

Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

1 Corinthians

Victory Christian Center Elder Tim Herman April 5th, 2009

Causes of division (1:18-4:5)

- "Is Christ divided?" (1:13) Greek is *mer-id'-zo*, meaning to cut into pieces. Can you cut Christ into pieces and then give a piece to each church leader? NO.
 - The Church as a whole must respect all parts of the body, but every church that believes in the gospel (death, burial, and resurrection of Christ), and the Bible as God's divine Word is part of the body.
 - What about Jehovah Witness, Mormons, and others?
- 1:17
 - "Christ did not send me to baptize". Paul's was a preacher, and he left baptisms for others to perform. Paul is not implying that baptism isn't important...see Acts 18:8
 - Paul's preaching was "not with words of human wisdom"; this may allude to the Alexandrian style of Apollos but Paul never says anything negative about Apollos.
 - Using human wisdom to explain the cross will simply void (empty out) the message
- Foolishness of men versus the power of God (1:18-31)
- 1:18, "the message of the cross"
 - To unbelievers (Jews and Greeks in Paul's time), it's foolishness because the crucifixion was "proof" that Jesus wasn't a savior
 - To Christians, it's the power (Greek is *doo'-nam-is*) of God...'dynamite' explosive life-changing power
- 1:19 is a quote from Isaiah 29:14
- 1:20-21...types of intellectual leaders who do not understand the cross
 - "Wise"...highly educated theologians
 - See Matt 11:25-28: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden" is referring to a Jewish rabbi (teacher) whose teaching would become a "yoke" (burden). Some rabbi's were proud of how heavy they could make the yoke for students. Note what "teacher Jesus" says about His yoke. (Note the context of Matt. 11:25-28 is about teaching as it relates to weariness)
 - "Scholar", Greek is *gram-mat-yooce'* meaning to be one who studies words and laws to determine their meaning. Scholars were leaders in the Sanhedrin courts that interpreted the Law of Moses).
 - "Disputer", Greek is *sood-zay-tay-tace'*, a rare word that means to 'dispute together' or essentially be a skilled debater
- 1:21...God does not use the "wisdom of the world"
- 1:22-25...see Paul's first-hand experience with the preaching of the cross in Acts 6 & 7:
 - Acts 6:8-15
 - Acts 7:1-8...note Stephen's reference to the Abrahamic covenant
 - Acts 7:9-43...Stephen's view of God's history
 - Acts 7:44-53...Stephen's strong indictment of the "wise, scholars, and debaters"
 - Acts 7:54-8:3...the stoning of Stephen. Who was there??? Paul!
 - Acts 9:1-31...Paul's conversion and start of his ministry
- 1:26...not many intellectuals become Christians
 - "Wise"...highly educated
 - "mighty/influential"...people of power
 - "noble"...Greek is *yoog-en'-ace* meaning to be well-born into a noble family
- 1:27-28, "God chose"

- Foolish things, weak things, and lowly things so that nobody can brag in His presence
- “and the things that are not” may be referencing a phrase from the Apocryphal book of 2 Edras 6:56 which was written in the first century, “*As for the other people, which also come of Adam, thou hast said that they are nothing*”
- 1:30, literal translation is “*and of Him ye -- ye are in Christ Jesus, who became to us from God wisdom, righteousness also, and sanctification, and redemption,*” (emphasis added)
- Through His Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, Jesus Christ became to us the “wisdom from God”
- God’s wisdom is righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to us (not a college degree!)
 - Righteousness and sanctification are from God, and results in redemption for us (ransom payment...Rom 3:24)