

Watch the grammar when you read anything, especially scripture. And in the KJV the 1611 English, hard to read as it sometimes is, is more precise in many cases than the more recent versions. Our modern English has lost the distinctions between third person pronouns that is still found in the KJV. English. For example: the pronoun “you” is ambiguous as we use it, sometimes meaning a single person and sometimes meaning a group of persons. Which it means depends upon the context in which it is used. Sometimes a major truth depends upon this distinction. Verse 16 is an example. Casual readers equate the lesson of this verse with 1 Corinthians 6:19. But notice the difference. “Ye are the temple.” Ye (plural) are the temple (singular). It means the assembly is the temple of God. In contrast 6:19 tells us we, each of our bodies, are the temples (plural) of the Holy Spirit. Both are marvelous truths, but the distinction is obscured to many believers today. Well, so what? While most believers are aware of the personal indwelling of the Spirit they are less aware of the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the assembly as a whole. Many apply this verse individually stating that if we engage in habits that are harmful to our bodies we will suffer the consequences, which is true. See Gal 6:6. But here Paul tells the Corinthian assembly **they are** (locally in Corinth) the temple God.

As mentioned in our Week 6 “Dig Deeper,” Corinth was the site of a great regional pagan temple, where many of them had worshiped before being saved. Now they learn they, themselves together are the temple of God. We, gathered here in Ramsey, Minnesota, are too. We are His temple collectively (or corporately) as well as individually. (The words “Collective” or “Corporate” simply means we are together counted as one, similar to a corporation in business.) The Assembly is the House of God. We are fellow laborers with God in building it. Last week we learned that what we build will be tested by fire and some of our efforts may not pass the test and be destroyed, but that we ourselves are saved by grace not works. This is not what some call and teach as “purgatory” although this is perhaps where that corrupt idea was derived. We are suitable for God’s presence right now due to

Christ’s redeeming work on the cross.

But in vers 16 we read of someone corrupting the temple of God being subject to personal destruction at God’s hands. This is a different thing to consider than the worthiness of our works of service. It speaks of severe judgement upon any who destroy the Temple of God.

Now then, am I safe? Safe as Christ death and resurrection is accepted by God can make me. But what is the destruction mentioned here? Who is liable to it? What does one do to corrupt the temple of God? What does God do to him? It may take different forms. Is the destruction eternal or is it speaking of people’s physical bodies in the here and now? Perhaps either or both.

Paul has something very serious in mind here. This is not just an abstract truth. Several possibilities come to mind.

1. **Destructive Heresies.** By their formation of sects and following certain leaders or teachings they were dividing the company of believers in Corinth, destroying the unity Christ had died to establish. Verses 18-21 would seem to indicate this immediate application. They were corrupting the temple of God by mixing in the wisdom and philosophy of men with the truth of God. Paul gives them much more on this in later chapters.

2. **Destructive Immorality.** We will learn in chapter five they were harboring flagrant fornication practiced openly by a man in fellowship with them and counted as a “brother.” He was delivered to Satan for “destruction of the flesh,” so he wouldn’t perish in the day of the Lord.

3. **Eating Unworthily.** There were those coming to the Lord’s table and eating the Lord’s supper in an unworthy manner, not practicing regular self judgement. Because of this there was illness and even death amongst them (11:31).

4. **Destructive Intentions.** Then there is another meaning we can see to this idea of destruction. Judas Iscariot was one example of some who mix in with believers, then apostatize. One who tastes the blessings but rejects the Blesser. They often actively seek to adulterate or discount the truth of scripture and replace it with their own religious ideas. There are many strong warnings against these enemies throughout the New Testament. See

ch.6:9-11; Hebrews 6:4-8; & 10:26-30 & 38; 2Timothy 3:1-9 & 13; 2Peter 2; Jude and more.

We marvel at how people who hear the gospel, even enjoy some level of fellowship with believers yet still make that wretched choice to prefer their own wisdom, the wisdom of this world, over that God offers. But they do. And they remain lost. They become enemies of God and His blood bought Assembly. Soon God destroys (not annihilates but banishes) them from His presence for evermore. That's what hell is after all, abandonment by God and the absence of His mercies we so often take for granted.

Yet how often we tend to operate our daily lives setting our goals and the methods to achieve them in what is simply human thinking. The goals aren't evil in themselves, the methods aren't evil. We just exclude God. Or, more subtly, include Him to carry out what we have decided without Him. Therefore he says, "Let no man glory in men." They, and we, as believers are set in a position above that. Far, far above that! All things are ours! Huh? What does that mean? All the things we as believers value most and all of the things God values for our benefit are ours. Things under our control and things out side of our control are ours.

1. People, like the apostles and prophets, Paul, Apollos, Peter and whoever we may look up to and aspire to be like, they are ours! They could safely follow them all, not divide themselves over them.
2. The world is ours, to use for God's glory and not

toward our own ends. (7:31)

3. Life, eternal life is ours to live and spend now and forever. Chapters 6-11 give us much practical instruction regarding Christian life.

4. Death is ours. It is but a passage into the presence of the Lord of Glory. Chapter 15 presents the wonderful truth of the resurrection of the believers who fall asleep in Jesus. Death will be swallowed up in victory. (15:54-58).

5. Things present are ours. We aren't just victims or "lucky" depending upon our current circumstances.

6. Things to come are ours. God's whole grand plan for the future has been revealed for us to look forward to.

7. All are ours!

8. And we belong to Christ, both individually (personally) and collectively (assembly), WE ARE CHRIST'S.

9. And Christ is God's. Christ, sinless, glorified man that He is, is God's. He does not set Himself as independent of God or even grasp at a place of Lordship and leadership as they were doing. He is God's. They (and we) are His, not their own (1Cor 6:19). He ultimately takes possession of all that He purchased at the cross and delivers it up to God (1Cor 15). What an example of humility and subjection for us to follow in our use and disposal of all that is ours.

By Ron Canner, November 27, 2002.