

Chosen to be an Apostle

1 Corinthians 1:1 – 8



~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God returns to the New Testament from second Chronicles, at around one thousand years before Christ — to carnal Corinth at around 57 AD in this report — and we're going out onto the streets of the sin-center-city of the Roman Empire in Paul the apostle's day. Paul is planning to publish a very practical epistle. I hope our study in Chronicles was edifying for you dear readers. Chronicles was dry and dusty, there is no doubt; but I hope reading it through brought you to love the Lord Jesus Christ even more. The Word of God is all about Him, friends. This safari is all about finding the Lord Jesus Christ on every page of Scripture. Corinthians, while quoted wildly today — is usually grossly misunderstood, misused and irresponsibly tailored to make a custom Christian suit of clothes that doesn't quite fit. Well, our safari is going to get our Corinthian garment tailor-fitted for us in the next several reports.

Corinth has been labeled "Vanity Fair." It was a twenty-four, seven Bacchanalian orgy. In Paul's day, Corinth had about four hundred thousand inhabitants. Religion itself was put to ignoble uses. Corinth was located about 40 miles west of Athens on a narrow isthmus between Peloponnesus and the mainland. It was the great commercial center of the Roman Empire with three harbors, of which two were important — Lechaeum, about 1 1/2 miles to the west, and Cenchreae, about 8 1/2 miles to the east. In 196 B.C. Rome declared it a free city. In 146 B.C. it rebelled and was totally destroyed by Mummius, the consul. Around 46 B.C. Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in great elegance, restoring it to its former prominence.

However, it didn't remain prominent, and even its ruins were lost to history for many years. A fishing village was eventually built over Corinth. In 1928, an earthquake uncovered it all, and now much of the city has been excavated. The temple of Aphrodite, built on the Acrocorinthus, was

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attended by 1,000 priestesses of vice, actually nothing more than prostitutes. Sex had become a religion for the Corinthians. The city was given over to pure licentiousness, debauchery, drunkenness and pleasure. The Isth-mian games were conducted there. Greek philosophy is in decline at the time at which we are studying. There were endless religious, philosophical and political discussions and debates amongst the Corinthian people. Well, Paul only had one message, and it was an Easter message: Christ and Christ crucified.

Against this highly corrupt social background, Paul preached the gospel in Corinth, founded the church, and wrote two epistles to the church in Corinth: first and second Corinthians. Acts chapter eighteen verse one has the account of Paul's visit to Corinth. Paul spent a lot of time there. When he preached in the synagogue, there was always a riot, revolution and revival. That happened everywhere Paul went, and Corinth was no exception.

What we see in this epistle is Paul writing to the Corinthian church attempting to correct some of the errors that had come into their doctrine. The church had all kinds of questions: political questions, religious questions and domestic questions. They had questions about heathenism and morality. So, Paul wrote a letter that we apparently do not have today. After that "lost" letter, there came *MORE* questions to Paul from Corinth which produced this first epistle to them.

We're now coming to the supremacy of Christ and the Lordship of Jesus; and that is important because the Lord Jesus Christ just happens to be the only solution to the problems we face in our lives today. We have considered in-depth in this expedition how Christ is the social, moral and ecclesiastical answer to every problem presented in philosophical, psychological or theoretical terms. All disorders are made order again in Christ; directly opposed to the second law of thermodynamics. What we have is the true doctrine of the resurrection – and the resurrection is the centerpiece of all of the apostle's sermons, exhortations and teachings. Obviously, we have a very significant section of Scripture to learn now.

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So, we see a church that existed two thousand years ago beset with serious problems. They had totally lost sight of the main objective and had drifted very far from the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a result, problems were overwhelming them. Today, our contemporary church is, likewise, plagued with problems. It's almost shocking how our modern problems are almost exactly the same as they were experiencing in Corinth at the time in which we are studying. Our problem is that we have lost site of the central truth of Christ crucified. We don't seem to correctly understand the fundamental meaning of "*the Lordship of Jesus Christ.*" Most self-professing believers actually deny the sovereignty and deity of Christ. Well, we're going to learn all about these topics in this leg of our so-called safari, I promise you that. Only the serious student of Scripture can or will continue from here....

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

² Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

³ Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you in Jesus Christ;

⁵ That in every thing ye are enriched in him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;

⁶ Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:

⁷ So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

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⁸ Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

~ Salutation and thanksgiving in the first eight verses form a remarkable literary masterpiece. Paul was called an apostle of Christ – and that means Paul is a certain type of apostle: called! Who called Paul? – God – the Lord Jesus Christ Himself – called Paul. Christ Himself appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road. The Spirit of God taught Paul in the Arabian Desert. Paul was called *that* way. Paul was called unto Christ through the will of God. The will of God is what made Paul a chosen apostle. You’re going to have to learn how that works if you want to help further the cause of Christ, friends.

It’s wonderful to be able to say, “*I am where I am and I am doing what I am doing because I am in the direct will of God.*” Is that your situation? If you can answer yes, then you are also a very happy, joyful and honest Christian! If you have reached this place, then you have no frustrations or disappointments. Of course, little things come up, but an underlying satisfaction in Christ gives us our Sabbath rest in Him! Remember, we just left Judah in Chronicles as they went into Babylonian captivity, and the main reason they went into captivity is because they had not observed the Sabbatic Years in the land. There is a very definite spiritual connection to be made here. This is also why our safari studies the Bible as we do; alternating between the New Testament and the Old Testament: because it’s supernatural.

To be a Christian means to be spiritually *IN* Christ. Our physical and geographical location is incidental, if not completely insignificant, when we are in Jesus Christ! So, we learned all about being sanctified in Christ Jesus in our study through Romans. There is *positional* sanctification. That’s our position in Christ. When we connect this all with the Holy Spirit it becomes *practical* sanctification. Christ has been made unto us in sanctification and wisdom, righteousness and redemption. He is our sanctification. What this means is: you’re not going to Heaven – and neither am I – until we’re

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perfected. I don't know about you, but I'm not perfect down here; I'm not even close. If you knew me like I know me, you wouldn't read any more of my reports; but wait! If I knew you like you know you, I wouldn't waste my time writing to you. Maybe that gives us a reason to stay connected?

Our Spiritual Safari isn't looking for theological or doctrinal platitudes. However, we do need to understand certain things; and *practical sanctification* is one of those things; and *practical sanctification* varies from person to person. These Corinthian's don't sound anything like sanctified saints. Well, they are saints; because they are sanctified in Christ Jesus; even though the Holy Spirit wasn't very much in evidence in their lives. Even so, Paul was called an apostle; and Paul called these people saints!

A saint is defined as someone who is set aside for the use of God. Being a saint is not determined by what we do or don't do. Every Christian should be a saint. That's not always true, however. Many intrude into the office of the priest presumptuously; and they typically mess up everything. There are only two types of people: those who are in Christ and those who aren't in Christ! We just left Chronicles, where we saw the peace and grace of God during periods of great revival. Here, Paul salutes these Corinthians by bidding them grace and peace.

We saw in Chronicles that the main ingredient for revival was to have the Word of God get into our hearts. To have the Word of God in our hearts means to obey God. I'm not talking about memorizing verses and passages, though. When we think upon Christ, we obey Him. Only when He occupies a very real place in our minds and in our lives can He really mean anything to us. When we make the Lord Jesus Christ first in our hearts, it will solve a whole bunch of your problems in your life. That's the key fact Paul talks about in this epistle.

The Corinthians had gone astray for gifts, too; but they centered on just one or two gifts. They were *NOT* occupied with Christ. They had a bad heart condition. It's likely the same problem you're having in your church today. Now, we're all going to have our faults without being worthy of blame, I

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understand that; but, we all share in contributing to a problem, too! We need to keep our eyes focused on that day when Christ is going to return and take us - His church - out of this world. *THEN* shall we be changed to be like Him. We'll examine those things in this epistle as our Spiritual Safari moves forward. The Lord Jesus Christ leads our way in this safari. Is Jesus the Lord of your life? Is He leading *YOUR* way? ~

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