

2/19/12

## 1Corinthians 1

We want to begin our verse by verse commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians and pray that God would bless us as we journey through it.

The letter is a most valuable for the church in terms of instructions, corrections and discipline, as it deals with so many practical problems that occur in the church from generation to generation.

### 1:1-3 The greeting and salutation.

**1:1** The identity of Paul.

- 1) Paul in the Greek “paulos”, means little one, his name used to be Saul “Saoul” in the Hebrew and it meant desired or ask.
- 2) Paul was called an apostle, “to be” has been added to by translators, he was a chosen vessel to preach the gospel. Acts 9:15
  - a) The word “apostolos” means one sent out, his authority was being questioned. 1Cor. 9:1-3; 15:8
  - b) He immediately preached the gospel in the synagogue. Acts 9:20
  - c) The requirements to be one of the 12 apostles was not met by Paul. Acts 1:21-22

- 1)) H was not with Jesus since the baptism of John, to the day Jesus was take up to heaven.
  - 2)) But he was a witness of the resurrection, when Jesus appeared to him.
  - 3)) The one chosen was Matthias confirmed by the statement, “The twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples that it was not good to leave the word of God and serve tables. Acts 6:2
  - 4)) He called himself the apostle to the Gentiles. Rom. 11:13; 1Rim. 2:7; 2Tim. 1:11
  - 5)) For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. 2Cor. 12:11
- 3) By the will of God not of man. Gal. 1:11-16
  - 4) Paul identifies himself as partners with Sosthenes.
    - a) He is most likely the ruler of the synagogue, the same one who was part of the accusations against Paul before the judgment seat of Gallio and was beat by the Greeks, as Gallio cast them out, due to the fact that it dealt with religious matters. Acts 18:17

- b) Now he was saved and concerned about the church, now with Paul at Ephesus.

**1:2** The identity of the church.

- 1) The church belongs to God not man, it is universal, not limited to a local church.
- 2) The local church at hand is at Corinth, “ekclesia” called out ones.
- 3) The church is comprised of people sanctified “hagiazos” in Christ Jesus, set apart for Him and His work.
- 4) The church members are called saints “hagios”, which means holy by virtue of Christ not themselves.
  - \* Saints are those born again, not as Catholic church understands them to be so through acknowledge miracles!
- 5) To all who in every place call on Jesus Christ our Lord, no one is excluded who repent.

**1:3** The salutation is two-fold.

- 1) Grace was the common Greek greeting and in it’s root meaning had the sense of beauty and blessedness.
  - a) Grace “charis” is also the source of salvation, unmerited favor.
  - b) Grace, as Paul is using it, is for living out life, difficulties, disappointments and victories.

- 2) Peace “eirene”, was the Hebrew greeting and implied blessing and tranquility of life.
  - a) Peace with God is the result of being Justified in Christ at salvation. Rom. 5:1-2
  - b) Peace for life is what Paul is referring to, to comfort and strengthen one through the testings of life. Phil. 4:7
- 3) Both are from our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, co-equal in deity.

**1:4-9** **The thanksgiving of Paul for the Corinthians.**

- 1) Paul thanked God always concerning the grace bestowed on the Corinthians through Christ. vs. 4
- 2) Paul thanked God that they were enriched in everything by Christ spiritually affecting their lives. vs. 5
  - a) In utterance, meaning thought and discourse.
  - b) In knowledge, meaning information on spiritual things that had visibly been evident to people.
    - \* The treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ Jesus. Col. 2:3
- 3) Paul thanked God for the church had been endowed with all the gifts of the Spirit,

as they waited for Christ's unveiling for them at the rapture. vs. 6-7

a) Jn. 14:1-2; Col. 3:4; Phil. 3:20-21; 1Thess. 1:10, Tit. 2:13

b) No one man has all the gifts. vs. 12:27-31

4) Paul thank God for the ability to present the Corinthians blameless in the day of our Lord and assured them of His faithfulness to the fellowship they had been call into. vs. 8-9

a) Blameless "anegkletos", means nimpachable, unaccusable. Phil. 1:6, Jude 1:1, 24

b) Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it. 1Thess. 5:24

### **1:10-4:21 The factions and exaltation of man.**

#### **1:10-17 The divisions at Corinth.**

**1:10** Paul pleads with the Corinthians.

- 1) His plead is based on three things.
  - a) His spiritual fatherhood.
  - b) His common brotherhood.
  - c) His and their relationship with Christ.
    - \* The word plead "parakaleo" means entreat or implore by calling to one's side.
- 2) His plead is two-fold regarding unity.

a) That they speak the same thing having the same standard, the word of God.

b) The preventative against divisions "and there be no divisions "schismata", to tear or have a rift, disrupting harmony.

\* The word is used of a torn garment. Mat. 9:16; Mk. 2:21

b) That they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.

a) Joined together "katartizo" is a medical term to knit together bones that heave been fractured and mended an is used for mending nets. Mk. 1:19

b) Due to the same understanding of spiritual truth, resulting in right and wise decisions.

c) The church is to teach doctrine. Eph. 4:11-16; 1Tim. 1:3; 1Tim. 4:15-16

\* Whosoever does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. 2Jn. 9

**1:11** The information came through the household of Chloe.

- 1) The best guess is that the house was used as a house church, though it is possible that it was a mere residence.

- 2) The person is a female whose name is Chloe means “green herb”
- 3) The information was specific, contentions were throughout the church.
  - \* Quarrels, strifes and wranglings were dividing the church, Paul had written before and now had sent Timothy to teach them his ways in Christ. 1Cor. 5:9, 4:17

**1:12** The parties involved.

- 1) Paul quotes their own words as their allegiance to the various teachers.
- 2) The Paulites were most likely the ones who leaned on grace to the exclusion of the law and perhaps to a permissive life-style. 1Cor. 5:1-2; 6:15, 18
- 3) The Apollonites were the ones who leaned heavily on the intellectual approach and pride since he was born and school in Alexandria’s Universities. 1Cor. 4:6; 8:1; Acts 18:24-26
- 4) The Cephitites were the ones who held on to the ritual and ceremony of the law and were legalist in foods. 1Cor. 8-9
- 5) The Christites were the ones who thought themselves above others, holier than thou. 1Cor. 7, 12-14
  - \* The body is made up of many parts, one body. 1Cor. 3:5-9, 1Cor. 12

**1:13-16** The rebuke of the Corinthians for their parties.

- 1) Three rhetorical question are asked with the obvious answer NO! vs. 13
- 2) Paul uses their false doctrine of baptism to rebuke them as if they were teaching that it was necessary for salvation. 1Cor. 15:29; 1Pet. 3:19-21; Rom. 6:3-4; Jn. 3:5; Col. 2:9-10
- 2) Paul only baptized a few individuals and a one household. vs. 14-16
  - a) Crispus was the ruler of the Jewish synagogue, one of the first converts of Corinth. vs. 14
    - \* Acts 18:18
  - b) Gaius was Paul’s host in his visit to Corinth. vs. 14
    - \* Rom. 16:23
  - c) Paul was glad he only baptized some and start a rumor he was baptizing in his own name. vs. 15
    - \* To baptize “into” one’s name meant allegiance and fellowship.
  - d) Stephanas was one of the bearers of the letter present with Paul at Ephesus. 1Cor. 16:15-17

**1:17** Paul recognized that preaching was the priority for a person to be saved.

- 1) Paul place the priority on the power of preaching the gospel, not the pride of ritual. vs. 17a-b
  - a) If baptism is required for salvation, then Paul is speaking blasphemous.
  - b) The word preach “evangelizo” means to evangelize, announce glad tidings of salvation.
- 2) Paul said preaching is not to be with the wisdom of words, skillful discourse, eloquence, philosophy or speculation that cleverly robbed the gospel of it’s power being void of the cross.
  - a) The word wisdom “sophia” refers to human conclusions based on human reasoning in contrast to divine wisdom.
  - b) The word appears 17 times in the letter and the first 16 appear in the first three chapters. 1Cor. 1:17-3:19
  - c) The word wise “sophos” also appears 10 times in the first three chapters. 1Cor. 1:19-3:20
- 3) The worldly method would void out the gospel.
  - \* The phrase no effect “kenoo: means to make empty, neutral, powerless or inoperative

**1:18-2:16** The message of the cross is the power and wisdom of God.

**1:18-25** *The message of the cross is divine wisdom versus the wisdom of man.*

- 1:18** The message of the cross was spurned.
- \* The word of the message of the cross, meaning the content were viewed differently.
- 1) To those who are perishing, it is foolishness, a present active process.
    - a) The fact that man was evil and not good was unthinkable to those who heard the gospel.
    - b) The fact that God became man and died in the place of man was mocked.
    - c) The word foolishness “moria” means irrational, stupid or worthless, we get our word moron from it.
  - 2) To those being saved, it is the power of God, a present active process.
    - a) The power to forgive man’s sins.
    - b) The power to make man a son or daughter of God.
    - c) The power to give man eternal life.
    - d) The word power “dunamis” describes the ability to accomplish salvation. Rom. 1:16-17
    - e) For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. 1Cor. 4:20
      - \* Both of these states are progressive in nature, perishing and have been

saved, shall be saved and are being saved!

**1:19-20** The historical illustration from the Old Testament.

- 1) Paul quotes the book of Isaiah to illustrate his point of the previous verse. vs. 19  
\* Is. 29:14
  - a) The threat of Assyrians caused Israel to attempt an allegiance with Egypt as a mark of political wisdom, trusting in Egypt. 2Kings 19:34-36
  - b) The refusal to make this allegiance was thought to be foolishness.
  - c) The outcome destroyed the wisdom of man in the way God defended the city by sending one angel to kill 185,000 front-line Assyrian troops.
- 2) The quotation again is from Isaiah, in response to God's destruction of the 185,000 men of Sennecherib by the angel of God. vs. 20  
\* Is. 33:18,
  - a) The wise is the intellectual, the scholar. Is. 19:12; Ps. 33:10
  - b) The Scribe is the stubborn interpreter of the law, the teachers.
  - c) The disputer is the debater, the philosopher of human wisdom.

\* All three are seekers of truth, but rejecting "the truth". Is. 55:8-9; 1Pet. 5:5-6 "Prov. 3:34"

**1:21** The efforts of human wisdom is unable to know God.

- 1) This is the wisdom of God, to conceal Himself from human attempts to know Him through human wisdom. Acts 17:18-32
- 2) The wisdom of God is that through the foolishness of the message preached by the herald, the content. 2:4-5
  - a) That man is a sinner and lost.
  - b) That man is in need of salvation.
  - c) That man is in need of repentance.
  - d) That man is saved by grace, not personal merit.
  - e) That man is absolved from all his sins by faith through repentance.  
\* Salvation is all of God, man can not boast. Rom. 11:33-36

**1:22** The problem of God's wisdom.

- 1) The Jews request a sign, being blind to the evident signs about them.  
\* Jesus gave them the sign of Jonah. Matt. 12:39-40
- 2) The Greeks seek after wisdom, the intellect and understanding, in order to

commit themselves to the preaching of the gospel.

\* Paul was mocked at Mars Hill by the men of human wisdom and called a seed picker. Acts 17

**1:23** The message of the cross is misinterpreted by rebellious unbelief.

- 1) The Jew is stumbled by the message.
  - a) They were looking for a conquering Messiah, not a suffering Messiah.
  - b) They knew that a cross meant a curse rather than a blessing. Deut. 21:23
- 2) The Greek think the message foolishness.
  - a) That God would become a man to feel all man felt and die for him, that would make Him less than God to them.
  - b) That man has to deny himself from his sinful lusts was unheard of to the Greek.
  - c) That a man could die in the place of another and be forgiven was idiocy.
 

\* There is a veil over the Jews and blindness on the Greek. 2Cor. 3:14, 4:4; 1Pet. 2:8; Rom. 9-11; Matt. 11:6

**1:24** The message of the cross is embraced by faith.

- 1) Those who are called and respond to be saved by God.
- 2) This includes both Jews and Greeks.
- 3) Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God to these individuals.
  - a) To see their lost condition.
  - b) To remove the blindness.
  - c) To prompt them to repent, without violating their free will.
  - d) To be assured of their salvation.
  - e) To overcome sin by the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - f) To see things as God sees them.
 

\* In Christ all barriers are removed!
- 4) The reason is two-fold. vs. 25
  - a) The foolishness of God is wiser than man, due to the fact that He is all knowing and all wise, knowing the end from the beginning.
  - b) The weakness of God is stronger than man for God is all powerful, there is nothing impossible for Him.
 

\* Man limits the Lord.

**1:26-31** *The ways of God lead to the glory is of God, not man.*

**1:26** The practical evidence of the wisdom of God.

- 1) Not many wise intellectual according to the flesh, depending on human knowledge and wisdom are saved.
- 2) Not many mighty or great and influential individuals are saved.
- 3) Not many noble, well born or high ranking people are saved.  
\* He does not say they never are saved but that not many, due to the dependency on human wisdom!

**1:27-29** The wisdom of God.

- 1) He has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise. vs. 27a
- 2) He has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty. vs. 27b
- 3) He has chosen the base things, low born of the world, things despised or contemptible and the things that are not, to bring to nothing, render idle or inoperative the things that are. vs. 28
- 4) He had a purpose in mind, that no flesh should glory in His presence! vs. 29  
\* I will not give my glory to another. Is. 48:11b

**1:30** The position of every believer.

- 1) You are in Christ.

- 2) He becomes wisdom from God to us, the message of salvation, encompassing the three that follow.  
\* Proverbs personified wisdom as a woman. Col. 2:3
  - a) He became for us righteousness from God.  
\* Our standing and justified before God. Rom. 5:1
  - b) He became for us sanctification from God.  
\* Our position, set apart from sin for God's use!
  - c) He became for us redemption from God.  
\* Our purchased price from the slave market of sin!
- 3) God's wisdom to save man is displayed before the entire world and heavenly host. Eph. 3:10
  - a) The Prophets searched diligently. 1Pet. 1:10
  - b) The angels desired to look into. 1Pet. 1:12  
\* The wisdom of God is rich and unsearchable. Rom. 11:33

**1:31** The clear purpose regarding the message of the cross through the gospel.



- 1) He is quoting Jeremiah, “ Let man glory in this, that he understands and knows Me”. Jer. 9:23-24
- 2) All glory belongs to Jesus Christ  
\* Col. 1:16-19; Gal. 6:14