

1 Corinthians 3:12 - Now if any man [believer] builds on the foundation [Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones [inflammable materials of divine good], wood, hay, straw [flammable materials of human good & evil],

1. The next three verses have already been examined and form the conclusion of Paul's remarks to the Corinthian church regarding the process by which divine good is produced in time and their evaluation in heaven:

1 Corinthians 3:13 - Each man's work [ἔργον (érgon): performance] will become evident [φανερὸς (phanerós): in an open, public demonstration]; for the day [of the evaluation tribunal; BER: Believer Evaluation Report] will show it [future tense of δηλώω (dēlóō): will reveal the report] because it will be revealed with fire [πῦρ (púr): See footnote.¹]; and the fire itself will test the quality [proving a thing whether it is worthy or not] of each man's work.

v. 14 - If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he shall receive a reward.

v. 15 - If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved [σώζω (sózō): to deliver safe from danger, loss, or destruction], yet as through fire [works tested for evaluation].

2. The theme Paul has taken begins in 1 Corinthians 2:9 and continues to 1 Corinthians 3:15. He is making the effort to warn the reversionistic believers in Corinth that their spiritual life is powerless without being led by the filling, teaching, and recall ministries of the Holy Spirit.
3. He presents the process by which a believer is enabled to learn, retain, and apply the thinking of God which cannot be obtained outside the bubble.

¹ "In 1 Corinthians 3:10–15, the works of men are represented as a building of which only the inflammable parts ("gold, silver, precious stones") can withstand fire; the worker (builder) "himself shall be saved; yet as by fire," means that he will escape from the fire which destroys those of his works which are wood, hay, [and] stubble." (Spiros Zodhiates, gen. ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. [Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993], 1255).

VISUAL:
Evaluation
Tribunal
of Christ

4. This process is developed within this section of 1 Corinthians and gives us an overview of what is required of all believers if they wish to become **πρόμαχοι (prómachoi)**² in the Lord's phalanx.
5. An expanded reading of these verses provides for us the details of this process:

1 Corinthians 2:9 - As it is written [in the Tanakh at Isaiah 64:4], things which the eye has not seen, nor ear heard [empiricism], and which have not entered the heart [καρδία (*kardía*): soul] of man [rationalism], all the things that God has prepared for them that love Him."

v. 10 - But [in opposition to empiricism and rationalism] to us [dative of advantage of the conjunction ἐγώ (*egó*)] God has revealed [aorist active indicative of ἀποκαλύπτω (*apokalúptō*): the removal of a veil to expose what was previously hidden] them through the Holy Spirit; for the Holy Spirit investigates all things, even the inscrutable things of God.

v. 11 - But who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man [human reasoning based on empiricism or rationalism] which is in him [his inventory of ideas based on human viewpoint]? Even so the thoughts of God [divine omniscience] no one knows [unbelievers cannot understand them and believers cannot acquire them without the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit].

v. 12 - Now we have received in its entirety and in perpetuity [culminative aorist of *lambánō*], not the spirit of the world that relies on logical systems of rationalism and empiricism, but in contradistinction from the Holy Spirit Who is from the source of God, so that we may come to know [the intensive perfect of *oída* indicating completed action with existing results] things [divine viewpoint] freely given to us by God,

² “πρόμαχος (*prómachos*): singular; πρόμαχοι (*prómachoi*): plural: *fighting before* or *in front*.” (Refers to the front rank in the Greek phalanx or “front rankers.”) (Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940], 1489).

pneumatikōs: plural masculine, referring to the content of divine truth found in Scripture.
pneumatiká: plural neuter, referring to the system and processes used by the Holy Spirit to teach the positive believer: GAP & Op Z.

1 Corinthians 2:13 - which things we apostles, evangelists, pastor-teachers also communicate, not in words taught by human wisdom, but by those **illuminations** [*sunkrínō*: category of Bibliology] of the Holy Spirit, combining **spiritual phenomena** [**pneumatikōs**: divine truth contained in doctrines] with **spiritual systems** [**pneumatiká**: spiritual systems of Bibliology, GAP, Operation Z, and spirituality: filling of the Holy Spirit].

anakrívō: Illumination of divine truth within the believer's soul;
pneumatikōs: by means of status quo spirituality and under the filling and teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

v. 14 - The **soulsh man** [**dichotomous**], having no human spirit, cannot accept spiritual phenomena because they are **folly** [*μωρία* (*mōría*): lack good sense; are foolish ideas] to him because they are **discerned** [*ἀνακρίνω* (*anakrívō*): illuminated in *πνευματικῶς* (*pneumatikōs*): status quo spirituality].

pneumatikōs: Illumination of spiritual things enabling
anakrívō: discernment of divine truth.

v. 15 - But he who is **spiritual** [*πνευματικός* (*pneumatikōs*): spiritual perception through illumination] **discerns** [*anakrívō* ³] **all things** [**spiritual phenomena**] yet he himself cannot be **judged or evaluated** [*anakrívō* ⁴ legitimately criticized] by anyone.

16 - For who is qualified to inform the omniscience of the Lord, that we will instruct Him? But we have the **revelation** [**Tanakh & New Testament**] of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:1 - I, **brethren** [**believers**], **could not** [*οὐκ* (*ouk*): “expressing direct and full negation] **speak unto you as unto spiritual** [*πνευματικός* (*pneumatikós*): spiritual status through illumination] **but, conversely, as unto carnal** [*σάρκινος* (*sárkinos*): men of the flesh controlled by the sin nature], **as to infants** [*νήπιος* (*népios*): preschool children] **in Christ** [*ἐν Χριστός* (*en Christós*): positional sanctification].

v. 2 - I have fed you **milk to drink** [**soteriology plus basic doctrines**], **not solid food** [**not advanced doctrines**]; for you were **not able to receive it** [**low doctrinal frame of reference**]. **At this time you still are not able,**

³ Customary present: denotes what habitually occurs or may be reasonably expected to occur.

⁴ Static present: A condition which is assumed as perpetually existing.

1 Corinthians 3:3 - for you are still functioning on energy of the flesh [**active sin nature producing human good** ⁵]. Since there is jealousy [ζήλος (*zélōs*): includes envy, jealousy, anger, & wrath], and strife [ἔρις (*éris*): contention, wrangling] among you, you keep on being carnal [out of fellowship], and keep on walking [περιπατέω (*peripatéō*); see footnote ⁶ below] as mere men [unregenerate].

v. 4 - When one of you says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal men?

v. 5 - What then is Apollos? And what then is Paul? ⁶ Servants [διάκονος (*diákonos*): **servants** ⁷] through whom you believed in the Lord, even as the Lord gave to every man that believes in Christ.

v. 6 - I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

v. 7 - So neither the one who plants counts for anything, nor the one who waters, but God Who causes the growth. (NET)

v. 8 - Now the one that plants and the one who waters work as a team; but each shall receive his own reward according to his own production.

v. 9 - For we are God's fellow workers [**each believer has his function in the plan of God**], you are God's field [**agricultural illustration: functionaries in the divine plan**], God's building [**architectural illustration: constructing an edifice of divine thought within a divine process**].

⁵ Failure to advance spiritually results in ignorance of biblical problem-solving devices including rebound. Such a believer functions on human viewpoint producing personal sin, human good, and evil. He functions on the same character traits, behavior patterns, and lifestyle of the unbeliever.

⁶ Paul and Apollos are on the same team but have quite different personalities. Paul is an intellectual genius while Apollos is an eloquent speaker; Paul is shy and reserved while Apollos is an extrovert; both are mighty in the Scripture.

⁷ First and 2 Corinthians were among the first epistles written by Paul whereas the word *diákonos* used to refer to deacons does not occur until his latter epistles written between five and 10 years later. Here it simply means “servant.”