, preaching, and proclaiming the full glory and grace of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The fact that fleshly jealousy and striving exist in the church, however, suggest that Paul has doubts about whether the builders in the church are continuing to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ.<sup>56</sup>

### Temple-Building Materials

What does it mean to “take care” how we build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 3:10)? Paul describes the quality of our work in terms of the materials that each person uses as they build on the temple, whether gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw (1 Cor. 3:12). Many people have offered various explanations as to what these materials might represent. Some, for example, make a significant point of the fact that these materials have various value, listed out here from the costliest to the cheapest.<sup>57</sup> Others rightly note that these some of these materials were used to build the old covenant temples (cf. Ex. 28:17–20; 1 Kgs. 5:17; 6:20–21; 1 Chron. 22:14, 16; 29:2; 2 Chron. 3:6; Isa. 54:11–12; Ezek. 28:13; Hag. 2:8).<sup>58</sup> Along these lines, we should also remember that the New Jerusalem is described as being composed of gold and many precious stones (Rev. 21:18–21).<sup>59</sup> Clearly, Paul is talking about the rightful construction of the temple. In this context, we can see that part of Paul’s point is that the cheaper materials (at least the hay and the straw) would not be fitting for such a glorious structure—just as false doctrines would not be fitting in the church built on the foundation of Christ and him crucified.<sup>60</sup>

Still, while Paul is clearly using temple-building imagery, we must focus in on the specific point Paul wishes to make here. Paul’s point does not have to do with the respective value of the various materials, but with whether the materials would burn in the fire of the Day of the Lord (1 Cor. 3:13).<sup>61</sup> This also means that the specific question Paul has in mind is not whether these materials should be used in the construction of a temple, since wood was used in the old covenant temple (cf. 1 Chron. 29:2), but wood would burn up in the fire. The ESV translates verse 13 this way: “each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done” (1 Cor. 3:13). By “Day,” Paul is almost certainly referring to the “Day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. 1 Cor. 1:8), which is often referred to simply as the “Day of the Lord” (e.g., Isa. 13:6, 9; Joel 2:11, 11, 31; Amos 5:18; Mal. 4:5; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). There is a significant question of interpretation, however, surrounding what the two instances of the word *it* refer to: “the Day will disclose *it*” and “because *it* will be revealed by fire.” Do these instances of *it* refer to the work, or the Day?

### Testing of the Temple

Understanding the proper referents of each instance of *it* requires us to understand the general use (there are many exceptions!) of active, middle, and passive voice in the Greek language. Generally, the active voice means that the subject *acts in relation to someone or something else* (e.g., “I cooked the stew”). Generally, the passive voice means that the subject is *acted upon* by someone or something (e.g., “The stew *was cooked* by me”). Generally, the middle voice means that the subject *acts in relation to himself, herself, or itself*. (e.g., The stew *cooked [itself]* on the stove”). In the first case of the word “it,” the verb “reveal” is in the active voice. Literally, the text has, “The work of each will be made manifest, for the Day will reveal [it].” In the active voice, Paul communicates that the Day

will disclose *something else*—namely, the *work* of each.

The second case is different, however, since the verb is not in the active voice, but in the middle voice. Here, the text literally has, “...for by fire [it] will disclose [itself]....” So, what the ESV translates as “it” (“for the Day will disclose *it*”) should really be “itself,” since this is a middle voice verb: “for the Day will reveal itself”—that is, the Day will reveal itself *by fire*. Finally, the text has, “... and the work of each of-what-sort [it] is the fire will test it.” Here, Paul states that the fire tests (active voice) the work. Thus, Paul’s point is that the Day of the Lord will reveal the quality of each person’s work, since that Day will manifest itself by a fire that will put each person’s work to the test.<sup>62</sup>

Paul, then, is talking not about the judgment of unbelievers, but about how the Lord will test the work of his people as they build on the foundation of Christ and him crucified: “The fire is not retributive, but testing....Combustible material will perish; the rest will abide.”<sup>63</sup> Every moment of ministry throughout history will be put under the blazing scrutiny of the Consuming Fire himself (2 Thess. 1:7–8; Heb. 12:29). Indeed, this has already happened once. The language Paul uses sounds like the prophecy of Malachi, who foretold a day when the Lord of Hosts would come suddenly to his temple, to refine and purify it (Mal. 3:1–5).<sup>64</sup> Jesus did exactly this by cleansing the temple (Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:28–40; John 2:13–17). By purifying the temple, he dramatically acted out the greater purification of his temple (that is, the church) that will happen upon his coming return. On that Day, much of what seems fruitful will be revealed to have been fraudulent, and much of what seems fruitless will be revealed to have been faithful. On this point, John Calvin writes this sobering warning:

It may indeed happen, that unprincipled workmen may for a time deceive, so that the world does not perceive how far each one has labored faithfully or fraudulently, but what is now as it were buried in darkness must of necessity come to light, and what is now glorious in the eyes of men, must before the face of God fall down, and be regarded as worthless.<sup>65</sup>

We must not judge by outward appearances, whether our own work or the work of another. Rather, we must judge with right judgment (cf. John 7:24) that seeks genuine faithfulness rather than false fruitfulness.

### Working for a Reward

In the aftermath of this fiery test, Paul says that, if anyone’s work still survives, that person will receive a reward (1 Cor. 3:14). Paul used the same word earlier in 1 Corinthians 3:8, which the ESV translated as *wages*: “He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his *wages* according to his labor.”<sup>66</sup> What, precisely, is this reward/wage? Critically, we must recognize that Paul only tells us *that* we will gain a reward, without ever telling us *what* that reward actually is.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, we should not venture into foolishly imagining the exact nature of this reward. Additionally, we must also recognize that this reward/wage does not merely refer to salvation, since even those whose work does not survive will still be saved, even though all their work will be burned up (1 Cor. 3:15). Thus, Paul is not talking about those who teach altogether heretical doctrines, but those who preach Christ, and yet go astray into more minor forms of error.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, Paul began this section by speaking about those only who “build on the foundation” of Christ and him crucified (1

Cor. 3:12).<sup>69</sup> All those who build upon the foundation will be saved. The only difference is whether their work will endure the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some will be saved, but only as a “brand plucked out of the burning” (Amos 4:11).<sup>70</sup> Their life’s work will be destroyed forever in the fire, and thus they will lose their reward, finding salvation only by the great difficulty—as through a fire.<sup>71</sup>

On what basis, then, do we receive this reward? Certainly, this reward cannot suggest that we somehow put God in our debt.<sup>72</sup> We can earn nothing from God, and whatever reward Paul describes must rest as squarely on grace as any part of our salvation.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, just as Paul earlier stated that we will receive wages “according to our labor” (1 Cor. 3:8), so now he states that we will receive a reward if our work endures the fiery judgment (1 Cor. 3:14).<sup>74</sup> Thus, while we cannot earn or merit anything from God, God nevertheless rewards us according to our labor. How, though, can this be? The answer becomes clear once we remember Paul’s teaching that even our *ability* to work arises from God’s grace: “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). *Grace* has saved Paul, making him what he is. *Grace* has empowered his ability to work as he laid the foundation of Jesus Christ and him crucified at Corinth. *Grace* sustains him every moment of every day. Ultimately, whatever reward Paul receives will also be by *grace*. This is grace upon grace upon grace, grace from first to last, grace abounding and sustaining through every trial and tribulation of our lives, and grace bestowing upon us a reward for what grace has provided! It is no wonder that we will cast our crowns back to the throne of God (Rev. 4:10), for we will boast only in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:30).

### The Temple of God

In v. 16, Paul turns his attention from the builders (especially the teachers) to what is being built: the church as the temple of God.<sup>75</sup> This is the first of ten instances in this letter (only appearing once elsewhere) where Paul makes his point in the form of a mild rebuke, asking, “Do you not know that...?” (1 Cor. 3:16; 5:6; 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:13, 24; cf. Rom. 6:16).<sup>76</sup> Here, Paul suggests that the Corinthians have lost sight of their holy identity by clamoring behind human teachers rather than under their common Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>77</sup> Specifically, they have forgotten that they are the *temple* of God. In the Greek New Testament, there are two words that may be translated as “temple” in English. One word, *hieron*, refers to the broader temple complex, including the various courts and other buildings associated with the temple, while a second word, *naos*, refers exclusively to the sanctuary where the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place were located.<sup>78</sup> In this case, Paul uses the latter word, *naos*, to emphasize that the Church is where the *Shekinah*, indwelling-presence glory of God resides: “Do you not know that...God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16).<sup>79</sup> This *dwelling* refers to more than God’s omnipresence, but to the place where God dwells in union and communion with his people.<sup>80</sup>

Now, we must remember that when Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian Church, the temple in Jerusalem was still standing and in operation before being destroyed in 70 AD.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, the prophet Ezekiel had famously depicted both the departure of the God’s indwelling presence from Solomon’s temple (Eze. 10; 11:22–25) and had prophesied a day when the Spirit of the Lord would return to the eschatological temple (Eze. 40–48).<sup>82</sup> We never read any indication that the Spirit of God revisited Israel’s Second Temple, either in the Old Testament texts that describe the rebuilding of the temple, or in the New Testament texts where the Second Temple features prominently. Paul,

therefore, is making an astounding point: not only has the Spirit of God never returned to the Second Temple, but the Spirit of God *has* begun to indwell Christian believers! Even more than this, we should remember that Moses could not enter the tabernacle, and the priests could not enter the temple, when the Spirit of God indwelled those places (Ex. 40:35; 1 Kgs. 8:11). Now, however, the Spirit of God indwells *us*. Of course, the fact that Paul names the Holy Spirit alone as indwelling his people does not exclude the indwelling presence of the Father and the Son (cf. John 14:17, 23), but only acknowledges the unique role of the Holy Spirit in applying the accomplished redemptive work of Jesus Christ.<sup>83</sup>

### Destroying the Temple

Earlier, Paul laid out only two different methods of interacting with this temple—that is, with the Church. Either, someone would build upon the temple with quality materials that would withstand the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ and receive a reward, or someone would build on the temple with combustible materials that would not qualify the builder for a reward (1 Cor. 3:14–15). Importantly, however, the bad builder himself would be saved, even though he forfeits his reward because none of his work survives the fire (1 Cor. 3:15).<sup>84</sup> Now, however, Paul treats a third possibility: those who corrupt the church to such a degree that they will not be saved, but rather destroyed by God (1 Cor. 3:17).<sup>85</sup> Paul uses the same word to describe the action of profaning God’s temple as well as God’s response to that temple profaner: “If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him” (1 Cor. 3:17).

The word that the ESV translates as “destroy” in the first use likely means something more like *corrupt*, which is how this word is used elsewhere in this same letter: “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins/corrupts good morals’” (1 Cor. 15:33). On the other hand, the second use of the word seems to refer to the destruction of God’s righteous wrath and judgment. The general meaning of the word simply conveys the idea of bringing something into a worse condition, whether figuratively or literally, so that we might capture Paul’s two shades of meaning with the same word like this: “If any man *injure* the temple of God, him will God *injure*.”<sup>86</sup> This may be a similar concept to the Old Testament idea of being “devoted to destruction,” where God destroyed those who violated the sanctity of what he had set apart as holy to himself (Exod. 22:19; Lev. 27:28; Deut. 7:26; Josh. 6:17; 7:11, 25).<sup>87</sup> In this case, God’s people are the temple which he has set apart as holy to himself, so that anyone who defiles that temple must be destroyed.<sup>88</sup>

### Discussion Questions

- 1) How does true Church growth come about (1 Cor. 3:5–9a)? Who gives the growth? If God gives the growth, then why are human beings important for the growth of the Church at all? Why does the Church need people to perform different roles? What role do all of us have in the growth of the Church? What promises does God make regarding our labor?
- 2) Why does Paul shift his metaphor of the Church from agriculture to construction (1 Cor. 3:9b)? What specific building does Paul speak about building (1 Cor. 3:16)? What is the foundation of this building? Why does Paul describe Christ as the foundation? In what sense does Paul lay this foundation at Corinth? In what sense does God lay this foundation in Christ?

3) What different materials does Paul mention for the construction of the temple (1 Cor. 3:12)? Which of these materials will withstand the scrutiny of Christ's building inspection on the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ? What does this extended metaphor of construction materials teach us about ministry in the Church? What does this teach us about God's promise of rewards?

4) Why is it important to recognize that we are God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16)? What value is it for God's Spirit to indwell us? How does the indwelling of the Holy Spirit relate to God's overall work of salvation in the world? What kind of protection does God promise to those whom he indwells (1 Cor. 3:17)? What does it mean that the Holy Spirit's presence makes us holy?

## Notes

1. In 1 Corinthians 2:14–15, Paul technically uses the singular forms, “natural person” (*psychikos*) and “spiritual person” (*pneumatikos*). In 1 Corinthians 3:1, however, Paul uses the plural form of “spiritual people” (*pneumatikoi*). Paul may be using the plural form of “spiritual people” in 1 Corinthians 2:13, since the word *pneumatikois* could refer to combining spiritual things with spiritual *people*, spiritual *words*, or spiritual *things*. As mentioned in the last study, I take 1 Corinthians 2:13 to refer to the combination of spiritual things with spiritual *words*.

2. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 130.

3. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 121. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.i.html>>

4. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 121.

5. “This is a very common usage. When we predicate spirituality of a Christian as compared to other Christians, we mean that he is eminently spiritual. But when the distinction is between Christians and the world, then every Christian is said to be spiritual. In like manner we speak of some Christians as worldly or carnal, without intending to deny that they are Christians. It is obvious that the apostle uses the terms here in the same manner. He is not speaking of Christians as distinguished from the world, but of one class of Christians as distinguished from another.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 48.)

6. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 121. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.i.html>>

7. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 121.

8. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 106.

9. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 122–23.

10. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 66.

11. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 124.

12. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 135–36.

13. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 122. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.i.html>>

14. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 122.

15. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 49.

16. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 109.

17. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 124.

18. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 81–82.

19. Thomas Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, USA, 2018), 88.

20. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 62.

21. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 125. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.ii.html>>

22. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 51.

23. Considered according to the categories proposed in Aristotle's four causes, God is the efficient cause (agent), while the ministers are instrumental causes (tools) whom God uses in his work. (Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 126.)

24. Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 140–41) argues that this only refers to the tasks, while Barnett (*1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People*, 53) insists that this must refer to the faith of the workers. I can see no good reason why the *assignment* could not refer to both aspects—the assigned tasks and the assigned results.

25. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 52.

26. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 62–63.

27. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 127–28. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.ii.html>>

28. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 52.

29. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 128.

30. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 112.

31. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 53.

32. “Usually it refers to someone who has worked as Paul's companion; here he extends the term to refer to another who in a more distant way joins him in the ministry of the gospel. In the Greek text the emphasis is altogether on God: ‘God's servants we are, being co-workers; God's field, God's building, you are.’ To be sure, some have occasionally suggested that by ‘co-worker’ Paul here intended, as the KJV had it, ‘we are laborers together *with* God.’ But everything in the context speaks against such a view: The emphatic position of the genitive (‘God's’) suggests possession, as do the following, equally emphatic, genitives, which are unambiguously possessive; the argument of the whole paragraph emphasizes the workers' unity as co-laborers *under* God, an argument that would be undercut considerably if he were not emphasizing that they worked *with* God in Corinth (a view that is altogether modern and quite out of sync with Paul's own concerns). It should finally be noted that these new ‘slogans’ serve as the climax of the whole paragraph, in which the emphasis is decidedly on God's *ownership*, not on Paul's and Apollos's working *with* God, as it were, in Corinth.” (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 143–44.)

33. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 129.

34. “He unfolds more clearly the nature of that ministry by a similitude, in which the nature of the word and the use of preaching are most appropriately depicted. That the earth may bring forth fruit, there is need of ploughing and sowing, and other means of culture; but after all this has been carefully done, the husbandman's labor would be of no avail, did not the Lord from heaven *give the increase*, by the breaking forth of the sun, and still more by his wonderful and secret influence. Hence, although the diligence of the husbandman is not in vain, nor the seed that he throws in useless, yet it is only by the blessing of God that they are made to prosper, for what is more wonderful than that the seed, after it has rotted, springs up again! In like manner, the word of the Lord is seed that is in its own nature fruitful: ministers are as it were husbandmen, that plough and sow. Then follow other helps, as for example, irrigation. Ministers, too, act a corresponding part when, after casting the seed into the ground, they give help to the earth as much as is in their power, until it bring forth what it has conceived: but as for making their labor actually productive, *that* is a miracle of divine grace — not a work of human industry.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 126–27.)

Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.ii.html>>)

35. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 53.

36. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 130.

37. “The emphasis rests on the three possessives: ‘God’s...God’s...God’s.’ Two of these declare that even the Corinthians are God’s. His are the laborers, his the field with its planting, his the building. Paul does not write co-laborers, for God works but never labors; so he writes ‘co-workers.’ The preposition σύν found in the noun connects God’s ministers with him and not these ministers with each other save as they are all equally joined with him. “We,” of course, refers only to Paul, to Apollos, and to men in the ministry (διδάκονοι), and we cannot extend it so as to apply it to Christians generally. The Christian ministry is still a distinct office. Behold the honor which Paul bestows upon this office! Full of labor though it be, it makes us co-workers with God.

Yet this truth involves much more: all that these workers plant, water, and build is likewise God’s, and God’s alone. The Corinthians are a vineyard that is planted and tilled by God’s workers and belong to God. There is no σύν in this statement, nor in the one that says that the Corinthians are God’s building. This marks the difference. Paul tells the Corinthians: We ministers belong to God as his fellow workers, you, the congregation, belong to him only as his field and his building. The holy office is something more than ordinary membership in the congregation. The Corinthians acted as if these ministers were theirs, to be measured and weighed at pleasure, to be exalted or to be lowered, to be rewarded with praise or to be chastised with criticism. Paul takes these ministers out of their hands, they are God’s, doing his work under his special call and commission.” (Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 130–31.)

38. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 53.

39. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 53–54.

40. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 114.

41. G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 66–80.

42. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 246.

43. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 147.

44. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 69.

45. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 54.

46. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 133.

47. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 133–34. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.iii.html>>

48. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 134.

49. “Second, a building must hold together with mutual dependency and integration of the component parts. The metaphor excludes individualism and any ‘autonomy’ of individual parts. This anticipates the image of the body in chapter 12. To transfer the metaphor into these present terms: ‘the roof cannot say to the walls, “I have no need of you”’ (cf. 12:21), and ‘the door cannot say, “because I am not a wall, I do not belong to the building”’ (Cf. 12:15–16).” (Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 65.)

50. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 54–55.

51. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 115.

52. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 69.

53. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 136.

54. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 55–56.

55. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 135–36. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.iii.html>>

56. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 136.

57. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 138.

58. See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, footnote 396, p. 152. See also, Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 92.

59. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 92.

60. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 56.

61. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 55.

62. “Thus he says: ‘For the Day of Judgment will expose every person’s workmanship, whether gospel of *sophia*, because that Day, when it comes, manifests itself with fire; and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.’” (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 153–54.)

63. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 88.

64. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 92.

65. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 137. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.iii.html>>

66. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 143.

67. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 155.

68. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 145.

69. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 57–58.

70. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 56.

71. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 58.

72. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 88–89.

73. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 143.

74. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 154–55.

75. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 142. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.x.iv.html>>

76. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 158.

77. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 58.

78. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 146–47.

79. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 59.

80. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 147.

81. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 57.

82. “For Paul the imagery reflects the OT people of God. Although they are never called God’s temple as such, they are God’s own people, among whom God chose to ‘dwell’ by tabernacling in their midst. It is possible, though by no means certain, that the imagery also had eschatological overtones for Paul. Such an understanding would flow from two sources: Jewish eschatological hopes as reflected in a variety of sources, and a tradition, which seems to go back to Jesus himself, that he would rebuild the temple ‘in three days.’ The present experience of the church as the place where the (eschatological) Spirit dwells would thus be the restored temple of Ezekiel’s vision (chaps. 40–48), where God promised ‘to live among them forever’ (43:9) and out of which flowed the river of fresh water that restored the land (47:1–12).” (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 158–59.)

83. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 147.

84. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 71.

85. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 146.

86. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 59.

87. “Those who destroy (*phtheirei*) the church, which is God’s holy temple, will themselves be destroyed (*phtheirei*). The idea is rather similar to the ban (*hērem*) in the Old Testament (cf. Exod. 22:19; Lev. 27:28; Deut. 7:26; Josh. 6:17; 7:11, 25). Achan is destroyed in Joshua 7 since he took what was devoted to the Lord, what was under the ban. In the same way, those who destroy the church ruin what is holy, what is consecrated to



God. Those who touch and deface what is holy will be placed under the ban themselves. Like Achan, they will be destroyed by God.” (Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 94.)

88. “As the word for temple is not in the text (which reads οἵτινές ἐστε ὑμεῖς) the reference may be to the word *holy*. ‘The Temple is holy, which ye also are.’ The same reason exists why the church cannot be defiled or injured, that there is that the temple could not be profaned. Both are sacred. The view given in our version is commonly preferred.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 59.)