

## PREFACE

I was struck this week by the realization of how so much that we do in the church is really a rehearsal for what we will do in eternity future.

- We gather to worship and praise the Lord—as we will for all eternity future ([Psalms 22:27](#));
- we sing to Him—as we will for all eternity future ([Revelation 14:2-3](#));
- we may not know precisely what we will be doing in eternity future—other than worshiping and praising the Godhead—but we do know that it will be in the company of the saints: fellow believers—just as we come together once a week to fellowship with kindred souls;
- and we gather around the Lord’s table to rehearse “the marriage supper of the Lamb”—which will be celebrated in eternity future.

**Read Revelation 19:7-9.**

The marriage supper of the Lamb will be the actual performance—opening night, as it were—for all the Communion meals we have rehearsed as earth-bound believers. It will include almost all the elements we have just listed ([save for singing, perhaps, which is not mentioned in the Revelation passage](#)), and certainly the two which are the apostle’s focus in our passage: a celebration of what Christ Jesus did to facilitate our attendance at such a holy feast, and the loving fellowship of the saints around the table.

**Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-34.**

## v30

*For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.*

For *what* reason? “For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly” (v29). Paul, having received the news about “many” getting sick, and even dying, concludes that this could very well be the result of their behavior toward one another. First, what is Paul *not* saying?

- He is not saying that every illness and death is the direct result of sin, or offenses against the body of Christ.
- He is not saying that these individuals have/had lost their salvation. This is *corrective* judgment, not eternal judgment (David Guzik). [See v32.](#)
- He is not saying that they are only “weak in faith,” “spiritually ill,” and “spiritually asleep.” No, he is saying that there has been in the Corinthian church temporal, *physical* judgments because of their behavior—including physical sickness and physical death. “Real suffering in the flesh, not a decay of the spirit, is the divine warning bell that should awaken the Corinthians to the dangers of their practices” (David Garland).

v31

*But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.*

This is a perfect example of a sentence that, when lifted out of its context, is a head-scratcher, but when read *in* context makes perfect sense. What did Paul say just before this?

**Read 1 Corinthians 11:28-29.**

The Lord is permitting—or even inflicting—sickness and death in the Corinth church because “many” are not rightly examining their behavior toward their brothers and sisters in the church. My guess is that this behavior was not limited to the Lord’s Supper, but was evident throughout the doings of the congregation. In any number of circumstances it was evident that the church was sick.

The Lord was at work in the Corinth church with His corrective judgment to make repairs, to get the church back on track, to restore fellowship among its members. The church was sick; it is seen in their lawsuits against each other (6:1-11), their sexual and marital sins (6:12-7:40), their attitude toward idolatry (8:1-11:1). And now, perhaps most offensive to the Lord, it is seen even during their observance of the Lord’s Supper. If only they would “examine themselves” and then make the necessary corrective adjustments to their faith-walk and behavior, the Lord would not have to be judging them.

v32

*But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.*

Here is the evidence that Paul is not taking about final, eternal, damning judgment for these believers. Here is the definition of the Lord’s *corrective* judgment: discipline.

**disciplined**<sup>nasb,niv,esv,csb</sup>, **chastened**<sup>kjvs</sup> = *paideuo* = from <G3816> (pais); **to train up a child, i.e. educate**, or (by implication) **discipline (by punishment)** :- chasten (-ise), **instruct**, learn, **teach**.

**Read Hebrews 12:7-11.**

*...so that we will not be condemned along with the world.*

**condemned** = *katakrino* = from <G2596> (kata) and <G2919> (krino); **to judge against**, i.e. sentence :- condemn, **damn**.

I confess that I had to chew on this quite a bit. It was a struggle—initially. When I read “we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world,” I hear the possibility of the alternative, that if we are *not* disciplined by the Lord we *might* be condemned (i.e., damned) along with the world! Yet that does not square with what Jesus said in John’s gospel.

### Read John 5:22-24.

And then we have the reassuring voice of the Good Shepherd later in the same gospel.

### Read John 10:27-30.

I think the way Christians who subscribe to the doctrine of “the perseverance of the saints” are to interpret this verse as found in the Hebrews passage—especially v6, which we did not include before—

For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” (Hebrews 12:6)

—and v8.

But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (Hebrews 12:8)

If we are His children, we *will* be disciplined; if we are *not* disciplined by Him, then we are not His children—and thus will be “condemned along with the world.” This is similar to the doctrinal root of the perseverance of the saints: if our faith endures to the end, then we are/have been truly born again; if our faith does not endure (i.e., we “lose our faith”), then we are not/have not been truly born again ([John 8:31-32](#), [Hebrews 3:14](#)).

Nonetheless, if it were not for the fact that it is holy writ, I might return v32 to the apostle with a few blue-pencil marks, requesting a rewrite for better clarity.

*John Darby:* The world is condemned. Sin in the Christian is judged, it escapes neither the eye nor the judgment of God. He never permits it; He cleanses the believer from it by chastening him, although He does not condemn, because Christ has borne his sins, and been made sin for him.

### v33

*So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.*

Now in this final paragraph we draw Chapter Eleven to a close. Here Paul summarizes the points he made earlier. And we must revisit the two interpretations of v21, where most of our translations employ the “temporal” interpretation, as in for in your eating each one takes his own supper **first**; and one is hungry and another is drunk. (emphasis added)

Correspondingly, v33 in the NASB has “wait for one another.” But the real issue at the supper was not a lack of patience for late arrivals, but a lack of *fellowship with them*. What difference would it make if they did wait for them, if when the late arrivals showed up they still kept to their own kind, eating the food they brought for themselves and not sharing it with their “lessers.”

This is why I favor the new CSB, which translates the beginning of v21, “For at the meal, each one eats his own supper,” and v33, instead of “wait for one another,” it has “welcome one another.” That’s the idea: not *when* one eats, but *what* one eats and *with whom*.

#### v34A

*If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment.*

Here Paul reiterates what he wrote in v22:

What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink?

The Lord’s Supper is not to be regarded as just any typical meal—a time to fill one’s belly to calm hunger pangs. It is to be a special time of commemoration and fellowship. His statement about coming together for judgment refers to the next sentence in v22:

Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?

That is what they were being judged for—their treatment of and disdain for their brothers and sister in Christ.

#### v34B

*The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.*

I hear Paul saying this—dictating it to his amanuensis—with a weary sigh. *You Corinthians are wearing me out*, I hear in this closing statement. And so this jam-packed chapter is closed. The next chapter will continue to address deficiencies in their church, but with a brighter, more positive tone as he turns to the issue of spiritual gifts.

The message—from God, through the Spirit, through the apostle—in this chapter is made crystal clear. We are to treat the Lord’s Supper as an occasion of critical importance—not just regarding our personal relationship with Christ and our gratitude and praise for the sacrifice He made to secure our salvation, but regarding our relationship with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. As Paul will write in Chapter Thirteen, the greatest and most important gift we possess is the gift of love: love for God first, but love also for our kindred in Christ.