



09.18.2019

Welcome

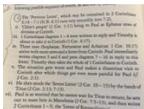
Worship w/Prayer Board

Announcements

Homework: Chapter 1 Cross References

Timeline:

We do not have access to the full story nor the full correspondence, so we study looking for clues and connections to fill in what is not said nor provided.



FIRST VISIT IS IN ACTS 18

Power Point: Slide #1

- i. The 'Previous Letter', which *may* be contained in 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7::1 (N.B. 6:13 runs very smoothly into 7:2).
- ii. 'Chloe's people' (1 Cor. 1:11_ bring Paul at Ephesus news of divisions at Corinth.
- iii. 1 Corinthians chapters 1-4 were written in reply and Timothy is about to take it to Corinth (1 Cor. 4:17).
- iv. Three men (Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus: 1 Cor. 16:17) arrive with more news and a letter from Corinth: Paul immediately writes chapters 5 and 6 and pens chapters 7-16 in reply to this letter. Timothy then takes the whole of 1 Corinthians to Corinth.
- v. The situation gets worse and Paul makes a disastrous visit to Corinth after which things get even more painful for Paul (cf. 2 Cor. 2:1).
- vi. He then sends the 'Severe Letter' (2 Cor. 10-13) by the hands of Titus (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:13).
- vii. Paul is so worried that he cannot wait for Titus to return; he sets out to meet him in Macedonia (2 Cor. 7:5-13), and then writes 2 Corinthians 1-9, the 'Letter of Reconciliation'.

("Message of 1 Corinthians", David Prior, pg. 18. The Bible Speaks Today, IVP 1985)

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

*1 Paul, called by the will of God to be an **apostle** of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,*

2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Divisions in the Church

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, ^[a] by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Power Point: Slides #2 - #6**I. Apostleship: Three Signs of**

(1.Appointed by Christ. 2.Seen Christ personally. 3.Signs and Miracles.)

(We use denominations to divide ourselves today)

1 Cor 1:1

*Paul, called by the will of God to be an **apostle** of Christ Jesus,*

Rom. 1:1 (ESV)

Paul, a **servant*** of Christ Jesus, called to be an **apostle**, set apart for the gospel of God,

1 Corinthians 9:1 (ESV)

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? **Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?**

2 Corinthians 12:12 (ESV)

¹² The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, **with signs and wonders and mighty works.**

Hebrews 5:4 (ESV)

⁴ **And no one takes this honor for himself,** but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

1 Thessalonians 2:6 (ESV)

⁶ Nor **did we seek glory** from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. (Humility)

S/G – Tested HOW? What did they do to ‘test’? Is that what the Corinthians are doing?

Revelation 2:2 (ESV)

“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have **tested**** those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

*Romans 1:1

Bondservant (1:1): This word can be translated *slave* or *servant*. It carries a number of ideas. It could refer to an employee who “could not resign and work for another employer. Highly educated and skilled people, as well as ordinary laborers, were *bondservants*.” **The word could also refer to a person owned by another. In this instance, Paul might have in mind the Old Testament picture of a slave who out of love makes a lifetime commitment to his master (Ex. 21:2–6).**

No matter the nuance, the word certainly indicates Paul’s loyalty to and service under the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostle (1:1): An apostle was a member of the early church to whom God gave special authority to proclaim and administer the gospel. The Lord gave His original twelve apostles miraculous gifts and abilities (Matt. 10:1–8) and used some of them to write His words without error (Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:3; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16). To others God also gave the gift of founding and governing churches in a life-multiplying way. Their insights and instructions were key to keeping the church on course (Gal. 1:8, 9; 1 Thess. 4:8; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14).

In the earliest beginnings of the church, not just anyone could be an apostle. **A person had to be appointed by God to the task and an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ** (Matt. 10:1–8; Acts 1:21–26). Paul qualified on both counts (Acts 9:1–27; 22:6–15; 26:12–20; 1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 1:1), and he referred to himself as the last of the apostles to see the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:7, 8).¹

**Revelation 2

To the Church in Ephesus

2 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

² “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have **tested** those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ⁶ Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

2:1 Ephesus Ephesus, the largest city in Asia Minor, was situated where the Cayster River meets the Aegean Sea. Ephesus was both a major port city and the site of many temples, including a large one dedicated to goddess Artemis (see Acts 19:27 and note).

the seven stars in his right hand Christ is identified as the speaker at the beginning of each of the addresses to the churches in Rev 2–3; this reflects aspects of John’s introduction in 1:9–20.

¹ Hayford, J. W., & Watkins, W. D. (1993). [Kingdom Living: Growing Steadfast in the Faith: a study of Romans](#). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Week 2 – 1 Corinthians 1:1-

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2:2 your labor and patient endurance Probably describes the church's work for the sake of the gospel.

I know Since Christ is among the churches (see 1:13), He knows their deeds.

not able to tolerate evil Initially, they were zealous for righteousness.

you put to the test Likely a defense mechanism to safeguard the purity and livelihood of the church (see Acts 20:29; and see note on 1 John 1:1–4); they were a discerning group of people.

2:3 patient endurance The church was probably encountering opposition, which may have resulted in persecution. Their refusal to conform would have also caused social and political backlash, causing tension in commercial and familial relationships.

because of my name Describes their identification as followers of Jesus.

2:4 I have this against you Christ's commendation now turns to condemnation.

you have left your first love The church was initially zealous and motivated by love, but that love diminished as time passed. This love could be directed at God or brothers and sisters in the Lord. Their love for unbelievers in the city may have also waned under the heavy hand of persecution.

2:5 repent Condemnation is followed by an exhortation to repentance: abandon sin and return to serving God.

if you do not Christ moves from exhortation to warning.

I will remove Failure to repent would result in the church's removal from that place. If a church fails to fulfill its function, it will not continue to exist.

2:6 you do have this Christ commends the church for zealously opposing that which is unjust in favor of righteousness.

deeds of the Nicolaitans Little is known of this group; they are probably not connected to the Nicolaus of Acts 6:5. Given John's disdain for the religious practices of the Roman Empire, the Nicolaitans may have compromised by allowing pagan religious practices into the church, thereby avoiding persecution and social tension (compare Rev 2:14–15).

things which I also hate Christ hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans and presents them as a threat to the church.

2:7 The one who has an ear Recalls Jesus' exhortation throughout the Gospels (e.g., Matt 13:9, 43): Hear, understand, and respond accordingly. This is reflected in the closing of each message to the seven churches (Rev 2:11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

To the one who conquers The first letter concludes with a promise reflecting the ultimate promise of the book in 21:7.

tree of life See note on Gen 2:9; compare Rev 22:2; Gen 3:24.

the paradise of God Paradise represents the ultimate place of rest and refuge with God. The new earth and arrival of the final kingdom of God is later cast in language like that used to describe Eden (Rev 22:1–2; compare Gen 2:8, 10).²

Could this be what the Ephesian church was using as a test for authenticity? The speakers belief in the authority of JC?

1John1:1-4

1:1–4 First John is concerned with false teaching that denied Jesus' incarnation and the atoning significance of His death and resurrection. The content of the letter indicates that its author was acquainted with his audience and likely had authority over them.³

REV 2:1–7 EPHEBUS: CASE STUDY OF A CHURCH IN ACTION

² Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Re 2:1–7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Jn). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

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There is much to be learned by looking at the history of a church over time. Perhaps you would benefit by undertaking such a study of your church. John's letter to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) is something of an audit or assessment of that 40-year-old congregation. He commended the people for **seven good accomplishments**, but also warned them about a glaring weakness.

The New Testament gives us more information about Ephesus than any other church in the first century A.D. As a result, we have a case study on the long-term life of a congregation. The record of the Ephesian Christians is given in seven documents by three authors, and spans about four decades of time. By studying this material carefully, you can gain insight into the life of your own congregation. The following articles, personality and city profiles, tables, and maps will help you in your study:

Key People

- Priscilla and Aquila; see the profile at Rom. 16:3-5.
- Apollos; see the profile at Acts 18:24-28.
- Paul; see the profile at Acts 13:2-3.
- Timothy; see the profile at the Introduction to 2 Timothy.

Key Places and Events

- "The Ephesus Approach: How the Gospel Penetrated a City" at Acts 19:8-41.
- The Introduction to Ephesians
- "The Ultimate 'New Testament Church'" at the Introduction to Ephesians.
- Ephesus; see the profile and map at the Introduction to Ephesians.
- The Introduction to 1 and 2 Timothy
- "A Manual for Church Life" at the Introduction to 1 Timothy.
- "Seven Churches to Study" at Rev. 3:1.

Key Biblical Texts

- Beginnings: Acts 18:18-28.
- Foundations and Growth: Acts 19:1-41.
- A Leadership Assembly: Acts 20:13-38.
- Correspondence to the Congregation: The Book of Ephesians.
- Directions for a Pastor: The Books of 1 and 2 Timothy.
- Praise and Warning: Rev. 2:1-7.

How well is your congregation doing as a community of God's people? Does it celebrate its past? Do current members know about its beginnings and history? In what areas would your church be considered strong or fruitful? What do the leaders need to focus on, and what changes do they need to implement? What warnings might God offer your congregation? How do you need to pray for your church? ♦

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2:1-7

Although the church at Ephesus was marked by works, labor, patience, and a discerning intolerance of moral and doctrinal error, it had no love. It epitomized orthodoxy without love. **Three commands were issued: remember, repent, and do.** The threat centered in the removal of any future opportunity to serve Christ as a local church; the **Ephesian church ceased to function in the sixth century.** The overcomer is not a superspiritual Christian; rather, it is a title for the individual believer (cf. 1 John 4:4; 5:1, 5; Rev. 21:7-8). Some dispensationalists believe that the principles of this church's life-style reflect first-century Christendom.⁵

Why does he need to 'prove' or 're-prove' this to the church he founded? (Factions)

Interesting note on WHY he has to keep spending time on this 'reproving' who he is in Christ = Warfare to waste time and energy. Tire everyone out from doing the loving of the unsaved.

⁴ [Word in life study Bible](#). (1996). (electronic ed., Re 2:1). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ Gromacki, R. G. (1974). [New Testament survey](#) (p. 401). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Take Home Application:

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II. Reaffirming WHO the Corinthians are in Christ.**III. The Trouble With Factions:**

Divide

Appeal to human self-aggrandizement

Who is Chloe?

Acts 9:1-27 (ESV)**The Conversion of Saul**

9 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.⁴ And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"⁵ And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."¹¹ And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem."¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;¹⁹ and taking food, he was strengthened.

Saul Proclaims Jesus in Synagogues

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.²⁰ And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."²¹ And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?"²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

Saul Escapes from Damascus

²³ When many days had passed, the Jews^[a] plotted to kill him,²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him,²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall,^[b] lowering him in a basket.

Saul in Jerusalem

²⁶ And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

CORINTHIANS

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 56

Theme: Resolving Doctrinal and Practical Church Problems and Growth of a Church in Christ

Key Words: The Cross, Sexual Sins, Spiritual Gifts, Love, the Resurrection

Author. The authenticity of 1 Corinthians has never seriously been challenged. In style, language, and theology, the letter belongs to Paul.

Occasion and Date. Paul established the church at Corinth about A.D. 50–51, when he spent eighteen months there on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1–17). He continued to carry on correspondence and exercise care for the church after his departure (see 1 Cor. 5:9; 2 Cor. 12:14). During his three-year ministry in Ephesus, on his third missionary journey (Acts 19), he had received disturbing reports concerning moral laxity among believers in Corinth. To remedy the situation, he sent the church a letter (1 Cor. 5:9–11), which has since been lost. Shortly afterward, a delegation sent by Chloe, a member of the church in Corinth, reported to Paul concerning the existence of divisive factions in the church. Before he could write a corrective letter, another delegation from Corinth arrived with a letter asking him certain questions (1 Cor. 7:1; 16:17). Paul immediately sent Timothy to Corinth to help correct conditions there (1 Cor. 4:17). He then wrote the letter that we know as 1 Corinthians, expecting it to reach Corinth before Timothy (16:10). Since Paul apparently wrote the letter near the end of his Ephesian ministry (16:8), it may be dated about A.D. 56.

Week 2 – 1 Corinthians 1:1-

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Purpose. 1 Corinthians is a pastoral letter, written to resolve doctrinal and practical problems within the local church. Paul’s authorship gives the letter apostolic application to all “the churches of God” (11:16).

Background. The letter reveals some of the typical Greek cultural problems of Paul’s day, including the gross sexual immorality of the city of Corinth. The Greeks were known for their idolatry, divisive philosophies, spirit of litigation, and rejection of a bodily resurrection. Corinth was one of the most important commercial cities of the day and controlled much of the shipping between the East and the West. It was located on the narrow neck of land which served as a land-bridge between the mainland of Greece and the Peloponnesian peninsula. The city was infamous for its sensuality and sacred prostitution. Even its name became a notorious proverb: “to Corinthianize” meant to practice prostitution. The city’s chief deity was Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of licentious love, and a thousand professional prostitutes served in the temple dedicated to her worship. The spirit of the city showed up in the church and explains the kind of problems the people faced.

It also reveals some of the problems the former pagans had in not transferring previous religious experiences to the ministry experience of the Holy Spirit. They may have associated some of the frenzied antics of paganism with the exercise of spiritual gifts (see 12:2).

Content. The letter consists of Paul’s response to ten separate problems: a sectarian spirit, incest, lawsuits, fornication, marriage and divorce, eating food offered to idols, wearing of the veil, the Lord’s Supper, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection of the body.

Personal Application. No epistle in the New Testament gives a clearer insight into the life of the first-century church than 1 Corinthians. In it Paul provides straightforward instructions for such moral and theological problems as sectarianism, spiritual immaturity, church discipline, ethical differences, the role of the sexes and the proper use of spiritual gifts. Where these same problems exist in the modern church, the remedies are the same. Those from non-Pentecostal or non-charismatic churches may receive a fresh challenge from the vitality and spiritual gifts evident in the Corinthian church, and may lay aside traditional prejudices against such things. Those from charismatic and Pentecostal churches, where worship is less structured and spiritual gifts are prominent, may reexamine their own practices in the light of Paul’s guidelines for congregational services.

Christ Revealed. The letter contains an unmatched revelation of the Cross of Christ as a counter to all human boasting (chs. 1–4). Paul cites Christ as our example in all behavior (11:1) and describes the church as His body (ch. 12). Especially important are the powerful consequences of Christ’s resurrection for the whole of creation (ch. 15).

The Holy Spirit at Work. The manifestations or the gifts of the Spirit make up the best known passages about the Holy Spirit (chs. 2–14). But we should not overlook the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing the things of God to the human spirit in a way that prevents all grounds for pride (2:1–13). Perhaps most illuminating amid current debate in the church at large is the way the apostle leads the Corinthians into a balanced employment of speaking with tongues, affirming this practice and refusing any the right to prohibit it (ch. 14).

Outline of 1 Corinthians *Introduction with greetings and thanksgiving 1:1–9*

- I. The problem of a sectarian spirit which arose from a preference for religious leaders because of their supposed superior wisdom 1:0–4:21
 - A. The contrast between human and divine wisdom over the Cross shows the fallacy of a sectarian spirit which stems from human wisdom 1:0–3:4
 - B. The role of religious leaders show they are important but never the cause for boasting 3:5–4:5

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- C. An open rebuke by ironic comparison of the Corinthians' pride with Paul's foolishness 4:6–21
- II. The problem of internal church discipline brought on by a case of incest 5:1–13
- III. The problem of lawsuits between Christians before public courts 6:1–11
- IV. The problem of a sexual misuse of the body from a misapplication of Paul's ethical teaching 6:12–20
- V. The problem of the relationship between the secular sphere and the believer's spiritual life, especially in the areas of sex, marriage, and slavery 7:1–40
- VI. The problem of ethical differences between brethren caused by the eating of food offered to idols 8:1–11:1
 - A. The basic principle of love versus knowledge 8:1–13
 - B. Paul's personal example in foregoing his rights 9:1–27
 - C. The application of the principle in attitude and action 10:1–11:1
- VII. The problem of the role of the sexes in light of the removal of the veil 11:2–16
- VIII. The problem of desecrating the Lord's Supper 11:17–34
- IX. The problem of spiritual manifestations which arose from a misuse of the gift of tongues 12:1–14:40
 - A. The need for variety 12:1–31
 - B. The need for love 13:1–13
 - C. The need for control 14:1–40
- X. The problem of the resurrection of the dead 15:1–58
- XI. Concluding personal remarks 16:1–24

1:1 Sosthenes was probably the former ruler of the synagogue at Corinth (Acts 18:17).

1:2 All believers in Christ are **saints** by virtue of their call, having been set apart to belong to Him. Having been placed in Christ, they are to grow progressively in holiness.

1:4 Paul rejoices in the grace of God at work in their past (vv. 5, 6), present (v. 7), and future (vv. 8, 9). Jesus Christ is validating the eternal purposes of God for His people.

1:5 Enriched: No one is impoverished by becoming a Christian. The particular wealth Paul has in mind is in the realm of spiritual gifts. Noteworthy is his introductory mention of **utterance**, affirmed as enriching, even though he will later bring severe correction regarding their manner of employing vocal gifts.

1:6 The changed lives of the Corinthians gave divine confirmation to Paul's **testimony** to Christ (see 2 Cor. 3:1-3).

1:8 Blameless: Paul's confidence of final approval is based on God's faithfulness.

1:10 The first problem addressed is the rivalry and strife that resulted over preference for religious leaders based on their assumed superior wisdom. Probably most were claiming to be of the "Paul-party" (v. 12). As a recipient of revelation, no one stood as close to the fountainhead of Christianity as Paul. He expressed gratitude that he had **baptized** only a few, lest anyone could claim baptism **in the name of Paul** and assume undue allegiance to him or privileged position before others. The gospel has to do with Jesus Christ, and one's allegiance belongs *to* Him and all position is *in* Him.

1:10 See section 4 of Truth-In-Action at the end of 1 Cor.

1:18–25 Message of the cross: A mutual antagonism exists between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of God, and the conflict shows up supremely in the Cross of Christ. God works most wisely and most powerfully in ways directly opposite human expectations. Even as Jesus hung on the Cross, the Jews asked for a power-sign (Matt. 27:40-43). The Greeks made the pursuit of wisdom a meaningless end in itself, as Paul learned at Athens (Acts 17:21).

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1:20 Where *is the wise?*: The deep gap between human and divine ways is evidenced throughout human history, as the quotation from Isaiah in v. 19 and the four questions in v. 20 show. The pro-Egyptian policies of Israel in Isaiah's day seemed to be the only reasonable recourse, but it was completely contrary to the divine plan of salvation (Is. 29:14).

1:24 The power of God: The gospel is the revelation of truth, but in the final analysis it is the operation of God's power with victory over sin and death. Biblical salvation is nothing short of a complete restoration of the universe, with a new heaven and a new earth.

1:25 See section 2 of Truth-In-Action at the end of 1 Cor.

1:26 A survey of the converts at Corinth proves the mutual rejection between human and divine wisdom. Only a few came from the world of culture and social sophistication. The heart of true wisdom is knowing the ways and the will of God, and living in harmony with ultimate, created reality. The human wisdom Paul opposes is not intellect or education, but a false independence of God and a bent toward self-sufficiency. God rejects human wisdom because of its pride and self-glory.

1:30 Righteousness, a term taken from the courts, is God's judicial determination to right every wrong, His gift to the guilty which removes all condemnation and puts them in a state of justification, including full acquittal from all charges against them. **Sanctification** is a symbol taken from the temple, showing the need for cleansing from pollution. It includes a renewal by the power of the Holy Spirit, which allows acceptable living before God and points to our ultimate perfection in His presence. **Redemption**, taken from a background of slavery and debt, speaks of freedom and final deliverance from all aspects of sin, including the resurrection of the body.⁶

2.3.1 Schisms (1 Corinthians 1–4)

Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 1–4 that God has outmatched worldly power through the weakness of the cross, perplexing human wisdom with its folly. God has triumphed through what the world thinks is weakness and folly (1:25), and he has chosen those who are not impressive by worldly standards (1:26–28). This means that no human being can boast about his own understanding or power (1:29), and there is no place for Christians to exalt themselves by identifying with their favorite teacher (1:12–13; 3:4–9). The gospel means that all people are helpless before God, that Christ is everything to believers (1:30), and that humans have nothing that they have not received (4:7). The only thing to boast in is the Lord (1:31), and when everyone thinks this way, the church will be unified (1:10).

These chapters of 1 Corinthians, then, condemn worldly standards of evaluation so that members of the Corinthian church will be delivered from the wisdom that God will destroy (1:19). Through this judgment on worldly wisdom, Paul wants the Corinthians to know the wonders of the gospel, which no one expected (2:7–13). God will catch the wise in their craftiness (3:19), judging their proud speculations. Meanwhile those who follow the apostles will suffer and then be exalted (4:9–16). God's glory is shown in the display of apostolic weakness (4:9–13), and Paul wants the Corinthians to imitate him so that God's glory will be seen in their weakness (4:16). By passing judgment against human strength and wisdom, Paul seeks to deliver the Corinthians to the glory of the cross, the glory of God's weakness and folly that is stronger and wiser than men (1:18–25).⁷

1 Corinthians

1:1–9 Paul founded the church at Corinth during his second missionary journey (probably around AD 51). Paul likely wrote the letter known as 1 Corinthians in AD 54–55 after he had received a report concerning the Corinthian believers quarreling (see note on 1 Cor 1:11) and a letter from

⁶ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., Ro 16:26–1 Co 1:30). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ Hamilton, J. M., Jr. (2010). *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (pp. 457–458). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

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them that raised questions about spiritual gifts, collections, and marriage. The work now called 1 Corinthians is actually (at least) Paul's second letter to the Corinthians; there is not a known copy of the letter mentioned in 5:9.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Paul's Letters

How to Study the Bible

1:1 Paul The apostle formerly known as Saul of Tarsus.

Paul: A Life of Redemption and Transformation

an apostle See note on Rom 1:1.

Pauline Self-Designations Table

through the will of God Paul's appointment to the office of apostle was God's decision, not a person's or group's. Paul doesn't need the affirmation of the Corinthians because God chose him.

Sosthenes He may be the synagogue leader Sosthenes, who was beaten in front of the judgment seat while Paul was in Corinth (Acts 18:17).

1:2 church The Greek word used here, *ekklēsia*, refers to a gathering of people, not a building; here, it references the gathering of Christ followers in Corinth.

The Church Devotional

Ekklēsia Word Study

Corinth Located on the coast of Greece, Corinth was a major metropolis in Paul's day.

Corinth

Corinth was a metropolitan city on the Mediterranean Sea with a population consisting of between 150,000 and 300,000 Roman citizens and approximately 460,000 slaves. Jewish people may have been some of the first settlers. The city contained many freed people who often became criminals because they were unable to work legitimate jobs; these may have represented the poor that Paul mentions (1 Cor 11:17–34). In the first century AD, when Paul wrote his letter, Corinth was known for its banking industry and incredible wealth. Shrines to deities of Greek, Roman, and even Egyptian gods have been discovered, and cult prostitution was common. The biannual Isthmian athletic games were held at Corinth, which made it a travel destination; these games also involved a celebration of the god Poseidon.

sanctified The process of a believer becoming more like Christ in thought and action.

saints See note on Rom 1:7.

Lord Paul uses the Greek word *kyrios* here to show Jesus' rightful reign and authority over all things and people.

1:3 Grace to you and peace See note on Rom 1:7.

1:4 I give thanks Statements of thanksgiving are a common feature in ancient letters. Paul thanks God for the Corinthian believers despite their immorality. He is thankful that they've come to Christ and are at least staying engaged with the Christian community; this provides the opportunity for God to work in them and through them.

Prayers in Paul's Letters Table

grace of God Refers either to the undeserved gifts the believers have received from God—speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts (1 Cor 1:5–7; 12–14; 2 Cor 8:7)—or to their receiving salvation.

in Christ Jesus Emphasizes that spiritual gifts and salvation do not come from people but from Christ. This also shows that the believers belong to Christ now that they've entered into a relationship with Him.

1:5 made rich in him Since there was a very large wealth gap in Corinth, Paul emphasizes that riches are found in a life of following Christ; Christ's gifts are what matter. This is Paul's first response to a problem he addresses further in 1 Cor 11:17–34 (compare note on v. 2).

People are poor prior to coming to Christ in the sense that they are removed from the life that God wants them to have in relationship with Him. To Paul, the only life worth living is one for Christ—even at the cost of all things, including wealth and physical well-being. Paul is modeling a life that doesn't revolve around economy but on a relationship with God and others. His life is focused on love as God is focused on love (13:1–3).

speech The Greek word used here, *logos*, refers to that which is spoken (in this instance). The Corinthians highly esteemed both speech and knowledge because of their cultural value (compare 12:8; 13:1–2; 2 Cor 8:7).

knowledge The Greek word used here, *gnōsis*, may refer to an understanding of Christian teaching (compare 1 Cor 12:8; 13:8), but based on Paul's subsequent reference to the testimony of Christ among believers in v. 6, it likely refers to remembrance of how Christ has worked in people's lives.

1:6 testimony Paul is referring to the work that he told the Corinthians that Christ would do in them; it's now happening and is providing a witness for Christ in the world. Christ has sent the Holy Spirit to them to transform them (see note on v. 2).

1:7 spiritual gift Literally “spiritual things”—refers to the gifts described in chs. 12–14.

revelation The Greek word used here, *apokalypsis*, often rendered as “revelation,” can either refer to the second coming of Christ (compare 2 Thess 1:7; 1 Pet 1:13) or to God revealing something directly to a believer through the gift of tongues, prophecy, or a vision (e.g., 1 Cor 14:6, 14:26; Rev 1:1).

Revelation as a Concept

1:8 blameless Meaning being free from accusation (compare Col 1:22; 1 Tim 3:10; Titus 1:6–7).

day of our Lord Refers to the day when Christ will fully inaugurate justice in the world by delivering His followers and purging the world of evil (see note on 1 Thess 4:16; compare note on 1 Thess 5:2).

1:9 fellowship Paul uses the Greek word *koinōnia* here—meaning “to fellowship” or “join together.” God intended for the Corinthian believers to join together because of Christ; instead, they focused on leaders and teachers, which (among many other things) caused division within their church (see 1 Cor 1:11–12).

Koinōnia Word Study

1:10–17 Paul responds to reports he received concerning the Corinthian church dividing itself over different leaders.

1:10 divisions See note on v. 2; note on v. 5; and note on v. 12.

all say the same thing Paul means that the Corinthian believers should all agree on how the Spirit works among them and the type of values that Christ would have them to hold—both of these things Paul clarifies within this letter (see note on v. 2).

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1:11 by Chloe's people Refers to the people in Chloe's household. In Ephesus, people from Chloe's household informed Paul of the quarreling in the Corinthian church (compare 16:19).

quarrels among you The divisions among the Corinthian believers were likely based on personalities rather than theological disputes.

1:12 Apollos A Jew from Alexandria who was an eloquent speaker and knowledgeable in the Scriptures. Apollos ministered in Corinth after Paul left (Acts 18:27–19:1). Some Corinthian believers may have preferred his teaching style (and even teachings) over Paul's (see note on 1 Cor 1:5).

with Cephas The Apostle Simon Peter (John 1:42; Gal 2:9). It is unknown whether he traveled to Corinth. See note on 1 Cor 1:5.

1:13 Has Christ been divided Paul's rhetorical question challenges the Corinthians regarding the divisions within their congregation. Since Christ is one with His body, the Corinthian church (which Paul calls "the body"; 12:27) should be united. He also may be critiquing them for ranking Christ among other church leaders, when Christ actually serves as head over the entire body (compare Eph 1:22; 5:23–24).

1:14 Crispus Probably the synagogue ruler in Corinth. He was likely the first person to accept Christ in Corinth during Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 18:8).

Gaius Possibly the same Gaius who hosted Paul in Corinth while he wrote his letter to the Romans (Rom 16:23).

1:16 household of Stephanas Paul described Stephanas and his household as the first converts in the province of Achaia (1 Cor 16:15). In first-century AD Graeco-Roman society, it was customary for the rest of the household to follow the pattern set by the head of the household (Acts 11:14; 16:31–34).

1:17 to proclaim the gospel Although Paul baptized people as part of his ministry, he believed his primary calling was to preach the gospel (e.g., Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 10:16; Gal 1:8).

be emptied If credit for Christ's saving work were given to Paul or anyone else, it would be diminishing the power of the gospel and essentially rendering void its purpose in their lives. The gospel's purpose is to do what they cannot do on their own: free them from sin and put them in right standing with God.

1:18–2:5 In this passage Paul explains the true nature of God's wisdom and the meaning of the cross. The Corinthians failed to grasp both of these issues. This explanation serves as the basis of Paul's appeal for church unity (1 Cor 1:10), which he revisits in 3:1–4:21.

1:18 foolishness God's provision of salvation through the crucifixion of a messiah appeared to be foolishness according to the wisdom of the world. The Romans used the cross as a humiliating form of execution reserved for the worst criminals—insurrectionists. The Greeks believed that the gods operated above the limitations of people and would not have allowed themselves to be treated as Jesus was. Jews regarded the cross as a shameful punishment and even a curse from God (see Deut 21:23).

who are being saved Although Paul believed that people were made right with God when they entered into a relationship with Jesus, he also viewed God's work of making people more like Him as an ongoing process.

the power of God See note on 1 Cor 1:24.

1:19 I will destroy Paul quotes Isa 29:14 to further highlight the contrast between divine wisdom and human wisdom.

I will confound In Christ's death and resurrection, those who have understanding (wisdom) according to people's standards—those who deem Christ's resurrection as foolishness—are shown to actually be ignorant.

1:20 wise person Refers to a Greek philosopher. Such people were highly regarded for their analytical skills and persuasive speech.

scribe An expert in the Mosaic law (compare Matt 5:20). The term may also refer to a “city secretary” (see Acts 19:35).

the debater A person trained as a skilled rhetorician or public speaker.

1:21 foolishness of preaching Paul is using rhetoric to mock those who are rising up against his teachings (1 Cor 1:12). It doesn’t make sense for some Corinthians to consider Paul’s preaching as foolishness because it was through his preaching that people were brought to Christ and their church was founded (Acts 18:1–11).

1:22 Jews ask for sign miracles In Jewish tradition, miraculous deeds functioned as a sign of authority and legitimacy from God (see Mark 8:11–12; John 2:18–20).

Greeks seek wisdom Greeks were renowned for their love of new ideas (see Acts 17:20–21). They were also the founders of philosophy and even worshiped gods of wisdom like Athena.

Wisdom and Related Terms

1:23 a cause for stumbling The message about a crucified messiah would have offended Jewish people. According to Jewish tradition, a person hung on a tree (e.g., a cross) was considered to be cursed (Deut 21:23). Jews would not have expected God’s chosen Messiah to experience such a horrific execution.

1:24 is the power of God Jesus’ death on the cross reveals God’s power to save people from sin and death, and thus His power to redeem seemingly irredeemable situations (like the problems at Corinth). The description of Christ as the power of God also challenges the Roman Empire’s use of crucifixion as a symbol of its own power. Resurrection hinges on God’s ability (see 1 Cor 15:17, 53–57; compare Isa 53:12).

the wisdom of God Christ can be described as the wisdom of God because His death and resurrection uniquely express God’s mysterious plan of salvation (1 Cor 2:7; 4:1). Christ demonstrates the paradoxical nature of God’s plan to save people from sin: it requires a death to save people from death (compare Isa 53:1).

1:26 consider your calling Refers to God’s call to be saved by accepting His work through Christ and entering into a relationship with Him.

1:27 foolish things of the world See note on 1 Cor 1:18.

the strong Paul is likely referencing the upper-class Corinthians who considered themselves superior (compare 11:17–34). Those who live by common wisdom rather than God’s revelation in Christ are choosing to depend on their own strength over God’s.

1:28 insignificant of the world Paul is likely referencing God’s choice to bring salvation by sending His Son in the way He did—as a poor man from an unimportant region in the frailty of human form—rather than in the triumphant image of a god. This emphasizes that God does not value people based on status or wealth; all people are given the opportunity to be saved and have the right to be at God’s table and be cared for (compare 11:21–22, 33–34).

1:29 boast Some Corinthians may have placed their confidence in their rhetorical skills or spiritual gifts (compare ch. 14). Paul challenges them to depend on God’s work in the cross rather than their self-sufficiency.

Humility Devotional

1:30 wisdom See note on v. 24.

righteousness See note on Rom 1:17.

sanctification See note on 1 Thess 4:3; compare note on Rom 6:19.

redemption Jesus paid the price for sin: death (Rom 6:23). This evokes the OT understanding of “redeemer” or *go’el* (see note on Ruth 2:20 and note on Job 19:25).

Go’el Word Study

1:31 The one who boasts Paul paraphrases Jer 9:24.⁸

1 CORINTHIANS

1 Corinthians 1:9

⁹God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Deuteronomy 7:9

⁹“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

1 Corinthians 1:19

¹⁹For it is written: “*I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*”

Isaiah 29:14

¹⁴Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hidden.”

1 Corinthians 1:20

²⁰Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

Isaiah 19:12

¹²Where *are* they? Where are your wise men? Let them tell you now, And let them know what the LORD of hosts has purposed against Egypt.

Isaiah 33:18

¹⁸Your heart will meditate on terror: “Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* he who weighs? Where *is* he who counts the towers?”

Isaiah 44:25

²⁵Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, And drives diviners mad; Who turns wise men backward, And makes their knowledge foolishness;

1 Corinthians 1:30

³⁰But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

Jeremiah 23:5–6

⁵“Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” ⁶In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now

⁸ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1 Corinthians 1:31

³¹that, as it is written, “*He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.*”

Jeremiah 9:24

²⁴But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD.⁹

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 1

1. **Called to be an apostle.** See on Rom. 1:1. Compare 1 Tim. 1:1. Not distinguishing him from other apostles. Compare Matt. 4:21; John 6:70; but Paul was called no less directly than these by Jesus Christ. Gal. 1:12–16. John does not use the word *apostle*, but gives the idea, John 13:18.

2. **Corinth.** The Corinth of this period owed the beginning of its prosperity to Julius Caesar, who, a hundred years after its destruction by Mummius (B.C. 146), rebuilt and peopled it with a colony of veterans and freedmen. It was situated on the isthmus which divided Northern Greece from the Peloponnesus. It had three harbors, Cenchreae and Schoenus on the east, and Lechaemum on the west. The isthmus, forming the only line of march for an invading or retreating army, was of the greatest military importance. It was known as “the eye of Greece.” By Pindar it was called “the bridge of the sea;” by Xenophon, “the gate of the Peloponnesus;” and by Strabo, “the acropolis of Greece.” In more modern times it was known as “the Gibraltar of Greece.” Hence, at least as early as the march of Xerxes into Greece, it was crossed by a wall, which, in later times, became a massive and important fortification, especially in the decline of the Roman Empire. Justinian fortified it with an hundred and fifty towers. The citadel rose two thousand feet above the sea-level, on a rock with precipitous sides. In the days of the Achaean league it was called one of the “fettlers” of Greece. “It runs out boldly from the surging mountain chains of the Peninsula, like an outpost or sentry, guarding the approach from the north. In days when news was transmitted by fire-signals,* we can imagine how all the southern country must have depended on the watch upon the rock of Corinth” (Mahaffy, “Rambles and Studies in Greece”).

At its narrowest part the isthmus was crossed by a level track called the *diolcus*, over which vessels were dragged on rollers from one port to the other. This was in constant use, because seamen were thus enabled to avoid sailing round the dangerous promontory of Malea, the southern extremity of the Peloponnesus. A canal was projected and begun by Nero, but was abandoned. The common title of the city in the poets was *bimaris*, “the city of the two seas.”

The commercial position of Corinth was, therefore, most important, communicating with the eastern and the western world, with the north and the south. The isthmus was one of the four principal points for the celebration of the Grecian games; and in Paul’s day great numbers flocked to these contests from all parts of the Mediterranean.

On the restoration of the city by Julius Caesar, both Greek and Jewish merchants settled in Corinth in such numbers as probably to outnumber the Romans. In Paul’s time it was distinctively a commercial centre, marked by wealth and luxury. “It was the ‘Vanity Fair’ of the Roman Empire, at once the London and the Paris of the first century after Christ” (Farrar). It was conspicuous for its immorality. To “corinthianize”

⁹ Jones, D. A. (2009). [Old Testament Quotations and Allusions in the New Testament](#) (Ge 3:15–Je 9:24). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

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was the term for reckless debauchery. Juvenal sarcastically alludes to it as “perfumed Corinth;” and Martial pictures an effeminate fellow boasting of being a Corinthian citizen. The temple of Aphrodite (Venus) employed a thousand ministers. Drunkenness rivalled licentiousness, and Corinthians, when introduced on the stage, were commonly represented as drunk. Paul’s impression of its profligacy may be seen in his description of heathenism in the first of Romans, and in his stern words concerning sensual sin in the two Corinthian Epistles. “Politically Roman, socially Greek, religiously it was Roman, Greek, Oriental, all in one. When, therefore, the apostle preached to the Corinthians, the Gospel spoke to the whole world and to the living present” (Edwards).

Called to be saints. See on Rom. 1:7.

Call upon the name (ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα). Compare Rom. 10:12; Acts 2:21. The formula is from the Septuagint. See Zech. 13:9; Gen. 12:8; 13:4; Ps. 115:17. It is used of worship, and here implies prayer to Christ. The first christian prayer recorded as heard by Saul of Tarsus, was Stephen’s prayer to Christ, Acts 7:59. The name of Christ occurs nine times in the first nine verses of this epistle.

Theirs and ours. A. V. and Rev. connect with *Jesus Christ our Lord*. Better with *in every place*. Every place in the province where Christians are is *our* place also. The expression emphasizes the position of Paul as the founder and apostolic head of Christianity in Corinth and in all Achaia.

3. Grace—peace. *Grace* is the Greek salutation, *peace* the Jewish. Both in the spiritual sense. Compare Num. 6:25, 26. This form of salutation is common to all Paul’s epistles to the churches. In Timothy and Titus, *mercy* is added. James alone has the ordinary conventional salutation, χαίρειν *rejoice, hail, greeting*.

4. I thank (εὐχαριστῶ). Found in the Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypse, but most frequently in Paul.

My God. Some very high authorities omit. The pronoun implies close personal relationship. Compare Acts 27:23; Philip. 1:3; 3:8.

By Christ Jesus (ἐν). Better, as Rev., *in*; in fellowship with. The element or sphere in which the grace is manifested.

5. Ye are enriched (ἐπλουτίσθητε). Rev., more literally, “*were* enriched.” Compare Col. 3:16; and see on Rom. 2:4.

Utterance—knowledge (λόγῳ—γνώσει). The two words are found together, ch. 12:8; 2 Cor. 11:6; 8:7. For *knowledge*, see on Rom. 11:33. *Utterance*, aptitude in speech. Paul gives thanks for speech as a means of testifying for Christ. “The saints have never been silent” (Pascal).

6. Witness of Christ (μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ). Testimony concerning Christ. See on John 1:7. Compare Acts 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:8.

7. Come behind (ὕστερεῖσθαι). See on Luke 15:14, and compare Rom. 3:23. Contrast with *were enriched*.

Gift (χαρισματι). See on Rom. 1:11. Its prevailing sense in this epistle is that of special spiritual endowments, such as tongues, prophecy, etc. Here of spiritual blessings generally.

Waiting (ἀπεκδεχομένου). See on Rom. 8:19. Denoting *assiduous* waiting. Dr. Thayer compares the phrase *wait it out* (ἐκ).

Revelation (ἀποκάλυψιν). See on Apoc. 1:1.

8. Confirm. Compare ver. 6.

Unto the end. Of the present *aeon* or period. See on *end of the world*, Matt. 28:20.

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Blameless (ἀνεγκλήτους). Used by Paul only. In apposition with *you*. Rev., *unreprovable*. The kindred verb ἐγκαλέω occurs only in Acts and Romans. See on Rom. 8:33. It means *to accuse publicly*, but not necessarily before a tribunal. See Acts 23:28, 29; 26:2, 7. Hence the word here points to appearance at God's bar.

9. **Faithful** (πιστός). Emphatic, and therefore first in the sentence. See on 1 John 1:9; Apoc. 1:5; 3:14. Compare 2 Tim. 2:13.

Ye were called (ἐκλήθητε). See on Rom. 4:17.

Fellowship (κοινωνία). See on 1 John 1:3; Acts 2:42; Luke 5:10.

10. **I beseech** (παρακαλῶ). See on *consolation*, Luke 6:24. The word occurs more than one hundred times in the New Testament.

Divisions (σχίσματα). See on John 10:19. In classical Greek used only of actual rents in material. So in Matt. 9:16; Mark 2:21. In the sense of *discord*, see John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19. Here, *faction*, for which the classical word is στάσις; division within the christian community. The divisions of the Corinthian church arose on questions of marriage and food (7:3, 5, 12); on eating meat offered to idols (8:7; 10:20); on the comparative value of spiritual endowments, such as speaking with "tongues" (14); on the privileges and demeanor of women in the assemblies for worship (11:5–15); on the relations of the rich and the poor in the *agapae* or love-feasts (11:17–22); and on the prerogatives of the different christian teachers (1:12, 13; 3:3–22).

Perfectly joined together (κατηρτισμένοι). Rev., *perfected together*. See on Matt. 21:16; Luke 6:40; 1 Pet. 5:10. Carrying on the metaphor in *divisions*. Not of individual and absolute perfection, but of perfection in the unity of the Church.

Mind (νοῦ). See on Rom. 7:23.

Judgment (γνώμη). See on Apoc. 17:13. The distinction between *mind* and *judgment* is not between theoretical and practical, since νοῦς *mind*, includes the practical reason, while γνώμη *judgment*, has a theoretical side. Rather between *understanding* and *opinion*; νοῦς regarding the thing from the side of the subject, γνώμη from the side of the object. Being in the same realm of thought, they would judge questions from the same christian stand-point, and formulate their judgment accordingly.

11. **It hath been declared** (ἐδηλώθη). Rev., *signified*, which is hardly strong enough. The word means *to make clear*, or *manifest* (δῆλος). Compare ch. 3:13. It may imply that Paul was reluctant to believe the reports, but was convinced by unimpeachable testimony.

Of the household of Chloe (τῶν Χλόης). See on Rom. 16:10 for the form of expression. The persons may have been slaves who had come to Ephesus on business for their mistress, or members of her family. *Chloe* means *tender verdure*, and was an epithet of Demeter (Ceres), the goddess of agriculture and rural life. It is uncertain whether she belonged to the Corinthian or to the Ephesian church.

Contentions (ἔριδες). Socrates in Plato's "Republic" distinguishes between *disputing* (ἐρίζειν) and *discussing* (διαλέγεσθαι), and identifies *contention* (ἔρις) with *gainsaying* (ἀντιλογία), "Republic," v., 454. Compare Titus 3:9.

12. **Now this I say** (λέγω δὲ τοῦτο). A familiar classical formula: *What I mean is this*. Rev., *Now this I mean*. *This* usually refers to what follows. Compare Gal. 3:17; Eph. 4:17.

I am of Paul and I of Apollos. The repeated δὲ *and*, expresses the opposition between the respective parties. The followers of Apollos preferred his more philosophical and rhetorical preaching to the simpler and more direct utterances of Paul. Others ranged themselves under the name of Peter.

Cephas. Aramaic for Πέτρος *Peter*. See on John 1:42. It is Paul's usual name for Peter, Πέτρος occurring only Gal. 2:7, 8. Peter would be the rallying-point for the Judaizing Christians, who claimed him as the apostle of the circumcision. The state of the Corinthian church offered the most favorable ground for Paul's Jewish-Christian adversaries, who took advantage of the reaction created by the looser views and practice of Gentile Christians, and by the differences of opinion on important questions, to press the necessity of legal regulation, and of ceremonial observances in non-essentials.

Of Christ. Many modern authorities hold that Paul thus designates a fourth and quite distinct party. This view rests mainly on the form of statement in this verse, and has no support in the epistle. The peculiar characteristics of this party, if it were such, can only be conjectured. It seems more probable that those who were "of Christ" belonged to the party of Peter: that they were native Jews, coming from abroad with letters of recommendation to Corinth, representing themselves as ministers and apostles of Christ, and using His name as the watchword under which they could most successfully prosecute their opposition to Paul and the gospel which he preached. The allusion in this verse would therefore link itself with those in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the second epistle.*

13. **Is Christ divided?** (μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός). Some of the best expositors render as an assertion. *Christ has been divided by your controversies.* He is broken up into different party Christs. This gives a perfectly good and forcible sense, and is favored by the absence of the interrogative particle μή, which introduces the next clause.** *Divided:* so portioned up that one party may claim Him more than another. *Christ* has the article. See on Matt. 1:1.

Was Paul crucified for you? (μη Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν). A negative answer is implied. *Paul surely was not, etc. For is ὑπὲρ on behalf of, not περί on account of, as some texts.*

In the name (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα). Rev., correctly, *into* the name. See on Matt. 28:19. Of *Paul* as the name of him whom you were to confess. The order of the original is: *Was it into the same of Paul that ye were baptized?*

15. **I had baptized** (ἐβάπτισα). The correct reading is ἐβαπτίσθητε *ye were baptized.* So Rev. Paul's commission contains no mention of baptism. Compare Acts 9:15, with Matt. 28:15. From his peculiar position as the inaugurator of a second epoch of Christianity, many would be tempted to regard him as the real founder of the Church, and to boast of having been baptized into his name. "No outward initiation of converts entered into his ministry" (Edwards).

16. **And I baptized also.** Another exceptional case occurs to him which he conscientiously adds. The δὲ *and* has a slightly corrective force.

17. **Should be made of none effect** (κενωθῆ). Lit., *emptied.* Rev., *made void.* Compare *is made void,* Rom. 4:14, and the kindred adjective κενὸν, κενὴ *vain,* ch. 15:14. The nucleus of the apostolic preaching was *a fact*—Christ crucified. To preach it as a philosophic system would be to empty it of its saving power, a truth which finds abundant and lamentable illustration in the history of the Church.

18. **The word of the cross** (ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ). Lit., *the word, that, namely, of the cross.* The second article is definitive and emphatic. The word of which the substance and purport is the cross.

To them that perish (τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις). Lit., *that are perishing.* So Rev. The present participle denotes process: they who are *on the way* to destruction. Compare 2 Cor. 2:15.

Foolishness (μωρία). Only in this epistle. See on *have lost his savor,* Matt. 5:13.

Which are saved (τοῖς σωζομένοις). Rev., *being saved:* in process of salvation.

19. **I will destroy**, etc. Cited literally from the Septuagint, Isa. 29:14, except that the Septuagint has κρύψω *I will conceal*, instead of *I will reject*. The Hebrew reads: “The wisdom of its (Judah’s) wise men shall perish, and the sagacity of its sagacious men shall hide itself.”

Wisdom—prudence (σοφίαν—σύνεσιν). The two words are often found together, as Exod. 31:3; Deut. 4:6; Col. 1:9. Compare σοφοὶ καὶ συνετοὶ *wise and prudent*, Matt. 11:25. For the distinction, see, as to σοφία *wisdom*, on Rom. 11:33; as to σύνεσις *prudence*, on Mark 12:33; Luke 2:47. *Wisdom* is the more general; mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense. *Prudence* is the special application of wisdom; its critical adjustment to particular cases.

Will bring to nothing (ἀθετήσω). See on Luke 7:30. Originally, *to make disestablished* (ἄθετον) something which is *established* or *prescribed* (θετόν). Hence *to nullify, make void, frustrate*, and, in a milder sense, *to despise* or *reject*, as Gal. 2:21. The stronger sense is better here, so that Rev., *reject* is not an improvement on the A. V. The American revisers render: *And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought*.

20. **Scribe** (γραμματεὺς). Always in the New Testament in the Jewish sense, *an interpreter of the law*, except Acts 19:35, *the town-clerk*.

Disputer (συζητητής). Only here. Compare the kindred verb συζητέω *to question with*, Mark 1:27; Luke 22:23; Acts 6:9; and συζήτησις *disputation*, Acts 15:2, 7. Referring to Grecian sophistical reasoners, while *scribe* refers to rabbinical hair-splitters.

World (αἰῶνος). See on John 1:9. More correctly, *age* or *period*.

Made foolish (ἐμώρανεν). Proved it to be practical folly; stupefied it. Compare Rom. 1:22. Possibly with a latent suggestion of the judicial power of God to make it foolish.

21. **After that** (ἐπειδὴ). Rev., correctly, *seeing that*.

By wisdom (διὰ τῆς σοφίας). Better, as Rev., giving the force of the article, “through *its* wisdom.”

Preaching (κηρύγματος). Not the act, but the *substance* of preaching. Compare ver. 23.

To save (σῶσαι). The word was technically used in the Old Testament of deliverance at the Messiah’s coming; of salvation from the penalties of the messianic judgment, or from the evils which obstruct the messianic deliverance. See Joel 2:32; Matt. 1:21; compare Acts 2:40. Paul uses it in the ethical sense, to make one a partaker of the salvation which is through Christ. Edwards calls attention to the foregleam of this christian conception of the word in the closing paragraph of Plato’s “Republic:” “And thus, Glaucon, the tale has been saved, and has not perished, and will *save* (σώσειεν) us if we are obedient to the word spoken, and we shall pass safely over the river of forgetfulness and our soul will not be defiled.”

22. **The Jews**. Omit the article. Among the Jews many had become Christians.

Require (αἰτοῦσιν). Rev., *ask*. But it is questionable whether the A. V. is not preferable. The word sometimes takes the sense of *demand*, as Luke 12:48; 1 Pet. 3:15; and this sense accords well with the haughty attitude of the Jews, demanding of all apostolic religions their proofs and credentials. See Matt. 12:38; 16:1; John 6:30.

Greeks. See on Acts 6:1.

Seek after (ζητοῦσιν). Appropriate to the Greeks in contrast with the Jews. The Jews claimed *to possess* the truth: the Greeks were *seekers, speculators* (compare Acts 17:23) after what they called by the general name of *wisdom*.

Christ crucified (Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον). Not *the crucified Christ*, but *Christ as crucified*, not a sign-shower nor a philosopher; and consequently a scandal to the Jew and folly to the Gentile.

Unto the Greeks (Ἑλλησι). The correct reading is ἔθνεσιν *to the Gentiles*. So Rev. Though Ἕλληνες *Greeks*, is equivalent to *Gentiles* in the New Testament when used in antithesis to *Jews*, yet in this passage Paul seems to have in mind the Greeks as representing gentile wisdom and culture.

25. **The foolishness** (τὸ μωρὸν). Lit., *the foolish thing*. More specific than the abstract μωρία *foolishness* (vv. 18, 21), and pointing to the fact of Christ crucified.

26. **Calling** (κλήσιν). Not *condition of life*, but your *calling by God*; not depending on wisdom, power, or lineage.

Noble (εὐγενεῖς). Of high birth. So originally, though as Greece became democratic, it came to signify merely the better sort of freemen. Plato applies it to the children of native Athenians (“Menexenus,” 237). Aeschylus makes Clytaemnestra say to the captive Cassandra that if slavery must befall one there is an advantage in having masters of ancient family property instead of those who have become unexpectedly rich (“Agamemnon,” 1010).

27. **Hath chosen**. The threefold repetition of the word emphasizes the deliberate and free action of God’s gracious will.

28. **Base** (ἀγενῆ). Of no family. The reverse of εὐγενεῖς *noble*.

Despised (ἐξουθενημένα). Lit., *set at nought*. Not merely despised, but expressly branded with contempt. See Luke 23:11.

30. **Wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption**. The last three terms illustrate and exemplify the first—*wisdom*. The wisdom impersonated in Christ manifests itself as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* For δικαιοσύνη *righteousness*, see on Rom. 1:17. For ἁγιασμός *sanctification*, on Rom. 6:19. For ἀπολύτρωσις *redemption*, Rom. 3:24.

31. **He that glorieth**, etc. From Jer. 9:23, 24, abridged after the Septuagint.¹⁰

1 CORINTHIANS

Author and Title

The first word of 1 Corinthians states that Paul is its author. There is no good reason to doubt this. The theological concerns of the letter, the energy of its style, its vocabulary, and its historical connections with the other Pauline letters and Acts mark it as Pauline. The traditional title of the letter means that it is the first of two *canonical* letters by Paul to the Corinthians, not that it was Paul’s first letter to them (see 5:9).

Date

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from the city of Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia (16:8, 19) sometime before the final day of Pentecost (16:8; cf. Lev. 23:11, 15), and therefore in the spring. It is unclear whether this was the spring of A.D. 53, 54, or 55. He wrote, in any case, near the end of his three-year ministry in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:5–9; cf. Acts 19:21–22).

Theme

First Corinthians covers a number of topics (see “Key Themes”). One theme emerges from these discussions, however, as Paul’s dominant concern. Paul wants this church, divided because of the arrogance of its more powerful members, to work together for the advancement of the gospel. He wants them to drop

¹⁰ Vincent, M. R. (1887). [*Word studies in the New Testament*](#) (Vol. 3, pp. 184–194). New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

their divisive one-upmanship, build up the faith of those who are weak, and witness effectively to unbelievers.

Purpose, Occasion, and Background

Corinth sat on the isthmus connecting the Greek mainland with the Peloponnesian peninsula. This location made it a flourishing crossroads for sea traffic between the Aegean region and the western Mediterranean. It was a place where many cultures and religions mingled. Since it was a Roman colony, Roman law and customs were important, particularly among the upper classes, but “many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’ ” found a home in Corinth (8:5). The worship of these gods was fully integrated into governmental affairs, civic festivals, trade guilds, and social clubs, and everyday life in general. Corinth was also a destination for traveling professional orators who charged a fee for attendance at their entertaining rhetorical displays and advised people on how to advance socially.

Into this milieu Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ, and soon a church was established. He was aided in his work by two new-found friends from Rome, Priscilla and Aquila, who, like Paul, were displaced Jews and tentmakers by trade (Acts 18:1–4, 18–19, 24–28; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19). Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila spent 18 months in Corinth in the early 50s and then, after a brief trip to Judea and Syria, Paul traveled to Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila were already there (Acts 18:19; 1 Cor. 16:19) and, by the time Paul arrived, they had already met the skillful Christian apologist Apollos, who had also been in Corinth (Acts 18:24–19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4–6, 22; 4:6; 16:12).

Paul settled in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31) and at some point wrote to the Corinthians the otherwise unknown letter that he mentions in 1 Corinthians 5:9. It is not known what prompted the letter but it dealt with sexual immorality, a persistent problem for the Corinthian church (5:1–13; 6:12–20). Sometime later, Paul received an oral report indicating that the Corinthians had not only misunderstood his first letter (5:10) but were plagued with serious problems of division, sexual immorality, and social snobbery (1:10; 5:1; 11:18). Around the same time, a letter arrived from the Corinthians that displayed considerable theological confusion about marriage, divorce, participation in pagan religions, order within corporate worship, and the bodily resurrection of Christians (7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 15:12, 35).

In response to these troubling developments, Paul felt compelled to write a substantial letter to Corinth, making the case that much of their conduct was out of step with the gospel. At the root of their disunity lay an arrogance (3:21; 4:6, 8, 18–19; 5:2, 6) that was incompatible with God’s free gifts to them in Christ: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1:30; 4:7). In addition, a self-centered insistence on their own rights (6:12; 8:9; 9:12; 10:23) at the expense of the weak (8:10; 11:22) and marginalized (14:16, 23) revealed that their own social advancement rather than the gospel’s advancement was their top priority.

At the root of much of the immorality and idolatry in Corinth, moreover, lay a lack of appreciation for the holiness that God requires of his people. Though the particulars of the Mosaic law were no longer to define the boundaries for God’s people (7:19), the law’s underlying theme that God’s people were to be “set apart”—a people marked off from their culture—remained in place (5:1–2, 13; 7:19; 10:1–5). In addition, the dwelling of God’s Spirit within each believer (6:19) and the new unity that believers have with the resurrected, living Christ (6:14–17; 15:30–34) implied that the Corinthians needed to make a clean break from the moral impurity of their culture.

Despite the often stern tone of the letter (4:18–21; 5:2; 11:17, 22; 15:36), Paul was thankful to God for the Corinthians (1:8) and felt a deep personal affection for them (16:24). Because of this love, and for the purpose of God’s glory (10:31), Paul wanted the Corinthians to become a well-constructed dwelling place for God’s Spirit (3:12, 16) and to be “guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8).

Timeline

* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810

The Ancient City of Corinth

The Acrocorinth is a small but steep mountain 1,886 feet (575 m) high on the Peloponnesian peninsula in southern Greece. Ancient Corinth was built at the mountain's foot, benefiting also from the natural spring that provided water for the town. In Paul's day Corinth, though a couple of miles inland, oversaw the territory connecting the Adriatic port of Lechaion on the west with the Aegean port of Cenchreae to the east (see Acts 18:18). Ships were often portaged between these seaports across this narrow stretch of the Peloponnesian isthmus, approximately 3.7 miles (6 km) wide at its narrowest. Several rulers in the first century A.D. foolishly attempted to construct a canal across the isthmus, but this was not successfully accomplished until the nineteenth century.

The famed Greek city of Corinth, renowned for its artistry in bronze, its wealth, and its wanton sexuality, was destroyed in 146 B.C. during a war with Rome. The city was re-founded as a Roman colony in 44 B.C. by Roman freedmen, and the distinct archaeological strata in the city center testify to this gap in its history. Inscriptions from the first hundred years of the new colony were mostly in Latin, although strong marks of Greek culture were also evident in the art and life of the city.

First-century Corinth followed a Roman city plan based on a rectangular grid. Typical urban structures were built (or reconstructed), such as shops, stoas, basilicas, a bouleuterion (for the city council meetings), a gymnasium, baths, latrines, and a theater. A few large houses from this period have also been excavated. The center of town boasted the refashioned Peirene Fountain as a pleasant place from which to draw spring water. To this day a raised speaker's platform stands in the main forum, and a nearby inscription refers to this platform as the *rostra* (equivalent to a *bēma* or tribunal); this is probably the very location where Gallio judged Paul to be innocent (Acts 18:12–17). Some other significant archaeological remains date from post-NT times, such as the odeion (a small covered theater).

In Paul's day the great Doric-style temple (to Athena or Apollo) from the sixth century B.C. remained a central feature in Corinth, and multiple temples to other deities dotted the city. Indeed, when the author Pausanias wrote about Corinth in the mid-second century A.D., his description of the city read like a tour guide of pagan monumental sacred sites. Corinth boasted an important sanctuary of Asklepios (the god of healing), where people would come to offer sacrifices to the god and to seek medical care. Marks of the imperial cult were evident, especially if some are correct in identifying the substantial Temple E as being dedicated to Augustus's sister Octavia (though it may have been for Jupiter). The famous Hellenistic-era temple of Aphrodite atop the Acrocorinth had been rebuilt as a rather small structure during the first-century A.D. Scholars debate whether Strabo's first-century A.D. account of 1,000 temple prostitutes refers to the earlier Hellenistic temple of Aphrodite or to the Roman one of Paul's day; the former seems more probable (Strabo, *Geography* 8.6.20c; see also Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.573c–574c). In any case, in Roman times wanton sexuality would have been common at such a port city.

For other important archaeological features see notes on 9:24–27 (Isthmian games), 8:1–11:1 (the meat market), Acts 18:4 (synagogue and Judaism), and Romans 16:23 (Erastus inscription).

Corinth in the Time of Paul (c. A.D. 60)

The city plan shows those features of the city of Corinth that archaeologists have so far identified as dating from the time of Paul. Others remain to be discovered by future archaeological excavations.

Key Themes

1. Since the church is the dwelling place of 1:10–4:21 (esp. 3:10–16; 14:12) God's Spirit, the people who make up the

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church should work for unity by building each other up.

2. Christians should build up the church in four practical ways:
 - a. they should be sensitive to those of fragile faith. 8:1–9:18; 10:28, 33
 - b. they should win unbelievers through culturally sensitive evangelism. 9:19–23; 10:27, 32–33
 - c. they should conduct worship services in such a way that unbelievers present might come to faith. 14:16, 23–25
 - d. their corporate worship should use spiritual gifts not for personal display, or evaluating who has a better gift, but to build up the church. 11:2–16; 12:12–30; 14:1–35
3. Sexual relations form a union between man and woman as profound as the union of the believer with Christ, and so sexual activity should be confined to marriage. 5:1–13; 6:12–20; 7:5, 9, 36
4. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are important but both are subordinate to personal trust in the gospel and to living in the way that God commands. 1:14–17; 10:1–5; 11:17–34; 15:29–34
5. The bodily resurrection of Jesus (and of his followers) from the dead is a critical component of Christian faith and practice. 6:14; 15:1–58

History of Salvation Summary

Christians are God’s own people, the family of God, the body of Christ (12:12–31), and the temple of the Holy Spirit (3:16). As those who fulfill the OT pattern for the people of God, they are to be a holy community (1:2), reflecting God’s character (1 Pet. 1:15–16). (For an explanation of the “History of Salvation,” see the Overview of the Bible.)

Literary Features

First Corinthians is a pastoral letter to a spiritually troubled church. Like other NT Epistles, it is an “occasional” letter, and one can quite readily piece together the things that occasioned 1 Corinthians by noting signals in the text. The letter is highly relevant today, as it deals with such issues as the relationship between Christians and their surrounding pagan culture, divisions within the church, the ordering of church practices such as the Lord’s Supper, and the use of spiritual gifts. The letter also deals with matters of personal morality, such as sex, marriage, celibacy, and the virtues (esp. love).

First Corinthians follows the form of a typical first-century epistle, though its content is governed by the specific situation in the Corinthian church. For example, the usual epistolary elements of salutation, thanksgiving, and *paraenesis* (set of moral exhortations) receive scant treatment. The body of the letter is taken up with situations and questions from the Corinthian church that Paul addresses, and the epistolary close (ch. 16) is extensive because of business Paul has with the church. The rhetorical modes of exhortation and instruction dominate the letter. Chapter 13 is an encomium (a written tribute) in praise of love.

The book makes extensive use of rhetorical techniques such as contrast, repetition, and analogy. It draws sharp contrasts between truth and error, and between moral good and evil. Because Paul regards the Corinthian Christians as being out of line in a number of areas, the letter exhibits a strong corrective tone.

The Setting of 1 Corinthians

c. A.D. 53–55

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians during his third missionary journey, near the end of his three-year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:21–22). Both Corinth and Ephesus were wealthy port cities steeped in pagan idolatry and philosophy. Corinth benefited both militarily and economically from its strategic location at one end of the isthmus that connected the southern Greek peninsula to the mainland.

Outline

- I. Epistolary Introduction to the Letter’s Main Themes (1:1–9)
 - A. Greeting: apostleship, sanctity, and unity (1:1–3)
 - B. Thanksgiving: speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts (1:4–9)
- II. Divisions over Christian Preachers (1:10–4:21)
 - A. The problem reported (1:10–17a)
 - B. God’s wisdom answers the problem (1:17b–4:21)
 1. The nature of God’s wisdom (1:17b–2:16)
 2. God’s wisdom applied to Apollos, Paul, and the Corinthians (3:1–4:21)
- III. A Report of Sexual Immorality and Legal Wrangling (5:1–6:20)
 - A. Incest, arrogance, and the need for discipline (5:1–13)
 - B. Trivial cases before unrighteous judges (6:1–11)
 - C. Sexual immorality and the body’s resurrection (6:12–20)
- IV. Three Issues from a Corinthian Letter (7:1–11:1)
 - A. Marriage, divorce, and unchangeable circumstances (7:1–24)

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- B. The betrothed and widows (7:25–40)
- C. Food offered to idols (8:1–11:1)
- V. Divisions over Corporate Worship (11:2–14:40)
 - A. Head coverings and worship (11:2–16)
 - B. Social snobbery at the Lord’s Table (11:17–34)
 - C. Elevating one spiritual gift above others (12:1–14:40)
- VI. The Futility of Faith If the Dead Are Not Raised (15:1–58)
 - A. The truthfulness of the traditions about Christ’s resurrection (15:1–11)
 - B. Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of believers (15:12–34)
 - C. The nature of the resurrection body (15:35–58)
- VII. The Collection for the Saints and Travel Plans (16:1–12)
- VIII. Closing Admonitions and Greetings (16:13–24)

1:1–9 *Epistolary Introduction to the Letter’s Main Themes.* The opening verses can be divided into an initial greeting (vv. 1–3) and a report to the letter’s recipients on how Paul prays for them (vv. 4–9). Both parts use language that anticipates some of the letter’s key themes.

1:1–3 *Greeting: Apostleship, Sanctity, and Unity.* Paul’s apostleship and the Corinthians’ sanctity and unity are among the letter’s most important themes.

1:1 On the meaning and background of **apostle**, see notes on Matt. 10:2; Rom. 1:1. The word occurs 10 times in 1 Corinthians, more often than in any other Pauline letter (1 Cor. 1:1; 4:9; 9:1, 2, 5; 12:28, 29; 15:7, 9 [twice]).

1:2 On **Corinth**, see Introduction: The Ancient City of Corinth. **sanctified ... saints.** These two words are closely related in Greek, one a verb (*hagiazō*) meaning “make holy” and the other an adjective (*hagios*) meaning “holy.” Here the adjective is used as a noun and means “holy people.” See note on 7:14. Something “holy” is set apart from evil and dedicated to God’s service. In the OT, God set Israel apart from all other nations (Ex. 19:5–6). He also gave Israel his law so that they would reveal the holiness of the God who chose them by the way they lived (Lev. 11:44–45). Paul reminds the Corinthians that because they are **in Christ Jesus** God has set them apart as his holy people (see 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1), and because they are God’s people they should reflect his holiness (Ex. 19:6; Lev. 19:2). Because the Corinthians have a tendency toward self-centeredness and disunity, Paul reminds them that in Christ they are spiritually united to **all Christians in every place** (see also 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33, 36).

1:3 **grace ... and peace.** See note on Rom. 1:7.

1:4–9 *Thanksgiving: Speech, Knowledge, and Spiritual Gifts.* Paul is thankful that God has richly blessed the Corinthians with speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts. Despite some problems with these blessings (8:1–3, 10; 12:12–31; 14:1–40), he considers them gifts from God.

1:4 **thanks.** See note on Rom. 1:8.

1:5 **enriched in him.** In 4:8 Paul will say that the Corinthians’ spiritual riches have led to an inappropriate pride. Paul’s thankfulness here shows that the problem lay not with the gifts God had given them but with the way the Corinthians used those gifts. The cure is found in a healthy dose of gratitude (4:7). The Corinthians valued especially the gifts of **speech** and **knowledge** (see 8:1–3, 10; 12:8; 13:2; 14:1–40), but

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because they had used these gifts in wrong and improper ways, the exercise of the gifts led to disunity (8:1–3; 12:29–30; 14:4).

1:7 When Paul tells them, “you were enriched” in Christ “in all speech and all knowledge” (v. 5) **so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift**, he implies that many spiritual gifts are “enrichments” of speaking abilities, knowledge, or skills that people had before they became Christians. **As you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ** implies that spiritual gifts are given as temporary provisions until Christ returns (see 13:10).

1:8–9 guiltless. There is no condemnation on the final day for those who, like the Corinthians, are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). They already have been justified and, in a sense, even sanctified (1 Cor. 6:11; cf. Rom. 5:1), so no one will be able to bring a charge against them at the judgment (Rom. 8:33). The Corinthians have a long way to go before their behavior matches their status before God (1 Cor. 3:2–3a), but Paul is confident that God, who is **faithful**, will make them what they should be.

1:10–4:21 Divisions over Christian Preachers. Paul now states one of the letter’s primary concerns: the Corinthians’ pride has led them to value outward appearance and eloquence over the genuine work of the Spirit.

1:10–17a The Problem Reported. Paul begins with a description of the problem of division as “Chloe’s people” have reported it to him. The Corinthians are exhibiting a haughty devotion to one or another of three itinerant Christian preachers.

1:11 Reported (Gk. *dēloō*) means to “show,” “make clear,” or “reveal” something. **Chloe’s people** (Gk. *tōn Chloēs*, lit., “the ones of Chloe”) may have done this by an oral report (5:1; 11:18). Chloe’s identity and her location (Ephesus? Corinth?) are unknown, as well as whether these “people” are friends, business associates, family, or from her household.

1:12 Apparently the Corinthian Christians were divided into factions on the basis of who had baptized them (vv. 14–17). Paul knew **Apollos** well (16:12). His rhetorical skills were impressive, and the Corinthian Christians had received him gladly after Paul’s departure (Acts 18:24–19:1). **Cephas** is the Aramaic equivalent of the name Peter (Gal. 2:7–14), and both names refer to Peter the apostle (1 Cor. 15:5; Gal. 1:18; 2:7–14). Unlike Paul (1 Cor. 7:8), Cephas was married and had traveled to Corinth with his wife (9:5). Apparently one faction in Corinth, claiming to be above it all, took the slogan “I follow Christ.”

1:17a not ... to baptize. While Paul considers baptism important (Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12), it is subordinate to the proclamation of **the gospel**. Hearing and believing the gospel, unlike baptism, is essential to salvation (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13). The Corinthians need to center their lives on the gospel, not on the various preachers in whom they can take pride.

1:17b–4:21 God’s Wisdom Answers the Problem. The divisions in Corinth can be healed if the Corinthians see the distinction between the world’s wisdom and God’s wisdom.

1:17b–2:16 The Nature of God’s Wisdom. God’s wisdom is displayed in the message of the cross, the calling of the Corinthians, the preaching of Paul, and the wisdom from the Spirit.

1:17b words of eloquent wisdom. The art of rhetorical persuasion was highly valued in the Greco-Roman world, and professional orators frequented large cities like Corinth, giving impressive displays of their ability to entertain and instruct. Paul’s proclamation of the gospel failed to measure up to these standards. This failure, however, served to place the spotlight on the **power** of the message itself (see also 2:1–5), for the Holy Spirit so empowered Paul’s words that they awakened faith in Christ (cf. James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23–25) and changed people’s very hearts and lives.

1:18 cross. See note on the crucifixion at Matt. 27:35. **folly.** Paul’s preaching in Corinth focused on the saving fact of Christ’s crucifixion, a method of execution considered so crude it was not even mentioned in polite company. The Corinthians’ fascination with the rhetorical ability of the ministers rather than their message demonstrated that they were living contrary to the power of the cross.

1:22–25 Jesus’ hostile opponents had kept demanding more miraculous **signs** to prove his claims (Matt. 16:1–4; Mark 8:11–12; Luke 11:16; John 2:18–20; 4:48), but they were doing this just to manipulate him, for the signs he had already given were sufficient to leave them without excuse for their unbelief (John 3:2; 12:9–11, 37; 14:11). **Greeks** were viewed in antiquity, in contrast to barbarians, as a cultured people and therefore interested in **wisdom** (Acts 17:21; Rom. 1:14). A crucified Messiah was offensive to an unbelieving Jew (Matt. 16:22; Gal. 3:13; 5:11), and nonsensical to an unbelieving Greek. God’s power to call forth his people, however, works through a deeper wisdom than human beings can recognize (unless God grants them faith). Paul writes that the gospel is preached to all (1 Cor. 1:23), but God calls some effectively to salvation from among both Jews and Greeks (v. 24). On Christ as a **stumbling block** (v. 23), see notes on Isa. 8:11–15; 28:16.

1:26–31 Just as the message and its messenger (Paul) were **foolish** by the world’s standards, so most of those in Corinth who believed the message were foolish by those same standards. God’s transformation of them into his people (by choosing them to be saved) in spite of their humanly unimpressive pedigree excludes all boasting in ancestry, accomplishment, or affiliation with one preacher or another (see also 3:21–22).

1:27 God chose what is weak ... to shame the strong. The themes of the lifting up of the downtrodden and the reversal of human status are prophesied in the OT (e.g., 1 Sam. 2:1–8; Isa. 61:1; cf. Luke 1:52; John 9:39).¹¹

COMMENTARY

■ Introduction (1:1–9)

Paul, to Corinth (1:1–3)

Paul was not inattentive to tradition in matters of style or rhetoric. That will become clear. Then, as now, occasions for inventiveness in the affair of letter-writing were not infinite—that is, if the author was not intent on founding a “school,” or if he wanted first of all to be understood and allowed what he had to say determine how he said it. But it could happen that what an author had to say could not be contained or restrained by whatever custom or habit dictated should be the form into which he should pour whatever he had to say—that when he began to speak or write, those traditional forms began to creak and strain at the seams. The shape of the introduction to our “first” epistle to the Corinthians appears usual enough. There is a superscription (**Paul**), an address (**to the church ... at Corinth**), and a salutation (**grace ... and peace**). But already the form is strained by a cluster of modifiers which will not answer to the usual. If the superscription belongs where it is—the ancients had not attained that level of modesty which requires the sender’s name below the “complimentary close”—the qualifiers which follow it lay claim to something calculated to fix a gap between sender and reader, unless, of course, the reader had somehow been convinced that it belonged there—**Paul, called ... to be an apostle**.

¹¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (pp. 2187–2193). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

This man holds an appointment, thus a title (*apostle* is not yet limited to the Twelve), and he came by it in a fashion that had nothing to do with him—**by the will of God**. However much or little of the Damascus encounter may be reflected in that phrase and others like it (cf. Gal. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Rom. 1:1), it is certain that it is there. Did the terminology in which Paul describes his Damascus experience help to shape the introductory formulae of his epistles? Later, Paul would describe that calling as his “destiny” (9:16). But if the appointment was fate, it was also freedom from every conceivable human authority. As he wrote earlier, “an apostle—not from men nor through men” (Gal. 1:1). And it was that dialectic of fate and freedom marking Paul’s calling which drove him and his readers apart, but at the same time threw them together. *He* was called to be an apostle, and his readers were called to be **saints** (v. 2)—and let none ignore the difference! But what *they* were depended on what *he* was. The same will which had made Paul an apostle and created the difference between him and Corinth, had bent that difference to the service of Corinth. If there had been no calling to be an apostle, thus no distinction, the **church** at Corinth would not have been **the church of God**, but merely one more religious phenomenon gotten up by the like-minded. The appointment, the title, the fate and the freedom of Paul had all been for Corinth—**by the will of God**. That will had determined whose apostle Paul should be—**of Christ Jesus** (the genitive here denotes possession). The sequence of those two names—**Christ Jesus**—may be traditional, and the appearance of **Christ** without the article may be accidental (though Paul had begun to alter it to a proper name), but was their connection, here, at least, a kind of first thunderclap ahead of the storm to come? Do these names in parallel already hint at attempts to break the link between them, between *Christ, Messiah, Anointed One*, and *Jesus*, the crucified man? Does the connection hide the implication that Corinth sought to put asunder what earliest, post-Easter Christianity had joined together when it fixed that title *Christ* to utterances concerning the death of Jesus?

That dialectic of fate and freedom into which Paul’s calling **by the will of God** had thrust him, that being owned and possessed by one who had been appointed for death would expose him to solitariness. And more than once the solitariness would find expression in pathos: “Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you!” (9:1–2). But that will of God would also give him others whom Christ had made his own, and his life with them would be the truth of his existence between the visible and perceptible isolation and the pathos, the truth of which even that isolation and pathos would be the proof. So he adds **and our brother Sosthenes** (had Sosthenes been that ruler of the synagogue at Corinth who took the beating intended for Paul? cf. Acts 18:17).

Now comes the address: **To the church of God which is at Corinth**. The definite article makes it crystal clear: Even that scattered group with its base at Corinth is the one church of God—**to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints**. (The word **sanctified**, in apposition to **church of God**, translates a perfect passive participle, marking an event of the past, the significance of which for the present is undiminished). But when did Corinth become the church of God; when was it sanctified? The answer will appear later (e.g., in 6:11). Enough for now simply to state the fact. And if it is the church of God, if sanctified, then it is **called to be saints** (that noun almost never appears in the singular!). If the apostleship of Paul derived from his call, the “setting aside” of the Corinthians, their sanctification or “sainthood” derived from their call to be such. There lies the indissoluble connection between Paul and Corinth—both were “called”—the connection which the difference between them had to serve, for the sake of which the difference between them had to be maintained. There would be no “church of God which is at Corinth,” no sanctification without a call, no Corinth without a Paul to call. And no Paul without a call, no Paul without a Corinth to call!

If in v. 1 Paul had given definition to his apostleship as “of Christ Jesus,” in v. 2 he gives definition to the call and sainthood of Corinth as **in Christ**. Libraries have been devoted to the exposition of that tiny preposition **in**. Is it to be construed as local or spatial, the relation between Christ and the believer conceived as mystical, as an absorption, or does it denote a radius of power or sphere of influence? Or,

does “in Christ” simply mean “Christian,” in service to, in the discipleship of Christ? So far, this much is clear, no allowance is made for a calling or sainthood as a possibility given with existence. The calling and the sainthood are what they are “in Christ.” The prepositional phrase raises an exclusive claim.

If the one church of God is at Corinth, it is not coterminous with Corinth, but rather embraces it. So the apostle adds in v. 2b, “with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, theirs and ours” (the possessive pronouns are to be attached to “our Lord,” etc., and not to “every place”; cf. the RSV). The phrase **who ... call on the name** is a technical, liturgical expression. Corinth, together **with all those**, together with the totality of the church of God, is conjured up in a vision of the worshiping assemblies, and at the moment of their acclamation of Jesus as Lord (was the epistle begun on a Sunday?). As for the words **in every place**, they read like a line torn from the old synagogue worship which acknowledged the presence of the people of God from Palestine to the Diaspora.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 3). Neither **grace** nor **peace** refers to some inner condition of soul, and neither is a summons to achievement. Both refer to an act, both to an act of God. “Grace,” the favor of God, the “spontaneous, uncaused, and unmerited favor of God” toward his world, become concrete in the life and destiny of Jesus of Nazareth, the one anointed for death, and because of his death exalted as Lord, and for that reason what is said of God may as well be said of him—**from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ** (cf. also Paul’s reference to the prophets’ description of the day of judgment, the “day of the Lord,” as “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” v. 8). The sequence is not accidental. **Grace** is the presupposition, the precondition, the basis, the reason for peace. And if **peace** marks that universal reign of God to come when the hostility between himself and what he has made is declared to be at an end; **peace** strains toward the future, then no future, no rule of God or end to conflict can be anticipated apart from the favor of God in the one who died. Again, is the link between **grace** and **peace**, here at least, forged for other reasons than the usual? If the Corinthians had tried to break the link between “Christ” and the crucified Jesus, then they had tried to break the connection between **grace** and **peace**, had tried to anticipate the peace, the observable rule or reign of God above, beyond, apart from the grace, since grace was manifest in, had lodged in a death, a death which rendered the grace equivocal because unobservable, a death which made grace give the lie to peace! Then Corinth had tried to fix that peace to something—to an idea, a “wisdom,” or to an event, a “sign”—or to someone—to a person, a group or party which could deliver from the ambiguity—which could make of **peace**, or even of **grace** for that matter, more than a word to be heard and held to. **Grace to you and peace!**

The Thanksgiving (1:4–9)

As per the form of the ancient letter, Paul appends a thanksgiving, and again the form begins to creak and strain. The thanksgiving, with its welter of prepositions (11 in all; 6 in vv. 4–5 alone; Paul loved to heap up prepositions!) is more a proemium or introduction to the letter’s main theme than a thanksgiving—something akin to the preacher’s “talking over God’s shoulder.” Here are ranged most of the topics that will make up the body of the letter. **The grace of God ... given you in Christ Jesus; enriched ... with all speech and all knowledge; the testimony** of (or “about”—the genitive is objective) **Jesus Christ ... confirmed among you; you** come behind in no **spiritual gift**, waiting for the revelation **of our Lord Jesus Christ** (vv. 4–6). Not one assertion in this encomium will be left unchallenged; not one parcel of it is without its direct antithesis in the “theology” or “ethics” of someone at Corinth, an antithesis sufficient to draw Paul’s fire. “What have you that you did not receive?” (4:7)—grace had somehow come a cropper. “The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power” (4:20); “has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1:20)—so much for being made rich in speech and knowledge. “I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not able to take it” (3:2)—so much for confirmation of the “testimony.” “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (13:1)—and so much for spirituality or piety. And as for waiting for the

revelation, “if the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’ Come to your right mind, and sin no more” (15:32, 34).

Should we set the thanksgiving down to pure irony? Not unless we eliminate vv. 8 and 9: **who** (does the relative clause in v. 8 introduce a sentence from an old credo?) **will sustain you to the end, guiltless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son.** The words reflect the basic mood of earliest Christianity. Their context is eschatological, having to do with “last” and thus ultimate things; with judgment and testing by fire, with the “great assize,” the “day of the Lord” (in Greek, “day” can also mean “court”—a nuance carried through the Latin to the Middle High German “Diät”). The implication is that whatever Corinth may be now—the church of God sanctified and called—is not perceptible in the present. The “day” will disclose it (3:13). But the accent in all this talk of future judgment and ordeal is on the promise: **he will sustain you** and it is the promise that will not allow us to set down Paul’s thanksgiving to mere irony. The abnormal, the absurd, the aberrant is always fascinating, more fascinating than the good, for which reason the interpreters of our epistle, observing Paul in struggle against party strife, libertinism, the parading of spirituality, and the denial of his gospel, have cast Corinth in the role of a rabble. But rabble or no, Corinth was Paul’s, and for Paul that meant Corinth was God’s, and to Corinth the promise belonged: **God is faithful, by whom you were called.** And with that Paul has not simply closed the ring, returned to the opening lines in his “introduction” (“called to be saints,” etc.), but given everything said till now its reason and support. The apostolic appointment and title; Corinth’s call and sanctification, its fellowship with all those who “call on the name”; the “grace” and the “peace,” the enrichment and the confirmation; the lacking of nothing and the waiting—all are for nothing without the faithfulness of God.

■ The Parties (1:10–4:21)

Chapter 1

The Divisions (1:10–17)

This section is crucial to an understanding of the situation at Corinth, and thus to an interpretation of the epistle. But the section is sufficiently cryptic to require the interpretation of the body of the epistle for its understanding. The interpreter is thus trapped in a circle, and the decision to fix the arc where the circle begins will always have something of the arbitrary about it. Let the innumerable hypotheses attest to that. As indicated in the introduction, this commentary rests on the decision that the opponents of Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians were neither Gnostic—if by “Gnostic” is implied adherence to a discrete community organized about a discrete worldview—nor were they interlopers come to alienate Paul from the arch-apostles at Jerusalem. They were rather enthusiasts whose behavior reflected more a kaleidoscope of attitudes and opinions than an integrated, settled “position,” opinions in part derived from misinterpretations of Paul and in part from religious notions common to the age which would later congeal into systems rivalling New Testament Christianity, all of it converging on the notion that the Spirit of God gave immunity from the conditions of this world, thus a denial of the event which rooted existence in this world as existence for God and the other—the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, proclaimed Lord by his obedience unto death.

The section opens with an admonition in the form of an antithetical parallelism: **I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree** (Greek, “say the same thing”) **and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment** (v. 10). Reference to the **name** is not an oath calculated to give force to the appeal. In the New Testament, there is nothing of “theurgy,” according to which possession of the god’s name is equal to possession of his power, so as to compel him to act. Exactly the opposite is true. The name denotes a sphere of power already present and at work. Hence, the words **by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ** (equal to “in the Lord,” a phrase which Paul may well have coined), signal the presence and power of the

one sent from God, first among those who confess him (cf. 5:4 and 6:11), finally among all who shall confess him (15:25; cf. Phil. 2:9–11), the one who has harnessed Paul to his apostleship, and by whose authority he speaks.

Verse 11 gives the reason for the appeal. From oral report—answers to the Corinthians' correspondence are delayed till chap. 7—Paul has learned that the community at Corinth is torn by **quarrelings** (the noun is in the plural). His informants are **Chloe's people** (*Chloe* in Greek means “sprouting” or “blooming,” a cognomen for the Greek or Roman goddess of fertility [Demeter or Ceres], a name given female slaves in the ancient world). Whether or not Chloe was a Christian, lived at Corinth or Ephesus, and was attached to any one of the parties, is impossible to tell. This is Paul's first and last reference to her. Paul next recites what he has heard (“now I say this,” or as the RSV translates, **what I mean is**): **Each one of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas”** (Peter's Aramaic name—restricted to contexts of dispute? cf. 3:23; 9:5; and Gal. 2:11ff.), **or “I belong to Christ”** (v. 12). Attempts to attach to each party a particular stance or posture later attacked in the epistle (“I belong to Apollos” referring to those who despise the “simple” preaching of Paul and strive for a higher wisdom; “I belong to Cephas” to Palestinian-Jewish Christians who had been converted by Peter, come to Corinth from the orient, etc.) have met with little success, for the reason that Paul nowhere addresses the groups, but rather the party spirit as a whole. But it is conceivable that the slogan “I am of Christ” which climaxes the list—at times construed as a gloss by a later hand, or even as a misprint for Crispus(!)—reflects an orientation to the exalted Lord calculated to annul the message of the crucified Jesus, and resulting in that “spiritual” exaltation of the individual against which Paul is struggling throughout the letter. This hypothesis takes support from the verse following, in which Paul describes the absurdity of self-deification by referring to his possible role as savior: **Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?** (The negative particle prefixed to the question requires an answer in the negative—“certainly not!” The oldest manuscript witness to 1 Corinthians may have prefixed that particle to all three questions, not merely to the last two.)

Why the reference to Baptism here, and what possible connection can it have with the “quarrelings” at Corinth? Have some (the pronoun “each” in v. 12 need not be stretched to include every living soul at Corinth) laid claim to special rank or privilege by virtue of being baptized by Paul, Apollos, or Cephas? Do they believe that the one or the other enjoys a monopoly on deity and its gifts, and that through Baptism by the one or the other they have come to share that monopoly? Paul's demurrer in vv. 14–16 and his later attack on the notion of the sacrament as guaranteeing immunity from the judgment (10:1–13) appear to support the conclusion that the Corinthians construed their Baptism as magic, for which reason the person of the baptizer as conjurer or mystagogue would have been all-important: “I am of Paul; I have been baptized by Paul; he is the medium by which I have acceded to spiritual rank, to oneness with God.” Paul writes: “I thank God” **that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius** (v. 14). Paul regarded holding such activity at a minimum as a divine dispensation. Even the reference to Gaius, not a name but a “pronomen,” a designation for any freedman under the sun, reflects casualness respecting his role as baptizer (was Crispus the one-time ruler of the synagogue referred to in Acts 18:8?). The casualness is heightened when Paul adds: **I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else** (v. 16). Following the final clause in v. 15—**Lest anyone should say that you were baptized in my name**—the sentence appears to compensate for the memory lapse in v. 14. Was Paul dictating right off here, in final form? And did not Fortunatus and Achaicus belong to that list (cf. 16:17)?

Verse 17, prepared for in v. 13 (“was Paul crucified for you?”—in the Greek: “Paul was not crucified for you, was he?”), and setting the theme for what follows, draws two sharp contrasts, signaled by the adversative in its first, and by the negatives in its second half: **For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent (a word of) wisdom** (the nouns may be linked to “send” or “evangelize”), **lest the cross of Christ be emptied** (reduced to nothing).

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But if sent **to preach the gospel and the cross of Christ** constitute a pair, “to baptize” and “to empty” do not. The antithesis in v. 17a is not between baptizing and evangelizing, as though Paul were spurning the role of a mere “liturgist,” but rather between the *person* of the baptizer and the proclamation of the gospel. In other words, Christ had not sent Paul to be a party leader. But if the contrast lies here, then the answer to the question, Why the reference to Baptism? deserves further answer.

For Paul, Baptism and cross were linked, inseparable. The Corinthians had been baptized “into the name,” into the presence and power, into the body of the Christ who had died, who even now as exalted made his way in the world as the crucified, as Lord in hiddenness, in nonobservability, his reign under the sign of weakness. It was precisely the Corinthians’ Baptism which signaled the antithesis between “cross” and “word of wisdom.” But once that truth had been denied, then the event had been reduced to a spiritual exaltation of the individual. In face of such a reduction or emptying, Paul exclaims: “I thank God I baptized none of you!”

The Foolishness of God (1:18–25)

No section in the epistle may be better suited to introduce the reader to Paul’s use of traditional literary devices than these verses. The section abounds in rhetorical flourishes. Verse 18 contains an antithetical parallel (**folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God**), both clauses ending with the same Greek word. Verse 19 contains another parallel (**the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness—behavior resulting from theoretical knowledge—of the clever**), this time in chiasma (**I will destroy the wisdom ... the cleverness of the clever I will thwart**). Verse 20 begins with the threefold repetition of the word *where*, and continues with an antithesis (**has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?**), the second half of the verse in Greek ending on the same syllable as the first. Verse 21 contains an antithesis (**since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save ...**). Both clauses in v. 22 end on the same Greek syllable. Verses 22 and 23a contain an antithesis (**Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified**). Verses 23b and 24 contain another antithesis (**stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called ..., Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**). Verse 25 forms a chiasma with v. 24b, the beginning of the verse corresponding to the end of v. 24b, and the end of the verse to the beginning of v. 24b (**Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser ... and the weakness of God is stronger**), and, in Greek, concludes with the same words, the same syllables, and the same sounds. And in all this rhetorical display the most striking is Paul’s use of the terms *folly*, *foolishness*, and *wisdom* throughout the section in two altogether different senses. The “folly” of vv. 18 and 23 is the antithesis to the “folly” or “foolishness” of vv. 21 and 25; and the “wisdom” (or “wise man”) of vv. 19–22 is the antithesis to the “wisdom” or to what is “wiser” of vv. 24 and 25.

The section takes up and interprets the antithesis first set up in v. 17 (word of **wisdom ... cross of Christ**) and which will dominate the discussion to the end of chap. 3, giving to 1:18–3:23 its “ring” character (1:18: “Folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God,” and 3:19–23: “For the wisdom of this world is folly with God”).

What has divided Corinth? It is not race—“Jews and Greeks” (Paul’s cipher for all humanity) are both on either side of the divide (vv. 23–24). Let Lucian, second-century Syrian philosopher, speak for the Greek:

The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence of which they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody, most of them. Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers of one another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws.

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Let Trypho speak for the Jew:

Whether Christ should be so shamefully crucified, this we are in doubt about. For whosoever is crucified is said in the law to be accursed, so that I am exceedingly incredulous on this point. It is quite clear, indeed, that the Scriptures announce that Christ had to suffer; but we wish to learn if you can prove it to us whether it was by the suffering cursed in the law.

It would be an error, however, to interpret Paul's word of the cross as in antithesis merely to Jewish or Greek expectations of salvation. It is to the Christian congregation at Corinth that Paul's word is opposed. The antithesis is thus between two perceptions, two ways of life among "believers," people of faith, and thus, to judge from history, with no greater prospect of reconciliation than between believers and unbelievers.

Nothing intrinsic has created the division, nothing given with human intelligence or feeling or strength of will which one could claim to possess to greater degree than the other. Something extrinsic has created the division, an event for which neither Jew nor Greek could furnish the occasion. Despite Paul's "concession" to the subjective response to that event in v. 18 (cf. 2:14), the gulf does not lie in the attitude which the one or the other might take toward that event, as though nothing more than perspective or taste or personal judgment lay on either side of the divide, something over which two could violently disagree but in the end achieve a reconciliation, provided each agreed to allow the other's point of view. It is the event itself which divides, which renders every attitude or position taken toward it, every perception of it subordinate, a reflex or reaction. To this event **the word of the cross** gave witness. Did that phrase, "word of the cross," together with, say, Deut. 21:22–23 ("a hanged man is accursed by God") once belong to the arsenal of the argument of the anti-Christian Paul? And does the Christian theology of Paul take the sharpness, the acuteness of its contours exclusively from the background of an earlier polemic against Jesus the crucified, at the "word" about whom he once took irreconcilable offense? Those participles in v. 18, **to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved**, point ahead to a decision which made that event what it is. Paul's quotation of Isa. 29:14 (LXX) in the verse following is not a proof from Scripture of the vanity of philosophy, but a reference to the initiator of that event: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart" (v. 19). Corinth had a love affair with wisdom. Paul's continual reference to *sophia*, "wisdom," throughout the first four chapters of the epistle gives every indication that some (not all—the pronoun in the prepositional phrase, "to us ... it is the power of God" is not editorial) believed they possessed a knowledge, however they may have arrived at it, which lofted them above the fleshly, earthly, temporal, and historical. Therefore they regarded concentration on the event of the cross which plunged human existence into the conditions of this world as a seduction or temptation to embrace again what they had abandoned, a reversion to a state from which they had been set free. But that division at Corinth was only the reflection in religion or piety of a decision and act which had fixed a gulf within humanity itself. **I will destroy.... I will thwart** (v. 19); **God has made** (v. 20); **it pleased God** (v. 21), and to those who are "called" **Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God** (v. 24; the repetition of the divine name is not merely for effect). If the subject of the event is ignored for the sake of the division which it creates, then Paul's description of the reversal of wisdom and folly which have come about through the cross—(**Where is the wise man?... the scribe?... the debater of this age?** [no subtle distinction is to be made between those three] **Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?... It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save.... For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men**, vv. 20–21, 25)—is reduced to mere rhetoric, a punning on words. Paul's move from a reference to the subjective appraisal of the action of God in the cross in v. 18, to wisdom and folly's exchange of roles, signaled in vv. 19–20, a reversal carried through to the end of the section, must not be missed. The rhetoric, Paul's use of the words *wisdom* and *folly* in two contrary and opposed senses, has been required by the event which turned wisdom to folly and folly to wisdom. Finally, then, the point is not that God has made to be power and wisdom what the world imagines to be their opposite, as though the section

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ended with a paraphrase of the Magnificat (“He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree,” Luke 1:52). The reversal, the standing of folly or wisdom on its head has come about by the fact that God has made his power and wisdom weakness and folly, that is, has deliberately set his saving activity against whatever may be grasped through perception or conception, opposed it to whatever is provable or able to be disproved by appeal to sense or reason (**for Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom**, v. 22).

But did not the incapacity of human wisdom at least furnish the occasion for this foolishness of God? **Since**, Paul writes in v. 21, **in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save....** The sentence is reminiscent of ancient Jewish speculation, according to which the wisdom of God was hypostasized, given arms and legs, personality and gender, in an attempt to explain what fate it had been forced to suffer in the world. Wisdom, agent of creation, had made her descent, had appeared to the race, but the race rejected her, whereupon she retreated to heaven from which she reappeared, but only to the elect or wise. Chapter 42 in the Similitudes of Enoch reads:

Wisdom found no place where she might dwell;

Then a dwelling place was assigned her in the heavens.

Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men,

And found no dwelling-place:

Wisdom returned to her place,

And took her seat among the angels.

Against such a background, v. 21 would imply that the world, created through the wisdom of God, was suffused with wisdom (the phrase **in the wisdom of God** to be construed spatially) so that it was possible, by means of wisdom, to come to a knowledge of God, to relate to God as God. The comment that, of course, Paul would not have allowed that possibility of knowing God to be anything more than an awareness of God as Creator, of God as not-I or not-world, or that the world’s not knowing God through wisdom denotes a conscious, active rejection of that awareness, though true, would still not get at the cause for the **folly of what we preach**. It would merely delay the question, “Who or what was the cause of that wisdom by which God could be recognized only as Creator?” The **since**, the causal conjunction at the beginning of v. 21 gets its come-uppance, its qualification, in the verse’s second half: **It pleased God**—again, there lies the cause for the folly! If the first half of the sentence has its final interpretation at the beginning of the Romans epistle (“ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse,” Rom. 1:20), the second half has its interpretation toward that epistle’s end (“for God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all,” Rom. 11:32).

But what of Corinth? If the decision to act in the Christ crucified lay only with God, if that event was the cause for the division between those who are perishing and being saved, were not at least some in Corinth fated for, doomed to, perishing? If a call, however misinterpreted or misapplied, determined the saving or the perishing, and if the Corinthians had been called, then there was still reason for Paul to write the epistle.

Corinth and the Theology of the Cross (1:26–31)

The style of the section is that of the ancient diatribe. Paul is engaging his reader-hearer in dialog, a style of which he will never tire throughout all his correspondence. **Consider your call, brethren**, he writes, “you yourselves are a graphic illustration of my contention:” **Not many of you were wise according to “the flesh”** (the RSV correctly interprets: **according to worldly standards**), **not many ...**

powerful, not many ... of noble birth (v. 22). The three members of that negative clause then form the scheme for the three clauses following in vv. 27 and 28: **But**—again the antitheses!—**God chose what is foolish in the world** (in the Greek, the neutral plural with the genitive recurring in these verses denotes a plurality of persons) **to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.** To the Greek, nothing could be more trifling than **things that are not.**

The verses are not an argumentum ad hominem. The threefold verb and its subject make that clear. And, again, the accent does not fall on the antithesis or reversal, but on its initiator: **God chose!** The shaming of the **wise** and **strong**, or the destruction of the **things that are** may be the “natural” consequence of the manifestation of God’s power in folly and weakness, but they are not the purpose. For what reason, then, had God determined to save through the folly and weakness of the “Christ crucified”? Why this scandal to sense, to those for whom the world must yield some evidence of deity and its intention with the world, at least some “sign” by which that intention could be inferred—a law, a code, or a cultus? Why this affront to reason, to those for whom mind or spirit are somehow linked with deity, so that whatever accords with rationality may be acknowledged to be divine, and whatever does not would be unworthy of it? And why this folly to those for whom deity and its intent can be grasped in a trice, in a sudden “vision” of the self and God as one, and for which the world, history, temporality, the other are an obstacle? The answer to the question has been postponed till now: “For the reason that no flesh (**no human being**, RSV) **might boast before God**” (v. 29). That flotsam at Corinth had suggested it, the correspondence of that ragtag and bobtail crew to the event which had constituted it what it was, had moved Paul to the answer. God had called Corinth out of nothing, and God had fixed his power and wisdom to a nothing, and the connection between these two events was indissoluble. The one nothing was the efficient cause of the other, “that no flesh might boast.”

His reflection moves Paul to a confession in v. 30: “You have your source from God” (literally, “from him you are, you exist”; RSV: **He is the source of your life**). That was always true of Corinth, and would still be true, whatever side of the event and its divide it would stand. But **God is the source of your life in Christ Jesus**. That was not always true of Corinth, for Corinth had been given a second birth, **in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom** (note again the “rehabilitation,” cf. v. 24), **our righteousness and sanctification and redemption**. Earlier, Paul had described Christ as God’s power and wisdom; here he writes that he became such “from God”—the subject of all this activity has never been out of sight! **Our wisdom, ... righteousness ... sanctification ... redemption** (in Paul, the latter term is not to be interpreted literally; no special theory of purchase attaches to it)—are these terms strictly soteriological, limited to the work of Christ who justifies, hallows, and ransoms? If **in Christ** means that Corinth and Paul have been taken up into his history, with the result that whatever may be said of him applies to them as well, the terms are also autobiographical. And if it is true that Paul’s anthropology throughout his epistles often thwarts attempts at systematization, the reason does not lie simply in his Jewish heritage or his preoccupation with eschatology, with apocalyptic thought, but in his understanding of faith as making of Christ and the believer one flesh. What creates the confusion is our attempt to regard Paul’s anthropological terms as retaining the same sense for existence “in” as well as apart from Christ, as though the structures of that existence were identical in either case. Or, it derives from our attempt to define existence from the perspective of the “I” as self-contained, whereas for the apostle Christ had become the subject of believing existence. For that **in Christ**, let a word from a disciple of Paul serve as its interpretation: “ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:31–32).

Therefore, the section concludes with resuming the thought in vv. 26–29, **as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord.”** The quotation is from Jeremiah:

Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practice steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord” (Jer. 9:23–24).

The quotation is not exact. Further, the sense of the sentence requires the alteration of object from God to Christ (cf. Gal. 6:14). But the alteration does not merely derive from that dialectic in Jewish use of Scripture according to which the “Book” could be regarded as having a single, unequivocal sense by which life was to be regulated, *and at the same time*, since it was God’s Word, could be conceived as infinitely plastic, allowing for infinite strata of meaning. The alteration is an exhausting of the prophetic word, pulling it out of shape. For Jeremiah, the object of boasting remained aloof: Yahweh would exercise his mercy, justice, and righteousness from heaven against uncircumcised Egypt and Ammon—and Judah with its “uncircumcised heart.” Even the forgiveness which Yahweh would guarantee to the house of Israel and the house of Judah in a “new covenant” would come by way of a surrogate—the Law (cf. Jer. 31:31–34). For Paul, “righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” had taken on flesh and blood in the one whom God had made to be such, in the KYRIOS, the Lord.¹²

Spiritual Gifts

The New Testament provides us with several lists of spiritual gifts. No one list is exhaustive, and the contents of each list depend on the specific purpose of the author. In Romans 12, Paul deals with the gifts in general terms, while in 1 Corinthians 12 Paul stresses the gifts which build up the church as a whole rather than the more spectacular gifts, such as tongues, which may confer individual benefit but were subject to abuse by the Corinthian Christians.

New Testament Lists of Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:6–8	1 Cor. 12:8–10	1 Cor. 12:28–30	Eph. 4:11	1 Peter 4:9–11
Prophecy	Word of Wisdom	Apostleship	Apostleship	Speaking
Serving	Word of Knowledge	Prophecy	Prophecy	Serving
Teaching	Faith	Teaching	Evangelism	
Exhortation	Healings	Miracles	Pastor/Teacher	
Giving	Miracles	Healing		
Leading	Prophecy	Helping		

¹² Harrisville, R. A. (1987). *1 Corinthians* (pp. 27–45). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.

Showing Mercy	Discerning of Spirits	Administrating
	Tongues	Tongues
	Interpretation of Tongues	Interpretation of Tongues

The Work of the Holy Spirit

In the beginning

- Active and present at creation, hovering over the unordered conditions (Gen. 1:2)

In the Old Testament

- The origin of supernatural abilities (Gen. 41:38)
- The giver of artistic skill (Ex. 31:2–5)
- The source of power and strength (Judg. 3:9, 10)
- The inspiration of prophecy (1 Sam. 19:20, 23)
- The equipper God's messenger (Mic. 3:8)

In Old Testament prophecy

- The cleansing of the heart for holy living (Ezek. 36:25–29)

In salvation

- Regenerates the believer (Titus 3:5)
- Indwells the believer (Rom. 8:9–11)
- Sanctifies the believer (2 Thess. 2:13)

In the New Testament

- Declares the truth about Christ (John 16:13, 14)
- Endows with power for gospel proclamation (Acts 1:8)
- Pours out God's love in the heart (Rom. 5:5)
- Makes intercession (Rom. 8:26)

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- Imparts gifts for ministry (1 Cor. 12:4–11)
- Enables the fruit of holy living (Gal. 5:22, 23)
- Strengths the inner being (Eph. 3:16)

In the written Word

- Inspired the writing of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21)

The Way of Love

Paul valued the gift of prophecy highly (see 14:1), and the Corinthians placed a premium on spectacular gifts such as speaking in tongues, as well as on the gifts of understanding spiritual mysteries and faith to do dramatic miracles. Yet even these spiritual gifts do us no good in God's sight unless we live in love.

Love is ...	Without Love ...	Love is Greater Than ...
Patient, kind, unselfish, truthful, hopeful, enduring (vv. 4-7)	Tongues are mere noise (v. 1)	Prophecies, which will fail (v. 8)
Not envious, proud, self-centered, rude, or provoked to anger (vv. 4, 5)	Prophecy, mysteries, knowledge, and faith amount to nothing (v. 2)	Tongues, which will cease (v. 8)
	Good deeds are unprofitable (v. 3)	Knowledge, which will vanish (v. 8)

Love is one of the dynamic terms Paul uses to speak of the holy life enabled by the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It encompasses motive and deed. Love is characteristic of the mature believer.¹³

Apostle, Apostleship. Official designation given to certain leading individuals in the NT churches. Apostleship is the more comprehensive term denoting the functions of the one who serves in such a capacity. Questions concerning origin, function, and history of the NT apostolate are much-debated; one cannot speak of anything like consensus of opinion uniting the various church traditions. Some light is shed on our understanding of the terms by an examination of the possible linguistic and conceptual backgrounds.

Background

¹³ Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). [*Nelson's complete book of Bible maps & charts: Old and New Testaments*](#) (Rev. and updated ed.). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

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Greek Usage. The Greek word for “apostle” is not used outside the NT in the same sense as it is in the NT. It is derived from the verb “to send” and is at home in the language of the sea meaning a particular “ship” or “group of ships,” a “marine expedition” or “the leader” of such. Its usage is almost always impersonal and thoroughly passive. There is no hint of personal initiative or authorization, merely the connotation of something being sent. Later papyri use the word to mean “bill” or “invoice” or even a “passport,” continuing to reflect the vocabulary of maritime affairs.

Jewish Usage. Here the word is not widely used. It appears possibly twice in the writings of the historian Josephus, and not at all in Philo. Of the instances in Josephus one is important, where the word has the sense of sending “emissaries” or perhaps an “embassy.”

The Septuagint (LXX) uses the word of the prophet Ahijah in 1 Kings 14:6, translating a Hebrew participle meaning “one who is sent.” The Hebrew verb underlying this description had become a technical term in the OT for the sending of a messenger with a special task. Although accepting responsibility and agreeing to accomplish what is asked, the person of the messenger (whether divine or human) fades behind the importance of being so “formally” commissioned. Attention is to be focused on the initiator and his concerns. Perhaps the clearest example can be seen in the call of (Isaiah 6:8): “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’ ” Thus when God’s prophet Ahijah (1 Ki 14:6) is described as “one who is sent,” the conviction is expressed that he is a divinely commissioned representative who must convey a message to the wife of King Jeroboam. By using the word “apostle” in this passage, the translators of the Septuagint gave it a meaning beyond the classical and papyri usages, replacing the secular meaning with a theological one.

Further movement in this direction is found in the rabbinic writings. Here the verbal form in 1 Kings 14:6 (*shaliach*) has become a noun in itself, retaining the meaning “one who is sent.” The rabbis used the word primarily in contexts which are neither explicitly theological nor religious but rather have to do with matters of the Law. The word is used of individuals who are temporarily authorized to carry fully in their own person the person and rights of another in the accomplishment of some act. The oft-cited passage from the Mishna provides a clear definition: “The one who is sent (*shaliach*) is the same as the one who sends.” The basis for such a practice lay in the OT law of the messenger, where the reaction paid to messengers is at the same time paid to the one who sent them. For example, Abigail washes the feet of David’s servants, who have come to bring her to the king as a wife, thereby accepting his proposal (1 Sm 25:40–42). Similarly the embarrassment of David’s servants experienced at the hands of the Ammonites is actually an embarrassment of the king himself and, in this case, leads to war (2 Sm 10:1–8). The shift from examples such as these to the realm of legal affairs seems natural and was doubtless occasioned by the problem of individuals unable to attend personally to specific matters. Scriptural precedent and practical necessity combined in developing this later institution of the *shaliach*.

The length of this relationship extended until the successful completion of the particular task in mind. The agreement was made void upon the return of the *shaliach* to the one in whose service he was sent. And while the initiative for such a transaction is that of the one who sends, carrying out the assignment faithfully depends on the agreement and willingness of the one commissioned. In this sense one may speak of the active participation of the representative.

The exact nature of the mission given to each *shaliach* does not obtain from the designation itself. Rather it is dependent upon the specific commission of the one who sends. The term provides the form of commissioning, the content of which is fixed by the word of the initiator. So, for example, an individual may marry or divorce through a *shaliach*, purchase property, or perform certain ceremonial functions.

The rabbis applied the designation to specific OT figures as well because they performed individual acts normally reserved for God. Moses causes water to spring forth from a rock (Ex 17:5, 6); Elijah brings rain (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:1) and raises the dead (1 Kgs 17:21–23); Elisha “opens the mother’s womb” (2 Kgs

4:16, 17) and Ezekiel receives the “key to the tombs at the reawakening of the dead” (Ez 37). Likewise, the priest is thought to act as God’s *shaliach* in offering sacrifices.

Such authorized representation extended to groups of people as well. In the local synagogue, one person’s prayer stands as the prayer of all the congregation; certain rabbis were sent out into the diaspora representing the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem in order to regulate the calendar, announce the beginnings of a new month, and collect necessary financial aid for the scribes of that city. Some think that it is against this background that Paul carries letters of accreditation from the Jerusalem authorities to seek out Christians in Damascus (Acts 9:1, 2).

To these few examples others may be added, but they are sufficient to demonstrate the most fundamental point of this institution: the term *shaliach* is not one of vocation or office. Rather it describes a relationship existing between two parties; it has to do with *function*, not *status*.

Finally it should be noted that the linguistic connection between the Greek word “apostle” and the Hebrew words “to send” and “one who is sent” do not provide the only evidence for linking the *shaliach* with the NT apostle. As early as Jerome the material closeness between the two figures was recognized, and the Syrian church actually referred to the apostles by this Semitic terminology. The above discussion therefore has led to the widely shared opinion that in the Jewish concept of the *shaliach* we have the closest parallel to the apostle.

The New Testament

Jesus and the Apostles. Rather than form a separatist reform within Judaism, Jesus seems to have called all Israel to repentance and to seek in faith God’s help in his own person. From among the wider group of those who follow him, Jesus selects 12 men (Mt 10:1–4; Mk 3:13–19; Lk 6:12–16), who maintain with him a particularly close relationship, receiving private instruction and witnessing his miracles and controversy with the Jewish authorities. On one occasion, Jesus sends these men out to preach the message of repentance, to cast out demons, and to heal the sick, that is, to minister in ways that were characteristic of his own work (Mt 10:1–15; Mk 6:7–13, 30; Lk 9:1–6). The same relationship is expressed in the saying, “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Lk 10:16; cf. Mt 10:40). It is clear that the 12 are not merely to pass Jesus’ teaching on but to represent his very person. This is exactly what the *shaliach* does, and it is in this sending that the Gospels refer to the 12 as apostles (Mt 10:2; Mk 6:30; Lk 9:10). The length of the *shaliach*’s assignment extends until his return, and consequently Matthew and Mark no longer use the term, although Luke continues to do so (11:49; 17:5; 22:14; 24:10).

From the saying in Matthew 19:28 (cf. Lk 22:29) we learn that the number of Jesus’ apostles relates to the number of the tribes of Israel. The hope of Israel included the true reunification of the 12 tribes in a new world. Israel would once again be God’s people in the time of salvation. Jesus’ selection of these 12 men is thereby an implicit sign that in his ministry he intends to accomplish this reconstitution. It is in this sense that we understand those passages that speak of the foundational position that the 12 had for the New Israel—the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 2:20; Rv 21:14; cf. also Mt 16:17–19). Among the Evangelists, Luke emphasizes this characteristic of the 12 and so relates the filling out of their number after the departure of Judas (Acts 1:15–26) but before the coming of the Spirit (Acts 2). The qualifications put forward for the election of Matthias (Acts 1:21, 22) are thus not that of apostleship in general but for being one of the 12.

After the resurrection the fellowship once enjoyed between Jesus and the 12, and temporarily broken by the cross, was reinstated and brought to completion. The Gospel appearances (Mt 28; Lk 24; Jn 20; 21) not only witness to the exaltation of Jesus but include a distinct commission. The “sending” of the 12, which was limited in time and space, now becomes renewed for life. The representation, indeed the continuation of Jesus’ ministry resident in the apostles, now takes the form of proclamation of God’s act in Christ on behalf of all men—a claim already implicit in Jesus’ own ministry.

Paul. The Pauline writings demonstrate two characteristic usages of the word “apostle.” On occasion (2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25) it refers to persons authorized by local congregations and entrusted with the safe delivery of specific gifts for other members of the Christian community.

More important are those passages where “apostle” takes on a more technical sense through the qualifying phrase “of Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 11:13; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thes 2:6; cf. Rom 1:1). The “sent one” is the “sent one of Jesus Christ” (Rom 16:7; 1 Cor 9:1, 5; 12:28; Gal 1:17, 19; also use the word in this absolute sense). In the statements where Paul claims his own right to this title, he argues along lines assuming the same basic apostolic concept that Jesus had. He consistently links this claim to a specific event in the past in which the risen Lord had appeared to him (1 Cor 9:1; Gal 1:12, 16). This appearance he ranked alongside those of the Easter witnesses (1 Cor 15:3–8). Paul understood his experience outside Damascus (cf. Acts 9:1–19a; 22:6–16; 26:12–18; Gal 1:17) as a lifelong commission to preach the now-resurrected One (1 Cor 1:17; 2:1, 2) chiefly among the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 22:15; 26:17, 23; Gal 1:15, 16). It was through his preaching ministry that Christ continues to work, creating the new people of God (1 Cor 9:1b, 2; Gal 2:8). Here again the background of the *shaliach* is in view.

Jesus as Apostle. Hebrews (3:1) uses the word once and applies it to Jesus himself. This is in keeping with the character of the whole book (and especially with the beginning, 1:1–4), that although God has been faithfully revealed in various ways throughout history he finds his definitive representative in his son, Jesus.

Apostles and the Church Today. The grounding of the NT apostolic ministry in a personal authorization by the risen Christ raises the question to what extent we can meaningfully speak of the apostolic office in our churches today. In an important respect the position of those called apostles was unique, and yet the church continues to expand and believes that it continues to be the body of Christ with him as Lord. A final answer cannot be given here. Suffice it to say, the various ecclesiastical traditions and practices of church office and ministry are attempts to answer this question.

See ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, BOOK OF THE; APOSTOLIC AGE; JOHN THE APOSTLE, LIFE AND WRITINGS OF; PAUL, THE APOSTLE; PETER, THE APOSTLE.

Bibliography. C.K. Barrett, *The Signs of an Apostle*; F.J.A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*; J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*; T.W. Manson, *The Church's Ministry*; K.H. Rengstorf, *Apostolate and Ministry*; B.H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church*.¹⁴

A. The Defense of the Apostle. 10:1–18

Paul defends his apostleship here in terms of his attitude (vss. 1–6), his authority (vss. 7–11), and his divine commendation (vss. 12–18).¹⁵

KEY ASPECTS OF APOSTLES

Read John 7:14–18 and note from Jesus' life three key aspects of apostleship.

Who ultimately commissions apostles? (v. 16)

In whose authority do apostles speak? (v. 17) What happens if this authority is violated? (v. 18)

¹⁴ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). [Apostle, Apostleship](#). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1, pp. 131–133). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

¹⁵ Hindson, E. E., & Kroll, W. M. (Eds.). (1994). [KJV Bible Commentary](#) (p. 2358). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

What is an apostle's chief ministry responsibility? (v. 16; cf. also Mark 3:14, 15)¹⁶

APOSTLE, APOSTLESHIP

1. *apostolos* (ἀπόστολος, 652) is, lit., “one sent forth” (*apo*, “from,” *stello*, “to send”). “The word is used of the Lord Jesus to describe His relation to God, Heb. 3:1; see John 17:3. The twelve disciples chosen by the Lord for special training were so called, Luke 6:13; 9:10. Paul, though he had seen the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8, had not ‘accompanied with’ the Twelve ‘all the time’ of His earthly ministry, and hence was not eligible for a place among them, according to Peter’s description of the necessary qualifications, Acts 1:22. Paul was commissioned directly, by the Lord Himself, after His Ascension, to carry the gospel to the Gentiles.

“The word has also a wider reference. In Acts 14:4, 14, it is used of Barnabas as well as of Paul; in Rom. 16:7 of Andronicus and Junias. In 2 Cor. 8:23 (RV, margin) two unnamed brethren are called ‘apostles of the churches’; in Phil. 2:25 (RV, margin) Epaphroditus is referred to as ‘your apostle.’ It is used in 1 Thess. 2:6 of Paul, Silas and Timothy, to define their relation to Christ.”¹⁷

CALL OF DISCIPLES

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him [Mark 1:16–20].

There were three separate and distinct calls made to the apostles:

1. In John 1:35–51 we are told that when Jesus went up to Jerusalem He met these men and gave them a general call, informal and casual. They wanted to know where He lived because John the Baptist had marked Him out, and some of John’s disciples followed Him. But they didn’t stay with Him—He didn’t ask them to at this time. They went back to their fishing in Galilee.

2. Now, we find here in Mark that at the beginning of His ministry, He walks along the sand and finds the disciples fishing, and He calls them to discipleship. They are to be “fishers of men.” However, we find in Luke 5:1–11 that again they went back to their fishing.

3. The final call was a call to apostleship. It is recorded in Mark 3; Matthew 10; and Luke 6. They had gone back to fishing, and Simon Peter said to Him, “... Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). What he is really saying is, “Why don’t you go and get somebody else. Let me alone because

¹⁶ Hayford, J. W., & Matsdorf, G. (1993). [*People of the Spirit: gifts, fruit and fullness of the Holy Spirit*](#). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁷ Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). [*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 30–31). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.

I have failed you so—I'm a sinful man.” But the Lord didn't give him up; thank God for that. So the Lord came to them the third time and appointed them to apostleship¹⁸

Apostle (Gk. *apostolos*). Envoy, ambassador, or messenger commissioned to carry out the instructions of the commissioning agent.

Etymology and Usage of the Term. Pre-Christian use of *apostolos* in the sense of messenger is rare. More common is the verb *apostellō*, referring to the sending of a fleet or an embassy. Only in Herodotus (1.21; 5.38) is it used of a personal envoy. Josephus employs it once (*Antiquities* 17.11.1) in the classical sense of an embassy. Epictetus (*Discourse* 3.22) speaks of the ideal Cynic teacher as one “sent by Zeus” to be a messenger of the gods and an “overseer” of human affairs.

The Septuagint uses *apostellō* or *exapostellō* some seven hundred times to translate the Hebrew *šālah* (“stretch out,” “send”). More than the act of sending, this word includes the idea of the authorization of a messenger. The noun *apostolos* is found only in 1 Kings 14:6, where the commissioning and empowering of the prophet are clearly in mind. Thus, the Septuagint uses the *apostellō* word-group to denote the authorization of an individual to fulfill a particular function, with emphasis on the one who sends, not on the one who is sent.

The noun *apostolos* appears seventy-nine times in the New Testament (ten in the Gospels; twenty-eight in Acts; thirty-eight in the Epistles; and three in Revelation). The vast majority of these occurrences are found in Luke-Acts (thirty-four) and in the Pauline epistles (thirty-four), and refer to those appointed by Christ for a special function in the church. Their unique place is based not only on having witnessed the resurrection, but also on having been commissioned and empowered by the resurrected Lord to proclaim the gospel to all nations.

In the New Testament *apostolos* is applied to Jesus as the Sent One of God (Heb. 3:1), to those sent by God to preach to Israel (Luke 11:49), to those sent by churches (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25), and most often, to the individuals who had been appointed by Christ to preach the gospel of the kingdom. This latter category, however, is understood differently by New Testament writers. For example, Luke-Acts uses the term “apostle” to refer almost exclusively to the Twelve, while Paul uses it in relation to a broader group of individuals. The expression “all the apostles” in 1 Corinthians 15:7 seems to include more than the twelve referred to in verse 5. James is considered here, and in Galatians 1:19, to be an apostle. Barnabas is referred to as an apostle in Acts 14:14 (cf. 11:22–24; 13:1–4). Paul calls Andronicus and Junias apostles in Romans 16:7. In this broader sense, an apostle was a witness to the resurrection of Christ, sent by him to make disciples of all nations.

Christ the Apostle. Although there is only one explicit reference to Jesus as an apostle (Heb. 3:1), implicit references to his having been “sent” by the Father are found throughout the New Testament. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the Gospel of John, where Christ's entire ministry is qualified by the term *apostellō* (“send”). As the Father sent his Son into the world (3:17, 34; 5:36–38; 6:29, 57; 10:36; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23; 20:21), Jesus in turn “sends out” his disciples (4:38; 17:18) to continue and extend his mission. Thus, all apostleship finds its meaning in Jesus the Apostle, sent by God to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

The Twelve. Jesus had a large number of disciples during his ministry, but not all of them were apostles. The Twelve were chosen out of a wider group both to be with Jesus as disciples and to be sent out to preach and teach as apostles. There are four lists of the Twelve in the New Testament, one in each of the three

¹⁸ McGee, J. V. (1991). [Thru the Bible commentary: The Gospels \(Mark\)](#) (electronic ed., Vol. 36, pp. 23–24). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

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Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 10:1–4; Mark 3:13–19; Luke 6:12–16) and one in Acts (1:13). These lists are roughly the same, representing four variant forms of a single early oral tradition.

Matthew and Mark identify the Twelve as apostles only once, and in each case, in the context of a missionary journey (Matt. 10:2; Mark 6:30). Here the word designates function rather than status. Luke, however, frequently and almost exclusively calls the Twelve “apostles” (6:13; 9:10; 17:5; 22:14; 24:10; Acts 1:26; 2:43; 4:35, 36, 37; 5:2, 12, 18; 8:1). Except for Luke 11:49 and Acts 14:14, Luke applies *apostolos* only to the Twelve. Because they had been called by Jesus, had been with Jesus throughout his ministry, and had witnessed his resurrection, they possessed the best possible knowledge of what Jesus had said and done. Commissioned by the risen Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, they became witnesses to the saving work of God in Christ. The identification of the Twelve as apostles finds its basis not only in the use of this title for them in the Gospel narrative, but also in the post-Easter task given to them by Jesus (Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–18; Luke 24:48–49; John 20:21–23; Acts 1:8). Thus, the essential qualification of an apostle is being called and sent by Christ. In the case of Matthias, additional qualifications come to light. In addition to the divine call, the person must have been a disciple of Jesus from John’s baptism to the ascension, and specifically a witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:21–22).

Jesus’ choice of twelve disciples to form an inner circle of followers served to symbolize the truth that he had come to build a new house of Israel. The Twelve formed the nucleus of this new people of God, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel, and signifying God’s saving activity at work in Jesus and his followers. Their number implies that they were destined primarily to work among the children of Israel. Although not confined to the Jews, the mission of the Twelve had special relation to the twelve tribes of Israel, as emphasized in the promise of Matthew 19:28.

Paul the Apostle. Since Paul had not accompanied Jesus during his earthly ministry, he did not meet the apostolic criteria of Acts 1:21–22. It is clear, however, that he considered himself to be an apostle. Even though the only place in the Book of Acts where Paul is called an apostle is in reference to the apostles of the church in Antioch (14:4, 14), Luke’s portrayal of Paul’s ministry as paradigmatic for the church gives implicit support to his apostolic claims. Not only does Acts depict Paul as manifesting the signs of an apostle, but in its three accounts of the Damascus Road encounter, his apostolic task is presented as the direct action of the risen Christ (9:3–5; 22:6–8; 26:12–18; cf. 2 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:16).

Paul’s own claim to apostleship is likewise based on the divine call of Christ (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1, 15; cf. 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1). He is an apostle, “not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead” (Gal. 1:1). His encounter with the resurrected Jesus served as the basis for his unique claim to be an “apostle to the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13). Paul bases his apostleship on the grace of God, not on ecstatic gifts or the signs of an apostle (2 Cor. 12). His apostolic commission is to serve God primarily through preaching the gospel (Rom. 1:9; 15:19; 1 Cor. 1:17).

Paul uses the word “apostle” in more than one sense. At times he employs the term in the broader sense of messenger or agent (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25). More often, however, Paul uses the term to refer to those who had been commissioned by the risen Lord to the apostolic task. Included in this category are the Twelve (although he never explicitly applies the title of apostle to them as a group), Peter (Gal. 1:18), Paul himself (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 9:1–2; 15:8–10; Gal. 2:7–8), James the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:19; cf. Acts 15:13), Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:1–6; Gal. 2:9; cf. Acts 14:4, 14), and possibly others (Rom. 16:7). In addition to understanding apostleship in terms of its basis in a divine call, Paul views the life of an apostle as being one of self-sacrificial service that entails suffering (1 Cor. 4:9–13; 15:30–32; 2 Cor. 4:7–12; 11:23–29).

Apostles and the Spirit. The primary function of the apostles was to witness to Christ. The Twelve had intimate knowledge of his life, and a wider group had been witnesses to his resurrection. Their commissioning by the risen Lord to worldwide witness (Acts 1:8), however, was incomplete without the

anointing of the Spirit. Only after Pentecost were they empowered by the Spirit for their ministry of word and deed. Their witness to Christ was not only empowered, but also guided and validated by the Spirit (John 14:26). Thus, their full apostolic vocation was realized only in the Spirit (John 14–17). Paul viewed apostleship as a gift of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:28), which was often accompanied by miraculous signs and mighty works (2 Cor. 12:12). Such signs and wonders, however, were clearly secondary to the apostolic functions of preaching and teaching.

Apostolic Authority. Having direct knowledge of the incarnate Word, and being sent out as authorized agents of the gospel, the apostles provided the authentic interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus. Because their witness to Christ was guided by the Spirit (John 15:26–27), the apostles' teaching was considered normative for the church. They were regarded as the "pillars" (Gal. 2:9) and "foundation" (Eph. 2:20; cf. Rev. 21:14) of the church, and their teaching became the norm for Christian faith and practice. The deposit of revelation transmitted by the apostles and preserved in its written form in the New Testament thus forms the basis of postapostolic preaching and teaching in the church.

It is evident that the apostles formed the nucleus of primitive Christianity. The New Testament highlights their function as apostles, without delineating in detail the authoritative nature of their office in relation to the church. What is emphasized is that their apostolic commission authorized them to preach (1 Cor. 1:17); to be ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:20); to be witnesses to all nations (Luke 24:48); and to make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28:19).

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The First Epistle of PAUL the Apostle to the CORINTHIANS

CHAP. 1

After his salutation and thanksgiving, 1–9, he exhorts them to unity, 10, 11, and reproves their dissensions, 12–17. God destroys the wisdom of the wise, 18–20, by the foolishness of preaching, 21–25; and calls not the wise, mighty, and noble, 26, 27, but the foolish, weak, and men of no account, 28–31.

1 called. Ro. 1:1. Ga. 2:7, 8. *an.* ch. 3:9; 9:1, 2; 15:9. Lu. 6:13. Jno. 20:21. Ac. 1:2, 25, 26; 22:21. Ro. 1:5. 2 Co. 11:5; 12:12. Ga. 1:1. Ep. 4:11. 1 Ti. 1:1; 2:7. *through.* ch. 6:16, 17. Jno. 15:16. 2 Co. 1:1. Ga. 1:15, 16. Ep. 1:1. Col. 1:1. *Sosthenes.* Ac. 18:17.

2 the church. Ac. 18:1, 8–11. 2 Co. 1:1. Ga. 1:2. 1 Th. 1:1. 2 Th. 1:1. 1 Ti. 3:15. *to them.* Jude 1. *sanctified.* ver. 30; ch. 6:9–11. Jno. 17:17–19. Ac. 15:9; 26:18. Ep. 5:26. He. 2:11; 10:10; 13:12. *called.* Ro. 1:7. 1 Th. 4:7. 2 Ti. 1:9. 1 Pe. 1:15, 16. *with.* Ac. 7:59, 60; 9:14, 21; 22:16. 2 Th. 2:16, 17. 2 Ti. 2:22. *call.* Τοῖς επικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα. That these words ought not to be rendered passively, is evident from the LXX., who translate the phrase יקרא בשם, 'he shall call on the name,' which is active, by επικαλησεται

¹⁹ Rightmire, R. D. (1996). [Apostle](#). In *Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology* (electronic ed., pp. 33–35). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

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εν ονοματι Θεου, or εν ονοματι Κυριου. Ge. 4:26; 12:8; 13:4–7, etc. *our Lord*. ch. 8:6. Ps. 45:11. Ac. 10:36. Ro. 3:22; 10:12; 14:8, 9. 2 Co. 4:5. Phi. 2:9–11. Re. 19:16.

3 See on Ro. 1:7. 2 Co. 1:2. Ep. 1:2. 1 Pe. 1:2.

4 *thank*. See on Ro. 1:8; 6:17. Ac. 11:23; 21:20. *the grace*. ver. 3. Jno. 10:30; 14:14, 16, 26; 15:26. 1 Ti. 1:14.

5 *in every*. ch. 4:7–10. Ro. 11:12. 2 Co. 9:11. Ep. 2:7; 3:8. *in all*. ch. 12:8, 10; 14:5, 6, 26. Ac. 2:4. 2 Co. 8:7. Ep. 6:19. Col. 4:3, 4. *and in*. ch. 8:11; 13:2, 8. Ro. 15:4. 2 Co. 4:6. Ep. 1:17. Phi. 1:9. Col. 1:9, 10; 2:3; 3:10. Ja. 3:13. 2 Pe. 3:18.

6 *the*. ch. 2:1, 2. Ac. 18:5; 20:21, 24; 22:18; 23:11; 28:23. 1 Ti. 2:6. 2 Ti. 1:8. 1 Jno. 5:11–13. Re. 1:2, 9; 6:9; 12:11, 17; 19:10. *was*. Mar. 16:20. Ac. 11:17, 21. Ro. 15:19. 2 Co. 12:12. Ga. 3:5. He. 2:3, 4.

7 *ye*. 2 Co. 12, 13. *waiting*. ch. 4:5. Ge. 49:18. Mat. 25:1. Lu. 12:36. Ro. 8:19. Phi. 3:20. 1 Th. 1:10. 2 Ti. 4:8. Tit. 2:13. He. 9:28; 10:36, 37. Ja. 5:7, 8. 2 Pe. 3:12. Jude 21. *coming*. *Gr.* revelation. Lu. 17:30. Col. 3:4. 2 Th. 1:7. 1 Ti. 6:14, 15. 1 Pe. 1:13; 4:13; 5:4. 1 Jno. 3:2.

8 *confirm*. Ps. 37:17, 28. Ro. 14:4; 16:25. 2 Co. 1:21. 1 Th. 3:13, 5:24. 2 Th. 3:3. 1 Pe. 5:10. *blameless*. Ep. 5:27. Phi. 2:15. Col. 1:22. 1 Th. 3:13; 5:23, 24. 2 Pe. 3:14. Jude 24, 25. *the day*. Phi. 1:6, 10; 2:16. 2 Pe. 3:10.

9 *God*. ch. 10:13. Nu. 23:19. De. 7:9; 32:4. Ps. 89:33–35; 100:5. Is. 11:5; 25:1; 49:7. La. 3:22, 23. Mat. 24:35. 1 Th. 5:23, 24. 2 Th. 3:3. Tit. 1:2. He. 2:17; 6:18; 10:23; 11:11. Re. 19:11. *by*. ver. 24. Ro. 8:28, 30; 9:24. Ga. 1:15. 1 Th. 2:12. 2 Th. 2:14. 2 Ti. 1:9. He. 3:1. 1 Pe. 5:10. *the fellowship*. ver. 30; ch. 10:16. Jno. 15:4, 5; 17:21. Ro. 11:17. Ga. 2:20. Ep. 2:20–22; 3:6. He. 3:14. 1 Jno. 1:3, 7; 4:13.

10 *I beseech*. ch. 4:16. Ro. 12:1. 2 Co. 5:20; 6:1; 10:1. Ga. 4:12. Ep. 4:1. Phile. 9, 10. 1 Pe. 2:11. *by the*. Ro. 15:30. 1 Th. 4:1, 2. 2 Th. 2:1. 1 Ti. 5:21. 2 Ti. 4:1. *that ye*. Ps. 133:1. Je. 32:39. Jno. 13:34, 35; 17:23. Ac. 4:32. Ro. 12:16; 15:5, 6; 16:17. 2 Co. 13:11. Ep. 4:1–7, 31, 32. Phi. 1:27; 2:1–4; 3:16. 1 Th. 5:13. Ja. 3:13–18. 1 Pe. 3:8, 9. *divisions*. *Gr.* schisms. ch. 11:18; 12:25. Mat. 9:16. Mar. 2:21. Jno. 7:43; 9:16; 10:19. *Gr.*

11 *it hath*. ch. 11:18. Ge. 27:42; 37:2. 1 Sa. 25:14–17. *that there*. ch. 3:3; 6:1–7. Pr. 13:10; 18:6. 2 Co. 12:20. Ga. 5:15, 20, 26. Phi. 2:14. 1 Ti. 6:4. 2 Ti. 2:23–25. Ja. 4:1, 2.

12 *this*. ch. 7:29; 15:50. 2 Co. 9:6. Ga. 3:17. *I am*. ch. 3:4–6, 21–23; 4:6. *Apollos*. ch. 16:12. Ac. 18:24–28; 19:1. *Cephas*. ch. 9:5; 15:5. Jno. 1:42. Ga. 2:9.

13 *Christ*. 2 Co. 11:4. Ga. 1:7. Ep. 4:5. *Paul*. ch. 6:19, 20. Ro. 14:9. 2 Co. 5:14, 15. Tit. 2:14. *or*. ver. 15; ch. 10:2. Mat. 28:19. Ac. 2:38; 10:48; 19:5.

14 *thank*. ver. 4; ch. 14:18. 2 Co. 2:14. Ep. 5:20. Col. 3:15, 17. 1 Th. 5:18. 1 Ti. 1:12. Phile. 4. *Crispus*. Ac. 18:8. *Gaius*. Ro. 16:23. 3 Jno. 1, etc.

15 *I*. Jno. 3:28, 29; 7:18. 2 Co. 11:2.

16 *household*. ch. 16:15, 17. Ac. 16:15, 33.

17 *not to*. Jno. 4:2. Ac. 10:48; 26:17, 18. *not*. ch. 2:1, 4, 13. 2 Co. 4:2; 10:3, 4, 10. 2 Pe. 1:16. *words*. *or*, *speech*. *lest*. ch. 2:5.

18 *the preaching*. ver. 23, 24; ch. 2:2. Ga. 6:12–14. *to*. Ac. 13:41. 2 Co. 2:15, 16; 4:3. 2 Th. 2:10. *foolishness*. ver. 21, 23, 25; ch. 2:14; 3:19. Ac. 17:18, 32. *unto*. ver. 24; ch. 15:2. Ps. 110:2, 3. Ro. 1:16. 2 Co. 10:4. 1 Th. 1:5. He. 4:12.

19 ch. 3:19. Job 5:12, 13. Is. 19:3, 11; 29:14. Je. 8:9.

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20 *is the wise*. Is. 33:18; 53:1. *hath*. ver. 19. 2 Sa. 15:31; 16:23; 17:14, 23. Job 12:17, 20, 24. Is. 44:25. Ro. 1:22.

21 *in*. ver. 24. Da. 2:20. Ro. 11:33. Ep. 3:10. *the wisdom*. Dr. *Lightfoot* well observes, ‘that σοφία του Θεου, *the wisdom of God*, is not to be understood of that wisdom which had God for its *author*, but of that wisdom which had God for its *object*. There was, among the heathen, σοφία της φύσεως, *wisdom about natural things*, that is, *philosophy*; and σοφία του Θεου, *wisdom about God*, that is, *divinity*. But the world, in its *divinity*, could not, by wisdom, know God.’ The wisest of the heathen had no just and correct views of the Divine nature; of which the works of *Cicero* and *Lucretius* are incontestable proofs. *the world*. Mat. 11:25. Lu. 10:21. Ro. 1:20–22, 28. *the foolishness*. See on ver. 18.

22 *the Jews*. Mat. 12:38, 39; 16:1–4. Mar. 8:11. Lu. 11:16, 20. Jno. 2:18; 4:48. *the Greeks*. Ac. 17:18–21.

23 *we*. ver. 18; ch. 2:2. Lu. 24:46, 47. Ac. 7:32–35; 10:39–43. 2 Co. 4:5. Ga. 3:1; 6:14. Ep. 3:8. *unto the Jews*. Is. 8:14, 15. Mat. 11:6; 13:57. Lu. 2:34. Jno. 6:53–66. Ro. 9:32, 33. Ga. 5:11. 1 Pe. 2:8. *foolishness*. ver. 28; ch. 2:14.

24 *called*. ver. 2, 9. Lu. 7:35. Ro. 8:28–30; 9:24. *the power*. ver. 18. Ro. 1:4, 16. *the wisdom*. ver. 30. Pr. 8:1, 22–30. Col. 2:3.

25 *the foolishness*. ver. 18, 27–29. Ex. 13:17; 14:2–4. Jos. 6:2–5. Ju. 7:2–8; 15:15, 16. 1 Sa. 17:40–51. 1 Ki. 20:14, etc. Zec. 4:6, 7; 12:7, 8. Ro. 11:33–36.

26 *that*. ver. 20; ch. 2:3–6, 13; 3:18–20. Zep. 3:12. Mat. 11:25, 26. Lu. 10:21. Jno. 7:47–49. Ja. 3. 13–17. *not many mighty*. Lu. 1:3. Gr.; 18:24, 25. Jno. 4:46–53; 19:38, 39. Ac. 13:7, 12; 17:34. Phi. 4:22. Ja. 1:9–11; 2:5. 2 Jno. 1.

27 Ps. 8:2. Is. 26:5, 6; 29:14, 19. Zep. 3:12. Mat. 4:18–22; 9:9; 11:25; 21:16. Lu. 19:39, 40; 21:15. Ac. 4:11–21; 6:9, 10; 7:35, 54; 17:18; 24:24, 25. 2 Co. 4:7; 10:4, 5, 10.

28 *things which*. Ro. 4:17. 2 Co. 12:11. *to bring*. ch. 2:6. De. 28:63. Job 34:19, 20, 24. Ps. 32:10; 37:35, 36. Is. 2:11, 17; 17:13, 14; 37:36; 41:12. Da. 2:34, 35, 44, 45. Re. 18:17.

29 ver. 31; ch. 4:7; 5:6. Ps. 49:6. Is. 10:15. Je. 9:23. Ro. 3:19, 27; 4:2; 15:17. Ep. 2:9.

30 *in*. ch. 12:18, 27. Is. 45:17. Jno. 15:1–6; 17:21–23. Ro. 8:1; 12:5; 16:7, 11. 2 Co. 5:17; 12:2. Ep. 1:3, 4, 10; 2:10. *of God*. Ro. 11:36. 2 Co. 5:18–21. *wisdom*. ver. 24; ch. 12:8. Pr. 1:20; 2:6; 8:5. Da. 2:20. Lu. 21:15. Jno. 1:18; 8:12; 14:6; 17:8, 26. 2 Co. 4:6. Ep. 1:17, 18; 3:9, 10. Col. 2:2, 3; 3:16. 2 Ti. 3:15–17. Ja. 1:5. *righteousness*. Ps. 71:15, 16. Is. 45:24, 25; 54:17. Je. 23:5, 6; 33:16. Da. 9:24. Ro. 1:17; 3:21–24; 4:6, 25; 5:19, 21. 2 Co. 5:21. Phi. 3:9. 2 Pe. 1:1. *sanctification*. ver. 2; ch. 6:11. Mat. 1:21. Jno. 17:17–19. Ac. 26:18. Ro. 8:9. Ga. 5:22–24. Ep. 2:10; 5:26. 1 Pe. 1:2. 1 Jno. 5:6. *redemption*. ch. 15:54–57. Ho. 13, 14. Ro. 3:24; 8:23. Ga. 1:4; 3:13. Ep. 1:7; 4:30. Col. 1:14. Tit. 2:14. He. 9:12. 1 Pe. 1:18, 19. Re. 5:9; 14:4.

31 1 Ch. 16:10, 35. Ps. 105:3. Is. 41:16; 45:25. Je. 4:2; 9:23, 24. 2 Co. 10:17. Ga. 6:13, 14. Phi. 3:3. Gr.²⁰

²⁰ Blayney, B., Scott, T., & Torrey, R. A. with Canne, J., Browne. (n.d.). [The Treasury of Scripture knowledge](#) (Vol. 2, p. 117). London: Samuel Bagster and Sons.